



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 16th February 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [**Sydney Morning Herald**](#) (page 1) reports hundreds of Sydney's parks and private properties may be contaminated by asbestos, NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe has warned, amidst a state-wide effort by the EPA to urgently test suspected locations. *Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph](#), [ABC Online](#), [SBS](#)*
- The [**Herald Sun**](#) (page 1) reports Victoria's triple-zero call-taker ESTA has rejected criticisms of its handling of a surge in calls after storms on Tuesday, with people left waiting up to six minutes to be connected to emergency services.
- The [**Courier Mail**](#) (page 1) reports Queensland oncologists have urged women to seek assessments for ovarian cancer even if symptoms are "vague or nonspecific" after local mother Emily Wiles was found to have a 5kg tumour during her pregnancy.
- The [**West Australian**](#) (page 1) reports some West Australian doctors are refusing to refer patients to the state's revamped Banned Drinkers Register amidst concerns it breaches the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.
- The [**Hobart Mercury**](#) (page 3) reports Hobart City Council has partnered with Quit Tasmania to offer resources for locals looking to quit vaping, amidst national data showing their use soaring

amongst high schoolers.

- The **Sydney Morning Herald** reports human trials for a potential single-dose injection cure for motor neurone disease, frontotemporal dementia and Alzheimer's could begin as soon as next year following successful lab results by scientists at Macquarie University.
- **ABC Online** reports the Prime Minister has ruled out changes to how a primary residence is treated in the asset test for aged care, but it is believed the government plans to strengthen the means tests on other assets. *Also reported by:* **Australian Financial Review**
- **The Guardian** (online) reports companies are using feminist messaging to market "useless" health products to women, placing them at risk of overdiagnosis and unnecessary treatment, new research by the University of Sydney's school of public health has found.

MINISTER BUTLER

Gallagher and Pocock clash on bulk billing rates

Canberra Times, General News, 16/02/2024, Miriam Webber, Page 13

Labor senator Katy Gallagher has rejected a comment from independent senator David Pocock that more attention might be paid to Canberra's disappointing bulk billing rates if it were a marginal seat. Canberra has the worst bulk billing rate of all the states and territories, at 53.4 per cent as of November 2023. [...] Senator Gallagher was representing the Minister for Health Mark Butler.

Also reported by: **Canberra Times (Online)**.

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Police seize illegal tobacco products amid state crackdown on new laws

Gunnedah Times, General News, 15/02/2024, Page 4

NSW Police have seized tobacco products and money during a search warrant of a Gunnedah business as part of ongoing investigations in alleged sales of illegal tobacco sales. Police from the Oxley Police District attended a business in Gunnedah recently where a search warrant was executed. [...] Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler said the Australian government is reforming the regulation of vapes, including removing loopholes in existing laws, and increasing enforcement in cooperation with states and territories.

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Patients told to shop around

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Antony Scholefield, Page 6

Patients should "vote with their feet" and shop around for GP practices that bulk-bill, says the federal Minister for Health and Aged Care. Speaking to media last month, Mark Butler was asked if his government's flagship health policy of tripling bulk-billing incentives was working.

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Health secretary dared to ignore minister's calls in 'right to disconnect' debate

Canberra Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Justine Landis-Hanley

Shadow health minister Anne Ruston has dared Health and Aged Care secretary Blair Comley to turn off his phone and ignore his minister's calls, as the 'right to disconnect' debate bleeds into senate estimates. [...] Appearing at the Community Affairs committee on Thursday morning, Senator Ruston quizzed the department over whether it had considered the impact of Labor's legislation, including whether Mr Comley felt he could ignore Health Minister Mark Butler outside of working hours.

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Aussies losing \$2k a year in 'sneaky' health insurance tactics

NEWS.com.au, Other, 15/02/2024, Brielle Burns

Aussies are forking out thousands of extra dollars for top-tier hospital cover thanks to "sneaky tactics" used by major health insurers, a new Choice report claims. The consumer advocacy group found the price of top-level and 'Gold' hospital policies have skyrocketed by over 30 per cent on average over the past three years. [...] Premium hike rejected In December, Health Minister Mark Butler rejected a request from 31 insurers that could have delivered an average increase of up to six per cent – the biggest premium hike in at least six years.

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Govt's tax cuts will help to make it 'cheaper' to see a doctor in Dunkley

Sky News Australia, Other, 15/02/2024

Health Minister Mark Butler says the Albanese government's tax cuts will build on all the other measures put in place to make it "cheaper and easier" to see a doctor in Dunkley. Mr Butler was asked during Question Time on Thursday how the Labor government's tax cuts will help healthcare workers keep more of what they earn.

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Improper claiming

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 15/02/2024, Megan Haggan

The Minister for health and aged care has reprimanded NSW approved pharmacist, Aged Health Care Pty Ltd, for breaches of its PBS approval. The reprimand stems from the approved pharmacist's improper claiming of payment from the Commonwealth for PBS medicines.

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Bupa, Medibank, HCF: Health insurers accused of 'jacking up' prices

Yahoo! Finance Australia, Other, 15/02/2024, Tamika Seeto

Choice has revealed the "sneaky tactics" health insurers are using to hike their prices. Australia's biggest health insurers have been called out for increasing their top-tier hospital policy prices by more than 30 per cent, as consumers brace for yet another insurance price hike. [...] Health minister Mark Butler is expected to announce the annual increase to health insurance premiums in the coming weeks.

[Read More](#)

Health insurers accused of overcharging for top-level hospital cover

Your Life Choices, Other, 15/02/2024

Major health insurers are using 'sneaky tactics' to charge premiums for their top-tier hospital policies that far exceed the federal government's approved price increases, according to consumer advocacy group CHOICE. The group claims health insurers have increased their average premiums for top-level or 'gold' hospital policies by an average of 30 per cent during the past three years – well above the average 8. [...] In December, health minister Mark Butler rejected a proposed 6 per cent premium increase by health insurers, who said inflation had put pressure on their costs.

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Koori Radio, Blackchat, 15/02/2024, Lola Forester

Forester says the Royal Australian of GPs has thrown its support behind a new drug that can help people quit smoking. She states that this comes as the Therapeutic Goods Administration received a private application to screen the drug as a potential medicine for smoking. Forester says they have asked Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler to step in to prevent the possible removal of nicotine patches from the public scheme.

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MINISTER WELLS

Home threshold won't change: PM

The Albanese government has baulked at increasing the means test threshold on the family home that helps determine aged care fees, as it moves towards a model of user pays to keep the system sustainable. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese confirmed that as p...

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#).

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Prime minister says no plan to touch aged care asset test for family home

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, David Speers

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says the government is not considering any change to the treatment of the family home in the aged care asset test. The federal government established a taskforce last year to find a consensus on how to properly fund aged care, following a range of recommendations made by a damning royal commission into the sector [...] Asked in parliament to rule out changes to the treatment of the family home in aged care assessments, Aged Care Minister Anika Wells refused to do so.

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Albanese government accused of rushing through \$200m women's sport pledge

The Guardian, Other, 15/02/2024, Jack Snape

Anthony Albanese's signature \$200m women's sport facilities program was scoped and approved in just 10 days as the government scrambled to tap into the enthusiasm around last year's Women's World Cup. [...] A letter signed by the sport minister, Anika Wells, and dated 14 August sought an "early announcement" during the World Cup "to ensure maximum recognition of this government's support for women and girls in sport".

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Aged care Royal Commission report a 'black and white description' of Coalition's 'failure'

Sky News Australia, Other, 15/02/2024

Aged Care Minister Anika Wells says the Royal Commission report into her sector was a "black and white description" of the Coalition's "failure". The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established in October, 2018, with the goal of assessing whether the services were meeting the needs of the community and how they could be improved.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

No relevant coverage

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 15/02/2024, Greg Jennett and Matthew Doran

Interview with Ged Kearney, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care. Jennett says a new consultants report has found out that seeks to promote and quantify the benefits of investments into online health services using public money out of the Medical Research Future Fund. Kearney points out that consulting has did a very thorough analysis of some MRF funding that was allocated to and for health, they would like to focus on startups with plans for innovative treatments or diagnostics, particularly advancing the technology in that field. She states that the MRFF has awarded \$20m.

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

Sweeping changes as CDP to be replaced in July

Torres News, General News, 15/02/2024, Page 4

A new federal remote jobs program, designed to help build workforces and reduce reliance on transient 'fly-in-fly-out' workforces, is set to replace the Community Development Program (CDP) later this year, the Government has announced earlier this week. [...] Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Health Malarndirri McCarthy said it would make a positive difference.

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Medicare in trouble for spending \$4000 on urgent care teddy bears

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/02/2024, Antony Scholefield

The bears were for MPs to promote urgent care clinics, the department's secretary explained. Bureaucrats have been forced to defend their decision to spend \$4000 of taxpayer cash on teddy bears to promote Medicare's GP urgent care clinics. [...] Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health Senator Malarndirri McCarthy came to his rescue.

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DEPARTMENT

ABC Radio Hobart, 11:00 News, 15/02/2024

The Federal Health Department spent \$4000 on teddy bears in an attempt to promote the use of urgent care clinics and the Federal Government funds the clinics, which provide free health care so Australians don't have to go to the emergency department for lower grade illnesses or injuries.

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CORONAVIRUS

The US Center for Disease Control proposes to scrap its five-day COVID-19 isolation recommendations. What are the rules in Australia?

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Brianna Morris-Grant

Americans testing positive for COVID-19 will no longer be told to stay home for five days under new rules proposed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), local media has reported. It will be the first time since 2021 that the CDC has loosened its isolation recommendations, according to the Washington Post, which cited multiple agency officials and internal communications.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Chris Pyne to chair ageing lobby

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 31

Continuing in our Nemesis-inspired "where are they now" dispatches, we were tickled to learn of

Christopher Pyne's newest role this week. The former defence minister was also, briefly, minister for ageing, which we figure was John Howard's idea of a joke....

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#).

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New interim chief at aged care provider

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 8

Mildura's largest aged-care provider, Princes Court, has appointed a new interim chief executive while it searches for a permanent candidate for the role. Experienced executive leader and longstanding Mildura resident Anthony Couroupis will succeed Carrie Chappell, who served in the role for the past 14 months.

Also reported by: [Sunraysia Daily \(Online\)](#).

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Six retirement horror stories and how to avoid them

Australian Financial Review, Other, 16/02/2024, Lucy Dean

Retirement is the time for the travel, volunteering and reading many have been putting off. But it doesn't take much to derail the golden years.

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Canning Lodge: City of Canning to consider demolishing vacant aged care facility

West Australian, Other, 15/02/2024, Gabrielle Becerra Mellet

Everything is still on the table for the City of Canning to transform a vacated building in Willetton that was once home to a council-run aged care facility. Councillors will vote next week on a suggestion to demolish the former Canning Lodge and at the same time, investigate the viability of a future land use after the centre was closed last year.

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Hundreds kept of out Wollongong ED thanks to new aged care flying squad

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 16/02/2024, Kate McIlwain

Almost 800 elderly Illawarra residents have been able to avoid a trip to the emergency department in the past eight months, thanks to the region's new Aged Care Outreach Service. The service, which began in July 2023 at 10 aged care homes, involves a flying squad of doctors, nurses and specialists on hand to go to aged care facilities around the region.

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Lawyers offer free Wills for Gold Coast aged care workers

Aged Care Insite, Other, 15/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

A Queensland law firm is offering aged care worker's the opportunity to have their Wills drafted free of charge. Throughout March, Attwood Marshall Lawyers is giving workers across the Gold Coast and Tweed area, where the practice is based, appointments to make free Wills

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Aged care worker mauled by a dog

Aged Care Insite, Other, 15/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

An aged care worker who was violently mauled by a dog at a Sydney home has undergone surgery to treat her significant injuries. Lynda Watson, 51, has spent the past week in intensive care unit after she was left with potentially life-altering injuries when a French Mastiff mauled her at a Condell Park home belonging to one of her clients last Tuesday.

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Dementia Australia announces new CEO

Public health expert Professor Tanya Buchanan has been appointed incoming chief executive officer of the consumer advocacy organisation. Dementia Australia has announced public health expert Professor Tanya Buchanan will commence as chief executive officer of the advocacy organisation in May.

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Resources provide guidance on advocating for loved ones

Healthcare Channel, Other, 15/02/2024

Palliative Care Victoria has launched a groundbreaking initiative aimed at improving the quality of care for older adults. Called "Dignified and Respectful Decisions," this initiative educates Australians on the importance of discussing end-of-life plans with their loved ones and working collaboratively with aged care teams to enhance living and dying experiences in residential aged care.

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In 2024, don't forget to check on your older neighbours living alone

Healthcare Channel, Other, 15/02/2024, Rosanne Freak-Poli and Barbara Barbosa Neves

Bella, in her early 80s, has lived alone since her husband passed away almost 20 years ago. Her relatives are all scattered across Australia, and she spent another festive season by herself. She's lost count of how many times she's been alone during the holidays. Bella feels very lonely, but doesn't talk about it with her loved ones. She describes loneliness as a "painful thing that gnaws at you"; a feeling that constantly reminds you that you have "no company".

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Opinion: fearmongering about the family home won't solve Australia's looming aged care bed crisis

The Weekly Source, Other, 15/02/2024, Lauren Broomham

Media speculation around the delayed release of the Aged Care Taskforce's Final Report misses the point: Australia can't afford to let its recommendations be left on the shelf. With the original deadline for the release of the Taskforce's recommendations now well past, scrutiny around the release of the Report is heating up.

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Draft Aged Care Act “disproportionate and punitive”: MinterEllison webinar

The Weekly Source, Other, 15/02/2024, Caroline Egan

The new Aged Care Act goes further than the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended in terms of penalties for providers who show "reckless... disregard for the people in their care", the law firm has warned in a webinar for aged care providers.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Just the thing for when it gets loud

Age, General News, 16/02/2024, Hannah Kennelly, Page 6

"There goes the loudest woman this town has ever seen," Taylor Swift declared in the ballad The Last Great American Dynasty from her award winning album Folklore. Many Australian Swifties are making an effort to protect their hearing at the pop star's longawaited Eras Tour by wearing earplugs.

Also reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

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Push to end vape harm

Hobartians have been warned of the dangers associated with vaping as new data shows almost one-third of Australian secondary school students have used an e-cigarette at least once. A Hobart City Council information booth was set up in the Elizabeth Mall on Thursday, offering resources for people looking to quit vaping or to help people they knew kick the habit.

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Tooth is, some are just not interested

Cairns Post, General News, 16/02/2024, Isaac McCarthy, Page 10

Cairns' three frontrunning mayoral candidates have rejected the region's chief oral health officer's call for council to put fluoride back in the water supply. On Thursday the Cairns Post reported rates of tooth decay among Cairns' children were almost double the rates in regions with fluoridated water, according to Queensland Health data.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#).

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Mixing alcohol with meds is a really bad idea

Daily Advertiser, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 11

Anyone who has drunk alcohol will be familiar with how easily it can lower your social inhibitions and let you do things you wouldn't normally do. But you may not be aware that mixing certain medicines with alcohol can increase the effects and put you at risk. When you mix alcohol with medicines, the medicines can increase the effects of the alcohol or the alcohol can increase the side-effects of the drug. Sometimes it can also result in all new side-effects.

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\$9.50 a kilo for broccoli: Will food insecurity kill us?

Launceston Examiner, General News, 16/02/2024, Isabel Bird, Page 7

As the cost of cancer-fighting and heart-healthy broccoli rises to \$9.50 a kilogram, hunger is becoming a normal part of everyday life for financially-stressed Tasmanians. Those aged in their twenties and thirties are more likely to skip meals because they are broke, while females, as well as people living alone, are more likely to be going hungry.

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Vaping producing a new generation of nicotine dependency

The Australian, Other, 15/02/2024

Marketed as a way to quit smoking, vaping is now being blamed for producing a new generation of nicotine dependency. Concerns have been raised about vaping creating nicotine dependency amongst young Australians.

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People accessing vapes through the 'black market' in Australia

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/02/2024

Action for Smokefree 2025 Director Ben Youdan says people trying to quit smoking using vapes, and young people are "accessing them through the black markets". Mr Youdan's comments come as concerns were raised that the federal government's prescription model is feeding a thriving black market for vaping.

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Thousands protest for safer worksites amid claims of rising heat stress incidents on worksites

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Antonia O'Flaherty and Michael Rennie

Thousands of workers have rallied outside Queensland parliament over the death of a Cross River Rail worker. The Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) said Daniel Sa'u, a 29-year-old labour hire worker, died of heat stress after working at the Cross River Rail Salisbury site in late December last year.

Parents warned not to fuel teen booze binges

Examiner Newspapers, Other, 15/02/2024

A new report has revealed alarming statistics about alcohol use among high school students. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation says new data released this week shows a concerning number of parents allowing their children to drink alcohol. The 'Secondary school students' use of alcohol and other substances report (2022-2023)' which is prepared by Cancer Council Victoria for the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, found nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Australian high school students in 2022/2023 reported having consumed alcohol, including a few sips.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 15/02/2024, Ryk Goddard

Interview with Will Coats, Councillor, Hobart City Council. Coats discusses that they are at Elizabeth Street Mall to educate people on the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes but also provide handy hints for people who may be addicted. He states that they do know at the end of the day that there are risks of using e-cigarettes particularly people getting addicted to it.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Lack of exercise a growing threat

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/02/2024, Sarah Berry, Page 19

New research suggests that more than three times as many cancer cases are attributable to physical inactivity than previously thought. Associate Professor Brigid Lynch, senior author of the paper, saw evolving evidence that physical inactivity was associated with at least 13 types of cancer not just three types, as researchers once believed and wanted to update the estimates based on Australian activity levels and cancer rates.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Baby boy saves mum's life

Courier Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

As baby Eli grew in his mother's womb, he lay alongside a 5kg cancerous tumour that was more than twice his size. But while the discovery at 33 weeks was shocking for both parents and medics, his mum Emily Wiles credits her miracle boy with giving her the chance of life.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Head-to-head to help fight against cancer

Border Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Jodie O'Sullivan, Page 2

There are only 32 students at St Joseph's Primary School at Chiltern and yet in the past two years, three mums have been diagnosed with cancer. It's certainly brought the reality of the disease close to home, says Tai Buchanan who works as a learning support officer in the tight-knit school community. [...] With a thick head of healthy hair, it was a hop, snip and a cut conclusion to decide on a head shave for Cancer Council Victoria.

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Bootcamp to raise funds for leukaemia research

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 16/02/2024, Sophia Baker, Page 2

Driven by the sudden loss of her husband to a rare and aggressive blood cancer, Lyn Gilmour is stepping up to help a Warrnambool gym raise funds for leukaemia research. Despite being diagnosed

with a stage four melanoma herself, Mrs Gilmour goes to the gym two days a week and said the fundraiser was a good opportunity for the community to get involved.

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Mawson Lakes parents Susan and Ben Dzioba have two sets of twins under the age of 5

Adelaide Now, Other, 15/02/2024, Zayda Dollie

No, your eyes aren't playing tricks on you – Susan and Ben Dzioba from Mawson Lakes have two sets of twins. And all four share a common thing that's kept them alive. [...] Ms Dzioba, a social worker, has her hands full managing four children under the age of five – two of whom suffer from a condition known as laryngomalacia and tracheomalacia.

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Brain of little 'angel' donated for research into rare disorder

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024

A Queensland family has donated their daughter's brain for research into Angelman Syndrome after the rare genetic disorder claimed the life of the three-year-old.

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Caring for patients and cutting carbon: how a pioneering cancer clinic is reducing emissions

The Guardian, Other, 15/02/2024, Kala Paul-Worika

Perched on a dramatic riverbank and filled with towering tropical plants, the Champalimaud Clinical Centre in Lisbon is not what comes to mind with the words "cancer treatment" but the work it is doing could be a template for the future of healthcare. New cancer cases across the world are predicted to increase by more than 50% by 2040, according to the Global Cancer Observatory.

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Debra's doctor told her she was 'pregnant and hormonal'. She actually had a brain tumour.

Mamamia, Other, 15/02/2024, Nicole Madigan

When Annette was 15, doctors told her painful periods was just part of becoming a woman. She accepted what he said, enduring the pain for the next four years. At 19, a female doctor diagnosed her with endometriosis. In her 20s, she visited her male GP about a chronic ear infection.

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PRIMARY CARE

Cash crisis a serious state emergency

Border Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 40

Worrying and alarming are just two adjectives to describe the financial state of Victoria's hospitals. This week The Border Mail revealed Victoria's hospital system racked up a \$697 million operating deficit - spending significantly more than its budget - in the first quarter of the 2023-24 financial year.

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New hubs closer to home

Loddon Herald, General News, 15/02/2024, Page 3

New rural health care hubs will open in three Loddon communities by July. The first hubs bringing nurse practitioner and allied health services "closer to home" will be in Boort and Pyramid Hill. Murray Primary Health Network says a third Loddon hub will be established to serve residents in the Inglewood-Wedderburn districts.

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City's new private hospital welcome, despite sector's woes

Newcastle Herald, General News, 16/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw and Jade Lazarevic, Page 15

A private hospital planned for Newcastle would be a welcome investment despite the sector's troubles, University of Newcastle Professor Francesco Paolucci says. Professor Paolucci, a health economist, said "demand for high quality health hasn't diminished". "It has grown and will keep growing in the future," he said.

Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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Doing it for the country kids

Shepparton News, General News, 16/02/2024, Kady Hadjab, Page 10

Did you know that in 1931, the Royal Children's Hospital faced imminent closure due to soaring operational costs, overcrowding and lack of appropriate funding? In response to this crisis, a group of Sporting Globe journalists organised a sports carnival to raise funds for the children's facility.

Also reported by: [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#).

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'I knew I wasn't likely to get old': Austen Blackman-Gatehouse is choosing to end his life

Adelaide Now, Other, 15/02/2024, Evangeline Polymeneas

Born with a congenital heart disease, doctors told Austen Blackman-Gatehouse he wouldn't survive to see his 19th birthday. But now a decade beyond that painful prediction, the married 29-year-old is choosing to take control of his own die with his "steadfast" wife Shannon by his side. Within the year, Austen says he will end his life using voluntary assisted dying laws that were introduced in South Australia in January 2023.

Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Some Victorians still can't call triple-0, 5 hospitals without power

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024

Five regional hospitals are without power after damaging storms in Victoria, while Ambulance Victoria has reported dozens of branches affected as well. Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child joined Raf Epstein to provide an update.

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What if people with dementia could use voluntary assisted dying?

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024

Victorians with dementia are not able to access voluntary assisted dying. What would happen if that changed?

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BaptistCare to pilot end-of-life program

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 15/02/2024

Aged care provider BaptistCare has been commissioned to operate a new and innovative end-of-life care pilot program in New South Wales. Developed by the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network, the End-of-Life Care Coordination Primary Care Pilot Program aims to help people in the region diagnosed with a life-limiting illness to better access health care at home.

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'We want to get on the front foot': PHN's rescue plan to help GP practices stay open

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/02/2024, Rachel Carter

The Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network says practice viability in the

region is 'marginal at best'. Dozens of GP practices have signed up to a Primary Health Network's new viability assessment platform amid a worrying spate of closures and mergers.

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Mobile GP clinic ready to roll

Medical Forum, Other, 15/02/2024

Perth's newest mobile GP clinic has hit the road — taking doctors and health care to the suburbs. The State Government-funded 360 Street Doctor service provides an accessible, non-judgmental health service for people experiencing homelessness, who are transient or facing disadvantage.

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Doctors at risk over VAD, says MP

Medical Forum, Other, 15/02/2024

Federal Member for Curtin Kate Chaney has warned that doctors are at risk of being prosecuted if they use telehealth to discuss voluntary assisted dying with patients. The Teal MP has introduced a Private Member's Bill to the House of Representatives to ensure all Australians have equal access to VAD, which is now lawful in all Australian states.

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Detention kids miss out on health

Medical Forum, Other, 15/02/2024

Children in detention need better healthcare, including once they are released, because of their ongoing and complex needs, a new Curtin University study has found. Researchers from Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Justice Health Group at Curtin University and the François-Xavier Bagnoud Centre for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University wrote a report that shines a light on one of the most neglected areas in the protection of children.

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Breast screening no more than 20 minutes away for 9 in 10 Aussie women

Science Media Exchange (Scimex), Other, 16/02/2024

Nine in ten Australian women live no more than a 20 minute drive away from a permanent breast screening service, or a visiting service that comes at least once every two years, according to a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The report looks at access to breast screening services and whether specific groups such as First Nations or remotely located women have convenient access. The AIHW says 99.98% of all women and 96% of First Nations women between the ages of 50-74 can drive an hour or less to reach a permanent or visiting screening service.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 15/02/2024, David Reilly

Interview with Dr Rosalie Woodruff, Tas Greens Leader. Reilly discusses that they have heard from ambulance workers and hospital staff about patients dying while waiting to be admitted to the hospital, which is an issue that still rampant and now an inquiry into the matter has been introduced by Woodruff, however, there have been pushbacks. Woodruff admits that she has heard the most harrowing stories from first-time paramedics and nurses, as well as patients and their families. She believes that its rather devastating that the Government has pulled up stumps and has effectively stopped this inquiry on its tracks.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Melbourne, Breakfast, 15/02/2024, Sammy J

Emergency repair works continue to restore power to more than 75,000 Victorian homes and businesses still without electricity since Tuesday's storms. Five hospitals in Victoria's south and east, as well as Yea north east of Melbourne, are relying on generators as Victorians grapple with the impact of Tuesday's power outage. Wonthaggi Hospital has cancelled all elective surgeries again today and has converted its theatre into a recovery ward.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

How Inglis is tackling mental health issues

Courier Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Tahlia Leathart, Page 21

State of Origin legend Greg Inglis has opened up about his new journey after footy as he campaigns for mental health issues in regional parts of Queensland. Speaking from Townsville ahead of the All Stars clash, Inglis said his community program, the Goanna Academy, was more important than ever. He said the Academy aimed to improve mental health outcomes across Australia and particularly in regional men, youth and First Nations people.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

How to 'lift' your mood

Daily Telegraph, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 19

Exercise can help fight depression and should be routinely prescribed as part of a treatment plan, new research has found. University of Queensland's Dr Michael Noetel reviewed more than 200 studies and found activities such as walking, jogging, yoga and strength training were beneficial for treating depression.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

More help for at-risk young

Courier Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 20

Children and adolescents at risk of suicide can now access help from new and expanded acute response teams at 12 Hospital and Health Service facilities as part of the biggest cash injection into youth mental health in the state's history. Response teams have been established in the Darling Downs, Metro North and Townsville HHSs.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Chance to fix grog problem

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 18

ALP Alcohol-related harm continues to be the biggest single social challenge in the Northern Territory, and we are focused on creating long term and sustainable changes. Territory Labor has a proven track record of investment. Since 2016, the Territory Labor government has invested over \$320m into services, programs, and strategies to directly target the prevention and rehabilitation of alcohol and drug abuse.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Our tragic tide

Northern Territory News, Editorials, 16/02/2024, Page 38

Territory mental health is a subject both difficult to talk about and tricky to navigate. It feels like only recently the narrative has shifted and more people are comfortable to talk about when they are struggling. Some people still can't do this. A coronial inquest in Darwin at the moment is hearing the harrowing story of 13-year-old Grace whose suffering was so severe she took her own life.

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Roadshows on draft mental health strategy

Air Force News, General News, 15/02/2024, Michael Rogers, Page 2

Defence's new Mental Health and Wellbeing Branch is conducting a national roadshow to talk about its work and seek feedback on a draft 2024-2029 strategy. The six-week campaign began on February 2

to provide an overview of how the team aims to enhance lives and work environments.

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Patients turn to fish oil for ADHD

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Carter, Page 13

Patients with ADHD are increasingly turning to complementary medicines, such as fish oil and turmeric powder, for pharmacotherapy, a GP is warning. Dr Andrew Leech says a combination of social media, word of mouth from friends, and patients conducting their own research is driving the phenomenon.

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Mental health toll on Queensland farmers from frequent natural disasters

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024

Experiencing a natural disaster can be a deeply traumatic event. But how do survivors cope when their homes and businesses are repeatedly battered by cyclones, floods or fires, with little relief in between? That has been the reality for many Australian farmers in recent years, with Queensland hit especially hard. Burketown grazier Kylie Camp said he had experienced numerous floods living in the Gulf of Carpentaria, but two devastating events in the past five years had killed livestock and destroyed buildings and infrastructure.

[Read More](#)

Mental health patients forced to rely on telehealth

Canberra Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Jack Gramenz

People seeking help for mental health issues in some areas only have online video consultations to rely on, an inquiry has heard. NSW Health mental health branch executive director Brendan Flynn told a parliamentary inquiry many services have a face-to-face clinician, but not everywhere.

Also reported by: [The New Daily \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Mental health patients 'pushed through', inquiry told

Canberra Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Jack Gramenz

Funding arrangements are creating perverse incentives for health practitioners to spend less time with patients in need of mental health services. Per-patient Medicare gap payments encouraged managers to push general practitioners towards shorter sessions, Ramsay Clinic Thirroul consultant psychiatrist Karen Williams told a NSW parliamentary inquiry.

Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Lifeline Central Australia folds, work begins on new Territory-wide service

Northern Territory News, Other, 15/02/2024, Alex Treacy

A Northern Territory suicide prevention service that offered training at schools, councils and prisons in the Red Centre has closed its doors after 20-plus years. Lifeline Central Australia Inc, which was founded in 2003 and had an office at Bath St, Alice Springs, closed after a bid for renewed funding via the NT Government was unsuccessful.

[Read More](#)

Shaken baby's mum 'needed to see a light at the end of the tunnel'

Newcastle Herald, Other, 15/02/2024, Gabriel Fowler

The mother of a five-month-old baby who sustained lifelong injuries at the end of 2020, likely as a result of being severely shaken, says she felt let down by the mental health care system. She once waited at the Mater Hospital for hours during which time she was not seen, despite having a seizure on the floor, Newcastle District Court heard on Thursday.

[Read More](#)

Youth loneliness on the rise, reveals new research

SBS, Other, 15/02/2024, Itee Dewan

Young Australians, particularly those aged 15-24, are facing increased psychological distress and loneliness, according to new research from the University of Melbourne. Mental health counsellor Aadhyaa Udawat discusses potential factors contributing to this concerning trend and offers insights on how to address it.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Baby blues

Burnie Advocate, General News, 16/02/2024, Helen Kempton, Page 1

The shock decision by the North-West's sole private obstetrician to stop working at Burnie's public hospital at the end of this year has prompted Labor to promise an urgent review of maternity services right across the state if it wins government. The caretaker government says it is open to working with Dr Kim Dobromilsky into the future and the North-West Maternity Service has the capacity to manage a full private caseload.

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Maternity support gets bumped up

Air Force News, General News, 15/02/2024, Jessica Winnall, Page 2

Aviators planning for pregnancy, currently pregnant, on maternity or paternity leave, or those returning to work, can now access the new Maternity and Extended Leave Support (MELS) program. MELS is an initiative that aims to enhance the experience of individuals navigating the complex terrain of family planning and career advancement within Air Force.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Health checks on new ESA chief's priority list

Canberra Times, General News, 16/02/2024, Peter Brewer, Page 12

The ACT's newly appointed Emergency Services Commissioner will initiate mandatory health checks for all his operational firefighting staff as a priority when he formally takes up the top job in the next few weeks. The commitment by incoming ESA Commissioner Wayne Phillips will immediately win kudos with the United Firefighters Union, which has been pushing for the health checks for years and had been sharply critical of the ACT government for lagging behind on this commitment stemming from enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations back in 2020.

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Workers fear booze ban attackers

West Australian, General News, 16/02/2024, Sarah Crawford, Page 1

The Cook Government is experiencing community pushback against the revamped Banned Drinkers Register with doctors refusing to refer patients and bottle shops rejecting requests to hand out alcohol counselling brochures. The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service said its clinics would not be referring patients against their will to the BDR because it breached the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Surprise health nomination

Border Watch, General News, 16/02/2024, Melanie Riley, Page 6

Jaylee Clark has been nominated for a Young Achiever Award for her contribution to the health of the Mount Gambier/Berrin and surrounding community. Ms Clark was nominated for the Rural Doctors Workforce Agency Rural Health Award, which recognises young people in South Australia's regional and rural areas who are dedicated to those in need of health services.

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GV Health's anti-violence success

Shepparton News, General News, 16/02/2024, Djembe Archibald, Page 3

In the 2022-23 GV Health annual report, it was noted that 10 occupational violence and aggression incidents were reported. Compared to other hospitals, this is a particularly low figure, with Albury-Wodonga Health reporting 717 during 2023 and Kyabram District Health Service reporting 110 incidents in 2023.

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Funding help lifts palliative care skill

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 12

More than \$350,000 will be spent to upskill 57 health workers across the state in palliative care, including four from Townsville. The Post Graduate Study Scheme will assist allied health, nursing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers from metro, regions, rural and remote communities in upskilling their education and training in palliative care.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Fighting injustice

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Heather Saxena, Page 1

"stop work now." With three words, a bureaucrat ended Dr David Squirrell's 30-year medical career. It was 2008, and at the time he was a senior consultant in aged care assessment and rehabilitation in Noarlunga in Adelaide. He had 20 inpatients under his care and was supervising an RMO and a registrar.

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'PESCI exam is unfair to IMGs'

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Carmel Sparke, Page 5

Dr Michael Mbaogu is finding it almost impossible to recruit doctors to his outback clinic, but it is not for a lack of applicants. Five GPs have recently left his practice at Mount Isa in western Queensland, leaving just three amid the town's worsening doctor shortage.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Professor Scolyer's journey into the medical unknown

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 3

Last month, Richard Scolyer and Georgina Long were named Australians of the Year for their work in the treatment of melanoma. It followed Professor Scolyer's diagnosis with a grade 4 glioblastoma and his decision to undergo their experimental immunotherapy as a last-resort treatment.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 15/02/2024, Ryk Goddard

Compere says AMA Tasmania President Dr John Saul has written an opinion piece outlining doctors concerns about pharmacists being able to prescribe antibiotics in general for UTIs. She states that they are quite worried about misdiagnosis. Compere says Saul also pointed out that pharmacists being able to prescribe are experts in their field of medication, but not in the diagnosis and treatment of them.

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GV residents save \$1.3m via medicines policy

Shepparton News, General News, 16/02/2024, Grace Carter, Page 13

Changes to make medicines cheaper have saved Victorians \$57 million in 2023. The Albanese Government is aiming to make medicines more affordable and accessible for Australians and ease the cost-of-living crisis across regional and rural Australia through the Cheaper Medicines policy. In January 2023, the Federal Government lowered the maximum cost of prescription medications listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to \$30 from \$42.50, the largest cut to the co-payment in the PBS's 75-year history.

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Gaps and inequities

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 15/02/2024, Megan Haggan and Shaun O Connor

One specialist cancer pharmacist has spoken out about the "postcode lottery" of limitations to PBS funding depending on a patient's treatment location. The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's head of policy and advocacy Jerry Yik and Shaun O'Connor, co-chair of SHPA's oncology and haematology leadership committee, have given evidence at the hearing into Equitable access to diagnosis and

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Taxpayers shouldn't have to subsidise Medibank's four-day week

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/02/2024, Nick Hossack, Page 35

Rather than lead the pack in extending long weekends to its staff, the health insurer should cut operating expenses and premiums. One of the outcomes of the pandemic and associated lockdowns is a population that emerged not really wanting to wor...

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#).

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Avoid a bill blowout at the doctor's office

Daily Telegraph, General News, 16/02/2024, Navarone Farrell, Page 59

Billshock hurts. Like when you walk into the doctor expecting to pay \$200, but walk out with a bill for more than double. It's an unpleasant experience that can leave you feeling uneasy about the financial side of your healthcare. Australians spent a total of \$241.3bn on health goods and services in 2021-22 (the most recent data) according to the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare. That's \$9365 per person, per year and that figure is going up.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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\$200 MBS item for GP iron infusions a 'no-brainer': RACGP

Australian Doctor, Other, 15/02/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse

The college says its proposed iron infusion item should be eligible for bulk-billing incentives. Rebates for iron infusions in general practice would save taxpayers up to \$123 million each year by keeping patients out of hospital, the RACGP says. In a submission to the MBS Continuous Review, the college called on the Federal Government to fund a new Medicare item worth \$200 for GP clinics to administer IV iron therapy.

[Read More](#)

PSR on track for one of its busiest years on record

The Medical Republic, Other, 15/02/2024, Holly Payne

Despite a teddy bear-themed drama threatening to derail the hearing, Estimates revealed new facts

about the Professional Services Review's activity over the past year. The Professional Services Review has received 85 referrals from Medicare so far this financial year, with the acting director Dr Antonio Di Dio telling a Senates Estimates committee that 2024 was on track to be "one of our busiest ever years".

[Read More](#)

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Nurse's ban lifted after theft

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Paul Smith, Page 8

A nurse who was suspended for two years under emergency powers after stealing cannula equipment worth a few dollars has been given the green light to return to work. [...] The nurse said she and a nurse friend had paid \$680 so they could import the Glutanex drip, an S4 poison that usually needs TGA approval and a doctor's prescription before being brought into Australia.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Dr Lei Min Chen and his quest for redemption

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Carter, Page 31

"You feel like a dead man walking in the street. You have a career, you have a job and then, suddenly, you are worthless." Dr Lei Min Chen comes across as positive and hopeful, but there are still moments, as he talks to Australian Doctor, where the pain of what he has been through surfaces.

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Inquest into death of Sachintha Battagodage hears evidence from general practitioner

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Olivia Mason

A general practitioner has told an inquest that his young patient, who died after multiple attempts to seek help from an Adelaide emergency department, would likely have survived if he had been admitted to hospital. The SA Coroners Court heard Sri Lankan national Sachintha Battagodage, 23, sought help from the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) three times within five days in November 2020.

[Read More](#)

University program shut down amid class action investigating veterans' medical data distributed without consent

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024

A University of South Australia program has been shut down and a class action is being considered amid claims by advocates that sensitive information about veterans was disclosed without their consent. The Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (MATES) program has been cancelled amid revelations that the program was using identifiable data.

[Read More](#)

Companies marketing useless health products to women using feminist wellbeing messages

The Guardian, Other, 15/02/2024, Melissa Davey

Corporations are co-opting feminist messages around women's wellbeing to promote useless health tests and treatments, an analysis by Australian researchers has found. Published in the British Medical Journal on Thursday, the paper describes how these marketing messages echo those historically used to promote harmful products like tobacco and alcohol to women.

[Read More](#)

Arson, DV conviction sees registration cancelled

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 15/02/2024

A pharmacist's conviction for domestic violence offences, including torching his pregnant partner's home, has been found guilty of professional misconduct The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal has heard the case of Curtis Shae Mickam, who was handed a seven-year imprisonment sentence in 2023 over the offences.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 15/02/2024, David Bevan

Interview with Dave Petersen, RSL SA. Bevan and Petersen discuss around 300,000 veterans having their billing data fully identifiable through University of SA, which he believes is similar to having someone's My Health Record data being sent to a university for research purposes.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Govt mulls MyMedicare incentive

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Carter, Page 13

GP work associated with the first 2000 days of a child's life could receive extra funding under MyMedicare as the Federal Government considers more incentive payments for enrolled patients. The Department of Health and Aged Care says it held a meeting in November to consider the new payment as part of general practice reforms.

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Denial of women's pain: call for inquiry amid claims of healthcare bias

Canberra Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw

A pain expert has called for a NSW government inquiry into women's pain , amid concern that the healthcare system is biased towards men. Fiona Hodson, a pain specialist, said a Victorian government inquiry into women's pain could have national implications. Given this, Ms Hodson said a similar inquiry on the issue would be valuable in NSW.

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SPORT

Blow to Rebels' handout hopes

Herald Sun, General News, 16/02/2024, Stephen Drill, Page 9

The cash-strapped Melbourne Rebels' hope of getting help from the Victorian government have been dealt a blow with no bailout deal currently on the table. When Rugby Australia boss Phil Waugh jetted into Melbourne on Thursday there was no scheduled meeting with Sports Minister Steve Dimopoulos.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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Brisbane River swim plan

Courier Mail, General News, 16/02/2024, Toby Crockford, Page 1

People could be swimming in the Brown Snake by 2032 under an ambitious multimillion-dollar plan by Greens lord mayoral hopeful Jonathan Sriranganathan. The ex-Gabba Ward councillor wants to invest \$6m over four years to improve the Brisbane River's water quality and cleanliness so people can swim in it when the Olympics arrive.

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Coaches to Premier: Save our Games

NRL coaching great Wayne Bennett is among a group of heavyweight sports administrators who will push Premier Steven Miles to give the Queensland Academy of Sport its independence from the government bureaucracy they say is damaging our 2032 Olympic and Paralympic hopes. The group's push - which includes that the QAS board reports to a minister rather than a bureaucrat - comes in the wake of the shock resignation of its star chief executive and "Gold Medal Maker" Chelsea Warr.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#)

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Diamond out of rough

Daily Telegraph, Sport, 16/02/2024, Robert Craddock, Page 72

Banned Australian shooter Michael Diamond is set to make a shock appearance at the Paris Olympics in a role no one expected. Having been banned for shooting for his country, Diamond is poised to coach against his homeland after taking the Qatar job vacated by his longtime Olympic teammate Russell Mark.

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Feud on stadium funding

Hobart Mercury, General News, 16/02/2024, David Killick, Page 1

The man backing Stadium 2.0 says the state government can't deliver its plan for anything less than \$1.2bn \$450m more than current estimates. Dean Coleman rejects claims by Premier Jeremy Rockliff that taxpayers would be on the hook for \$2.3bn if his alternative bid for a waterfront stadium was adopted.

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Matildas effect a win for junior football

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 71

It possibly isn't surprising that our junior football (soccer) clubs are bursting at the seams this season. Coming on the back of the incredible FIFA Women's World Cup there would be something wrong if the Matildas hadn't inspired a new generation of footballers. The Matildas effect has seen registration numbers for the local junior league jump by 20 per cent, with the increase in registrations from girls aged 13 years plus having gone up by 36 per cent - and there are another six weeks to go until registration closes.

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Global Sea Otter mountain bike festival to be held at Batemans Bay and Mogo in NSW

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, James Tugwell

South-east New South Wales's reputation as a must-visit location for mountain bikers from around the world has been bolstered by the announcement it will host one of the sport's largest events. The Sea Otter Classic started as a multi-day mountain bike festival in Monterey, California in 1991 and the now-annual event attracted more than 80,000 visitors last year.

[Read More](#)

Increasing evidence student participation in sport is linked to greater academic success

SBS, Other, 15/02/2024

With the new school year underway, there is now increasing evidence that sticking with sport during school years is linked to greater academic success. With withdrawal rates from school sport higher among girls, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and from low-socio economic backgrounds, it's hoped more can be done to promote sports participation.

[Read More](#)

Adelaide Crows 'cannot afford' more delays on Thebarton Oval HQ project, chairman warns

The Adelaide Football Club settled on Thebarton Oval as the site for its new headquarters in 2022, after earlier plans to move to North Adelaide and Brompton were blocked. Olsen said the club had now submitted plans to the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) for its "world class" headquarters at Thebarton Oval, after roughly three years of talks with the City of West Torrens.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 15/02/2024, David Reilly

Reilly is joined by David Mark, ABC reporter. Mark says he has spoken to a number of people who are basically all view that taking drugs before athletic events can be bad, particularly for their health. He states that according to the CEO of Sports Medicine Australia, none of his members who think that taking certain type of drugs before a competition is a good idea.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Mornings, 15/02/2024, Nadia Mitsopoulos

An expert on ethics in sport is warning the notion of an athletics event without doping rules is a backward step. The enhanced games plans to allow athletes to use performance enhancing drugs under medical supervision. Catherine Ordway, Head of Sports Integrity, University of Canberra, says the use of PEDs is detrimental to an athlete's health.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

'Vacuum' drug has MND potential

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/02/2024, Angus Thomson, Page 5

Australian patients could soon be among the first to trial a singledose injection to halt and potentially reverse some symptoms of motor neurone disease and frontotemporal dementia after researchers in Sydney discovered a way to clear blockages linked to both diseases in mice. Abnormal clusters of a protein called TDP-43 are a common feature of many neurodegenerative diseases, including motor neurone disease (MND), frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and Alzheimer's.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#)

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Study looks at AI in prison to stop harm

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 18

University of Wollongong researchers have received funding to explore the feasibility of AI as a suicide prevention tool in NSW jails. The researchers will use a radar-based solution to monitor the vital signs of people while in their prison cells. The technology will be used to monitor "atrisk" individuals and help prevent self-harm among people at increased risk in prison, which could result in suicide.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#)

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Loss of ovarian function in younger women

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Page 28

Premature ovarian insufficiency is defined as loss of ovarian function before age 40, and early menopause as menopause occurring between the ages of 40 and 44. A recent meta-analysis indicates that premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) and early menopause (EM) are more common than originally thought, affecting 3.7% and 12.2% of women respectively.¹ Increasing cancer survivorship means there are more people living with POI/EM.

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Check Up: Aussie biotech Avarax on verge of peanut allergy cure

The Australian, Other, 15/02/2024, Eddy Sunarto

Avarax is entering Phase 2 clinical trials in its quest to cure peanut allergies. In doing so, it joins other Aussie innovators on the brink of breakthroughs. In fact Australia is widely seen as one of the world's biotech and medtech powerhouses. Not only are our discoveries saving lives all over the world, we're also fast becoming a hub for global companies and investors in this space.

[Read More](#)

Imugene advances search-and-destroy cancer mission

West Australian, Other, 15/02/2024, Michael Philipps

An Australian-based medical mission to flesh out and kill cancerous cells in humans has received a boost after ASX-listed medtech Imugene intravenously dosed its first patient diagnosed with bile tract cancer as part of a clinical trial. The patient, engaged in the intravenous monotherapy arm of the trial, was dosed at the City of Hope medical facility in California with Imugene's "onCARlytics CD19" virus technology, which it says has the potential to target and eradicate solid tumours.

[Read More](#)

Superbugs and how we date now

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Hilary Harper

By 2050, superbugs are predicted to become the second biggest cause of human death, after heart disease. Could a new treatment, developed by Australian researchers, provide a cure?

[Read More](#)

Drug offers 'wonderful' breakthrough in treatment of asbestos-linked cancer

The Guardian, Other, 16/02/2024, Andrew Gregory

Scientists have developed a drug to treat mesothelioma, a notoriously hard-to-treat cancer linked to asbestos, in the biggest breakthrough in two decades. Thousands of people are diagnosed with the disease globally every year, which tends to develop in the lungs and is mainly caused by exposure to asbestos at work. It is aggressive and deadly, and has one of the world's worst cancer survival rates.

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LEGO builds on research

Medical Forum, Other, 15/02/2024

Tracking the eye movement of preschoolers for as little as one minute could help with the early detection of autism spectrum disorder, according to Australian research. The study tracked the eye movements of children both with and without autism while watching side-by-side images of geometric patterns and children performing yoga exercises, and the researchers were able to predict an autism diagnosis, with an accuracy of 94%.

Also reported by: [Pharmacy Daily \(Online\)](#).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Real action needed

Herald Sun, Editorials, 16/02/2024, Page 54

Real challenges demand real solutions at the grassroots level, not a return focus on politics and circular debates over contentious policy that might appease activists and some academics. In just the last week a damning report again highlighted that almost no progress had been made on Closing the Gap goals for Indigenous wellbeing; four areas marked for improvement had actually gone backwards and just four of 19 were progressing.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Heart of the matter: Missed opportunity costs Aboriginal lives

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 16/02/2024, Boe Rambaldini, Page 72

My people have the worst health outcomes on this continent. There was a time when we were the healthiest people. Sadly, today, we are at the mercy of the health system. Indigenous health is rightly on the national radar as governments and health experts work to close the gap, with too many people still falling through the cracks. Closing the gap is a good strategy to improve the health of my people, and there is some movement.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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Hammer scores big with health message

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/02/2024, Natasha Emeck, Page 5

NRL sensation Hamiso Tabuai Fidow traded tackles for a powerful pitch promoting Indigenous health as he rubbed shoulders with locals at a community day in Garbutt. The beloved fullback, celebrated for his on-field prowess, seized the spotlight alongside a cohort of Indigenous All-Stars players at TAIHS' Deadly Choices Community Day on Tuesday, ahead of their eagerly awaited showdown with the Maori Kiwis.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

'We've been abused'

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 16/02/2024, Blair Jackson, Page 19

Indigenous people are in an abusive relationship with governments, a Palm Island man says in the wake of a critical Closing The Gap report. The Productivity Commission review, released last week, makes four recommendations to government: share power; recognise and support Indigenous data sovereignty; fundamentally rethink mainstream government systems and culture; and implement stronger accountability.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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Partner sues prisons over Indigenous inmate's death

Canberra Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Duncan Murray

A woman is suing the NSW prison system and inmate healthcare service over the death in custody of her partner after a coroner found the emergency response to his asthma attack was confused and unreasonably delayed. Karen Pochodyla is pursuing damages over the death of Indigenous man Nathan Reynolds on September 1, 2018 at the minimum-security Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre, in northwest Sydney.

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Will Choy, Julianna Wan, Ben Jones and Vafa Lalehzari among 227 new NT Health junior doctors

Northern Territory News, Other, 15/02/2024, Alex Treacy

More than 220 junior doctors are finding their feet in the Northern Territory after taking on year-long contracts as part of their studies. Health Minister Selena Uibo on Thursday said 227 interns – 160 of whom would be based at the Royal Darwin Hospital – would be rotating through NT Health as part of their contracts, which began last month.

Also reported by: [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#).

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Victoria's largest public health service faces criminal charge over Indigenous woman's hospital death

The Guardian, Other, 15/02/2024, Adeshola Ore

Victoria's largest public health service is facing a criminal charge over the death of an Indigenous woman who took her own life while receiving mental health treatment at Dandenong hospital in 2022.

WorkSafe Victoria on Thursday announced it had charged Monash Health for allegedly exposing a patient to health and safety risks while in its care.

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Failing to Close the Gap is now parliamentary tradition, no matter who's in power

The Mandarin, Other, 15/02/2024, Bernard Keane

Another year, another Closing the Gap report, another lament of bipartisan failure over so long a period, another expression of hope that things will change soon. It's now a ritual of the opening weeks of parliament. It doesn't matter who's in government.

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Dr Josh Tobin: Teaching medical students about culture to improve Indigenous health outcomes

SBS, Other, 15/02/2024

Proud Darug man Dr Joshua Tobin chats with Dr Mikayla Couch about the journey from medical student to teacher, working in ICU, and the fundamental importance of teaching health practitioners about Indigenous culture early in their studies. He sees it as vital to improving health outcomes for First Nations patients.

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'Stronger You, Stronger Mob' campaign aims to help Indigenous youth in WA

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Rhiannon Clarke

The WA government has launched a new campaign - 'Stronger You, Stronger Mob' - which aims to prevent the use of alcohol and other drugs among Indigenous youth. The initiative was set up by the Mental Health Commission's Strong Spirit Strong Mind Youth Project (SSSMYP) to support the social and emotional wellbeing of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 to 25 years in Western Australia.

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Alcohol restrictions alone will not work, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services board warns

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Giovanni Torre

Alcohol restrictions in Western Australia's far north will do little to tackle the health issue of substances abuse, the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services warned on Thursday. The KAMS Board, representing Aboriginal community-controlled health services across the Kimberley region of WA, said it stands against the push for more liquor restrictions "without simultaneous investment in comprehensive alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services, planning and infrastructure".

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Rockingham General Hospital welcomes two Aboriginal Health Practitioners

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/02/2024, Rhiannon Clarke

The South Metropolitan Health Service's Rockingham General Hospital has recently welcomed the first Aboriginal Health Practitioners to join WA Health. The Aboriginal Health Practitioners (AHPs) will play a crucial role in supporting both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals who seek medical attention at the hospital's emergency department for acute and urgent illnesses and injuries.

Also reported by: [Medical Forum \(Online\)](#)

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Triple woe

Herald Sun, General News, 16/02/2024, Shannon Deery, Page 1

Victorians needing urgent police help waited almost six minutes for triple-0 calls to be answered during Tuesday's bushfire, storm and blackout crisis. Leaked internal records have exposed the shocking extent of potentially life-threatening delays, with almost 200 people waiting for help just before 4pm on Tuesday. At one point, desperate Victorians making calls for police help were forced to wait up to six minutes, those seeking fire service assistance faced a wait of more than a minute, and people trying to get through to a State Emergency Service call-taker were holding on for an incredible 23 minutes.

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Lincoln looms

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/02/2024, Jordan McCarthy, Page 1

A cyclone watch and act warning has been issued for parts of the Northern Territory and Queensland as tropical low 07U continues to strengthen in the Gulf of Carpenatria. The system, which would be named Tropical Cyclone Lincoln if it forms, had a moderate chance of developing in to a cyclone, the Bureau of Meteorology warned on Thursday afternoon.

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Top doc warns of syphilis outbreak

Daily Mercury, General News, 16/02/2024, Zoe Devenport, Page 7

Stay safe and wear a condom Mackay's top doctor has warned, ringing the alarm bell on a growing syphilis outbreak. Mackay Health and Hospital Service CMO Dr Charles Pain said the number of syphilis cases in 2023 was four times the usual number, with 80 patients identified with the infection.

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Doc's warning as whooping cough spikes

Sunshine Coast Daily, General News, 16/02/2024, Chloe Grimshaw, Page 13

Parents are being urged to get their children vaccinated for whooping cough as reported cases of the potentially deadly infection spike across the Sunshine Coast. A Sunshine Coast Health's Public Health Unit spokeswoman said they had noticed a concerning rise in pertussis, widely known as whooping cough, cases with the region, recording more than half of the yearly average of cases in under two months.

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Cell-based flu vax listed on NIP

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse, Page 4

A cell-based quadrivalent flu vaccine will be available on the National Immunisation Program for the first time this year for patients at higher risk of complications from influenza. From 1 March, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5-64; pregnant women; and patients aged 5-64 with co-existing conditions, including diabetes, chronic renal failure, heart disease and chronic respiratory or neurological conditions, can get CSL Seqirus' Flucelvax Quad for free.

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Health authorities urge overseas travellers to check vaccination status after measles outbreaks

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Sarah Cumming and Gemma Sapwell

Health authorities are urging middle-aged Australians to check if they are fully immunised against measles as cases emerge across the country. Three confirmed cases of the highly infectious disease have been confirmed on the Gold Coast and in northern New South Wales this week.

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Silicosis diagnosis in two workers at Newmont's Cadia gold mine

referred to safety regulator

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Micaela Hambrett

Mining giant Newmont has advised the New South Wales Resources Regulator that two workers at its Cadia gold mine near Orange in central west NSW have early-stage silicosis. Newmont Mining has told the ABC that both cases at Cadia were detected several years ago during health surveillance and have now progressed.

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Fears for dozens of Pomonal homes as residents wait to inspect bushfire damage

ABC Online, Other, 15/02/2024, Nate Woodall

Some residents in fire-affected communities in Victoria's west are still unable to return to their homes amid fears dozens of properties may have been destroyed or damaged. Many residents evacuated Bellfield and Pomonal, in the Grampians, before bushfires swept through on Tuesday.

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NSW Health alert on parasite illness

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 15/02/2024

After a recent steep increase in cryptosporidiosis cases across the state, NSW Health has strongly advised the general public not to swim for at least two weeks after they've had diarrhoea. Health Protection NSW's Executive Director Dr Jeremy McAnulty said there has been 498 cases of cryptosporidiosis reported in NSW so far this year, compared to the five-year average of 95 cases for the same time period.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Man dies after frog poison ritual

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/02/2024, Megan Gorrey, Page 17

A Lismore man who died after using Amazonian frog poison in a purging ritual was groaning and in extreme pain hours before he collapsed at a wellness retreat in northern NSW, an inquest has heard. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration banned the use of kambo in Australia on October 1, 2021 about two weeks before Antonovich's death - on the grounds it posed a danger to human health.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

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Police seize illegal tobacco products amid state crackdown on new laws

Gunnedah Times, General News, 15/02/2024, Page 4

NSW Police have seized tobacco products and money during a search warrant of a Gunnedah business as part of ongoing investigations in alleged sales of illegal tobacco sales. Police from the Oxley Police District attended a business in Gunnedah recently where a search warrant was executed. [...] Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler said the Australian government is reforming the regulation of vapes, including removing loopholes in existing laws, and increasing enforcement in cooperation with states and territories.

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Warning on osteo drug

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse, Page 1

The US medicines regulator has slapped a boxed warning on the osteoporosis medication denosumab regarding the increased risk of severe hypocalcaemia in patients with advanced chronic kidney disease. The safety alert follows a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigation into the risk of serious outcomes, including death and hospitalisation, in those with impaired renal function prescribed

denosumab (Prolia). The TGA updated the product information for the drug last August to include warnings following post-marketing reports of severe hypocalcaemia.

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RSV vax approved for over-60s

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/02/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse, Page 6

The TGA has approved the first respiratory syncytial virus vaccine, Arexvy, with sponsor GSK Australia hinting it would "soon" be available on a private script for over-60s. The company, which first sought approval for the protein-based vaccine in early 2023, said the decision was based on results from its phase III trial involving 25,000 older adults. [...] The TGA's decision last month was welcomed by infectious diseases experts, including Professor Robert Booy in Sydney, who said it represented "a turning point".

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Social media erupts over easy-to-miss detail on Coles medicine: 'Check now'

7news.com.au, Other, 15/02/2024, Amy Sinclair

A Coles shopper has urged customers to pay careful attention when buying medicine from the local supermarket. Sharing on Reddit, the shopper shared an images of a packet of Coles Cold & Flu Day & Night tablets, one of the retail giant's best-selling products. [...] "The markers on the box are TGA labels ; AUST R means 'tested for efficacy', while AUST L basically just means 'probably won't kill you'.

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Medicinal marijuana for pain and mind

Medical Forum, Other, 15/02/2024

A survey of Australians using medicinal cannabis has found that it is mostly being used for pain and mental health treatment. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration reported that there had been only around 30,000 Special Access Scheme-B (SAS-B) approvals to prescribe MC by the end of 2019.

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FOOD STANDARDS

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AICIS

Hundreds of sites may be contaminated

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/02/2024, Max Maddison and Jessica McSweeney, Page 1

Asbestos-ridden mulch may have been discovered on private properties in NSW, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has revealed, as contaminated sites begin being identified outside Greater Sydney. With the EPA embarking on one of the biggest investigations in its history, Environment Minister Penny Sharpe announced an Asbestos Taskforce to co-ordinate government agencies and boost staffing levels more than 11-fold to deal with the crisis, warning the number of contaminated sites "may be in the hundreds".

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [Mamamia \(Online\)](#).

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