



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 24th March 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)** (page 1) reports that a Queensland Health blitz has seen \$27m in illicit tobacco and vapes taken off the streets since July last year.
- **[Sunday Territorian](#)** (page 5) reports Northern Territory Health Minister Selena Uibo has acknowledged the rules around Covid vaccines for frontline health staff were "a bit of a blur" after a nurse's contract was cancelled due to only having two vaccines.
- **[Sunday Age](#)** (page 6) reports cancer rates among people under 50 years of age have risen globally, with the National Health and Medical Research Council dropping the recommended screening age for bowel cancer from 50 to 45 last year.
- **[Sunday Age](#)** (page 16) reports that Malaysia has rejected an offer to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games after Victoria cancelled plans to host the Games last year. *Also reported by: [ABC Online](#)*
- **[Sunday Age](#)** (page 26) reports that IOC vice-president John Coates has supported the decision by the Queensland government to upgrade QSAC for the 2023 Brisbane Olympic Games. Minister for Sports Anika Wells has stated that an agreement between the state and

## MINISTER BUTLER

### An unlikely coalition may tell the tale of the vapes

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 24/03/2024, James Campbell, Page 55

Given the spectacular failure of the war on black market cigarettes, you might have thought that governments would be wary of opening a second front against nicotine by trying to eliminate vaping. But the desire to police other people's behaviour is strong in Australia's public health bureaucrats and, after years of inaction, in Mark Butler they have finally found a man prepared to introduce "world-leading" legislation to outlaw the sale, the supply, the commercial possession, and the advertising, as well as the manufacture, of vapes in this country.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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### Tough new vape laws loom

CQ Today, General News, 23/03/2024, Tess Ikonomou & Kat Wong, Page 62

Young Australians are being lured by big tobacco companies to take up vaping, doctors warned, as the federal government introduced new legislation with tough penalties to combat a growing national health crisis. Health Minister Mark Butler said the bill he brought to the house on Thursday will stop the importation, manufacture, supply, and commercial possession of disposable single use and non-therapeutic vapes.

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### Labor's vape crackdown an 'idiotic piece of public health policy' that exposes double standards in its approach to tackling addiction

Sky News Australia, Other, 23/03/2024, Caleb Bond

The extraordinary move to ban the sale of all non-prescribed vapes, but not do the same for cigarettes, shows the Federal Government is more interested in making as much money as possible from addicts than actually improving public health, writes Caleb Bond. Health Minister Mark Butler says vapes are an "insidious device" from big tobacco to recruit a new generation to nicotine addiction.

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## MINISTER WELLS

### Games get the shakes

Sunday Age, General News, 24/03/2024, Chris Barrett, Page 26

Nearly a quarter of a century after his star turn in Sydney, Roy and HG's unofficial mascot of the 2000 Olympics was the first thing that came to mind for a Brisbane-based sports executive when a bombshell on venues for the 2032 Games was dropped this week. [...] Conceding "it's a shame that things have come to this point", Sports Minister Anika Wells says costings will need to be examined and an agreement between the state and federal governments will have to be varied and re-signed.

Also reported by: [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#), [The Age \(Online\)](#), [WA Today \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).

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4BC, Weekends, 23/03/2024, Peter Fegan

Fegan is joined by Tim Arvier, Nine State Political Reporter. Fegan asks Arvier about the matters about the Olympics that dominated the news this week. Arvier says Federal Sports Minister Anika Wells has come out and mentioned that the possible cancellation of the Brisbane 2032 Olympics heard this week, was rather disappointing.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### Investing in women's health care

Hills to Hawkesbury, General News, 22/03/2024, Page 23

If you're someone who doesn't have endometriosis, or doesn't know someone with endo, this may not seem important. [...] We know there needs to be changes to the health care system, so it works better for women, and at a recent women's health forum I held with Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, we heard from women who've faced misdiagnosis, not being listened to, and being ignored- often when at their most vulnerable.

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## CORONAVIRUS

### Long Covid may be nothing unique in the future – but its effects today are still very real

The Guardian, Other, 23/03/2024, Gideon Meyerowitz-Katz

Long Covid is one of the most controversial topics remaining about the pandemic. Depending on who you ask, it is either a real and current threat to the health of the globe, or a relatively minor issue that we should pay little attention to in the future.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

## Pet project for oldies

Sunday Mail Adelaide, Edition Changes, 24/03/2024, George Yankovich, Page 25

More aged-care homes need to change policies to allow residents to keep pets, an advocate says. Chris Moore is campaigning for pilot programs where new residents can bring their beloved pets, or have new ones as loved companions.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Last laugh for gas abusers

Sunday Times, General News, 24/03/2024, Joe Spagnolo, Page 14

Government crackdown to put nitrous oxide 'nangs' out of reach Tough new laws restricting the sale of nitrous oxide cannisters known as nangs will be introduced in WA in a bid to stop young people from misusing them to get high.

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### Epidemic sparks calls for people to adopt Social60

Sun Herald, General News, 24/03/2024, Page 18

An epidemic sweeping Australia is targeting young people, can be as damaging to physical health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and is increasing the risk of early death. It's not a plague or virus but loneliness, and experts say it's being exacerbated by a lack of faceto-face social interaction.

Also reported by: [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Canberra Times \(Canberra\)](#), [Sunday Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#).

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### Gen Z saying here's cheers to 'dry-tripping'

Sunday Age, General News, 24/03/2024, Sue Williams, Page 18

They're calling it The Next Big Dry - young Australian travellers overseas turning their back on alcohol-fuelled partying and instead opting for high sobriety. A new survey has found 84 per cent of Gen Z Australian full-time students have chosen holidays with no drinking involved, and far prefer sightseeing and activities over partying and clubbing.

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### Cook Government crackdown to put nitrous oxide 'nangs' out of reach under tough new WA laws

West Australian, Other, 23/03/2024, Joe Spagnolo

Tough new laws restricting the sale of nitrous oxide cannisters - known as nangs - will be introduced in WA in a bid to stop young people from misusing them to get high. The Cook Government's new regulations, set to be the toughest in Australia, will come into force later this year and allow only food or beverage businesses to buy the cannisters.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### More people aged under 50 being diagnosed

Sunday Age, General News, 24/03/2024, Mary Ward, Page 6

Globally and in Australia, more people are being diagnosed with cancer before their 50th birthdays. [...] Last year, the National Health and Medical Research Council dropped the recommended screening age for bowel cancer from 50 to 45 following a campaign by Bowel Cancer Australia.

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

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## Tell them the truth: how to discuss illness with children

Sunday Age, General News, 24/03/2024, Benjamin Preiss, Page 6

Cancer survivor turned patient advocate Melissa Le Mesurier has seen parents respond in all manner of ways to a cancer diagnosis. Some have told their children within minutes of finding out they have cancer.

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

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## Another bake for sun beds

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 24/03/2024, Suzan Delibasic & Olivia Jenkins, Page 26

At least 100 social media accounts promoting dangerous illegal solariums in Melbourne have been put on notice as shoddy backyard businesses continue to flout the law despite the threat of hefty fines. [...] Head of SunSmart Victoria Emma Glassenbury said SunSmart and Cancer Council Victoria were deeply concerned by the ongoing promotion of illegal solariums and the impact on health, especially the increased risk of skin cancer.

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

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## Gruelling weeks ahead are critical

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 24/03/2024, Andrew Koubaridis, Page 11

The next 12 weeks will prove critical for Princess Catherine as she undergoes a gruelling course of preventive chemotherapy to destroy cancer cells from potentially returning. [...] "In many cases, surgery is followed by chemotherapy to reduce the chances of the cancer coming back and to aim for the best possible outcomes," Cancer Australia's medical director, Professor Vivienne Milch, said.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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## What is preventative chemotherapy? Here's Kate Middleton's cancer treatment explained

ABC Online, Other, 23/03/2024, Hanan Dervisevic

Princess Kate has revealed why she has been out of the public eye for months — she has been diagnosed with cancer following major abdominal surgery. [...] According to the Cancer Council, possible side effects from chemotherapy include: Fatigue, Nausea or vomiting, Constipation, Hair loss, Mouth sores, Thinking and memory changes, Changes in hearing, Numbness in your hands or feet.

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## Get your eyes checked: this silent disease can rob you of sight

Ballarat Courier, Other, 23/03/2024, Melanie Whelan

A visit to see Nihaama Narayanan is not necessarily about glasses, she says. [...] She also volunteers as a clinical educator for Glaucoma Australia and is an associate member of the Asia-Pacific Glaucoma Society.

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## Fan of a tan? Why you should think twice about collariums

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 23/03/2024, Elissa Doherty

Think collariums are a safe alternative to solariums? We ask the experts to shed light on the dangers of tanning beds and who is most at risk. [...] Cancer Council national skin cancer committee chair

Professor Anne Cust says some young people may be unaware of the risks of tanning beds because they were banned nine years ago.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Labor sees potential in the Northern Territory

Sunday Territorian, General News, 24/03/2024, Anthony Albanese, Page 15

The Northern Territory is a big place with even bigger potential and our government is proud to be investing in its people. Our cabinet met in Darwin last week to focus on delivering a better future for all Territorians: building more homes, investing in better schools and creating good jobs.

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### The rise of the robot: This surgeon believes open surgery in Australia will soon be history

Australian Doctor, Other, 23/03/2024, Paul Smith & Rachel Carter

In the words of Australian surgeon Professor Tony Costello, It was truly miraculous. He's referring to a video he watched of a doctor performing a coronary artery graft on a still beating heart in four seconds using a robot he had designed himself.

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### Cameron 'Sparrow' Obst breaks Australian record for takeoffs and landings in one day for Royal Flying Doctor Service

Cairns Post, Other, 23/03/2024, Jack Dyson Evans

A local pilot has completed 145 takeoffs and landings in one day while raising money for an important cause. A Chinchilla pilot has set the Australian record for most takeoffs and landings by a single plane during daylight hours while raising money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

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

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### Dental care out of reach for many - but Victoria's Smile Squad has a solution

SBS, Other, 23/03/2024

This week marks World Oral Health Day but for many Australians, cost of living pressures are putting a trip to the dentist out of reach. A new Victorian initiative is bringing dental care to schools, and fast-tracking the recognition of qualifications for overseas-trained dentists.

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### Tweed Valley Hospital is mould-infested just months before opening

The Mercury, Other, 23/03/2024, Savannah Pocock

There has been a mould outbreak in a new \$723m regional NSW hospital – and it has not even opened its doors yet. The developer now has weeks to resolve the issue before it opens.

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### Eurobodalla Regional Hospital: Health minister tight lipped over possible delays

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 23/03/2024, Tom McGann

The NSW Health minister has remained tight lipped over possible delays to the construction and opening of a major south coast hospital, after NSW received less than usual in this year's federal GST carve-up. The NSW Health minister has remained tight lipped on concerns the construction and opening of a major south coast hospital could be delayed following less than normal GST distribution.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Drive Against Depression announces first event in Adelaide

West Australian, Other, 23/03/2024, James Wong

Australian-registered mental health charity Drive Against Depression is expanding into South Australia, announcing its first-ever Adelaide Autumn Drive Day to be held on Sunday, April 7. Following the charity's expansion across the eastern seaboard – including events in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane – the Adelaide Drive Against Depression (DAD) event will commence from McLaren Vale, then "take a stunning route through the historic Clarendon township before stopping at the autumnal splendour that is Stirling, to take in the fresh air, share stories and create meaningful connections".

Also reported by: [7news.com.au](https://7news.com.au) ([Online](#)).

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Covid regs jab for govt

Sunday Territorian, General News, 24/03/2024, Camden Smith, Page 5

The NT government has been forced into a backdown after it reneged on a remote nursing contract because of an issue around Covid vaccinations. Tasmania-based nurse Nadine Brown and her tradie husband, Matthew, were "literally loading the ute" when they were contacted by the Department of Health telling them the contract they had signed weeks earlier had been cancelled.

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### Ambulance workers strike after ban block

Sunday Examiner, General News, 24/03/2024, Benjamin Seeder, Page 3

Ambulance workers have voted to take industrial action, after the government and the Department of Health failed to implement the initial stage of the ramping ban this week. Members of the Health and Community Services Union voted to strike followed a Tasmanian Industrial Commission decision this week to block the start of the government's 60-minute protocol.

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### Nurses reject pay deal offer

Sunraysia Daily, Other, 23/03/2024, Wade Stephens

Nurses and midwives in Mildura have unanimously rejected an enterprise bargaining agreement pitched by the Allan Government, describing it as "seriously inadequate". Seeking to reverse the increased casualisation of the workforce, more than 1500 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) members attended statewide meetings on Thursday, declining the wages and conditions offer pitched to cover the next four years.

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### Ambulance Tasmania paramedics to take industrial action over ramping, says HACSU

The state's most powerful union has warned that the Tasmanian government faces industrial action as frustration mounts over the state's ramping crisis. Paramedics and patient transport officers across Tasmania will join together from 7am Monday and refuse to provide treatment outside their specific scope of practice.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### Vapes up in smoke

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 24/03/2024, Madura McCormack , Page 1

Nearly 150,000 vapes have been taken off Queensland's streets just nine months into a multi-agency crackdown. Dodgy retailers are feeling the pinch amid the Queensland Health blitz which seized millions of dollars in illegal tobacco including 15 million illicit cigarettes and 6 tonnes of loose tobacco.

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

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### The vote on vapes

Sunday Telegraph, Editorials, 24/03/2024, Page 78

Australia has never had a federal election fought over drug policy. But the news that senior Liberal frontbenchers are seriously debating adopting a policy to tax and regulate vaping would mean voters could go to the next election with a clear choice in an area in which there has, until now, been a broad consensus.

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## SPORT

### Malaysia refuses to host Games

Sunday Age, General News, 24/03/2024, Danial Azhar & Lachlan Abbott, Page 16



Malaysia has rejected an offer to hold the 2026 Commonwealth Games, another major setback for the global sporting event after Victoria last year sensationally scrapped its hosting plan and put the Games' entire future in doubt. On Friday night, the Malaysian government said time constraints, costs and an insufficient offer of funding caused it to reject the Commonwealth Games Federation's approach as the longstanding event struggles to find a host.

Also reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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## Games 'not any threat' to koalas

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 24/03/2024, Madura McCormack , Page 15

Controversial upgrades to make an athletics stadium 2032 Games-ready won't need to encroach into critical koala habitat, according to the state environment minister. But there is still little guarantee no trees will be felled under Premier Steven Miles's plan to build a \$1.6bn stadium at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre in Nathan.

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

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## QSAC: no Eiffel, just an eyesore

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 24/03/2024, Jeremy Pierce, Page 28

The Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre, the State government's contentious pick as the main stadium for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, sits amid a mix of retail factory outlets, car yards, tyre and fast food joints and is just a javelin-throw away from the Mount Gravatt Cemetery and Crematorium. Beyond the nearby grounds of Griffith University's Nathan Campus and the Toohey Forest Park whose koala population is set for a rude shock when bulldozers roll in lie a handful of modest hotels, motels and eateries unlikely to fill the needs of the tens of thousands of spectators set to pour into the precinct for the Olympics.

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## Blow for Games host bid

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 24/03/2024, Page 16

The future of the 2026 Commonwealth Games looks in doubt after Malaysia rejected an offer to host, citing "cost". The country was asked to step in after Victoria dumped plans to host a multi-city regional version of the Games last year, with then-premier Daniel Andrews claiming it would cost the state almost \$7bn.

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## Regional football netball clubs call for equitable changerooms as women get changed in mouldy 'sheep shed'

ABC Online, Other, 23/03/2024, Shannon Schubert

Disgusting, substandard changing room facilities are a barrier to participation in sport for girls and women, regional Victorian netball clubs say. The Victorian government requires all councils to have policies around providing gender equitable access to community sport infrastructure, by July this year, and for change rooms to be available from October.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Elon Musk says ketamine can get you out of a 'negative frame of mind'. What does the research say?

ABC Online, Other, 23/03/2024, Julaine Allan

Elon Musk recently described using small amounts of ketamine "once every other week" to manage the "chemical tides" that cause his depression. He says it's helpful to get out of a "negative frame of mind".

## Kiama woman a 'game-changer' for linking people up with clinical trials

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 23/03/2024, Kate Mcilwain

A Kiama woman whose start-up helps doctors connect their patients to active clinical trials has won the Entrepreneur of the Year award at this year's Women Leading Tech Awards. Charlotte Bradshaw, who moved to the southern Illawarra town after the pandemic, said she was honoured to have received the accolade at an event run by industry publication B&T.

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## Coffee drinkers have much lower risk of bowel cancer recurrence, study finds

The Guardian, Other, 23/03/2024, Denis Campbell

People with bowel cancer who drink two to four cups of coffee a day are much less likely to see their disease come back, research has found. People with the illness who consume that amount are also much less likely to die from any cause, the study shows, which suggests coffee helps those diagnosed with the UK's second biggest cancer killer.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Victoria's peak Aboriginal health body urges support for Indigenous organisations to Close the Gap

National Indigenous Times, Other, 23/03/2024, Dechlan Brennan

Victoria's peak Indigenous health body says two Closing the Gap agreements in 15 years have brought little change when not backed by significant investment in self-determination and Aboriginal-led approaches. The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) used Closing the Gap day on Thursday to note the recently released Productivity Commission report highlighted the consistent failure by governments to prioritise placing Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands.

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## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### This is how to vanquish a killer

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 24/03/2024, Prof Brendan Crabb & Negaya Chorley, Page 76

Tuberculosis has long been preventable and treatable. Yet, it remains the top infectious disease killer in human history, currently causing 1.3 million deaths a year.

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### Alert on list of sites visited by an infant now in hospital with measles

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 23/03/2024, Brad Crouch

An infant with measles is now in a stable condition in hospital and has triggered a health alert for multiple sites visited including several shopping areas. The child from metropolitan South Australia recently returned from overseas in early March, but was not infectious during the flight to Australia.

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

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## Three-year-old given antibiotics in likely life-saving act as paramedics suspect meningococcal

7news.com.au, Other, 23/03/2024, Warren Barnsley

'Little marks have popped up on him', his mum told an emergency operator. Queensland paramedics' quick decision to immediately give a sick boy antibiotics — suspecting, correctly, that he had meningococcal — potentially saved his life.

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## OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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## FOOD STANDARDS

### Mystery illness grips more than 60 people in Canberra's north

Canberra Times, Other, 23/03/2024, Peter Brewer

More than 60 people have fallen ill with several presenting to hospital after a suspected virulent form of gastroenteritis spread through a private function in Gungahlin. ACT Health said on Friday it was continuing to investigate the cause of the outbreak that left victims suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea

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