



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 27th February 2024

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister Wells](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#)
| [Assistant Minister Kearney](#) | [Assistant Minister McCarthy](#) | [Department](#)
| [Coronavirus](#) | [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Population Health](#)
| [Cancer, Hearing and Chronic Conditions](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
| [Medicare Benefits and Digital Health](#) | [Benefits Integrity](#)
| [Health Systems Strategies](#) | [Sport](#) | [Health Economics and Research](#) |
[First Nations Health](#) | [Office of Health Protection and Emergency Management](#)
| [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) | [Office for Drug Control](#) | [Food Standards](#)
| [AICIS](#)

LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Courier Mail \(page 1\)](#) reports that a lack of critical air conditioning and air filter maintenance at the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane caused fungal infections in five heart transplant patients in 2023.
- The [Courier Mail \(page 1\)](#) reports that the Australian Dental Association has warned that vaping may cause tooth decay, gum disease and oral cancer, with trends of oral diseases being noted in young adult patients.
- The [West Australian \(page 3\)](#) reports that research published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology has found that blocking the pathway of beta common cytokines proteins can inhibit the occurrence of severe asthma.
- [The Guardian \(online\)](#) reports that the First Nations man Ricky Hampson Jr died less than 24 hours after being erroneously discharged from Dubbo base hospital, with a doctor admitting that his incorrect diagnosis of drug-use symptoms was “without foundation”.
- [The Guardian \(online\)](#) reports that the Tasmanian salmon producer Tassal was found to have used 368.5 kgs of the antibiotic oxytetracycline (OTC) at its two farms last year. The EPA limits

OTC residue in food for human consumption at 200µg/kg; a sample of blue mackerel found near the salmon facilities had OTC residues of 960µg/kg.

- **ABC News** reports that Brisbane's Wesley Hospital has apologised to a woman 14 years after surgeon Vahid Reza Adib used her in a human trial without written consent, with the Medical Board of Australia's Performance and Professional Standards Panel finding he had "unsatisfactory professional performance" and "unprofessional conduct".

MINISTER BUTLER

Where there's smoke, there's a failed vaping policy

Daily Telegraph, General News, 27/02/2024, Ross Fitzgerald, Page 13

In the past decade, Australia has witnessed slow wage growth, higher inflation, mortgage stress, prohibitive energy prices and a rising cost of living. Yet the Albanese government has done little to alleviate economic and social pressures that especially bite in Labor electorates. [...] Yet federal Health Minister Mark Butler has ramped up even further the restrictions on vaping.

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Worries bubble as close but crucial polling day looms

Canberra Times, Other, 26/02/2024, Tess Ikonou and Kat Wong

The taxes, house prices and hospital conditions of one electorate have dominated Parliament House as anxieties simmer over its upcoming by-election. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler also spruiked the Victorian Labor government's upgrades to Frankston Hospital, while lambasting the health sector cuts made when the opposition was in power.

Also reported by: [Bendigo Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Ararat Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Victorian payroll tax may double regional emergency department visits

Geelong Times, Other, 26/02/2024, Angus Smith

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. [...] Earlier this month, federal Health Minister Mark Butler called on his Victorian counterparts to review the controversial tax.

Also reported by: [Surf Coast Times \(Online\)](#), [Bellarine Times \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

New reports shows bulk billing rates rise within the Gilmore electorate

Milton Ulladulla Times, Other, 26/02/2024, Glenn Ellard

A new report by Cleanbill said that of the clinics taking on new patients in the electorate, 21.3 per cent bulk-billed adults who did not have concessions cards, attending for a standard consultation. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said it showed the decision to triple bulk billing incentives was "a game changer".

[Read More](#)

New national awards chance to shine a light on GP excellence

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 26/02/2024

GPs and clinics are encouraged to nominate their peers for the Stronger Medicare Awards, aimed at recognising those delivering outstanding care. Award winners will be announced at a ceremony in Canberra in October. [...] Instead, Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said the awards are a way for Australia to honour and say thank you to healthcare professionals for their effort and excellence.

[Read More](#)

Universal bulk billing practices are going extinct

The Medical Republic, Other, 26/02/2024, Laura Woodrow

The number of practices that bulk bill everyone for everything declined in nine out of 10 federal electorates over the course of 2023, leaving nine electorates with none, according to data from a new Cleanbill report. [...] "As Mark Butler explained last month, the Cleanbill report measures how many practices fully bulk bill every single patient that comes through their door for every single service," Professor Robson told The Medical Republic.

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Medibank's \$50 cash boost for thousands of Aussies

Yahoo! Finance Australia, Other, 26/02/2024, Tamika Seeto

Health insurance customers will receive at least \$50 through the latest cashback scheme. Thousands of Aussies will be getting a slice of \$215 million in cash back from major health insurer Medibank. [...] In December, Health Minister Mark Butler rejected initial proposals from insurers - believed to be as high as 6 per cent.

[Read More](#)

2SM, Afternoons, 26/02/2024, Brent Bultitude

Bultitude reports anger over youth vaping has triggered concerns in Parliament about government policies that are meant to stamp out the sale of illegal nicotine. He adds in a new sign of frustration with a Federal Government pledge to quash the black market, Coalition MPs are warning about the skyrocketing sale of vapes to children and the rapid spread of illicit tobacco and vape stores in local communities despite Health Minister Mark Butler's plans to restrict vaping to people with a doctor's prescription only.

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER WELLS

Legends flock to launch Foxtel's fare with appropriate fanfare

The Australian, General News, 27/02/2024, James Madden, Page 7

Sporting legends, actors, media powerbrokers and CEOs gathered at Parliament House in Canberra on Monday night for the unveiling of Foxtel's content slate for 2024. [...] Interim CEO of Netball Australia Stacey West, Warner Bros boss Michael Brooks and head of NBCUniversal Chris Taylor also attended, as did federal Sports Minister Anika Wells, Arts Minister Tony Burke and opposition communications spokesman David Coleman.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

Koori Radio, Blackchat, 26/02/2024, Lola Forester

Forester says Senator and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy recently opened a public consultation on strengthening the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy until March. She adds through the Buy Australia Plan, the Albanese Government is committed to providing more opportunities to First Nation businesses and increasing sustainable employment, strengthening the IPP and will be key to delivering on those commitments.

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[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

Who is best placed to measure teacher quality?

The Educator Australia, Other, 26/02/2024

A recent (controversial) suggestion deserves a closer look, writes ACU Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership Dr Paul Kidson by Dr Paul Kidson Some high profile and significant leadership roles are up for grabs. [...] Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Paul Kelly, has been a "public health physician and epidemiologist" for more than 30 years; state/territory CMOs have similar backgrounds.

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[Back to Top](#)

CORONAVIRUS

Keeping up with Covid-19

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 27/02/2024, Sue Dunlevy, Page 5

More than 1000 Australians a day are catching Covid. And if it is six months since you had your last Covid vaccine or infection, you are vulnerable, experts have warned. Unlike the flu, Covid is not seasonal, evidenced by the fact Australia recently weathered a peak in infections in the middle of summer, whereas influenza is traditionally a winter virus.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

VIC council axes in-home aged care services

Aged Care Insite, Other, 26/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

In a council meeting last Wednesday, staff from the City of Port Phillip, south of Melbourne, have decided to end in-home aged care services. Around 650 residents rely on these services, which include domestic assistance, personal care, respite care, shopping assistance, property maintenance, and home modifications.

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Strategy launched to better connect care

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 26/02/2024, Christopher Kelly

Advanced information sharing and real-time data exchange is "absolutely crucial" for the aged care sector, says an industry expert. "Because this is where complex, chronic long-term health conditions exist," said Dr Steve Hambleton – chief clinical advisor at the Australian Digital Health Agency.

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'Beyond The Chart': A pioneering industry event navigating the age of change

HelloCare, Other, 26/02/2024, Sneha Krishnan

The inaugural bestmed 2024 Conference focuses on where technology, research and innovation are leading the future of medication management for aged care, home care and pharmacy. The event focuses on where current and future technology and developments can be used to further improve safety, compliance and efficiencies within the aged care sector.

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Aged care provider Regis' IHFY24 profit surge sends shares to pre-COVID-19 high

The Weekly Source, Other, 26/02/2024, Caroline Egan

Australia's only remaining listed residential aged care provider has announced a \$16.3 million profit after tax before amortisation of beds for the six months to 31 December 2023, a profit more than five times the result of the 1H23 result. A \$28.5 million write down on the value of bed licences net of tax, ahead of the deregulation of bed licences on 1 July 2024, took Regis Healthcare's net loss after tax to \$12.

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ABC Radio Darwin , Drive, 26/02/2024, Liz Trevaskis

Interview with Sue Shearer, CEO, Council on the Ageing, on assault incidents and how they affect the elderly. Shearer says older people should be able to conduct their daily activities inside and outside their homes in complete safety.

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Extreme heat driving early births

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 27/02/2024, Angus Thomson and Megan Gorrey, Page 11

Pregnant women exposed to extreme heat are more likely to have a premature baby, analysis of more than 1 million Sydney births has shown, sparking a push for more green space to combat the health effects of climate change. The study of more than 1.2 million births over two decades found exposure to extreme temperatures in the third trimester increased the risk of preterm birth by up to 61 per cent, while the risk was reduced for women living in suburbs with more access to green space.

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Vapes: The vile tooth

Courier Mail, General News, 27/02/2024, Sue Dunlevy, Page 1

Vapes are wrecking the teeth and jaws of young people in a similar way to illicit drugs including cocaine and methamphetamine. The damage is occurring so fast users aged in their 20s are requiring expensive crown work that is usually the preserve of older patients. "When you vape and the same with cigarette smoking and a lot of those illicit drugs as well they cause mouth dryness," The Australian Dental Association's vaping expert Dr Sue-Ching Yeoh said.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#)

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Adoptions plummet despite reforms making it easier for carers to adopt

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 26/02/2024, Caitlin Fitzsimmons

The number of children being adopted out of the child protection system has plummeted by 60 per cent since 2020 despite reforms to make it easier for foster carers to adopt. In 2022-23, just 60 children were adopted from out-of-home care – which includes foster families, kinship care and residential institutions – across NSW, down from 89 the year before. [...] Nationally, more than two out of five children in out-of-home care are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows.

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It's easy to forget the basic drivers of our economic and social development

Canberra Times, Other, 26/02/2024, Stephen Anthony

With all the noise these days about potential productivity drivers (for example, artificial intelligence, modernising infrastructure, renewable energy investment etc) it is easy to forget the basic drivers of economic and social development which are fundamental. [...] What is ironic is the fact that Calvary has always been measured to be the far more efficient and effective operation based on Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data.

[Read More](#)

Property investors are swallowing up even more of the housing market

NEWS.com.au, Other, 26/02/2024, Tarric Brooker

In Australian politics there are relatively few issues outside of foreign policy that the two major parties can agree on. But there is one issue where both sides ostensibly agree: greater levels of home ownership. [...] The AIHW data instead illustrates a very different trend: the rise of the property investor.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Family's plea for help

Northern Territory News, General News, 27/02/2024, Alex Treacy, Page 1

Two-year-old Alice Springs toddler Annabelle Tilmouth is bubbly, has a smile that lights up the room, and loves nothing more than playing with her twin Lucy and younger sister Matilda. She is also unlikely to be able to walk without intense therapeutic intervention that is beyond the financial means of her White Gums parents Jemma, an NT Police liaison officer, and Jamie, a glazier.

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Asthma sufferers may soon breathe easier

West Australian, General News, 27/02/2024, Page 3

Australian researchers have found proteins called beta common cytokines are responsible for the inflammation and scarring of airways in severe and steroid-resistant asthma. Inflammation and tissue damage is usually caused by immune cells entering the lungs because of viruses or allergens that irritate airways.

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

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Allergy breakthrough

Courier Mail, General News, 27/02/2024, Page 5

A drug long used to treat asthma can help protect people from dangerous or fatal food allergies, a study published on Sunday in the New England Journal of Medicine has found. The randomised study tested the drug Xolair (chemical name omalizumab) on 118 children known to be allergic to peanuts and at least one other food, like milk or eggs.

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Brother's life-saving stem cell donation

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 27/02/2024, Gabriel Rule, Page 2

Bendigo-raised Olivia Slattery says her bone marrow disease and blood cancer diagnosis left doctors "gobsmacked". It was a few days before Christmas 2023 when Ms Slattery was told something she'd never even heard of, myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), was skulking around her body tearing up blood cells. "It really, really rocks you," she said.

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'An eggciting time': Egg consumption beneficial for older Aus

Aged Care Insite, Other, 26/02/2024, Arshmah Jamal

A new partnership between Australian Eggs and Hearts4Heart aims to educate Australians about the health benefits of eggs on their hearts and cardiovascular systems. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) affected more than four million Australians, costing the economy \$5bn each year – more than any other disease.

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

'Come clean on deaths'

Herald Sun, General News, 27/02/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 10

There are calls for greater government transparency on patient deaths following revelations dozens of Victorian babies died after failings and missed opportunities in their mothers' care. The state's peak doctor group said more information on the 36 infants who died between January 2017 and June 2022 was needed, while the opposition criticised the state government's lack of detail less than a decade after the Bacchus Marsh baby scandal.

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

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Source of hospital fungus

Courier Mail, General News, 27/02/2024, Madura McCormack, Page 1

High fungal counts in a storage room at the Prince Charles Hospital were caused by a lack of routine maintenance of critical air filters and airconditioning being at the wrong temperature, internal documents have revealed. But a deadly series of fungal infections among heart transplant patients at the hospital was not a cluster event, according to interim Queensland Health investigation findings.

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Primary health support tops AMA election wishlist

Hobart Mercury, General News, 27/02/2024, Rob Inglis, Page 8

Stronger general practice, more beds in the public hospital system, and tougher tobacco regulations headline the Australian Medical Association's wishlist ahead of the state election. The AMA on Monday launched its top five priorities for the election, with Tasmanian president, Dr John Saul, saying the state's medical workforce needed greater support in both the public and acute sectors in order to improve the broader health system.

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'Threat to services': record hospital shortfall nears \$1.5b

Ballarat Courier, General News, 27/02/2024, Ben Silvester, Page 2

Victoria's hospital system has entered uncharted territory, plunging further into the red than ever before prompting serious concerns about staff cuts, longer wait times and access to care. Internal health department figures, sighted by ACM, showed the state's public hospitals were \$1.46 billion in deficit in the six months to December 2023, with every single regional health service recording a shortfall.

Bulk-bill death throes

Cairns Post, General News, 27/02/2024, Annabel Bowles, Page 3

As few as five per cent of Cairns doctor clinics are completely bulk-billed, new data reveals. Figures released by online healthcare directory Cleanbill show that about 31 per cent of all medical clinics in the Leichhardt boundary are fully bulk-billed. But when state-funded clinics in remote Far North communities are taken out of the equation, the bulk-billing rate drops to a staggering 4.8 per cent of services.

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When mother really does know best

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 27/02/2024, Will Keech, Page 7

An Armstrong Creek woman's motherly instinct to go against a doctor's diagnosis has saved her toddler's life. Nicole Lamont and Luke Spaeth's daughter Tilly, 2, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia last July. The couple now want to raise awareness of the good work of staff at the Royal Children's Hospital.

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Hospital staff parking shows rules 'inconsistent'

Newcastle Herald, General News, 27/02/2024, Sage Swinton, Page 2

Newcastle's Labor councillors have called out the reinstatement of paid staff parking at John Hunter Hospital as another "inconsistent" example of the city's classification as both regional and metropolitan. The Labor bloc has lodged a notice of motion to the February 27 Newcastle council meeting to seek answers about the NSW government's decision to reintroduce parking fees for nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health workers at John Hunter, Calvary Mater and James Fletcher hospitals from February 1.

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Doctor slams design of new city hospital

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 27/02/2024, Christine Schindler, Page 3

A leading Toowoomba doctor has called for a "proper" hospital, as a round of community feedback closes for Toowoomba's new \$1.3bn hospital. Toowoomba and Darling Downs Local Medical Association president Dr Peter Hopson weighed in on the 118 bed hospital slated to be completed in 2027, and said the region needed a "\$3bn proper hospital" with an additional 500 beds.

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ALP and CLP have committed to a conscience vote on a future Voluntary Assisted Dying

The Courier Mail, Other, 26/02/2024, Zizi Averill

If a bill offering Territorians the right to die was presented to parliament today, only 40 per cent of NT politicians would actively support it. Chief Minister Eva Lawler and Opposition Leader Lia Finocchiaro have both committed their parties to a free vote, allowing members to be guided by their conscience when a voluntary assisted dying Bill is presented.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#).

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Transgender woman shares her story of struggle within Cairns health services

Cairns Post, Other, 26/02/2024, Kate Stephenson

A transgender woman claims a doctor refused to use her name when she was treated at a Cairns health facility as she speaks out to the state of transgender care in Australia. While for many, the ability

to see a GP and access critical treatment is simple, for transgender patients hurdles including transphobia, long waitlists and Medicare snubs stand in the way of basic care.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Brisbane surgeon found to have used woman in human trial without written consent

ABC Online, Other, 26/02/2024, Jemima Burt and Rory Callinan

A prominent Brisbane surgeon used a woman in a human trial without her written consent while operating on a hernia that may have never existed, medical board documents reveal. Dr Vahid Reza Adib was investigated by the Medical Board of Australia's Performance and Professional Standards Panel in 2011 over the trial, which was only supposed to be for men.

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Aboriginal man died after being 'erroneously' diagnosed with drug-related illness, inquest hears

The Guardian, Other, 26/02/2024, Eliza Spencer

Ricky Hampson Jr, 36, died of perforated stomach ulcers less than 24 hours after being discharged from Dubbo base hospital in 2021. Sign up for the Rural Network email newsletter. Join the Rural Network group on Facebook to be part of the community. A doctor who incorrectly diagnosed an Aboriginal man with drug-related side-effects less than 24 hours before he died of perforated stomach ulcers has admitted his diagnosis was "without foundation", an inquest has heard.

Also reported by: [SBS \(Online\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Lawyer explains the potential class action against medicines review program

Australian Doctor, Other, 26/02/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse

A lawyer working on a potential class action against a Department of Veterans' Affairs medicines review program says patients did not realise their health data were being shared with researchers. The Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutic Education Service (Veterans' MATES) was shut down by the Federal Government last week after the department's independent Human Research Ethics Committee withdrew ethics approval.

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Voluntary assisted dying is not a form of suicide

Australian Doctor, Other, 26/02/2024, Marc Trabsky, Michaela Estelle Okninski and Neera Bhatia

Voluntary assisted dying is now lawful in every Australian state and will soon begin in the ACT. However, it's illegal to discuss it via telehealth. That means people who live in rural and remote areas, or those who can't physically go to see a doctor, may not be able to access the VAD scheme.

Similar coverage reported by: [Aged Care Insite \(Online\)](#).

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GP 'push to corporatise' pharmacy criticised

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 26/02/2024, Megan Haggan

Two weeks after its representatives appeared at Queensland's the Economics and Governance Committee – Inquiry into the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023, the Australian Medical Association has issued a statement outlining its opposition.

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RACGP voices opposition to pharmacist-initiated antivirals

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 26/02/2024, Jack Ramsey

Steps to ensure "there are no perverse incentives for prescribing" need to be taken before pharmacists

could be allowed to prescribe Covid-19 antiviral medicines, Dr Nicole Higgins, the president of the Royal Australia College of General Practitioners says.

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Misconduct management must be 'strong and robust': RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 26/02/2024

A college submission into professional sexual violations by health practitioners says laws must 'strike the right balance' between patient protection and procedural justice. Around one third of all doctors in training have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. The RACGP has called for better protection for patients and healthcare practitioners against sexual misconduct in the workplace, as part of proposed reforms to national regulations.

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ABC, ABC News, 26/02/2024, Jeremy Fernandez

Dubbo Hospital has apologised after an inquest heard Aboriginal man Ricky Dougie Hampson died hours after being incorrectly diagnosed and discharged. The inquest heard that a doctor in the emergency department believed Hampson had a condition common among cannabis users, and that no further diagnoses were investigated. The inquest is examining whether Hampson's cannabis use, his Aboriginal background and previous prison sentences had any bearing on his diagnosis.

[Play Now](#)

ABC News, ABC Evening News, 26/02/2024, Joe O'Brien

The Wesley Hospital has apologised to an elderly woman, 14 years after a surgeon used her in a trial without her informed consent. The medical board applied strict conditions on Dr Reza Adib's registration after a two-year investigation reprimanded him for unprofessional conduct, but they were watered down months later by a disputes tribunal.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 26/02/2024, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

New figures show that fewer people are going to the GP for bulk billing expenses, that's half as many as last year. More than a decade after a medical rebate that was designed to cover 85% of costs was implemented, it now covers only 40%. A Federal Government policy was introduced in November to help lower costs but doesn't cover gap fees.

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Channel 9, Today, 26/02/2024, Karl Stefanovic and Sarah Abo

Interview with Maria Boulton, President, Queensland AMA, on 87% of electorates seeing a decline in bulk billing last year with 10% having no bulk billing clinics at all. It's a record slump, forcing many Australians to put off medical appointments. Boulton says those stats are confronting but they are not surprised because, for decades, successive governments have failed to fund the Medicare rebates that patients use to access their GPs adequately.

Interview continues on: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

School's bid to stop mental hospital fails

Herald Sun, General News, 27/02/2024, Himangi Singh, Page 6

A school has lost its appeal to stop a 24-hour mental health hospital being built next door. Alphington Grammar School appealed to VCAT after Yarra Council approved the application from Health Care Group in February last year. The school said the facility which would offer overnight and same-day

mental health services for those suffering mild to moderate psychiatric conditions, as well as trauma and stress-related disorders would pose a risk to students.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Nursing, midwifery, and care worker workforce reform

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 26/02/2024

Nursing and midwifery workforce reform in Australia is essential for adapting to changing healthcare needs, improving patient outcomes, addressing health disparities, and ensuring that the right number of skilled professionals are empowered and enabled to provide timely and high-quality care. It demands strategic planning, improved education, and policy changes to help build a sustainable workforce that meets the increasing demand for healthcare services.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Accord 'will link unis to job training'

The Australian, General News, 27/02/2024, Joe Kelly and Sarah Ison, Page 5

Skills and Training Minister Brendan O'Connor says the sweeping Universities Accord will help "bring universities and vocational education and training together", amid union concerns more must be done urgently to boost apprentice numbers. Mr O'Connor will tell the Universities Australia summit in Canberra on Tuesday the reform blueprint the biggest review of tertiary education in Australia in 15 years is an opportunity for the VET sector to allow workers to better complement their education with necessary training qualifications.

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

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'Rebuild general practice workforce'

Burnie Advocate, General News, 27/02/2024, Benjamin Seeder, Page 8

The state president of the Australian Medical Association has said that both major political parties must work with the federal government to rebuild the general practice workforce and make it a more attractive option for doctors in training. At a briefing to outline his election priorities on Monday, Dr John Saul said developing general practice was at the top of the AMA's state priorities despite the general practice being the federal government's responsibility.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#).

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Record number of trainee psychiatrists working out west

Central Western Daily, General News, 27/02/2024, Riley Krause, Page 5

A record number of trainee psychiatrists have started work across Orange and the wider region in 2024. The cohort of 14 new doctors will undertake work across different mental health units and services within the Western NSW Local Health District. Four will complete a term in mental health and then return to the general hospital, while ten of these doctors have chosen to specialize in psychiatry.

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CareFlight NT records 7,900 patient retrievals in 2023

The Courier Mail, Other, 26/02/2024, Jordan McCarthy

Rescues ranged from early labours in Elcho Island to Irukandji stings off Dundee Beach for the NT's number one aeromedical service. The Northern Territory's leading aeromedical service, CareFlight,

clocked its busiest year on record in 2023 amassing a whopping 7900 patient retrievals.

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Instagram account defends outing dozens of doctors it says are anti-Semitic

Australian Doctor, Other, 26/02/2024, Sarah Simpkins

A doctor posted by the account says others will be intimidated from sharing their views. An anonymous Instagram account that posts pictures and workplaces of doctors it accuses of anti-Semitism says it is targeting racists. The account Notmydoctor48 has made around 100 posts, including accusing one doctor of "hiding Nazis in the closet" and a GP of "spreading baseless Hamas propaganda".

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Report backs paid clinical placements for nursing students

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 26/02/2024, Robert Fedele

The federal government should provide financial support for nursing students undertaking mandatory clinical placements as part of their courses, the highly-anticipated Universities Accord final report has recommended. The report makes 47 recommendations for change it says are 'urgently' needed to meet Australia's future skills challenges – including increasing the tertiary attainment rate from 60% to at least 80% of Australians in the workforce by 2050, moving to a needs-based funding model to ensure under-represented groups receive greater access to higher education, and modernising the HECS/HELP loan system, moving to a student contribution scheme based on lifetime earnings.

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Medical students may hold the key to workforce shortage woes

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 26/02/2024, Annika Howells

As workforce shortages continue to plague the Australian health care system, an innovative program utilising final year medical students as Clinical Assistants could help hospitals struggling to fill rosters. A Perspective article, published in the Medical Journal of Australia, proposes that the Clinical Assistant program designed by Western Health in Victoria during the COVID-19 pandemic could be adapted to plug critical gaps as hospitals across Australia struggle with unprecedented workforce shortages.

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Donating ticks all the boxes

Hobart Mercury, General News, 27/02/2024, Tia Ewen, Page 1

David Wightman was given the gift of life when his mum donated her kidney after he was diagnosed with kidney failure 25 years ago. "It was quite an emotional experience," Mr Wightman said. "Mum said it wasn't a decision for her. Straightaway she knew she was just going to donate.

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How we lead nation in gift of life stakes

Hobart Mercury, General News, 27/02/2024, Samantha Landy, Page 5

A nation-leading 83 per cent of Tasmanian families are saying 'yes' to their loved ones becoming organ donors when asked. The state was also home to 21 deceased donors in 2023 equating to a rate of 36.7 donors per million population that was the highest recorded in Australia, ahead of South Australia at 26.5.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

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Little state has got a big heart

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 27/02/2024, Page 14

Organ donation is a crucial act of compassion and generosity that is known to save lives. Despite its importance, many people are hesitant to consent to organ donation due to various misconceptions or fears. By consenting, individuals can leave behind a powerful legacy of kindness and altruism. One donor can potentially save up to eight lives through organ donation and enhance the lives of many more through tissue donation.

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No clowning around with fundraiser

Launceston Examiner, General News, 27/02/2024, Saree Salter, Page 7

Most people would agree bringing laughter and happiness to the faces of sick children in Tasmanian hospitals is a worthy cause. The Humour Foundation wants Tasmanians to support the well-being of sick children in local hospitals during this year's annual roadside appeal from February 26 - March 2.

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The gift of life

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 27/02/2024, Cas Garvey, Page 12

Organ donation is a selfless act that brings some comfort during a family's worst time. Knowing my Dad could save many more lives after he suddenly passed away just over a year ago gave our family some comfort during the worst time in our lives. It didn't take away our pain, but it really helped to know the very last thing he did was the perfect example of his selfless nature in always helping others.

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[Back to Top](#)

SPORT

Digital sport revolution

The Australian, Business News, 27/02/2024, Robert Gottlieb, Page 21

What happened at Arrowhead stadium at Kansas City on January 13 was a signal of the fundamental changes looming in global marketing and eventually the revenue base of Australian sporting events. At the unroofed Arrowhead, a month before Taylor Swift was due to arrive in Melbourne, she braved temperatures of minus 20 the fourth-coldest game in National Football League history to support her boyfriend Travis Kelce, who was playing for the Kansas City Chiefs in a game leading to the finals.

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What are anti-siphoning laws? A Crikey clarifier

Crikey, Other, 26/02/2024, Daanyal Saeed

The Albanese government, especially its Communications Minister Michelle Rowland, has made a big song and dance about its changes to anti-siphoning and prominence legislation. Last week, almost every major media executive in the country, as well as a number of sporting executives, showed up to Parliament to have their say on proposed changes to anti-siphoning and prominence laws. But what is anti-siphoning, and why does it affect you?

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Government flags changes to HECS and placement pay

ABC Online, Other, 26/02/2024, Claudia Long

University students could get cost of living relief in the federal budget, with the education minister considering changes to HECS repayments and unpaid placements. The biggest review of universities in decades has recommended sweeping changes to better financially support students and get more people from low-income backgrounds into uni.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Violence survivors to get as-SiS-tance

Hobart Mercury, General News, 27/02/2024, Jake Smith, Page 17

A one-of-its-kind service has been set up to support Aboriginal victims, writes Jake Smith SiS is the dedicated Family Violence Prevention Legal Service of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service. SiS, established in September 2022, has worked to set up a model that is holistic and provides both legal and non-legal wrap-around supports for Aboriginal victim/survivors of family and/or sexual violence. It is a one-of-its-kind service in Tasmania.

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Tourism Central Australia calls on NT government to relax bottle shop trade restrictions

ABC Online, Other, 26/02/2024, Stewart Brash and Lee Robinson

Central Australia's tourism peak body has urged the NT government to relax bottle shop trading restrictions in Alice Springs in a bid to turn around the fortunes of the tourism industry. In January 2023, the Northern Territory government forced the closure of Alice Springs bottle shops on Mondays and Tuesdays and limited trading hours from 3–7pm on other days, in response to a wave of alcohol-fuelled violence and crime.

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Premier dabbles in pill testing, cannabis reform

Herald Sun, General News, 27/02/2024, Shannon Deery, Page 19

Drug reform is rarely an easy sell. On the one hand you have advocates who say it saves lives, on the other you have critics who argue it simply green-lights drug use. Which is why it is surprising to see

Jacinta Allan tackle such a divisive issue, with the government actively considering a pill-testing trial while reportedly going cold on a second injecting room for Melbourne's CBD.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#)

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Kids flu cases predicted to spike if vaccine rates remain low

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 26/02/2024

GPs have been urged to promote the vaccine among patients with young children, with just 28% of kids receiving the lifesaving immunisation. Just 28% of children received a flu vaccination last year. With this year's flu season looming, the RACGP is calling on parents to get their kids vaccinated early, as more children continue to miss out on the vital protection.

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No more anthrax cases reported

Shepparton News Online, Other, 26/02/2024, Geoff Adams

No further anthrax cases have been reported from northern Victoria, while a big vaccination campaign is under way. The first cases were reported on February 9 at a farm property north-east of Shepparton. A total of 10 beef cattle across two properties have died. Almost 6000 cattle and sheep have been vaccinated as part of the response so far, with private veterinarians working alongside members of Agriculture Victoria's animal health team.

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Antibiotics found in wild fish near Tasmanian salmon farms at nearly five times allowed limit, reports show

The Guardian, Other, 26/02/2024, Bob Burton

Tasmania's largest salmon company, Tassal, has revealed wild fish at one of its salmon farms contained antibiotic residues at almost five times the allowed level. In another case, there were low-level antibiotic traces in wild fish caught more than seven kilometres from another Tassal salmon farm.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 26/02/2024, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

Victoria could soon trial pill testing across the state's medical clinics in a new bid to curb drug overdoses, instead of building a second safe injecting room in Melbourne. The debate over treatment for drug users has come under the spotlight after a mass MDMA overdose at the Hardmission Dance Festival which saw eight patients placed in a coma.

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

TGA issues fines following raids

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 26/02/2024

A NSW-based individual has been issued 13 fines totalling \$42,900 by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in relation to alleged advertising and supply breaches of the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989.

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Finally, there's a new medication for endometriosis.

Mamamia, Other, 26/02/2024, Erin Docherty

One in seven Australian women are estimated to have endometriosis One in seven. That's hundreds of thousands of women. [...] A once-daily tablet, the medication has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of symptoms associated with endometriosis.

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The mental health side effects of weight loss drugs no one is talking about.

Mamamia, Other, 26/02/2024, Erin Docherty

It's no secret that weight loss drugs have exploded in popularity. Previously used only in the social circles of Hollywood, the diabetes medication has gone mainstream and swiftly become more in demand than ever before. Used to restrict hunger and lose weight, it's been dubbed the 'miracle cure' for obesity. The catch? When it comes to the long-term side effects, there's a lot we still don't know.

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Regulators join up

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 26/02/2024

Ahpra and a number of national boards convened a forum in Melbourne last Fri to address the use of unregistered medicinal cannabis products, which has spiralled from around 18,000 patients using products in 2019 to more than one million patients using medicinal cannabis this year. The forum included all the state and territory health departments, ACT Human Rights Commission, Pharmacy Board of Australia, the TGA, ACCC, among many others who all wanted a "clearer picture of the medicinal cannabis landscape and to strengthen a joined up regulatory approach".

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Is filler finished? The changing face of cosmetic injectables

SBS, Other, 26/02/2024, Daisy Henry

Some celebrities and social media personalities are leading a trend to dissolve filler and reverse cosmetic treatments in favour of a more natural look. But are cosmetic procedures now yesterday's fad? "I haven't seen what I've looked like in years," reality star Tilly Whitfeld said in a recent TikTok

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Addict aid close to by-election

Herald Sun, General News, 27/02/2024, Jade Gailberger, Page 6

The Albanese government has spent thousands of dollars to ensure addicts have access to treatment in Frankston, after a GP clinic providing more than 10 per cent of Victoria's methadone services announced it was shutting. The Herald Sun last month revealed there were fears hundreds of abandoned patients would flood streets and hospitals, creating a crime hotspot in the area ahead of the Dunkley by-election on March 2.

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[Back to Top](#)

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