



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 24th February 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The **[Weekend Australian](#)** (page 1) reports the Department of Education's Universities Accord review will recommend federally-funded paid work placement for student nurses and teachers. *Also reported by: [The Australian](#)*
- The **[Courier Mail](#)** (page 3) reports two cancer patients at Brisbane's Princess Alexandra Hospital have tested positive for legionella. *Also reported by: [Courier Mail](#), [Courier Mail](#)*
- The **[Adelaide Advertiser](#)** (page 4) reports almost 200 South Australian state school teachers were absent with COVID-19 last week. *Also reported by: [Adelaide Now](#)*
- The **[Weekend Australian](#)** (page 5) reports medical bodies including Pain Australia, the Brain Foundation and the Migraine World Summit are calling on the Department of Health and Aged Care to address worsening shortages of chronic migraine medications Emgality and Ajovy. *Also reported by: [The Australian](#)*
- The **[Herald Sun](#)** (page 5) reports the Victorian government will combine the Victorian Health Building Authority and Major Transport Infrastructure Authority into a single statutory body to oversee the state's hospital and transport building projects.

- The [Saturday Age](#) (page 10) reports Minister for Health Mark Butler said this week the Department of Health and Aged Care is investigating the use of artificial intelligence and genomics in advanced cancer screening programs. *Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald](#)*

MINISTER BUTLER

Under a cloud

Weekend Australian, Magazine, 24/02/2024, Nikki Gemmell, Page 10

The horror, the horror, of where we are with vaping and the glary deadening shops by our schools and transport hubs populated by the nation's young. A mother of one beautiful young man told me recently she's now trying to get her boy hooked onto cigarettes, of all things, because she believes they'd be better than the vapes he's now hopelessly addicted to. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says the market is increasingly being controlled by organised crime – because it's so lucrative.

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

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AI hope for melanoma patients

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 24/02/2024, Clay Lucas and Henrietta Cook, Page 22

A program trying to harness artificial intelligence (AI) to overhaul the way melanomas are detected in high-risk Australians is being considered by the Albanese government. It comes as a large-scale research trial collects evidence for a targeted screening program at 15 hospitals and three universities across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler also this week confirmed that the Department of Health is looking at how AI and genomics can be used in future screening programs.

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

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Vaping hole in policy, voters declare

Herald Sun, General News, 24/02/2024, Carly Douglas, Page 29

Soaring youth vaping rates have surfaced as an issue for Dunkley voters ahead of the by-election, with more than seven in 10 voters "not confident" the government's recreational vaping ban will work. Polling has revealed 81 per cent of voters in the south-eastern electorate want vaping products strictly regulated in the same way as alcohol and tobacco, some saying they would base their vote on it. [...] "This research shows that Health Minister Mark Butler's policy is not only inflicting harm on Australian families battling against his youth vaping crisis and the black-market crime wave, but also on the Labor Party's vote in Dunkley," Mr Foukkare said.

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Green agenda hits red meat

Hamilton Spectator, General News, 24/02/2024, Patrick MacKarness, Page 24

Graziers are concerned about a recent change of emphasis by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Commonwealth's peak medical science body. NHMRC is proposing to include environmental considerations into what constitutes a healthy diet as opposed to focussing solely on the individual's health. [...] Federal health minister, Mark Butler is supporting the change.

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Victorian payroll tax may double regional emergency department visits

Geelong Times, General News, 23/02/2024, Angus Smith, Page 21

The Victorian government's new payroll tax on medical clinics could see emergency department visits surge, potentially affecting the state budget by a \$1 billion a year. A HotDoc survey found 4 per cent of respondents would choose hospital emergency departments over GPs to avoid extra fees, potentially leading to 2.2 million more visits annually. [...] Earlier this month, federal Health Minister Mark Butler called on his Victorian counterparts to review the controversial tax.

Also reported by: [Armstrong Creek Times \(Victoria\)](#), [Surf Coast Times \(Torquay\)](#).

World's most advanced heart right here

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 23/02/2024, Page 2

The Federal Government is providing \$50 million to develop and commercialise the world's most advanced artificial heart, a technology that, it stated, could halve deaths from heart failure globally and contribute \$1.8 billion to Australia. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said, "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".

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

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Psychiatrist shortage in regional Australia leads to work burnout, long waits for mental health patients

ABC Online, Other, 23/02/2024, Isabella Carbone and Becc Chave

Dire shortages of psychiatrists in regional Australia are leaving those patients struggling to access treatment with chronic conditions and contributing to the health professionals' burnout in the workforce. A new Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) report has found that 94 per cent of regional psychiatrists say this lack of specialist healthcare is having a detrimental impact on patients. [...] A spokesperson for federal Minister for Health Mark Butler said the government was "committed to reforming the mental health and suicide prevention systems" for all Australians.

[Read More](#)

What's a GP worth? Let's crunch the numbers

The Medical Republic, Other, 23/02/2024, Louise Stone

Governments have millions of dollars to throw at health programs – let's see how many GPs you could get for what they've spent. There has been a lot of talk about what a GP is worth, and what we, as a community, can afford. [...] Mark Butler's position is this: "For too long, too many of our health workforce haven't been able to work to their full potential.

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MINISTER WELLS

ABC South East SA, Breakfast , 23/02/2024, Becc Chave

Pre-recorded interview with shadow minister Anne Ruston regarding the delayed release of the Aged Care Taskforce report. [...] The federal Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells was contacted for comment and the minister's spokesperson responded in a statement saying the Taskforce gave their final report to the government in December 2023. The government is currently considering the report and will release it at an appropriate time.

Continues: [ABC South East SA \(Mt Gambier\)](#).

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Have chronic pain? You're more likely to be a woman and less likely to be believed by doctors

Cosmos Magazine, Other, 24/02/2024, Professor Fiona Blyth and Dr Saman Khalatbari-Soltani

If you are among the one in five adult Australians experiencing chronic pain, then you are more likely to be female. Not only that, if you're female you're less likely to be prescribed or recommended medication by your doctor — be they male or female. [...] Chronic pain is in the mix here: "Women have told me they're being seen but not believed," Federal MP Ged Kearney said when launching initiative.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

Shortage of migraine medication crushing for chronic pain patients

Weekend Australian, General News, 24/02/2024, James Dowling, Page 5

A migraine medication shortage has spread across the country, threatening to leave tens of thousands of people with a return to chronic pain and sending desperate sufferers out hunting for pharmacies that might still have stocks. [...] A coalition of medical bodies including Pain Australia, the Brain Foundation, Migraine & Headache Australia, the Australian and New Zealand Headache Society and the Migraine World Summit urged the Department of Health to take immediate measures to get more treatments.

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

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AI hope for melanoma patients

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 24/02/2024, Clay Lucas and Henrietta Cook, Page 22

A program trying to harness artificial intelligence (AI) to overhaul the way melanomas are detected in high-risk Australians is being considered by the Albanese government. It comes as a large-scale research trial collects evidence for a targeted screening program at 15 hospitals and three universities across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler also this week confirmed that the Department of Health is looking at how AI and genomics can be used in future screening programs.

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

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Statistics are out on Gippsland's sexual health

Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, General News, 23/02/2024, Page 2

Gippsland saw its highest number of gonorrhoea cases in 2023, jumping almost 20 per cent on previous years. "We know that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as gonorrhoea are much more widespread in the community than many people might assume," Gippsland Region Public Health Unit (GRPHU), Senior Epidemiologist, Katie Walker said. "Data from the Department of Health and Aged Care shows that one in six Australians will develop an STI at some stage in their lifetime."

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Concerns over shortage of medication

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 24/02/2024, Monique Patterson, Page 7

A south-west woman has expressed concerns over the shortage of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication. The woman, who didn't want to be named, said she had enough

medication for two weeks for her 10-year-old son. [...] The Department of Health's Therapeutic Goods Administration has reported a shortage of the medication on its website.

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PBAC to examine if doctors should prescribe PBS medicines to prisoners

Australian Doctor, Other, 23/02/2024, Sarah Simpkins

The Federal Government is considering lifting the PBS ban on Australia's 42,000 prisoners, taking the suggestion to the PBAC's March meeting. [...] The PBAC's March agenda said the federal Department of Health and Aged Care had gathered feedback from states and territories and would seek PBAC advice on the possible changes.

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Government yet to confirm new 60-day list

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 23/02/2024

A full list of medications that will be eligible for double dispensing will be announced as part of a legislative instrument within the next week, the Department of Health and Aged Care says.

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Ambition versus costs in high-wire Act

Business News WA, Other, 23/02/2024, Amber Crosthwaite

Imagine being handed a map promising to guide you through uncharted territories, only to find that key parts are missing and treacherous waters ignored or reframed as sunny climes. This is the conundrum facing aged care providers, who must respond to the new Aged Care Act 2023 (part of the most fundamental reform of the aged care system since 1997) within a consultation period of eight weeks, much of which straddled the Christmas-New Year break. [...] Sadly, the Act's progressive spirit is also tempered by its reluctance to hold the Department of Health and Ageing accountable for delivering on its own role as 'system governor'.

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Movers & shakers

The Mandarin, Other, 23/02/2024

The Department of Health and Aged Care has hired a suite of new assistant secretaries. Emma Cook, Stephanie Kaiser, Susan Trainor, Eleanor Browne, Andrew Rintoul, Chantal Jackson, Kayla Jordan, Karlie Brown, Darius Everett and Sarash Sinclair will cover strategic policy. Rachelle Davis, Aimee Chambers, and David Evenden will join compliance and regulatory leadership.

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CORONAVIRUS

Schools ravaged by Covid

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 24/02/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 4

Almost 200 state Education Department staff including teachers called in sick with Covid last week, and 168 have tested positive over the past seven days. While social distancing is now a thing of the past, the virus remains a health threat and has taken a toll on the workforce.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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The world's largest COVID-19 vaccine study involved millions of people. This is what it found

SBS, Other, 23/02/2024, Jessica Bahr

New research involving more than 99 million people has linked very rare neurological, blood and heart-related medical conditions to COVID-19 vaccines. But experts say the benefits still outweigh the risks.

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Antiviral decision 'disappointing': Tassone

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 23/02/2024

The rejection of a recommendation to allow pharmacists to initiate Covid-19 oral antiviral treatment for patients eligible under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is "disappointing", Anthony Tassone, the president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Victorian branch believes.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

The care factor failure

Herald Sun, General News, 24/02/2024, Julie Cross and Annabel Fleming, Page 31

One resident was left in almost constant pain for four days, another suffered 12 falls in eight months, and a vegetarian struggling with weight loss was served a meat dinner - all at one aged-care home that has dropped more than 100 places in the official government ratings. At another home that slid down the rankings, residents soiled themselves up to 37 times in a month and were often left in front of blank TV screens.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Parents deserved so much better

Herald Sun, General News, 24/02/2024, Julie Cross, Page 31

Debbie Martin will never be at peace with the way her parents suffered in aged care during their last few years. She said she saw no improvement in the sector from when her dad, John, 96, a World War II veteran, died in a nursing home in 2016, to when her mother, Carlene, 86, a seamstress, passed away in a different facility last year.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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POPULATION HEALTH

Vapers, you're humiliating yourselves

The Saturday Age, General News, 24/02/2024, Roby D'Ottavi, Page 41

You certainly would have noticed the epidemic we are facing in this city. It's not vandalism or stupidly expensive iced coffees – although, I do feel we need to address this as the other day I paid \$7. No, this crisis is significantly crapper than those combined. I am talking about vaping, or the use of e-cigarettes, as they are referred to by political figures and those over the age of 40.

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Vape crisis: teens listen to parents, study claims

Ballarat Courier, General News, 24/02/2024, Melanie Whelan, Page 4

Parental "superpower" can be a powerful force in helping to curb the vape crisis sweeping the nation a new deep-dive into teen behaviour shows. What a parent thinks about vaping has been shown to be a

key influence on teenagers and young people, a collaborative study from VicHealth and The Behavioural Change Collaborative shows.

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No consensus on vaping products

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 23/02/2024, Sheshtyn Paola

With pharmacies to become the only legal source of nicotine vaping products from 1 March, a study has found that pharmacists and authorised prescribers may differ on their use for smoking cessation.

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This is what is replacing vapes for children, and it's scary

The New Daily, Other, 23/02/2024, Madonna King

Snus. Zyn. Upper decky lip pillow. Heard any of those words before? Because they pose an insidious threat to our children. In short, they are words that describe a new type of vape. They are as dangerous as vapes, marketed in the same secret way often (via social media), available in all sorts of flavours and knocking on their bedroom doors.

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

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Punishment not a solution to addiction

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 24/02/2024, Monique Patterson, Page 4

A punitive approach to people with addiction issues is unhelpful, according to WRAD Health chief executive officer Mark Powell. He backed calls for a harm reduction approach, rather than a punitive stand on the eve of International Family Drug Support Day on Saturday, February 24.

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Red meat industry questions high priority on sustainability in Australian Dietary Guideline review

ABC Online, Other, 23/02/2024, Megan Hughes

The red meat industry has questioned the inclusion of environmental impact, accessibility, and food affordability as considerations in new official dietary advice. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is reviewing guidelines about what Australians should eat to meet nutritional requirements.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

No relevant coverage

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PRIMARY CARE

Tummy tucks, IVF: super cash 'leaking'

Weekend Australian, Business News, 24/02/2024, James Kirby, Page 31

You have to wonder sometimes what the Morrison government unleashed when it allowed \$36bn to be removed "early" from super funds during the Covid crisis. [...] Yes "tummy tucks" can be paid for though your super fund. In fact, "this is one of the most common types of cosmetic procedures people access super early for", according to the Gold Coast Plastic Surgery group.

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

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Big changes at the Big Build

Herald Sun, General News, 24/02/2024, Matt Johnston, Page 5

Major transport and hospital building projects worth about \$100bn will be brought together under a new public sector infrastructure body in Victoria. The new Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority will oversee about 200 projects, as it absorbs the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority and the Victorian Health Building Authority.

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Deadly bacteria found at hospital

Courier Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Madura McCormack, Page 3

Two cancer patients at one of Brisbane's largest hospitals have tested positive for the deadly legionella bacteria, with investigations under way to determine the mystery source. Princess Alexandra Hospital executive director Jeremy Wellwood confirmed two patients returned a positive legionella result on February 20.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Legionella call a test of leadership

Courier Mail, Editorials, 24/02/2024, Page 60

The perception of a crippled health system will only grow stronger with the shock news of a possible outbreak of legionella at one of the state's biggest hospitals. In the past few months, the health department has already revealed three transplant patients died after contracting fungal infections in Brisbane hospitals, and concerns have also been raised about black mould at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

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They've failed our kids

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 24/02/2024, Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 30

Sammy Scully and Alyssa Hann are just two of hundreds of sick children whose chance at accessing life-changing cancer treatment may have been ripped from them. This week, The Advertiser revealed the nation's first proton beam therapy unit, which was due to open in a concrete "bunker" in the Australian Bragg Centre, faces failure.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Medicos say bed numbers don't add up

Border Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 7

The Border Medical Association says the NSW Health Minister was being deceptive in stating there would be a 50 per cent increase in beds at the Albury hospital after it is upgraded. The association's chair Barb Robertson was reacting to minister Ryan Park who told a parliamentary committee on Thursday that "once fully operationalised the new hospital complete will have around 380 beds and this is around about a 50 per cent increase from the 2019 bed base of 245".

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Hope for new hospice to help relieve LGH bed block

Launceston Examiner, General News, 24/02/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 2

The site for a state-of-the-art Northern hospice centre was chosen by the Tasmanian Liberal government this week. Health Minister Guy Barnett said the new hospice would be located at the current Allambi building at 3339 Howick Street.

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MP's war with Base

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 24/02/2024, Bernard Humphreys and Michael Difabrizio, Page 1

Mildura's state MP has publicly attacked the management of Mildura Base Public Hospital, suggesting financial mismanagement and saying it had lost the public's confidence. Nationals Member for Mildura Jade Benham this week used State Parliament to launch her attack, then followed up with a scathing column in today's Sunraysia Daily and a separate release to all media.

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'Inhumane' cut to palliative care funding

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 24/02/2024, Page 25

Doctors have hit out at "heartless and inhumane" delays in palliative care as new figures show reductions to promised funding exceed 30 per cent in most NSW regional areas. About \$401 million has been committed to palliative care services in the state over the next four years, amounting to an increase from previous years.

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Bulk-bill slide revealed

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 24/02/2024, Blair Jackson, Page 3

Fewer North Queensland GPs have bulk billing than a year ago and out-of-pocket costs to visit the doctor have gone up. Health directory Cleanbill has collected pricing and availability data of GPs and all other healthcare practices across Australia, and a new electorate breakdown report shows a dip in services in North Queensland.

Editorial: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

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New clinic step closer

Weekend Post, General News, 24/02/2024, Annabel Bowles, Page 13

A desperately needed new health clinic in the Daintree is a step closer after the transfer of land between two tiers of government. The Douglas Shire Council has sold a 10,000sqm property in Diwan that is earmarked to become home to the new Cow Bay primary health care centre.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Shane Love claims knives, makeshift weapons seized at Broome Regional Hospital

ABC Online, Other, 23/02/2024, Esse Deves

There are renewed concerns for the safety of patients and staff at one of Western Australia's regional hospitals as Opposition Leader Shane Love claims knives and makeshift weapons are being seized almost every day. Mr Love said he was "very disturbed" after witnessing a bag of weapons and staff wearing stab vests during a visit to Broome Hospital last year.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Dangerous system

The Saturday Paper, General News, 24/02/2024, Hannah Reekie, Page 28

Victoria's mental health royal commission has done little to fix a deeply flawed system. As someone who has been traumatised by the available care, the author says the first step towards repair is to value the insights of those with firsthand experience.

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Our mental health 'just as important as the economy'

Border Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Jodie O'Sullivan, Page 16

There's a woman who worked at one of the big banks 20 years ago who survived 19 armed robberies.

Chris Gambian, who was a senior trade union official for the finance sector, recalls that along with job security, "psycho-social safety" was the most pressing workplace issue. "At the time, we didn't call it that, of course," reflects the now executive director of Australians For Mental Health (AFMH).

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Women's trauma is not an illness

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 24/02/2024, Ali Anderson, Page 56

At work yesterday, I was collaborating with our Mental Health Team Leader to develop a form to track the time our Centre invests in supporting the rapidly increasing number women in immediate crisis who walk through our door. To ensure that we are ever responsive to the needs of the women who seek us out, and to lobby harder for funding in critical areas, it's important for us to understand and capture the reasons that drive women at breaking point to us.

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New study shows dancing is best exercise to combat depression

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 23/02/2024, Olivia Hebert

A new study indicates that dancing is one of the best forms of treatment for depression Australian researchers have published a study that shows that the best form of exercise to treat depression is dancing, beating out several exercises including walking or jogging, yoga, tai chi, and strength training among others.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Learn, earn and charge the taxpayer

Weekend Australian, General News, 24/02/2024, Natasha Bitá, Page 1

Taxpayers are likely to pay student nurses and teachers to learn on the job while universities will be banned from cherrypicking the smartest students before they finish high school, under sweeping university reforms. The final Universities Accord report will recommend that governments fund paid work placements for university students, who are currently expected to work for free for weeks on end during compulsory on-the-job training in schools and hospitals.

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

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Scholarship offer to upskill cancer nurses

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 24/02/2024, Wade Stephens, Page 25

Registered nurses in Mildura's cancer centre and clinics are being encouraged to apply for a Rotary scholarship, to pay for a Graduate Certificate in Cancer Nursing. In collaboration with Myeloma Australia, the Rotary Club of Camberwell has come to Mildura to promote scholarships to upskill nurses as a means of addressing blood cancer survival rates in regional areas, and survival rates from cancer more broadly.

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Rural stint is right medicine

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 24/02/2024, Carwyn Monck, Page 3

A cohort of medical students will gain hands-on clinical experience this year during a 12-month

placement with Rural Clinical School of WA's Kalgoorlie-Boulder branch. Twelve students will spend their penultimate year of study in the Goldfields taking part in a range of theoretical and hands-on learning experiences, including regular rotations at different hospital departments and local GP practices.

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Midwives fear for patients as staff shortages take their toll

Newcastle Herald, General News, 24/02/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 5

A whistleblower says midwives are regularly working 16- to 18-hour double shifts at Tamworth Hospital's maternity unit, amid severe staff shortages putting lives at risk. The unit had to turn away complicated pregnancies from February 16 to 19 due to the lack of staff, Hunter New England Health documents show.

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New registered nurse and care minutes requirements placing strain on AdventCare's Warburton aged care home

Upper Yarra Mail, Other, 23/02/2024, Callum Ludwig

Aged care homes in Australia have been required to have a registered nurse (RN) on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week since July 2023, implemented as a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. For some homes, including the AdventCare home in Warburton, this requirement has proved to be impossible to fulfil due to staff shortages, despite their best efforts.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Sport broadcast revamp urged

Daily Telegraph, General News, 24/02/2024, Jack Quail, Page 22

A controversial overhaul of Australia's anti-siphoning laws, which grant free-to-air television channels first dibs on broadcasting rights for major sporting events, should be amended to allow all free video platforms to negotiate broadcast deals, the NRL says. Fronting a Senate inquiry into new legislation which proposes to stop streaming services from outbidding free-to-air television networks, NRL corporate affairs boss Misha Zelinsky said a "technologically neutral" approach was needed to bolster the game's revenue and expansion.

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

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NRL calls a Kennedy

Courier Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Peter Badel, Page 1

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Australia's US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy joined forces to lobby American visa authorities to allow Broncos sensation Reece Walsh and Roosters star Brandon Smith to play in Las Vegas. The Courier-Mail can reveal the inside story of how Mr Albanese and Ms Kennedy emerged as the secret weapons ensuring the NRL's biggest stars, including Walsh and Smith, were cleared for the season kick-off in Sin City.

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Players' silence on footy knocks

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 24/02/2024, Daniel Renfrey, Page 11

Disturbing new research has revealed lucrative match payments in local football encouraged players to downplay, or in some cases altogether deny, concussion symptoms for fear of missing out on income. Adelaide Footy League chief John Kernahan said the league surveyed six clubs through 2022 and 2023 and found 70 percent of players who said they were paid to play also admitted to lying about concussion.

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Action and awareness of sport concussion must grow

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 24/02/2024, Annette Greenhow, Page 64

No pads. No helmets. No fear. That's the tagline in video advertisements the NRL is running in the US ahead of next week's historic rugby league season opener in Las Vegas. The glitzy event is set to be major international showcase for Australian sport with the Broncos, Sea Eagles, Rabbitohs and Roosters running out onto Allegiant Stadium, host of the recent 2024 Super Bowl.

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Angus Brayshaw's premature retirement shows why concussion is such a huge issue for the AFL and all contact sports

ABC Online, Other, 23/02/2024, Andrew McGarry

The decision to retire from a lucrative sporting career, one that has seen you reach the top of your chosen sport, cannot be an easy one. For Melbourne AFL player Angus Brayshaw, that decision was essentially made for him, as medical experts — looking at a range of neurological tests and other evidence — recommended that he be medically retired from the game, effective immediately.

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City bidding for World Cup action

Newcastle Herald, General News, 24/02/2024, Sage Swinton, Page 32

Newcastle will push to become a host city for the upcoming men's and women's Rugby World Cups as part of a plan proposed by the city's Labor councillors. The Labor majority have signed a notice of motion to the February 27 council meeting calling for the council to write to Rugby World Cup Local Operating Company chair Rod Eddington and director Phil Kearns as well as NSW Minister for Sport Steve Kamper advocating for Newcastle to be a host city.

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Australia in box seat to host 2026 women's Asian Cup as economic impact of World Cup revealed

Australia is all but certain to host the Women's Asian Cup in 2026 after potential rival nations withdrew their interest. Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan have pulled out of the race, Guardian Australia understands, leaving Australia in the box seat to win hosting rights for a second major international tournament in the space of three years, following last year's women's World Cup.

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Melbourne boss asked directly if club has a drugs culture

7news.com.au, Other, 23/02/2024, Anna Harrington

Melbourne football boss Alan Richardson insists the AFL club does not have a drug culture, despite the dramatic escalation of utility Joel Smith's anti-doping case. On Tuesday night, the AFL confirmed Sports Integrity Australia had charged Smith with three anti-doping rule violations (ADRVs) of the Australian Football Anti-Doping Code over alleged "trafficking or attempted trafficking" of cocaine to third parties.

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

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Public health sleeping giant? It's poor slumber

Weekend Australian, General News, 24/02/2024, Greg Bearup, Page 3

Australia is in the midst of a sleep crisis and, according to one expert, slumber is the sleeping giant of public health. Forty per cent of us are not getting the required seven to nine hours a night; more than 20 per cent of us have potentially deadly sleep apnoea (and most don't know it); and 15 per cent of us suffer from chronic insomnia.

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The superpower of sleep

Weekend Australian, Magazine, 24/02/2024, Greg Bearup, Page 24

A pioneering Australian study - filmed for a new show by documentary maker Dr Michael Mosley - highlights an emerging public health crisis.

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

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Immune cells key for fighting cystic fibrosis

Courier Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Page 31

Researchers have identified an opportunity to reduce infections in people living with cystic fibrosis. University of Queensland trio Matt Sweet, Kaustav Das Gupta and James Curson found a fault in the bacteriaking function of immune cells in people with CF and a potential way to get around it.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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Protein key to gut health

Courier Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Page 35

Australian researchers have identified a protein integral to gut health, a critical lead in the search for a treatment for Inflammatory Bowel Disease. La Trobe University research shows the removal of the protein BECLIN1 in mice causes a condition with similarities to IBD.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

In a heartbeat: smart watches helping to close the gap

Canberra Times, Other, 23/02/2024, Rudi Maxwell

When Aunt Mary Waites joined a research trial aimed at helping to reduce the risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, she saved her husband's life. When Aunt Mary, a Ngemba woman from Brewarrina in western NSW, had her blood pressure checked by the local Aboriginal Medical Service, as part of the study, it prompted her husband Lindsay to do the same.

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

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State and Federal Governments announce AOD support for Kimberley

Broome Advertiser, Other, 23/02/2024, Cain Andrews

As images of an Aboriginal woman in her 20s drinking hand sanitiser in the Kimberley hit newsstands on February 13 the State Government announced a new alcohol and other drug withdrawal service for the East Kimberley. Wunan Health in Kununurra will run a community-controlled low-medical withdrawal service, filling a crucial gap identified in the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025.

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

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AMA WA President backs Kimberley health provider's stand against banned drinkers register

Kimberley Echo, Other, 23/02/2024, Sarah Crawford

WA's peak body for doctors has backed the Kimberley's biggest primary health care provider that has decided to not refer patients to the Banned Drinkers Register against their will. Australian Medical Association WA president Michael Page said he supported, "in general" the stance by Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service to not refer patients to the BDR.

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

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Fears of cough plague

Courier Mail, General News, 24/02/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 27

Cases of potentially deadly whooping cough have doubled in Queensland as tens of thousands of children are overdue for their vaccinations and 20 per cent of pregnant women are not getting the jabs that protect their newborns. The falling vaccination rates are so dire the chief health officer John Gerrard has raised the alarm as he warns a whooping cough epidemic looms.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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

Stomach bug rise sparks pool fear

Weekend Post, General News, 24/02/2024, Dylan Nicholson, Page 13

Far North Queenslanders are being warned by public health officials to take precautions, particularly with swimming pools, as stomach bug cases spike in the region. Since the start of the year, 25 cryptosporidiosis cases have been reported in the Cairns region.

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Lilly's Alzheimer's super drug to be approved 'any day'

Weekend Australian, Business News, 24/02/2024, Eric Johnston, Page 25

The pharmaceutical giant behind breakthrough Alzheimer drug Donanemab expects approval from US regulators "any day" with Australian approval to follow later this year. The drug passed its final trial tests last year and has been shown to slow the progression of the early stages of Alzheimer's, which is now emerging as one of the leading causes of death, particularly for women.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#)

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Big Pharma's weight loss king only as good as the next hit

Weekend Australian, Business News, 24/02/2024, Eric Johnston, Page 25

David Ricks reckons the pharmaceutical industry has a lot to learn a lot from tech companies. It's a telling comment given Eli Lilly, the drug company he runs, is often described as the Nvidia of the healthcare world.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#)

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"It was absolutely one of the most intense things I've ever been through"

Sydney Morning Herald, Good Weekend Magazine, 24/02/2024, Kate Cole-Adams, Page 1

In a world-first Melbourne trial, Shannon Turner and 34 other terminally ill patients were given psychedelics to help them face end-of-life fears. They lift the lid on what it was like. [...] When the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) announced in February 2023 that Australia where the number of published high-level clinical psychedelic therapy trials totalled zero was about to reschedule psilocybin and MDMA (commonly called "ecstasy") for the treatment of entrenched depression and PTSD respectively, the psychedelics research world was blindsided.

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

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'Vulnerable' lured to frog poison

Daily Telegraph, General News, 24/02/2024, Savannah Pocock, Page 36

Amazonian frog poison triggered a fatal cardiac arrest in a Byron Shire woman who had become increasingly involved in alternative medicine, a coronial inquest has found. Mullumbimby's Natasha Lechner, 39, needlessly lost her life 2 years before the suspected tragic "kambo" death of Lismore man Jarrad Antonovich.

Similar coverage: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#)

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Natasha Lechner inquest: 'kambo' proponents underestimate its 'clear and identified risks', NSW coroner says

The Guardian, Other, 23/02/2024, Joe Hinchliffe

Vulnerable people are placing their trust in self-proclaimed healers who lack basic first aid training, a coroner has warned in handing down her findings into the death of a woman after a two-person ritual involving the poisonous mucus of an Amazonian frog. Natasha Lechner died suddenly and violently after a "kambo" ceremony in a Mullumbimby sharehouse on 8 March 2019 a time at which the

traditional South American medicine was largely unregulated in Australia. [...] In part due to Lechner's death, the Therapeutic Goods Administration had listed kambo a schedule 10 poison by the time of Antonovich's death, making it illegal.

[Read More](#)

Kambo guidelines do not reveal 'true risk' of frog poison, Natasha Lechner coronial inquest hears

ABC Online, Other, 23/02/2024, Hannah Ross

A frog toxin used in kambo ceremonies can cause death even in healthy people, the New South Wales state coroner has concluded. [...] In delivering her findings at the Byron Bay Court House today, the coroner said she would have recommended the manufacture, supply and use of the frog toxin be made illegal. However, as the Therapeutic Goods Administration had already listed it as a banned substance in 2021, there was no need for further recommendations.

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TGA warns popular herbal supplement could cause sudden vomiting, diarrhoea and liver injury

9News, Other, 23/02/2024, Lara Pearce

A warning has been issued over a popular herbal supplement sold in supermarkets and pharmacies after several Australians developed serious liver injuries and others were hospitalised with sudden vomiting and diarrhoea. The herb *Withania somnifera*, commonly known as Ashwagandha or winter cherry, is commonly used to reduce anxiety, improve sleep and build strength. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration is investigating its use after dozens of Australians reported gastrointestinal problems after taking the herb.

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Patients being scammed by fake semaglutide websites: TGA

Australian Doctor, Other, 23/02/2024, Carmel Sparke

Patients trying to buy semaglutide online have been scammed with orders that never arrive, products that are not semaglutide or are not medically suitable, the TGA says. It follows a doctor's warning to GPs to be careful when prescribing compounded versions of the drug for weight loss.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Wallaby's cannabis fix for anxiety

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 24/02/2024, Mikaela Wilkes, Page 27

Former Wallabies winger Drew Mitchell retired in 2017 as Australia's highest try scorer in Rugby World Cup history. But with retirement emerged an unwelcome companion - anxiety.

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FOOD STANDARDS

Plastic fears for breads

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 24/02/2024, Page 30

A gluten-free product range has been pulled from shelves over fears it is contaminated with plastic. The Gluten Freedom range sold at IGA supermarkets and independent retailers across the country was recalled by Food Standards ANZ on Thursday.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily](#)

[Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Channel 9, Nine News, 23/02/2024, Georgie Gardner

It will soon be easier to identify allergens in food products from Sunday. Labels will be clearer under changes to the Food Standards Code. Individual tree nuts will be labelled in bold with an icon along with common allergens such as eggs, milk, wheat and fish. Individual cereals, including barley, rye and oats must also be specifically labelled.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Perth\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Darwin\)](#)

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