



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 21st February 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [The Australian](#) (page 1) reports a Northern Territory government survey about proposed voluntary assisted dying laws has led some health experts to warn the state needs to offer better palliative and mental health care options. *Also reported by:* [The Australian](#)
- The [Canberra Times](#) (page 1) reports the obstetrics and gynaecology department at Canberra's Centenary Hospital for Women and Children has again failed to meet its accreditation standard, while a review found serious staffing and workplace cultural issues.
- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 1) reports Australian patients will be the first in the world to trial a new drug US biotech firm Spinogenix says it believes could slow or even reverse motor-neuron disease.
- The [Northern Territory News](#) (page 1) reports the Territory's triple zero call-taking efficacy has fallen more than ten per cent in the past five years, data from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2022-23 has shown, transforming it from the best to the worst performing jurisdiction in Australia.
- [The Age](#) (page 3) reports instances of ambulance callouts for chest pain rise during hot weather, a new study co-authored by Victoria's top health institutions has found, leading to

warnings about the potential impact of climate change on health outcomes for young people.

- The **Courier Mail** (page 3) reports an inquest has begun into Queensland's voluntary assisted dying scheme following an incident where a grieving husband took his wife's VAD medication after she passed. *Also reported by:* [ABC Online](#), [Canberra Times](#)
- The **Sydney Morning Herald** (page 4) reports Sydney's railway underground has no air pollution monitoring or regulation standards in place, NSW's EPA has confirmed, while the state government says it is working to confirm independent reports of particle pollution double the WHO's prescribed safe daily limits.
- **The Australian** (page 6) reports Health Minister Mark Butler has backed proposed updates to national dietary guidelines factoring in environmental sustainability, and has encouraged stakeholders to present submissions to the National Health and Medical Research Council.

MINISTER BUTLER

Trust the experts, Butler tells red-meat rebels

The Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Charlie Peel, Page 6

Health Minister Mark Butler has backed a government agency's proposal to amend the official dietary guidelines to account for environmental sustainability, despite farmers and industry groups saying it undermined public confidence in health advice. Red meat producers say the change to the guidelines will provide an opportunity for "environmental ideologies or agendas" to infiltrate official channels at the expense of nutritional science.

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Doctors in demand

Border Watch, General News, 21/02/2024, Charlotte Varcoe, Page 1

More than 1750 visits have been made to the Mount Gambier Urgent Care Clinic with one in six of these visits being over the weekend. New statistics released by the federal Minister for Health Mark Butler show the largest proportion of presentations at the clinic had been those aged under 30 years, representing one in three presentations.

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Doctor shortage hitting home

Border Chronicle, General News, 21/02/2024, Caroline Hammat, Page 7

A Millicent doctor has recently taken to social media to express his frustration with the state and national doctor shortage. Doctor James Bushell is one of five partners of the Medical Clinic Millicent (MCM) and said the difficulty in making a doctor's appointment has worsened with the recent departure of their two registrars. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler responded to concerns raised about improving the number of doctors in regional communities.

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Hunter bulk-billing blues

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 1

The Hunter's bulk-billing rate has fallen by 15 per cent in two years, federal data shows. The latest Medicare data, released this week for the December quarter 2023/24, shows a bulk-billing rate for all ages across the Hunter network of 71 per cent. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said "bulk-billing is the beating heart of Medicare and a Labor government will always protect it".

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CAPS calls for a gap fee for 60DD pain

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 20/02/2024, Page 2

With the 8CPA deadline drawing closer, a lead protest group stated that the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has made "minimal effort" to secure the funding agreement for pharmacists before the 01 Mar date, and there seems to be "no plan in action". The Community and Pharmacy Support Group

(CAPS) also wanted pharmacists to be allowed to charge a gap fee, in line with other healthcare professionals, to "provide muchneeded relief from the pain of 60-Day Dispensing (60DD)".

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

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Federal government's response to long COVID inquiry a 'missed opportunity', experts and patients warn

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Steven Schubert

It's been four years since Tim Stannard could smell or taste anything normally, thanks to what he originally thought was "a little flu". "It's debilitating. [...] A parliamentary committee makes a series of recommendations to tackle long COVID, as Health Minister Mark Butler pledges \$50 million to research the poorly understood condition.

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MRFF awards \$50 million to Australian team developing artificial heart

@AuManufacturing, Other, 20/02/2024

Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to assist development and commercialisation of an Australian inventor's total artificial heart, which uses a rotor rather than pulsation to move blood through a patient's body. According to a statement on Tuesday from federal health minister Mark Butler, the grant to the the Artificial Heart Frontiers Program was the third-largest in almost a decade of the MRFF's existence.

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Australian gov't invests \$50 million to advance artificial heart development

Australian Manufacturing, Other, 20/02/2024

The Australian Government has allocated \$50 million towards the development and commercialisation of what it claims to be the world's most advanced artificial heart. [...] Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler highlighted the multifaceted significance of the initiative, stating, "As well as the obvious health benefits, this is an incredible story of Australian ingenuity and sovereign manufacturing , with collaboration across universities, clinical hospitals, and industry to develop the world's most advanced artificial heart."

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Monash to lead Australian revolution in next generation heart devices

Biotech Dispatch, Other, 20/02/2024

Monash University is to lead a transdisciplinary consortium to develop and commercialise a suite of revolutionary and life-changing implantable cardiac devices that, for the first time, will offer longer-term solutions for all types of debilitating heart failure. Health Minister Mark Butler has announced that the Monash-led Artificial Heart Frontiers Program, based at the Monash Alfred Baker Centre for Cardiovascular Research at The Alfred, has been awarded a \$50 million grant from the Medical Research Future Fund.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/02/2024, Kate Freebairn

An artificial heart made of titanium and magnets and designed in Australia will soon be trialled in humans. It was originally born from a trip to Bunnings but has since received \$50m from the Federal Government. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says about 60,000 Australians every year are diagnosed with heart failure and it kills millions of people around the world.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 20/02/2024, Mark Ferguson

A revolutionary heart replacement decades in the making is about to be trialled in humans for the first time. The implant, developed in Australia, is being fast-tracked, with a \$50m grant from the Federal

Government. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it is a genuine game changer and a revolutionary technology.

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Channel 7, Seven Morning News, 20/02/2024, Ann Sanders

Researchers from Melbourne's Monash University are working on the world's first long-term artificial heart. The federal government has today announced \$50m in funding to see the project completed. If successful, it could halve the number of deaths from heart failure. Health Minister Mark Butler says it deals with one of the most pressing public health challenges not just in Australia but worldwide.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 20/02/2024, Andrew Lofthouse and Melissa Downes

Australian researchers have built an advanced artificial heart that will soon be implanted into patients needing transplants. The half-a-kilogramme device works on the same technology as high-speed trains. Health Minister Mark Butler says today's announcement is about a genuine game changer.

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2SM, 14:00 News, 20/02/2024

Around \$50m in funding will go towards the development of a groundbreaking artificial heart. It's the third-largest grant to be handed out from the Medical Research Future Fund in its ten-year history. It's hoped to contribute \$1.8b to Australia over the next 15 years, due to healthcare savings and the expansion of manufacturing and research. Health Minister Mark Butler labelled the program an incredible story of Australian ingenuity and sovereign manufacturing, with five universities, hospitals and industry coming together to develop the advanced technology.

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MINISTER WELLS

Renewed AIS push set to be left out in the cold

Canberra Times, Sport, 21/02/2024, Caden Helmers, Page 40

The federal government has shot down a renewed push for an AIS relocation, adamant keeping the institute in Canberra provides the best path towards Olympic Games gold in 2032. Sports Minister Anika Wells' office refused to buy into the debate about moving the AIS to Queensland, doubling down on the declaration "any relocation would compromise athlete preparations for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics".

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Miles government slammed over Queensland Academy of Sport overhaul

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/02/2024, Robert Craddock and James Hall

One of Australian sports most experienced sports administrators has slammed the Miles government for putting at risk gold medals at Brisbane 2032 by changing the way the Queensland Academy of Sport is run. [...] But federal Sport Minister Anika Wells – a Queenslander – pointed to a recent independent review which had assessed that Canberra was still the "optimal location" because of the level of investment required to move it, its international best practice facilities, and the on-site accommodation for athletes and staff.

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DEPARTMENT

The Mumbrella CommsCon Awards 2024 shortlist has been announced

Mumbrella, Other, 20/02/2024, Matthew Leong

The 2024 Mumbrella CommsCon Awards shortlist has been announced, with an impressive lineup of agencies, campaigns and talent nominated. [...] Dentsu Creative Public Relations for Department of Health and Aged Care.

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Even DoH boss needs to disconnect

Pharma In Focus, Other, 20/02/2024

In the words of Shadow Health Minister Anne Ruston, it would take a brave Department Secretary to make use of the Federal Government's new 'right to disconnect' laws but Health Chief Blair Comley may well have found a way to carve out some time on the golf course. In light-hearted banter at a Senate Estimates hearing last week, Comley said that he believed he could in fact disconnect, despite the pressure-cooker demands of being the Department of Health Secretary.

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CORONAVIRUS

Teenagers the greatest losers of COVID-era school closures

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/02/2024, Lucy Carroll and Jordan Baker, Page 8

Teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds are struggling to make up lost ground years after pandemic-era school closures, while experts warn the full impact of 1.2 million children missing out on months of in-person learning still remains unclear. The Sydney Morning Herald convened a panel of top educators to assess the impact of COVID-19 on students after the federal government failed to include the decision to close schools in its independent inquiry into how the nation managed the pandemic.

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COVID lessons for schools tackles myths and provides advice on keeping pupils and teachers safe

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2024, John Flint

Several of Australia's leading COVID experts have created an educational resource for schools on how to protect students and staff from the disease. The COVID Safety For Schools Course was launched

Monday to provide schools with accurate information and debunk some of the common myths and misunderstandings.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Theodore volunteers ensure care from early childhood to twilight years

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Megan Hughes

Nestled between Dawson River and Castle Creek in central Queensland, the town of Theodore offers more than just stunning river views. For generations, the residents have banded together creating a unique care model to bring vital services to the area. The early childhood centre and retirement village are both run by a committee of volunteers, with staff hired to manage the day-to-day operations, while governance is done by locals for locals.

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Alzheimer's - detecting, treating, and breakthroughs?

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024

Dementia, the second leading cause of death in Australia, and it impacts thousands of individuals every year. This widespread illness affects many directly or indirectly, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common form. Fortunately, ongoing research in Australia is uncovering ways to detect and treat dementia.

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New kit to help services tackle ageism

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/02/2024, Natasha Egan

A new resource to help aged care providers combat ageism will be launched at an online event on Wednesday. A new toolkit being launched this week has been produced for service providers and community leaders to facilitate a campaign to combat ageism.

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Informal carers wanted for palliative care study

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/02/2024

A University of South Australia research team is calling for people who have cared for a loved one at end of life to take part in a study exploring palliative care in rural settings. The information gathered from informal carers will be shared with service providers and policy makers to help improve knowledge and access to palliative care in rural and remote communities.

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Christopher Pyne new COTA chair

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/02/2024

Former Liberal federal minister Christopher Pyne has been appointed independent chair of seniors advocacy peak Council on the Ageing Australia. Having previously held the minister for ageing portfolio in John Howard's government in 2007, Mr Pyne brings "a wealth of experience to COTA Australia," said the organisation's chief executive Patricia Sparrow.

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Aged care sector facing shortage of 6000 nurses

CathNews, Other, 20/02/2024, Rebecca Comini

According to new figures from the Department of Health and Aged Care, residential aged care is facing a gap of 5918 nurses by 2024-25, an improvement of only 44 from government forecasts during the December quarter. A further seven aged-care facilities closed in the three months to December, with

Labor's stringent nursing reforms placing intense strain on the sector. The closures come despite escalating demand on residential services as the population ages.

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Lipid-lowering therapy for older people: the changing paradigm

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Ian Hamilton-Craig

The benefits of lipid-lowering therapy (LLT) for secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease and primary prevention in middle-aged people at increased risk are well established. Until recently, however, LLT trials have included few people in older age groups, and there may have been a reluctance to prescribe LLT for primary prevention in these groups. Evidence is now accumulating for the benefits of LLT in older people, suggesting chronological age alone should no longer be a barrier to LLT.

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Retirement Living Council wants retirement villages to be part of Housing Australia Future Fund

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2024, Ian Horswill

Executive Director Daniel Gannon told The Source he is winning traction in securing the retirement living sector's involvement in the Australian Government's bid to create social and affordable housing. He is telling the Government that the retirement village sector will cut the expected 200,000 housing shortfall by a third if it is added to the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, the dedicated investment vehicle providing additional funding to support and increase social and affordable housing.

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150 Village Managers to attend DCM Institute Sydney Professional Development Day

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2024, Ian Horswill

The DCM Institute's current series of Professional Development Days continues in Sydney on Thursday with a full house expected at the Pullman Sydney Hyde Park. Part of the DCM Institute's wider Village Manager Professional Development Program staged every capital city, these days provide opportunities for program participants to hear from industry-leading subject matter experts.

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HammondCare's 57 apartment/30 bed project approved as State Significant Development

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2024, Ian Horswill

The NSW Government Independent Planning Commission has approved the charity's \$82 million proposal to demolish its Neringah Hospital site at Wahroonga in Sydney's Upper North Shore to make way for 57 seniors living units, 12 residential aged care facility beds, and 18 palliative care beds.

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Sky News Live, First Edition, 20/02/2024, Peter Stefanovic

The residential care sector will need almost 6,000 more nurses this year. New figures from the Department of Health and Aged Care show the worker shortfall has barely reduced over the past three months. At least 54 aged care homes have shut since September 2022, as the sector adapts to new staffing standards implemented by the Albanese Government.

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POPULATION HEALTH

No air quality rules for Sydney stations

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/02/2024, Nigel Gladstone, Page 4

There are no air pollution limits, regulations or monitoring regimes in place at Sydney's underground train stations despite poor air quality being recorded across the city's network of tunnels, some of which are almost 100 years old. There are strict pollution limits and monitoring regimes for many areas used by the public, such as road tunnels, but not train stations, a NSW Environment Protection Authority spokeswoman confirmed after questions from the Herald.

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Chest-pain danger zone as heat rises

Age, General News, 21/02/2024, Bianca Hall, Page 3

It's something paramedics have long observed: when the weather in Melbourne warms up and nights bring little respite, things get busier. Chest pain callouts increase, alongside other general health conditions. "When [the body is] under stress on hot days, it just seems to flare up so many of these types of issues," said paramedic Jack Boessler, Ambulance Victoria's Brighton team manager.

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

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Little goes a longer way for women

West Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 14

Women only need to do half as much exercise as men to reap the same heart health benefits, a US study has found. Those who cycle, swim or run regularly are much less likely to die from a heart attack or stroke compared with men - even when they put in less effort. Overall, women and men with active lifestyles were 24 and 15 per cent respectively less likely to die early compared with those leading sedentary lives.

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Women on the move cut risks

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 4

Women who exercise regularly have a lower risk of early death, fatal heart attack or stroke than men who exercise regularly. Tsinghua University researchers in China found women were 24 per cent less likely than those who did not exercise to experience death from any cause, while men were 15 per cent less likely.

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Wake-up call on sleep

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 13

Nearly a third of Australians are not getting the right amount of sleep and researchers say that has a negative effect on their health. Just over 30 per cent of adults surveyed by Flinders University said they slept more or less than the recommended seven to nine hours a night.

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Fog clears on smoker stereotype

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 8

QUIT-smoking material needs to better reflect Australia's 2.5 million daily smokers, who aren't the jobless and dumb as some would have them portrayed, researchers say. A first-of-its-kind national study released on Monday paints a clearer picture of how smoking affects the whole community.

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Helping care for themselves

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 01/02/2024, Cat Woods, Page 60

Australian teenagers are healthy, for the most part, but a number of concerns relate to lifestyle choices that could be modified to prevent diseases and improve their quality of life now and into their adulthood. According to the federal Department of Health and Aged Care, excess alcohol use in people aged 15 to 24 is a significant problem, while nearly seven per cent of this group are daily smokers, a scant minimum eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables, and more than a quarter of 15-17 year olds are overweight or obese, many having experienced high or severe psychological distress.

Meat us halfway: Culture warriors ham it up over diet advice

Crikey, Other, 20/02/2024, Charlie Lewis

Sound the culture war klaxon, those Canberra clowns are coming for our steak according to the national broadsheet! The federal government's official advice on diets will now incorporate the impact of certain foods on climate change, sparking outrage from farmers who fear it is driven by an "ideological agenda" against red meat.

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Weekend warriors lose just as much weight as regular exercisers, study suggests

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/02/2024, Caitlin Tilley

Working out just one to two days per week can be as effective at losing weight as working out every day. 'Weekend warriors,' people who cram exercise into one or two sessions per week as opposed to working out a little every day, had similar decreases in abdominal fat, waist circumference and body mass index to those who hit the gym on a regular basis.

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Cold fact or hot air? Joint pain from changing weather is a myth, Australian researchers say

The Guardian, Other, 21/02/2024, Melissa Davey

The common belief that changes in temperature and humidity can trigger musculoskeletal aches or common forms of arthritis has been challenged by the first comprehensive review to examine the effect of weather on joint pain. Researchers led by Prof Manuela Ferreira, a pain expert from the University of Sydney, analysed 11 international studies on weather and musculoskeletal pain that involved more than 15,000 participants.

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What does vaping do to your skin?

Harper's Bazaar Australia, Other, 20/02/2024, Ruby Stephens

It's estimated that over 1.72 million Australians vape, an increase of 340 per cent over the past five years, according to recent Roy Morgan data . This year-on-year rise comes in the face of a federal government crackdown on vaping, including a ban on the import of disposable vapes from the start of this year. While we're well-versed in the health — and beauty — risks associated with cigarette smoking, we're yet to fully understand where vaping might leave us, and our complexions, later down the track.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 20/02/2024, Michael Rowland and Lisa Millar

Report on vapes, a cleverly marketed product that's getting kids addicted to nicotine. Vapes have been growing in popularity in schools across the country, with governments scrambling to stop it. Now, there's not a lot of research out there about the harms of inhaling the fruity substances and other ingredients inside the vapes, but two researchers in NSW are hoping to change it.

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4BC, Breakfast , 20/02/2024, Laurel Edwards, Gary Clare and Mark Hine

The increasing popularity of vaping could be costing the nation's healthcare system more than \$180m a year. A QIMR Berghofer study estimates that 13% of people who vape and have never smoked before eventually transition to tobacco cigarettes. Researcher Professor Louisa Gordon says vaping hasn't been around long enough to know the full cost.

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

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ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 20/02/2024, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan

Interview with Professor Louisa Gordon, QIMR Berghofer, on QIMR Berghofer researchers warning the increase in the number of people taking up e-cigarettes is effectively going to choke the health system. Gordon says they don't know what the full cost is going to be of e-cigarettes in the community because they haven't been around long enough. She adds what they tried to do with their research is look at the costs of people who have never smoked before, who have taken up e-cigarettes, and then switching to cigarette smoking.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Jacqui's journey

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2024, Duncan Abey, Page 1

Hobart's Jacqui Doyle knows better than most how dangerous the sun can be to human health. After losing her father to melanoma, Ms Doyle is facing her own fight, battling Stage 4 of the disease, and has undergone immunotherapy treatment. Ms Doyle urged Tasmanians to join the Melanoma Institute Australia's "Melanoma March Hobart" on Sunday, March 3 at Bellerive Beach Park to help raise awareness of sun-safe behaviours.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#).

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Putting women's chronic pain under microscope

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Marilla Druitt, Page 17

It is now recognised that some women face real and enduring challenges when seeking care and support to manage their pain. Chronic pain affects a higher proportion of girls and women, yet we know they are less likely to receive treatment. In response to these issues, the Victorian government is holding an inquiry into women's pain to better understand the experience of girls and women in the healthcare system.

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Taking the step to saving lives

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/02/2024, Phoebe Doyle, Page 2

Both Shane Dickeson and Member for Mallee Anne Webster know the lifechanging effects of organ donation, and both are encouraging people to start a conversation with family and friends. Mr Dickeson was born with cystic fibrosis an inherited, life-threatening disorder that damages your lungs and digestive systems and it was understood from a very young age that he would need a lung transplant at some stage of his life.

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Painful diagnosis behind global search

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 21/02/2024, Christine Schindler, Page 3

A 28-year-old Toowoomba nurse has opened up about her \$120,000 medical journey of diagnosing her chronic pelvic pain as bilateral pudendal entrapment after an uneventful, planned Csection. When she started feeling lower back pain after giving birth to her second son in November 2022, Katie Harch first wrote it off as regular post-epidural pain.

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YWCA Encore urges breast cancer survivors to join free fitness program to boost health and connections

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2024, Jessica Moroney

Facilitators are calling for women who have lived through breast cancer to register for a mobility

restoration fitness program while sharing stories in a supported environment. YWCA Encore is encouraging women to register for term two of the eight-week Encore program, kicking off on April 18 at Holland Street School.

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Sunshine Coast girl Blair Snelgar donates brain to science after dying of Angelman Syndrome

Sunshine Coast Daily, Other, 20/02/2024, Madeline Grace

A beautiful, bubbly, and affectionate three-year-old girl who died of a rare genetic disorder has had her brain donated to science to help researchers save the lives of others. A beautiful, bubbly, and affectionate girl from the Sunshine Coast who died of a rare genetic disorder has had her brain donated to science to help researchers save the lives of others.

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Queensland-first clinic at Logan helping Muslims with diabetes to safely fast for Ramadan

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Emma Pollard and Janelle Miles

Anwar Deen has avoided fasting during Ramadan since arriving in Australia from Pakistan almost two decades ago, based on medical advice. But this year the 66-year-old, who has type 2 diabetes, hopes to join other Muslims in abstaining from eating, drinking, and taking medication from dawn to sunset during the month-long religious and cultural ritual.

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

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Dr Michael Mosley on psychiatry, medical inertia and his type 2 diabetes crusade

Australian Doctor, Other, 20/02/2024, Rachel Carter

After he was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, Dr Mosley refused metformin and started hunting an alternative. "I was interested in what makes people tick. How the human body works, but also how people think and behave," says Dr Michael Mosley, BBC presenter. [...] He says he found himself in a "head-to-head" with Diabetes Australia.

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New clinical guideline for managing chronic temporomandibular disorder-related pain

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Michael Doris

A new clinical practice guideline, published in the BMJ, aims to provide clear and evidence-based recommendations on the management of chronic pain associated with temporomandibular disorders (TMDs). As one of the most common causes of chronic pain, TMDs encompass pathology of the temporomandibular joint, muscles of mastication and adjacent structures.

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Increased retinopathy risk in patients with young-onset diabetes, especially men

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Melanie Hinze

Patients diagnosed with type 2 diabetes before age 40 years have more than double the likelihood of retinopathy, compared with those with later onset diabetes, new research in BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care suggests. The study authors collected cross-sectional data from Norwegian general practice electronic medical records for 10,241 adults aged 18 years and over with type 2 diabetes in 2014 and repeated measurements of glycated haemoglobin from 2012 to 2014.

[Read More](#)

Primary VTE prevention for patients with cancer

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024

In a randomised trial, primary prophylaxis in high-risk patients with lung or gastro-intestinal cancers

lowered incidence of thromboembolism. Based on results from randomised trials, current guidelines recommend primary prophylaxis against venous thromboembolism (VTE) for high-risk outpatients with cancer (J Clin Oncol 2023; 41: 3063-3071).

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Study provides valuable real-world data on sex differences in severe asthma

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Rebecca Jenkins

Women with severe asthma (SA) have worse symptoms, increased exacerbation rates and are more likely to be obese than their male counterparts, a large UK study finds. Researchers said severe asthma was known to be more common in women, but it was vital to further understand the different characteristics associated with severe asthma in women to establish personalised care and help to focus future research on understanding the underlying mechanisms driving sex differences in the condition.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 20/02/2024, John Xintavelonis

Interview with Jess Tyler, Tas Lead, Asthma Australia. Tyler says her mission is to support people with asthma in Tasmania by working on communities, systems, the health system, and the things that wrap around people with asthma in the community. She adds around 1000 to 1500 end up in hospital at some point in their asthma journey every year and they need to come up with new innovative ways to drive that number down.

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PRIMARY CARE

Concerning Territory: NT surveys public support on euthanasia for mentally ill

The Australian, Edition Changes - All-round Metro, 21/02/2024, Rhiannon Down, Page 1

Northern Territory Labor is surveying whether there is public support for allowing people to access euthanasia because they are suffering from a mental illness, prompting concerns the government was considering offering vulnerable patients "death instead of the support they need". With the NT planning on being the final jurisdiction in Australia to legalise voluntary assisted dying, residents have been encouraged to answer a government survey on how they think the scheme should be designed.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Australia\)](#)

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Patients 'put at high risk'

Canberra Times, General News, 21/02/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 1

Patients face significant safety risks at Canberra's women's and children's hospital and the obstetrics and gynaecology department has again failed to meet all its training accreditation standards. A review of the department at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children found serious workplace cultural issues, staffing issues, poor behaviour and unacceptable overtime hours are still present more than six months after training accreditation first became at risk.

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Fatal flaw in euthanasia

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2024, Patrick Billings, Page 3

Queensland's voluntary assisted dying scheme is under the microscope after a grieving widower died by ingesting a lethal substance that had been made available for his wife who passed away without using it. Coroner David O'Connell who is investigating the man's death at an inquest in Brisbane told the couple's daughter, who remains supportive of voluntary assisted dying, that it was an important area where some improvement could be made.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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10 second rule

Northern Territory News, General News, 21/02/2024, Alex Treacy, Page 1

Whereas once no ambulance service in Australia answered triple-0 calls directed to it more swiftly, St John NT now trails the rest of the federation. The worrying trend is detailed in the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2024. According to the report, in 2022/23, St John NT operators only answered 86.6 per cent of triple-0 calls, directed to it from the emergency services telecommunication system, within 10 seconds.

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Revealed: Victorian hospitals with worst hand hygiene rates

Ballarat Courier, General News, 21/02/2024, Ben Silvester, Page 2

Doctors are among the worst hospital staff in regional Victoria for washing their hands when they should, trumped only by cleaning and food workers, The Courier can reveal. Hand sanitising in the major hospitals spiked during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic but has dropped off sharply since.

Also reported by: [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#).

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Call for hold on hospital work until key details released

Border Mail, General News, 21/02/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 4

Victoria's Opposition health spokeswoman wants further work on the Albury hospital upgrade to be delayed until key reports are released. Georgie Crozier yesterday put a notice of motion to the state Legislative Council outlining various concerns about the jointly funded Victorian-NSW redevelopment of Albury hospital.

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

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Organ and tissue donation changing lives

Border Watch, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 8

Organ and tissue donations transform and save lives. Since the program's inception in 2009, the lives of 16,748 Australians have been changed as a result of receiving an organ transplant, thanks to the generosity of 5,904 deceased organ donors and their families. Let's think about that - 5,904 fathers, mothers, grandparents, children, partners and friends, have enabled 16,748 strangers to survive, and even thrive.

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New Wiradjuri name for former hospital

Daily Liberal, General News, 21/02/2024, Allison Hore, Page 6

The former Lourdes Hospital has been given a new name as part of its transition into a specialist facility for rehabilitation and palliative care. Debbie Bickerton, general manager of the Dubbo Health Service, said the hospital will be renamed Walanmarra, which translates to "make strong" in the Wiradjuri language.

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

New health hubs

Gannawarra Times, General News, 20/02/2024, Page 6

Two communities in the Gannawarra Shire will soon have new health-care hubs to complement existing services. The first four hubs to be announced will be in Kerang, Quambatook, Pyramid Hill and Boort. The Integrated Health Network Alliance is one of six successful applicants selected from 80 submissions nationally to receive \$1.4 million in funding through the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care's Innovative Model of Care grant.

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Banding together to improve Deni's health

Shepparton News Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Rowan Frazer

Local residents and visitors to Deniliquin will now have easier access to information which may save a life or prevent long-lasting health impacts. Deniliquin's Local Health Advisory Committee last week launched a project which will see a series of banners located around the community. Each of the 12 large, colourful banners focuses on a singular health topic.

[Read More](#)

Should Australia allow voluntary assisted dying for people without a terminal illness?

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Emma Wynne

Despite not having a terminal illness, Terry Phillips's 97-year-old mother was able to choose voluntary euthanasia in Canada, a system that gave her "what she wanted" at the end of her life. Ms Phillips has decided to speak out about her mother's choice because she thinks more people should have access to voluntary assisted dying in Australia, even if they don't have a terminal illness.

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

[Read More](#)

Victor Harbor Private Hospital to close with beds to be transferred to public system

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Caroline Horn

The 18-bed Victor Harbor Private Hospital (VHPH) will cease operations on April 19, the latest in a series of regional community hospitals in South Australia to close due to financial and other pressures. VHPH board chairperson Phil Goode said it had become obvious that the hospital did not have a viable future.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

First responders' new threat

Herald Sun, Edition Changes, 21/02/2024, Jade Gailberger, Page 14

Vital mental health support for first responders is under threat, as devastating bushfires and floods take a toll on the dwindling workforce. The federal government is being urged to extend funding beyond June 30 for Fortem Australia's program, which provides psychological support for emergency service workers. Advocates say the \$3.5m budget request would help retain those on the frontline, as it could take years and be costly to develop a dedicated workforce to respond to disasters.

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In plain sight

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 17

It's one of Geelong's most affluent suburbs - where families thrive and real estate booms. And yet, a modest brick home in Newtown harboured a grim secret. Officials in hazard suits unearthed the body of an elderly man from inside the Russell St home in late 2022. The man lay unnoticed for up to five years while his sister lived in the same house.

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Daily struggle to function without doctor

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/02/2024, Phoebe Doyle, Page 5

Mildura resident Renea Gregory has been on psychiatric medication for the past 24 years, keeping her obsessive-compulsive disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in check enough for her to function. Without it, she is constantly "stimming" through repetitive physical movement, cannot focus and is easily distracted.

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Labour waits for Swift

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Madeleine Achenza, Page 10

A pregnant Taylor Swift fan who went into labour during one of the pop superstar's MCG concerts held off going to hospital until after the last song. And then she gave her newborn daughter a middle name in honour of Swift. Tenille Smith was 39 weeks and five days pregnant on Saturday when the drama occurred during Swift's second Australian show for the Eras Tour.

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The first thing I asked my nurse was if my baby had survived

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/02/2024, Cindy Lever

A new mum was relieved when she went into labour because it would stop her morning sickness, but her pregnancy would soon take a turn for the worse. Cindy Lever 5 min read February 20, 2024 - 12:54PM Pregnancy for Danielle Mitchell had been a rough experience, with weeks of severe morning sickness .

[Read More](#)

More emergency nurses for Alice Springs to tackle healthcare workforce shortage

National Indigenous Times, Other, 20/02/2024, Dechlan Brennan

Alice Springs Hospital has started training its second cohort of registered nurses to work in the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit, as the Northern Territory government attempts to tackle the shortage of health professionals in regional and rural NT. On Tuesday it was announced nine registered nurses from ED and ICU are undertaking the critical care post-graduate program, with the NT government stating they are helping to build both the capability and capacity of registered nurses in Central Australia.

[Read More](#)

Right to disconnect laws: What's in it for nurses?

Nursing Review, Other, 20/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

Labor's "closing loopholes" industrial relations bill has passed the Senate following deals with the crossbench, including the insertion of a Greens amendment to create a right to disconnect from work. The Greens announced last Wednesday the Albanese government had accepted the right to disconnect, which would prevent employees from being punished for refusing to take unreasonable emails or calls in their unpaid personal time.

[Read More](#)

Staffing levels at VIC private hospital "a grave concern"

Nursing Review, Other, 20/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

Midwives working at a private Victorian hospital have claimed staffing shortages are putting mothers and babies at risk. Cabrini Malvern in Melbourne's south-east has been a subject of concern regarding the current midwifery staffing levels in the postnatal ward, as conversations of midwife-to-patient ratios have been asked to be a mandate. [...] According to data from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, 54 per cent of midwives account for Victoria's RN workforce.

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Love of life a lasting legacy

West Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Phil Hickey, Page 14

Two WA paramedics who died in tragic circumstances last year are being honoured by St John WA through new scholarships. Four scholarships will be launched by St John to honour the memory of Fiona Lavelle and Tinesh Tamilkodi - who died in separate incidents last year. The scholarships will be announced on Wednesday to coincide with the 12month anniversary of the passing of Ms Lavelle, who died while hiking at Cape Le Grand National Park near Esperance.

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Empowering pharmacists: a call to arms for NIP participation

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 01/02/2024, Melody Mugari, Page 8

In recent years, the role of pharmacists in healthcare has been transformed, positioning them as key contributors to patient-centred care. One exciting avenue for pharmacists to deepen their impact on public health is through active participation in the National Immunisation Program (NIP) of Australia.

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Assessing pharmacy fitness: strategies for business owners

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 01/02/2024, Nick Biggs, Page 26

As we welcome the new year, gyms are buzzing with determined individuals, all striving to fulfil their 2024 resolutions for a healthier and happier life. This renewed focus on self-improvement prompts us to take stock of our vital health metrics.

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The child psychiatry pioneer who approached ADHD in a new way

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/02/2024, Alastair Metcalf

Sheila Metcalf, a pioneer in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry and a trailblazer in the profession, was one of few female Fellows at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists in the 1970s. She paved the way for women in psychiatry. Out of a membership of 8,269 the College now has 3,743 female members and the college credits women like Metcalf with inspiring countless women to take up the profession.

[Read More](#)

RACGP backs push for \$36,000 parental leave for GP registrars

Australian Doctor, Other, 20/02/2024, Carmel Sparke

The college is calling for parental leave so trainees, like Dr Marian Dover, do not have to return to work weeks after giving birth. The RACGP has called for GP trainees to receive up to 14 weeks' paid parental leave to prevent drastic income slumps compared to their hospital-based counterparts.

[Read More](#)

Vic to treat 2 skin issues

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/02/2024

Pharmacists across Victoria will soon be able to supply treatment for two skin conditions under the next phase of the Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot set to begin in Mar. Victorian pharmacies that opt for the skin clinical stream and undertake additional training can treat herpes zoster (shingles) and a flare-up of mild plaque psoriasis.

Also reported by: [Australian Journal of Pharmacy \(Online\)](#), [Retail Pharmacy \(Online\)](#).

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NSW pharmacists recognised for outstanding contribution

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 20/02/2024

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has recognised New South Wales pharmacists as part of the PSA Excellence Awards. The NSW pharmacist of the year is Margaret Ruhnau MPS. Margaret is a Western Sydney pharmacist who puts practising with her community at the heart of her work. Since

becoming one of the first pharmacists to practice with the Aboriginal Health Service, Ms Ruhnau continues to build a diverse and culturally aware team at Emerton Amcal Pharmacy.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No to pharmacist initiated Covid antivirals

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/02/2024

Labor will not implement a recommendation from the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport, to allow pharmacists to initiate Covid-19 oral antiviral treatment through for patients eligible under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

WHO launches plan to advance digital health systems

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/02/2024, Christopher Kelly

A World Health Organisation initiative to accelerate equitable global access to digital health will be beneficial for Australia's technology industry, says an expert. George Margelis – chair of the Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council – told Australian Ageing Agenda , the WHO's Global Initiative on Digital Health , which launched online at 2pm Central European Time on Tuesday, "is potentially a commercial opportunity for Australian software vendors giving them the opportunity to expand their market and thus fund further development.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Surgeon in ban for patient sex

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2024, Vanda Carson, Page 21

An ex-Princess Alexandra hospital renal transplant surgeon has been disqualified from applying to be a doctor in Australia for two years and reprimanded for misconduct over his improper sexual relationship with a high-flying former patient who killed herself. Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal judicial member John Robertson ruled that "almost immediately after" Dr Andrej Grajn operated on the woman his behaviour toward her "indicated a clear sexual interest" in her.

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

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Owner suspended over expired Covid jabs

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/02/2024

The Pharmacy Board of Australia has suspended the owner of a Tasmanian pharmacy where patients were given doses of expired Covid-19 vaccines.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Inmates face greater risk of reoffending if in poor health

West Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Stuart Kinner, Page 42

The criminal justice system is a polarising issue, with competing calls for compassionate solutions and others demanding "tough on crime" responses regardless of the consequences. [...] Given the cost, keeping people out of custody should be a priority, and one way we can help this is by changing our approach to health in the justice system.

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NSW contemplates mandatory coronial reporting of homelessness deaths as part of policy rethink

The Guardian, Other, 21/02/2024, Christopher Knaus

The New South Wales government will consider reforms to begin monitoring homelessness deaths after a major Guardian investigation earlier this month. In a potentially nation-leading shift, the NSW housing minister, Rose Jackson, will consider mandating the coronial reporting of homelessness deaths as part of a broader push to strengthen reporting and monitoring in its upcoming homelessness strategy.

[Read More](#)

Population-based melanoma screening

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024

In a new position statement, the Australian College of Dermatologists recommends against population based screening for melanoma because of insufficient evidence showing it reduces mortality. Studies suggest that targeting highrisk groups for screening and surveillance appears most costeffective compared with an untargeted approach, the statement notes, calling for further research in this area.

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SPORT

Nine secures rights to Melbourne Cup

Age, General News, 21/02/2024, Calum Jaspan and Amelia Mcguire, Page 1

Nine Network has secured the broadcast rights for the Melbourne Cup, striking a deal with the Victoria Racing Club and Tabcorp to air the four-day carnival. The deal, from this year to 2029, brings to an end a drawn-out process, with wagering firm Tabcorp striking a broadcast, media and sponsorship deal with the VRC.

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Demon Smith accused of trafficking cocaine

Age, General News, 21/02/2024, Jake Niall, Page 2

The AFL has confirmed that Melbourne forward Joel Smith is facing three doping violation allegations for the trafficking, or attempted trafficking, of cocaine. The allegations place Smith in a far worse position than previously. A News Corp report alleged that Sport Integrity Australia officials had uncovered multiple text messages sent by Smith allegedly referencing cocaine.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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AFL clubs urged to get 'inclusion road map' to avoid culture wars

Age, General News, 21/02/2024, Peter Ryan, Page 10

AFL clubs that promote themselves as inclusive need to "do the work" to ensure different views on race, religious freedom and sexuality can be raised - even if it makes some people uncomfortable, says a report commissioned as part of former NAB boss Andrew Thorburn's settlement with Essendon. Thorburn's stint as CEO of the Bombers lasted one day, but the report's author, Dr Matthew Beard of

the Cranlana Centre for Ethical Leadership, hopes the controversy will help sports organisations deal with "the inclusion dilemma".

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Access for all genders

Herald Sun, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 6

All-gender changerooms at sports facilities will be considered in a review by the City of Melbourne to encourage more women and girls into community sport and recreation. Councillors were on Tuesday assessing the Fair Access Sport and Recreation Action Plan which aimed to "improve gender equitable access" at the council's sporting fields, pavilions and recreation centres such as City Baths, Carlton Baths and Royal Park Golf Course.

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Ball's in their court

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2024, Judy Augustine, Page 6

Funding is all that lies in the way of an improved sports centre for New Town after the council endorsed concept designs for the masterplan. On Monday night, Hobart City Council approved the designs for the New Town Sporting Precinct which also features new courts to facilitate Australian Netball Championships matches. The current facility is owned by the council and is home to 10 clubs and associations including netball, lawn bowls and croquet.

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Cats' AFLW star inspiring next generation

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Meg Saultry, Page 31

Geelong young gun Georgie Prespakis is finding different ways to develop her game throughout an extended AFLW off-season. The Cats' reigning AFLW best and fairest stepped into a coaching role last month to run her own holiday program for girls 12-and-under, as she waited for the new AFLW season in the second half of 2024.

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Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds uncovers deaths off-track, calls for inquiry

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Georgia Lenton-Williams

Veterinarian Sarah Pollard-Williams has often treated racing greyhounds with fractured legs that go on to make a full recovery. She said it was a common injury caused by the curved design of the tracks the dogs usually raced around. "Once you get tracks that have turns in them, and obviously the greyhounds want to race to the inside [and] not going wide around the outside, that puts significant stress on those limbs," Dr Pollard-Williams said.

[Read More](#)

How the Taylor Swift effect is changing sports fandom and the dark side of being a female fan

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Kasey Symons

As the attention from pop culture aficionados switches from American football back to the Australian leg of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, sports fans, and sporting organisations more importantly are wondering if the "Taylor effect" might remain for the next NFL season or impact the participation of more women and girls' in more sports fandoms.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

MND hope world first

Australian motor-neuron disease patients will be the first in the world to trial a "novel" treatment that scientists hope could not only slow but actually reverse the condition. If successful, the US biotech firm Spinogenix drug would be the first regenerative treatment for the devastating and rapid neurodegenerative disease which kills two Australians a day and may also help fight Alzheimer's and schizophrenia.

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Asthma fear amid storms

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 6

Australian researchers say there is a possibility thunderstorm asthma events could increase under climate change. In 2016, a thunderstorm in Melbourne triggered a 672 per cent increase in asthma-related hospital admissions and caused 10 deaths. These events occur when thunderstorms with high wind gusts interact with airborne allergens.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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Vitamin B3 in heart scare

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 6

Vitamin b3 might be linked to an increased risk of heart disease, according to international researchers. US researchers found that when B3 is broken down it can increase the amount of pro-inflammation proteins in the lining of blood vessels. Excess amounts of these breakdown products may be linked to an increased risk of mortality, heart attacks and stroke, according to research.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

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'Kid power' a health boost

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2024, Tamara McDonald, Page 9

Children who are the future of Geelong are helping researchers around the world via an ambitious study as the city cements its status as a health knowledge hub. In the early 2010s, 1074 babies were recruited for the Barwon Infant Study (BIS). Study co-lead Peter Vuillermin said BIS, a collaboration between Barwon Health, Deakin University and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, exemplified "cutting edge science meets people power".

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Researchers call for oral bacteria to be added to toothpaste

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 8

Transplanting bacteria from the mouths of donors with healthy teeth through toothpaste or gel could be the next leap forward in treating tooth decay. The oral microbiome the collection of bacteria that naturally occupies the human mouth contains more than 700 bacteria, and a healthy microbiome reduces the risk of oral health problems including tooth decay.

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

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New world-class Tasmania Parkinson's Project recruits Tasmanians to try solve Parkinson's puzzle

The Mercury, Other, 20/02/2024, Tia Ewen

A new world-class Tasmanian project will attempt to solve the mysteries behind Parkinson's, but it needs help. Trying to solve pieces of the Parkinson's puzzle, a new world-class Tasmanian project will boost awareness and research into the neurodegenerative disease.

[Read More](#)

Australia's 'game-changing' artificial heart

Australian scientists are developing a 'game-changing' artificial heart, with the Federal Government announcing a grant of 50 million dollars towards the project. Transplant recipients hope the research will ensure more people get access to the life saving technology

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Concurrent administration of RSV and influenza vaccines appears safe in healthy older adults

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024

In a randomised, double-blind Australian study, antibody responses and likelihood of adverse events were similar whether the two vaccines were coadministered or given sequentially. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccination is now recommended, with shared decision-making, for adults aged 60 years or older.

[Read More](#)

Hearing aids mitigate dementia risk in people with hearing loss, study reaffirms

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Rebecca Jenkins

Hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of dementia, especially among people who do not use hearing aids, according to a large population-based cohort study. Hearing loss has been suggested as a risk factor for dementia, Danish researchers wrote in JAMA Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, but there was a need for high-quality research to better understand the association between the two conditions.

[Read More](#)

Young-onset dementia: new risk factors identified

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Melanie Hinze

A range of previously unidentified risk factors have been found to be associated with young-onset dementia, according to research published recently in JAMA Neurology. The prospective cohort study used data from the UK Biobank from a total of 356,052 participants aged younger than 65 years (55.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 20/02/2024, Ryk Goddard

Scientists want 5,000 Tasmanians to help in a research project in a bid to find better treatment for Parkinson's disease. Tasmania is a world leader in research into Parkinson's disease, the fastest-growing neurological disease in the world. Scientists at the University of Tasmania want people with or without Parkinson's to sign up with Tasmania's older and smaller community, making it an ideal study population.

[Play Now](#)

Radio National, Breakfast, 20/02/2024, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with Associate Professor Shaun Gregory, Artificial Heart Frontiers Program Co-Director, Monash University, regarding the Federal Government announcing a grant of \$50m to support the development of a new generation of artificial hearts. It's claimed those devices could halve the number of deaths from heart failure. Gregory says it's really exciting because they are using state-of-the-art revolutionary techniques that are applied to completely different disciplines to revolutionise artificial hearts.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Young offenders on-country programs to expand

Young offenders would be made to stay at an out-of-town facility to undertake training programs and learn life skills under the state government's planned expansion of its "oncountry" programs. The major expansion of the program will for the first time involve children staying onsite potentially for months, amid calls from service providers and kids asking to be involved for longer than the usual six to eight weeks.

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

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State funeral to be held for renowned Aboriginal leader, Australian of the Year Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue

Adelaide Now, Other, 20/02/2024, Talara McHugh

A state funeral to honour the extraordinary life of renowned Aboriginal leader and former Australian of the Year Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue will be held at St Peter's Cathedral on Kurna country at 1pm on Friday, March 8. Members of the public are welcome to attend the service which will honour her dedication to improving the rights, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Yankunytatjara leader and matriarch died aged 91 on February 4 with her immediate family by her side on Kurna country in Adelaide.

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

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Indigenous gap widens for kids in protection

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 8

The number of Indigenous children in the child protection system is growing. Updated figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showed there were 72 Indigenous children per 1000 who were on care and protection orders as of June 2022, up from 62 per 1000 four years earlier.

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

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New eczema storybook to promote healthy skin for Indigenous children

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2024, Claudette Rizzi

A new book for kids aims at raising awareness about people suffering with the often-painful skin condition eczema. Kaal Tackles Eczema was developed by the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project at Telethon Kids Institute after research identified nearly 20 per cent of Aboriginal children living in urban areas have eczema.

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

[Read More](#)

'Remain in the Yes': Walk with us to keep Aboriginal women and children safe

Crikey, Other, 20/02/2024, Antoinette Braybrook

We need properly funded, community-controlled specialist services to combat domestic violence against Indigenous women and children. The end of 2023 was a challenging — no, devastating — time for me, an Aboriginal woman who has dedicated more than 20 years to ensuring First Nations women and children have access to self-determined, holistic, wrap-around services for their safety.

[Read More](#)

Racist introduction to smoking stereotypes report sparks outcry

National Indigenous Times, Other, 20/02/2024, Giovanni Torre

The introduction to an ABC report on a new smoking study has sparked a backlash after listing Indigenous people among negative "stereotypical smokers". The report, when first published on Tuesday, opened with: "If you were asked to picture a typical smoker, you might come up with the following stereotypes: someone who is unemployed, uneducated, Indigenous, and suffering poor mental health."

New pilot program to help combat domestic and family violence

National Indigenous Times, Other, 20/02/2024, Dechlan Brennan

The Victorian government has announced a new pilot program with Aboriginal service Dardi Munwurro to tackle family and domestic violence at the source. The Changing Ways pilot program is designed to ensure keep victim/survivors safe through intensive interventions and individual behaviour change work on the offender.

[Read More](#)

Monash Health charged over alleged death of an Indigenous woman

Nursing Review, Other, 20/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this article may contain images of people who have died. Monash Health 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.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Labor on the attack over Liberals' vaccine holdout, climate denier

The Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Matthew Denholm, Page 8

Labor has attacked the Tasmania Liberals for preselecting a candidate who denies human-induced climate change and another who opposes vaccine mandates for the coming state election. Liberal Premier Jeremy Rockliff on Tuesday unveiled his 35 candidates for the state's five multi-member electorates, announcing them as "the Tasmanian's Liberal Party's Team of the Decade".

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Shingles relief soon

Herald Sun, General News, 21/02/2024, Page 10

Victorians suffering from shingles will soon be able to access treatment at their local pharmacy. The Allan government will expand its community pharmacy pilot program to include treatments for mild psoriasis or shingles from March, with Victorians able to access the care at 729 pharmacies across the state.

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On the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control, some questions answered

Croakey, Other, 20/02/2024, Alison Barrett

Last week, Croakey published a report raising many questions about the interim Australian Centre for Disease Control, which launched at the beginning of last month. Our survey of 11 health leaders – who mostly chose to speak off the record – identified concerns about the centre's governance, level of independence, scope of practice, and communications and outreach.

[Read More](#)

STI increase in Gippsland

Gippslands Gold, Other, 20/02/2024

Sexually transmitted infections are on the rise locally, in new figures provided. A nearly 20 per cent increase in gonorrhea cases in 2023, with 61 per cent of those cases in males in the Gippsland region. Men between 20 and 34 recorded the highest sheer numbers of cases - while federal data from the Department of Health and Aged Care suggests one in six Australians will develop an STI at some point in their lifetime.

Mosquitoes are a buzzing health threat, here's how to protect yourself

Shepparton News Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Taylah Baker

The risk of mosquito-borne diseases is expected to increase in the upcoming months across the region due to a rise in mosquito numbers. Greater Shepparton City Council said it is keeping a close eye on the mosquito population in the area after recent warm and wet weather. It said insect repellent and wearing clothing that covers the skin are the best ways to protect from mosquito bites.

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

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Vapes a 'low-risk' aid to quit smokes

The Australian, General News, 21/02/2024, Sofia Dmitrieva, Page 9

People trying to quit smoking tobacco are more likely to be successful if nicotine vapes are part of their strategy, according to a new international study, but Australian experts are divided. [...] "E-cigarettes are not approved as a smoking cessation device and have not been independently tested for quality, safety, and efficacy by the Therapeutic Goods Administration," she said.

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Medical cannabis use at a high

Herald Sun, General News, 21/02/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 15

Medical cannabis use has skyrocketed in the past five years amid a boom in telehealth and online prescriptions, prompting concern from authorities. The staggering increase of more than 5400 per cent means more than one million Australians had been prescribed unregistered medicinal cannabis products as of last month, compared to just 18,000 in 2019. [...] TGA head Professor Tony Lawler said the country's regulatory system had to keep pace with the large rise in unapproved medicinal cannabis and telehealth use, to ensure patients were not harmed.

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

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Filling in the nutrition gaps for kids and teens

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 01/02/2024, Tracey Cheung, Page 56

Children and teenagers go through important stages of growth that require specific amounts of nutrients to ensure they meet their milestones for development. These nutrients are also important for immune support. [...] To evaluate the quality of a product by label, Dr Williams says all products that have complied with TGA regulations for safety will have an AUST-R number.

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Fundie Merchant Group picks four biotech stocks that could rip as sector hits rude health again

The Australian, Other, 20/02/2024

Biotech doesn't need another pandemic for a resurgence – it's made a strong comeback regardless. Stockhead spoke with Andrew Chapman, head of Perth-based fundie Merchant Group – to learn why this is the case, and which are his top picks for the sector. [...] Mid last year, NTI received Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval and Clinical Trial Notification (CTN) scheme clearance by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to investigate the use of NTI164 – the company's proprietary cannabis-derived drug formulation – in female Rett Syndrome patients.

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Deakin University research reveals detrimental effect of Instagram

influencers on diet

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/02/2024, Robyn Riley

Clueless influencers are dishing out potentially dangerous dietary and nutritional advice on the social media platform Instagram, a new national study has found. [...] Ms Denniss says nutrition was a tricky territory to govern online as it involved multiple regulatory authorities, including the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Food Standards of Australia and New Zealand and the ACCC "Social media platforms also have a responsibility," she said.

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Singular gets green light for patented medical software

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2024, Michael Philipps

ASX-listed medtech Singular Health Group has been given the green light to continue developing and manufacturing its 3Dicom diagnostic medical software in Perth after retaining its global regulatory certification. [...] The clearance proves Singular's continued compliance with regulatory and quality requirements of Health Canada, the Therapeutic Goods Administration in Australia, and the United States Food and Drug Agency (FDA) through that country's Medical Device Single Audit Program.

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Some psychiatrists say the jury is out on prescription of psychedelic drugs like MDMA and psilocybin, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Peter McCutcheon

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) says people may be getting the wrong impression about the availability of some psychedelic drugs, following an historic 2023 decision to take them off the prohibited drug list. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) decided last year to allow therapeutic use of both MDMA (also known as ecstasy) and psilocybin (the active ingredient in magic mushrooms) for specific mental health illnesses under strict conditions.

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Nirsevimab protects infants from RSV-associated hospitalisation

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2024, Rebecca Jenkins

One dose of the monoclonal antibody nirsevimab protects infants from hospitalisation with lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs) associated with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a large study finds. In the ongoing 3b, multicentre, open-label HARMONIE trial, researchers enrolled more than 8000 healthy infants who were 12 months of age or younger, had been born at gestational age of 29 weeks or more and were entering their first RSV season. [...] Nirsevimab was approved by the TGA last year for the prevention of RSV in neonates, infants, and vulnerable children aged up to 24 months.

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ABC, 7:30, 20/02/2024, Sarah Ferguson

Report on the use of innovative psychedelic treatments for mental health which divides the experts. The Therapeutic Goods Administration made a groundbreaking medical decision 12 months ago when Australia became the first country in the world to allow the therapeutic use of psychedelic drugs. But the decision has so far had little practical effect and the jury is still out on the role psychedelics will play in the Australian health system.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

New drugs mean more risk of overdose. Experts say we need more pill testing now

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Sam Nichols

At least once a fortnight, Zach, a Sydney man in his early 30s, consumes an illicit drug. "I typically use

cocaine and ketamine. I'll occasionally — probably like once a month if not less frequently — have MDMA as well." Zach knows the drugs he buys could contain things he might not be aware of. He says it's common knowledge that drugs in Australia are low quality, often cut with benign fillers by suppliers to maximise profits.

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

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FOOD STANDARDS

Govt diet advice to promote foods with lower carbon footprint

The Australian, Other, 20/02/2024

Official Australian Dietary Guidelines will now incorporate information relating to climate change. They will promote foods with a lower carbon footprint. The farming industry claims the move is an 'ideological agenda' against red meat. It has the potential to drive down lamb and beef sales.

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AICIS

Aussie farms polluted with plastic from sewage sludge

Canberra Times, Other, 20/02/2024, Tracey Ferrier

Sewage sludge used to fertilise Australia's farmlands is loaded with microplastic and is getting into the food chain, researchers warn. Scientists have taken a forensic look at the sludge left over when wastewater is treated at plants across the nation. The nutrient-rich waste product is called biosolids and most of the 349,000 tonnes produced each year is spread on agricultural land.

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

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Sydney's Bicentennial Park among six new sites testing positive for asbestos

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2024, Jesse Hyland

A dangerous form of asbestos has been detected at Sydney's Bicentennial Park as the number of contaminated sites across the city grows. Mulch at six new sites has tested positive for asbestos, according to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

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

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