



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 29th March 2024

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 1) reports Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital is celebrating 93 years of service with charitable partner the Good Friday Appeal. *Also reported by:* [Herald Sun](#), [Herald Sun](#), [Herald Sun](#)
- [The Age](#) (page 2) reports Victoria will introduce new tobacco licensing laws to bring the state in line with national standards, but industry experts are warning strict regulatory powers will be needed to suppress the illegal tobacco market. *Also reported by:* [Herald Sun](#), [Canberra Times](#), [ABC Online](#), [9News](#)
- [The Age](#) (page 3) reports the AFL will retain its health-based illicit drugs policy, chief executive Andrew Dillon has told club bosses, claiming incidents of withdrawing players to avoid positive drug tests were rare. *Also reported by:* [The Australian](#), [Herald Sun](#), [West Australian](#), [ABC Online](#)
- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 5) reports two Adelaide hospitals will extend delays on elective surgeries until at least Tuesday next week, with the bulk of hospitals believed to have only cancelled surgeries over the Easter long weekend.

- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 6) reports researchers at Melbourne's Florey have developed an mRNA treatment they hope will be a preventative therapy for Alzheimer's.
- The [Hobart Mercury](#) (page 6) reports Cancer Council Tasmania and the S.H.E. Gynaecological Cancer Group will partner to develop a wellbeing centre opposite the Royal Hobart Hospital to provide affordable accommodation for patients.
- The [Canberra Times](#) (online) reports NSW's waitlist for planned surgeries has dropped 85 per cent in a year and 84 per cent of elective surgeries were performed on time between October and December 2023.
- [The Guardian](#) (online) reports new laws banning ads for vapes and e-cigarettes online will need to be backed by rigorous compliance and enforcement efforts if they are to have any effect, health experts say.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Australia's chance to lead the world in protecting children

Mudgee Guardian & Gulgong Advertiser, General News, 29/03/2024, Steve Robson, Page 8

When federal Health Minister Mark Butler addressed the National Press Club at the beginning of May last year, the centrepiece of his speech was about vaping. The minister committed his government to strong action against the scourge of e-cigarette use.

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### Medical leaders discussing system-wide sector reform

Narromine Star, General News, 28/03/2024, Page 15

Australian Medical Association (AMA) and leaders from more than 50 of Australia's medical colleges, associations, and societies, came together in Canberra on Monday to discuss the need for reform to the country's health system . [...] "Meanwhile, everyone, including Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler, who will speak at the meeting, acknowledges the health workforce shortages facing the country, with access and lack of planning continuing to be a problem," Prof Robson concluded.

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### Daniella is not thin enough to be considered anorexic. There are calls for that to change

SBS, Other, 28/03/2024, Charis Chang

A focus on weight in the diagnosis of eating disorders means some Australians are facing barriers when it comes to receiving help because they are not considered skinny enough. This article mentions eating disorders and suicide. [...] Funding for virtual services Health Minister Mark Butler said the government was aware more needed to be done in prevention but "treatment services for eating disorders remains the priority".

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### PM greets lawnmower trek but no change in Motor Neurone Disease monitoring planned

About Regional, Other, 28/03/2024, Oliver Jacques

The Federal and NSW Labor governments appear to have rejected a push to improve monitoring of Motor Neurone Disease (MND), despite a face-to-face plea to the Prime Minister from an MND sufferer himself. Former truck driver Warren 'Woz' Acott made an 800 km trek on a ride-on lawnmower from Toollen (near Bendigo) in Victoria to Parliament House in Canberra to raise awareness of the fatal illness that weakens the nervous system and muscles. [...] The NSW Health Minister is Ryan Park and his federal counterpart is Mark Butler.

Also reported by: [PS News \(Online\)](#), [RiotACT \(Online\)](#).

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### Dear Minister, funding must change

Peak cancer groups have hand-delivered a message to Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler calling for urgent expanded access to the PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitor class of drugs for more than 3500 Australians. The appeal for a new, so-called 'pan tumour' approach to reviewing and funding cancer medicines, follows two submissions made to the PBAC last year by MSD and BMS which would see their blockbuster drugs Keytruda and Opdivo (plus BMS' CTLA-4 inhibitor Yervoy ) automatically listed on the PBS at the point of TGA registration.

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## Victorian tobacco licences to smoke out 'dodgy' sellers

The Queenslander, Other, 28/03/2024

A long-awaited tobacco licensing scheme will be rolled out in Victoria as black market vapes and cigarettes fuel a spate of store firebombings. The Victorian government intends to introduce legislation to establish a tobacco retailer and wholesale licensing scheme in the second half of the year. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler last week introduced a bill to stop the importation, manufacture, supply, and commercial possession of disposable single use and non-therapeutic vapes.

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## ABC Newcastle, Early Mornings, 28/03/2024, Paul Turton

Panel discussion with Christine Cockburn, CEO, Rare Cancers Australia, and Noel, cancer patient. Cockburn says they were fortunate enough to go see Health Minister Mark Butler and they had a really good conversation about these shifts in reform and the way that medicine comes to the market.

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## MINISTER WELLS

### Aged Care Minister visits Cabanda

Moreton Border News, General News, 29/03/2024, Page 7

Cabanda Care hosted a visit from the Federal Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells recently to learn about the Federal Government's aged care reforms. The visit was arranged by Federal Member for Blair, Shayne Neumann, to give residents and staff a chance to speak with the Minister.

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### 'The next election belongs to the future': LNP Olympic review looms over IOC

Brisbane Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Cameron Atfield

The prospect of an incoming LNP state government starting Games venues planning from scratch has loomed over the International Olympic Committee co-ordination commission's second meeting for Brisbane 2032, hosted online from Switzerland overnight. [...] Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner backed his predecessor Quirk's Victoria Park recommendation , while federal Sport Minister Anika Wells last week told Nine's Today show the Queensland government's QSAC decision was "theirs to own".

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

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### Positive financial results for residential aged care – but more workforce pain ahead

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Lauren Broomham

The latest StewartBrown Aged Care Financial Performance Survey has again delivered improved results for residential aged care providers – but also hinted at the increasing pressure that operators will face in the leadup to the mandated requirement for 215 direct care minutes per resident in October. [...] In Parliament this week, Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells revealed that the sector has now reached 24/7 RN coverage in aged care 98.79% of the time – with 90.02% of aged care homes having an RN on site 24/7.

## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

### Call to fix rural health

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 28/03/2024, Page 1

The stark health inequalities between Australians living in regional and metro areas have been highlighted in a new report from The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The Best for the Bush: Rural and Remote Health Baseline 2023 report launch aligns with the National Rural Health Alliance's urgent plea for improved nationwide health equity. [...] Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and pharmacist Emma McBride in her speech at the report's launch agreed that there is a "stark discrepancy" of health outcomes for those living in the country's rural areas.

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

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### Mount Barker will get a new \$20m mental health service under a joint state-federal initiative

Adelaide Now, Other, 28/03/2024, Brad Crouch

A new \$20m Mount Barker mental health service will provide urgent mental health support for people experiencing distress or crisis on the spot. Mount Barker will get a new \$20m mental health service under a joint state-federal initiative being announced today. [...] Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride said expanding the Head to Health network will give more people access mental health care and support.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### National centre to tackle gender inequity in medicine

HealthTimes, Other, 28/03/2024

Challenging Australia's predominantly "male-centric approach to medical care" will be top of the agenda for a new national research centre that pledges to tackle gender inequity in medicine. From dismissing women's pain to understanding the impact of gender bias in medical research, the initiative hopes to deliver better health outcomes for all. [...] Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney welcomed the centre as part of Australia's more inclusive health and medical research industry.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

No relevant coverage

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## DEPARTMENT

### Movers & Shakers: JSA ministerial advisers, new role for June Oscar

The Mandarin, Other, 28/03/2024, The Mandarin

Senior Executive Service Band 1 has been promoted to assistant secretary for government cyber and

protective security at the Department of Home Affairs. Home Affairs has also moved to assistant secretary for humanitarian and child wellbeing policy and capability. [...] The new assistant secretary for funding and revenue at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has taken a new role as assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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## CORONAVIRUS

### Omicron linked to more long COVID-19 cases: study

Canberra Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Aaron Bunch

The Omicron coronavirus variant could be causing more cases of long COVID than earlier versions of the disease, scientists say. A study of more than 11,000 Western Australians infected in 2022 found almost one in five continued to suffer symptoms three months after they initially tested positive.

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

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### Department of Health and Aged Care pauses publishing aged care COVID-19 vaccination rates

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Caroline Egan

The Department of Health and Aged Care has paused reporting of aged care resident vaccination rates in its weekly 'COVID-19 outbreaks in Australian residential aged care homes' report. "The department is reviewing COVID-19 vaccination data and reporting for 2024," the report states.

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### ABC Radio Melbourne, Breakfast, 28/03/2024, Sammy J

The Australian National University says new research has shed light on the experience of Australians with long COVID. The ANU says the study shows the risk of developing long Covid from the Omicron variant of Covid 19 is higher than previously thought. Researchers studied more than 11,000 Australians who tested positive to the virus in 2022, and found 1 in 5 were still experiencing ongoing symptoms three months after their diagnosis.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### New study to 'transform' falls prevention

Aged Care Insite, Other, 28/03/2024, Arshmah Jamal

A new study by James Cook University could reduce the risk of potentially fatal falls in older Australians by 40 per cent once the study is successful. Set to begin this year, the five-year study will trial the adoption of an Environmental Assessment and Modification (EAM) framework for occupational therapists to use with their older clients.

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### Aged care nurses call out poor conditions

Aged Care Insite, Other, 28/03/2024, Arshmah Jamal

Around 60 aged care nurses and carers from across Australia travelled to Canberra to address "ongoing failures" by providers. The group stood together to call out aged care providers, saying "they can't be trusted" to uphold the standard of care for older Australians

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## Perth aged care worker charged over alleged assault

Aged Care Insite, Other, 28/03/2024, Arshmah Jamal

A 27-year-old aged care worker has been charged with indecently assaulting a male resident in an aged care facility. Police reported on Tuesday that the assault allegedly occurred at an aged care facility in Perth's western suburbs last Friday.

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## Hospital bed crisis is aged care crisis – 375 new beds every month required

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Chris Baynes

According to a study by Deloitte, the growth in new hospital beds over the next 15 years has stalled at around 95,990 beds. Their report however states that by 2036 the country will require 148,317 beds, a 55% increase.

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## Bupa's residential aged care makes first profit since 2018

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Caroline Egan

Bupa Asia Pacific's aged care operations returned their first profit in six years in 2023 on the back of higher occupancy rates, increased government funding, and improved rates of compliance. [...] After experiencing compliance issues in recent years, which were aired during the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and in mainstream media, about 70% of Bupa's aged care homes today are rated 3 stars and 28% are 4 stars.

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## Families paying \$80 a day for private aged care in Thailand: 60 Minutes

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Caroline Egan

Australian families seeking to avoid aged care facilities at home are finding the care and services they need, including dementia care, in luxurious resorts overseas, such as in the northern Thailand city of Chiang Mai, the Nine Network's 60 Minutes reported on Sunday. An example of one such home is Vivo Bene , where Australian Brad Roberts is manager.

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## Wait times increasing for ACAT assessments, Home Care packages

The Weekly Source, Other, 28/03/2024, Caroline Egan

People are waiting 24% longer to receive an ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team) assessment from the time of referral this financial year, according to the latest data from the Department of Health and Aged Care. Median wait times for an ACAT assessment increased from 17 days in the 2022-23 financial year, to 21 days in the first six months of 2023-24.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Tobacco war: Licence laws 'need teeth'

Age, General News, 29/03/2024, Kieran Rooney, Broede Carmody and Chris Vedelago, Page 2

Victoria's new tobacco licensing laws must have strict character tests, a dedicated taskforce and massive fines to avoid being a toothless tiger at stopping the state's underground turf war, the industry has warned. Premier Jacinta Allan revealed yesterday that the state would adopt the recommendation of a report by Better Regulation Victoria that tobacconists must have a licence to operate, bringing it in line with the rest of Australia, as her government attempts to stop the illegal trade.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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## The truth about low-carb diets

The Australian, Other, 28/03/2024, Natasha Robinson

With the majority of Australians now classified as metabolically unhealthy, is it time to endorse low-carb eating for all? The diet wars have been raging in Australia for decades. Experts are pitted against one another in acrimonious battles over what the evidence really says on low carb, meat, saturated fat, plant-based foods, and myriad other points of dietary contention.

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## Why eating bananas can be more effective at reducing blood pressure than cutting down on salt

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/03/2024, Michael Searles

A mineral found in bananas and other produce could help people tackle high blood pressure. Eating bananas is more effective at lowering blood pressure than reducing salt intake, a study has found. Scientists discovered that consuming an extra gram of potassium - which is the equivalent of two medium-sized bananas, a cup of spinach or a large sweet potato - per day could be a simple way for someone to tackle high blood pressure.

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## New Australian laws banning vaping ads 'toothless' without social media enforcement, experts say

The Guardian, Other, 29/03/2024, Melissa Davey

The scale of the promotion of vapes and e-cigarettes online means that new laws being introduced to ban vaping ads on social media may be a "toothless exercise" without additional policy reforms, health experts have said. Most e-cigarette posts on TikTok and Instagram portray vape use positively and many posts breach the platforms' content policies, research from Prof Jonine Jancey and her colleagues found.

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## TikTok bans account of Australian influencer who promoted nicotine pouches in viral videos

The Guardian, Other, 28/03/2024, Natasha May

TikTok has banned the account of an influencer who promoted flavoured nicotine pouches in viral videos, but other accounts showcasing the controversial products remain on the platform. Guardian Australia revealed in early February that nicotine pouches were being promoted by the Australian bodybuilder Stefan Kohut.

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 28/03/2024, Jennifer Keyte

Tobacco retailers in Victoria will soon require a licence to operate in an attempt to clamp down on the violence-fueled black market. Health experts have welcomed the move, which brings Victoria into line with other states, but it remains unclear who will enforce the tougher rules.

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## 2CC, Breakfast, 28/03/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Jemma O'Hanlon, Senior Food and Nutrition Advisor, the Heart Foundation. O'Hanlon discusses the health benefits in the heart provided by consuming dark chocolate, for as long as they are taken moderately. He states that since its Easter, people should let up a bit and they should be eating a heart-healthy eating pattern throughout the year.

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## 3AW, Mornings, 28/03/2024, Tom Elliott

Elliott says the Vic Government is looking to adopt a licencing scheme for vape and tobacco shops. He mentions whether this would be the end of illegal tobacco in the State.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### How to tell if you have an auto-immune disease

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29/03/2024, Ashley Lowe, Page 27

What do you know about these silent illnesses that affect many Aussies? For the best part of a decade, I have suffered from some degree of joint pain. And as someone who has also always been extremely active, it's fair to say that this constant hum of discomfort has been not only frustrating, but also debilitating.

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

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### Superboy

Herald Sun, General News, 29/03/2024, Jen Kelly, Page 1

After Xavier Grant made it through open-heart surgery with flying colours, his family counted their blessings and took him home. But three weeks later, Xavier was rushed back to the Royal Children's Hospital, where he went into cardiac arrest on the operating table on his sixth birthday. Now the Warrnambool family share their heart-wrenching story.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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### Princess cancer tip of iceberg

Herald Sun, General News, 29/03/2024, Page 13

When Catherine, Princess of Wales, revealed last week she was being treated for cancer, part of the shock was that an otherwise healthy 42-year-old has a disease that mostly plagues older people. However, researchers have been increasingly sounding the alarm that more and more people under 50 are getting cancer and no one knows why.

Also reported by: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#).

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### Cancer-care groups in bid to build support

Hobart Mercury, General News, 29/03/2024, Judy Augustine, Page 6

Two major cancer-care organisations are joining forces to bring the vision of a patient wellbeing centre in Hobart to fruition. Cancer Council Tasmania and the S.H.E. Gynaecological Cancer Group announced on Thursday a partnership to further develop the centre in the Royal Hobart Hospital precinct.

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### The five factors behind rising rates of cancer in under 40s

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/03/2024, David Cox

Last year, speakers at the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting – the most eminent cancer conference in the world – came with a dire warning. Rates of colorectal cancer were rapidly increasing in the under 40s, they said, so much so that c...

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### How the Victorian government almost killed the next Cochlear

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/03/2024, Patrick Durkin and Tom Richardson

It was late into the night on January 23 when Dr Dean Freestone found himself online with Seer Medical's key investors as a funding deal to save the company slowly imploded. The next morning, the Seer board – including Cochlear executive Mark Phelps and ...

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## **Warnbro renal dialysis patient campaigning for mobile Kidney Health Australia renal dialysis bus in WA**

West Australian, Other, 28/03/2024, Kasey Gratton

A Warnbro renal dialysis patient has started a fundraising campaign for a mobile dialysis bus to be stationed in WA, which would enable patients to take much-needed holidays. Christine Beard, who has kidney failure and has been on dialysis for six years, is running a fundraising campaign to fund a Kidney Health Australia Big Red Kidney Bus for WA.

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## **Limestone Coast cancer patients want access to radiation treatment in Mount Gambier**

ABC Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Sam Bradbrook

Mount Gambier woman Anelia Blackie knows one day she will get a call that will prompt her to sell her house and move her life away from her home town. She was diagnosed in 2020 with uterine leiomyosarcoma, a rare cancer that starts in soft tissue and can spread quickly. [...] While she could claim some travel expenses and get accommodation in the Cancer Council's Adelaide lodge, she said it was not the same as receiving treatment at home.

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## **Geraldton mother's breast cancer diagnosis highlights importance of screening buses in regions**

ABC Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Piper Duffy

Lois Garner describes herself as "fiercely independent" and always loves operating in her own time. Living in Geraldton, about four hours north of Perth, she enjoys the slow-paced lifestyle of a coastal town. But six months ago Ms Garner's life went from morning swims to blood tests and doctor appointments. In August she went for a routine visit to the breast screening bus when it came to Geraldton.

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## **Alfred Health's new concussion clinic is putting patients on the path to recovery. Clinicians are already shocked by what they're seeing**

ABC Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Hayley Gleeson

At first Jasmin Weightman brushed off her concussion symptoms. She'd suffered two hard head knocks playing in her local AFL team's grand final last August, which quickly triggered a headache, confusion, and a "huge flood of emotions". Later that afternoon, while she was out celebrating with her teammates, she noticed she was slurring her words and struggling to hold herself upright.

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## **Teenage sunburn soars**

Medical Forum, Other, 28/03/2024

Cancer experts want the State Government to spend \$2.2 million a year to prevent skin cancer, as new data reveals the number of people treated at hospital EDs for severe sunburn has more than doubled since 2014. Cancer Council WA's Cancer Prevention and Research Manager Melissa Ledger said the data showed the need for urgent action by the Government.

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## **One-stop-shop prostate cancer resource answers all your "ick" questions**

The Senior, Other, 28/03/2024, Anthony Caggiano

A chance swap in doctors potentially saved Eliot Rifkin's life from prostate cancer The 67-year-old shared his story after the release of a new Survivorship Toolkit , an online one-stop-shop for information that answers all the taboo questions about the disease and then some.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### More elective surgeries cancelled

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 29/03/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 5

Elective surgery cancellations already have been extended into next week, after the snap decision to postpone non-urgent surgeries this week to ease pressure on the beleaguered hospital system for Easter. The Advertiser has learned the Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) was cancelling surgeries scheduled for Tuesday within hours of SA Health chief Dr Robyn Lawrence holding a press conference last Wednesday to defend the decision to postpone non-urgent elective surgeries until Good Friday. Dr Robyn Lawrence's elective surgery ends for the Easter break.

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

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### We can all help ED crisis

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 29/03/2024, Page 12

The Easter holiday weekend is a time eagerly anticipated by most as a break from work and a chance for a well-earned rest. Unfortunately for our troubled health system, the opposite is true. Holiday weekends can see demand spike and place the system under additional strain. The Health Department has urged people to acquaint themselves with the options available should they need medical attention over the Easter break.

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### Levelling up aeromedical capability

Air Force News, General News, 28/03/2024, Greg Hinks, Page 3

As patients were ushered into what appeared to be a tent city at the Greenbank Military Training Area in Queensland, looks were deceiving. The tent opened to a fully working hospital with a surgical capability, intensive care unit and patient bays - Air Force's Role 2 Forward Medical Treatment Facility operated by 1 Expeditionary Health Squadron (1EHS).

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### Overdue surgery list slashed but COVID hangover lingers

Canberra Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Samantha Lock

Elective surgery lists have markedly improved for patients across NSW but people are still waiting far longer than before the COVID-19 pandemic. The state government credits a surgical task force in bringing the overtime waitlist for planned surgeries down 85 per cent since the expert group was established late last year.

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

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### New clinic to keep people out of Canberra Hospital's cancer centre

Canberra Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Lucy Bladen

Canberra Hospital's cancer centre is usually focused on treating people who have the disease. But a new clinic will be focused on making sure people don't need treatment in the first place. In an Australian-first, the clinic will be screening people for genetic changes, which can lead to illnesses such as cancer and heart disease, and educating people on how they can manage their risk and, ultimately, prevent disease.

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### Townsville University Hospital: Surge in emergency surgeries leaves elective procedures delayed, patients in agony

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 28/03/2024, Natasha Emeck

The Townsville University Hospital finds itself grappling with a spike in emergency surgeries, leaving some patients languishing in pain and fasting for over a week as they await long-delayed elective

procedures. A mum of four, known by the pseudonym Jessica to preserve her anonymity, said she spent most of last week confined to a hospital bed, fasting and grappling with excruciating pain caused by a gallstone lodged in her common bile duct.

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### **Channel 10, 10 News First, 28/03/2024, Hugh Riminton**

Thousands of surgeries delayed by COVID have finally been performed as waiting lists across NSW have now returned to pre-pandemic levels. This was a target that NSW Premier Chris Minns made as a priority on his very first day as Premier. The challenge now to replicate these sorts of results when it comes to waiting times in emergency departments.

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### **Channel 7, Seven News, 28/03/2024, Mark Ferguson**

There has been a dramatic improvement in NSW's once-shocking elective surgery lists. The number of patients who are waiting to get into surgery has been slashed by thousands, however, critics are still complaining. A total of 14,000 people were on the elective surgery waitlist one year ago and as of the December quarter, it's just over 2000.

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### **Channel 9, Nine News, 28/03/2024, Georgie Gardner**

Some good news tonight for patients waiting for long overdue elective surgeries. A task force set up last year has been able to slash the backlog by 85%, getting many the help they need much faster. In March last year, 14,000 people were waiting for planned surgeries that were deemed clinically overdue by their doctors and that's fallen to just 2000, a drop of 85%

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### **Channel 9, Nine News, 28/03/2024, Andrew Lofthouse**

New medical technology is slashing recovery times on waitlists for tens and thousands of Queenslanders impacted by a debilitating heart condition. The tool is being rolled out nationwide. The \$1.7 million investment means this procedure will now become available to thousands more patients every year at all major Queensland public hospitals.

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### **ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 28/03/2024, Sarah MacDonald**

Interview with Ryan Park, NSW Minister for Health. MacDonald says that the NSW Government has slashed waiting time by 85% since its surgical care taskforce was set up in March 2023. Park says when they went into the office, they noticed that they had around 14,000 people who were waiting clinically longer than the recommended times to receive their surgery. He states that the issue lies that these 14,000 people should have already received their surgery.

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## **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION**

### **Defence chief apologises for high suicide rates**

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/03/2024, Matthew Knott, Page 6

Australian Defence Force Chief Angus Campbell has unreservedly apologised for failures that have contributed to the high rates of suicide among current and former service members. The royal commission into defence and veteran suicide, which was launched in 2021, completed its final day of hearings yesterday with the nation's most senior military official providing evidence.

*Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The](#)*

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## Dogs sense air of stress

Herald Sun, General News, 29/03/2024, Page 17

Dogs can be trained to detect the scent of trauma reactions and stress in people's breath, according to US researchers, who say this could make PTSD assistance dogs more effective. Dalhousie University researchers trained two dogs to recognise stress cues on the breath of humans reflecting on past traumatic events.

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

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## A new free mental health clinic will serve southside Canberrans

Canberra Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Bageshri Savvasachi

Getting help for mental health issues could become easier for Tuggeranong locals after a new free clinic has been announced to open in south Canberra. It will be the ACT's second Head to Health location where adults can access support services without referrals or making an appointment.

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## Mum slams 'traditional men's hobbies' that put a strain on women's mental load

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/03/2024, Alexandra Feiam

A mum has launched a fierce debate after arguing the harsh discrepancies between traditional men's and women's hobbies. Paige, a mum-of-four, runs a TikTok account where she shares the highs and lows of motherhood, exposing the "mental load" women often carry. However, a recent video explaining how men's and women's hobbies differ once they get married and have kids fuelled a fiery discussion online.

[Read More](#)

## How Lei is helping her sons with autism paint a brighter future for their lives beyond school

SBS, Other, 28/03/2024, Nicole Gong and Shan Kou

This 2 April marks the 17th annual World Autism Awareness Day. Over 205,000 Australians including Melbourne's Jason Liu, 17, and Jeno Liu, 13, are living with autism, many of whom encounter formidable obstacles in securing employment as they transition into adulthood.

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## Nearly half of ADHD medication scripts are now for adults

Australian Doctor, Other, 28/03/2024, Rachel Carter

Professor Richard Harvey said there was previously 'significant underdiagnosis' of ADHD in adults. Adults have overtaken children aged 6-12 as the biggest patient cohort treated with ADHD medications, PBS data show. Nearly 210,000 patients aged over 18 were prescribed ADHD medications — primarily stimulants — on the PBS in 2022-23, compared with about 154,000 patients aged 6-12.

[Read More](#)

## Private mental health unit goes public

Medical Forum, Other, 28/03/2024

A government lifebuoy has been thrown to the ailing mental health clinic in Cockburn, which was run by Bethesda until its abrupt closure earlier this year. The State Government has signed a three-year agreement to lease the clinic previously operated by Bethesda, delivering a boost to public mental health services in the southern suburbs.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### Bianca's nursing dream comes true

Queensland Farmer Today, Other, 28/03/2024, Jin Hui

Living on a cattle station in Cheepie, a small town eight hours from the nearest university campus, you could be forgiven for feeling isolated while studying to be a nurse. But that was never the case for Bianca Bain thanks to a program that brings university education to the bush. Launched in semester 1, 2022, the University of Southern Queensland-led innovation is growing the pipeline of south west Queensland talent equipped for careers in healthcare.

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### 'Without us everything stops': Ambulance mechanics take industrial action

Ballarat Courier, Other, 28/03/2024, Michelle Smith

Ambulance Victoria's fleet maintenance officers, the people who keep ambulances on the road, have taken industrial action and threatened more in their campaign for better pay and conditions. United Workers Union members in fleet and administration, including those at AV's Wendouree depot, participated in stop work action on Wednesday and are looking toward a full-day strike in the next week or so.

[Read More](#)

### Transport team gets special thank you at Government House

Shepparton News Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Shannon Colee

Five members of the Rochester Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Community Transport team travelled to Government House in Melbourne last month to attend the Victorian Volunteering Awards. The program nominated was one in partnership with Rochester and Elmore District Health Service (REDHS). The RFDS Team was nominated in 2023 for the Volunteering Partnerships Award. They were informed in late 2023 that they had succeeded as one of six finalists.

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### Queensland government facing 'thousands' of potential compo claims after vaccines ruling

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/03/2024, David Southwell

A state government could be up for millions in compensation after a court ruled its Covid vaccine mandates were 'ineffective' and 'unlawful' - with a controversial billionaire ready to back more legal action by those sacked for refusing the jabs. Despite the Queensland government deciding not to appeal the landmark Supreme Court decision against their imposition of vaccine mandates, health agencies have not moved to automatically give fired staff their jobs back or provide compensation.

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

[Read More](#)

### There's no place for libertarian doctors in a public health crisis

Australian Doctor, Other, 28/03/2024, Sue Ieraci

Readers may remember the recent discussion in AusDoc about the selection of a GP, who publicly opposed COVID-19 vaccine mandates, as a Tasmanian Liberal Party candidate. Her name was Dr Julie Sladden. She said she was forced to close her practice during the pandemic because she refused to be vaccinated.

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## **‘I don’t know if a lot of pharmacists want to get into selling vapes’**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024, Megan Haggan

The vaping bill is read a second time, with the National Party arguing again for a similar approach to vaping as Australia has adopted towards tobacco. The Albanese's prescription-only approach, with vapes used only as a smoking cessation aid, is naïve, the Nationals claimed. Nationals leader David Littleproud said that the party believes in having

[Read More](#)

## **Collaborative care**

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 28/03/2024

The AHPRA Accreditation Committee has recently unveiled its Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Statement of Intent aimed at integrating collaborative practice throughout the varied healthcare sectors. The initiative promises to bring professionals from varied healthcare backgrounds together to deliver quality, discrimination-free care.

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## **TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS**

### **Call for paracetamol to go S4**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024, Chris Brooker

New research indicates the upscheduling of modified-release paracetamol has had no impact on rates of overdose, with calls for it to go to prescription only.

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### **‘Don’t be worried, we actually love an excuse to sit and look at your tablets’**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024, Megan Haggan

How can patients start conversations about deprescribing – and where can pharmacists come in? Pharmacists were recently offered a consumer perspective.

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### **Medicines access at risk again**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024, Megan Haggan

Pharmacists are again calling on governments to make continued dispensing measures permanent, as the current arrangements expire.

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## **MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH**

### **Electronic medical records a ‘step-change’ for safety**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024

Electronic medical records (EMRs) play a key role in averting medication errors in hospital settings, researcher reports. Media reports linking EMRs to adverse events overlook the significant medicines safety benefits they provide.

[Read More](#)

**6PR, Afternoons, 28/03/2024, Julie-Anne Sprague**

Sprague is joined by Oliver Peterson, 6PR host. Peterson asks Sprague if she has had some trepidation when it comes to having a digital ID card. Sprague mentions that she had. Peterson continues that people can opt out of it now and explains that people could opt in or out of the My Health Record data.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Cops swoop on luxury cars, cash, drugs

Herald Sun, General News, 29/03/2024, Mark Buttler and Regan Hodge, Page 6

A prominent anti-ageing clinic has been raided and luxury cars worth many millions seized as part of a major steroid trafficking investigation. The Melbourne Sports Medicine and Anti-Aging Science clinic at Moonee Ponds was searched on Thursday and drugs allegedly seized. Millions of dollars worth of vehicles were impounded at a Somerton factory and police will allege some were the proceeds of crime.

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### 'I had no access': ex-residents of controversial rehab centre say welfare payments were taken against their wishes

The Guardian, Other, 28/03/2024, Christopher Knaus and Lorena Allam

Gabriel Osborne was 15 when he first arrived at Perth's notorious Esther House. Like other former residents, he claims he was confronted with shocking practices. Residents who were there for mental health treatment or drug and alcohol rehabilitation allege they were subjected to gay conversion therapy and exorcisms. Some say they were baptised against their will and suffered severe psychological and emotional abuse.

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### South Australian coroner finds missed opportunities led to mum's 'preventable' death

7news.com.au, Other, 28/03/2024

When a young mother complained to paramedics she was suffering chest pains, cold sweats and her lips were going black, she was told to take Panadol and follow up with a GP. Within 48 hours, she was dead. On Wednesday, a South Australian coroner found Jennifer Collins, 30, would likely still be alive if not for a series of missteps by those overseeing her treatment.

[Read More](#)

### Five-year ban for taking exploitative photos

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 28/03/2024, Megan Haggan

A doctor and qualified pharmacist has been banned from providing any health service after his "disgraceful and contemptible" conduct. The practitioner had been registered as a pharmacist between 2008 and 2015. In January 2015, he was first granted registration as a medical practitioner.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### WA becomes the final state to decriminalise abortion, as Premier praises change

SBS, Other, 28/03/2024

Western Australia's new abortion laws have come into effect, decriminalising the procedure and cementing access to improved healthcare for women. Abortion has officially been removed from

Western Australia's criminal code, as sweeping reforms improve access to healthcare for women across the state. The new laws that came into effect on Wednesday remove clinically unnecessary barriers and bring WA into line with other jurisdictions.

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## SPORT

### Pride of the Tiger at Leichhardt: inside the stadium Sydney forgot

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/03/2024, Anthony Segart, Page 4

Joel Giblin has spent the last decade of his career meticulously caring for every inch of Leichhardt Oval: measuring the length of the grass, inspecting the ground before big games, and sitting inside the iconic scoreboard box on the top of the venue's famous hill. But for years the site known among inner west locals as the eighth wonder of the world has struggled to measure up to Sydney's larger, newer stadiums.

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### AFL sticks with its drugs policy

Age, Edition Changes - 2nd Edition, 29/03/2024, Jake Niall, Page 3

AFL boss Andrew Dillon has told a briefing of all 18 clubs that the league will continue with a healthbased illicit drugs policy. In practice, this would mean no sanction on the first offence. The AFL chief executive also told the clubs that incidents of players being held over from playing because of drug use were extremely rare, according to three senior sources present at the meeting who did not wish to be named due to the sensitivity of the discussions.

*Also reported by:* [Sydney Morning Herald \(Sydney\)](#), [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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### Fury over trans players

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29/03/2024, Clarissa Bye, Page 15

Soccer gender war as women's teams complain about 'men' NSW soccer officials have held an emergency meeting about transgender players in female competitions amid allegations that clubs who didn't want to play against biological men were "threatened" with fines and possible discrimination action.

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

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### We pass the test

Daily Telegraph, Sport, 29/03/2024, Fatima Kdouh, Page 69

Andrew Abdo is confident that clubs are not conducting secret "off the book" illicit drugs testing but said it was part of his job as NRL boss to worry about the issue. On Thursday, it was revealed about 100 AFL players received secret immunity from the code's three-strike drugs policy, according to club medical officials, as the league is accused of "aiding and abetting" illegal drug use of players.

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

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### IOC backs Brisbane 2032 Games preparations amid political turmoil over changes to venue planning

ABC Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Arianna Levy

A senior member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has expressed confidence in



preparations underway for the Brisbane 2032 Games at a virtual meeting held overnight. Members of the IOC Coordination Commission and the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee held their second annual meeting late last night.

*Also reported by: [9News \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [The New Daily \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).*

[Read More](#)

## **Mediation commences between Indigenous former Hawks, Hawthorn staff**

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Andrew Mathieson

Cyril Rioli confronted his former Hawthorn bosses Alastair Clarkson and Chris Fagan on Tuesday for the first time in more than five years at the Australian Human Rights Commission that continued mediation into Wednesday over systemic racism claims from its once Indigenous players. Conciliation looks set to continue between the warring parties of former premiership coach Clarkson, general manager of football Fagan, and ex-Hawks staffer Jason Burt against ex-teammates and their partners, Rioli, wife Shannyn Ah-Sam-Rioli, Jermaine Miller-Lewis, wife Montanah Miller-Lewis, Carl Peterson as well as ex-Aboriginal liaison officer Leon Egan.

[Read More](#)

## **Australia's Hooper hopes to transition from 15s to rugby sevens in time for the Paris Olympics**

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 28/03/2024

After setting records in the traditional game, ex-Wallabies captain Michael Hooper is ready to complete the transition to rugby sevens in a bid to play for Australia at the Paris Olympics. Hooper has been picked in Australia's 13-man squad for next month's Hong Kong Sevens, the regular highlight of the sevens calendar.

[Read More](#)

## **ABC News, News Breakfast, 28/03/2024, Michael Rowland and Lisa Millar**

Former head of Australia's anti-doping authority ASADA Richard Ings says the AFL must answer questions around the explanations given to the public about positive off-the-books drug tests. Allegations were raised under parliamentary privilege about widespread cocaine use and cover-ups by clubs and the AFL to avoid detection by anti-doping authorities.

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## **Channel 7, Sunrise, 28/03/2024, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington**

Olympic champion Ariarne Titmus is pleading for decision-makers to get serious about the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games, which has so far been plagued by stadium debacles.

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## **Channel 9, Today, 28/03/2024, Alex Cullen and Sarah Abo**

The AFL has been forced to respond to bombshell claims it's conducting a secret illicit drug testing programme. It is believed that the players are avoiding the three-strike-out policy. The AFL has come out in defence of its current policies but does say that it is going to review its 19-year-old illicit drug policy.

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## **Channel 9, Today, 28/03/2024, Alex Cullen and Sarah Abo**

Panel discussion with Shaun Smith, AFL footballer, and Dr Peter Larkins, Melbourne physician. Cullen says the AFL has launched an unapologetic defence of its drug policy following claims it authorised an off-the-books testing programme that allowed players to evade detection on match days. Abo says Sports Integrity Australia is now assessing the allegations, which a former Asada employee told the show could amount to cheating. Smith admits that he finds it astounding that the AFL is admitting to doing drug testing that's off-the-books and unapologetic.

### **SBS, World News Australia, 28/03/2024, Janice Petersen**

The International Olympic Committee has given Brisbane a vote of confidence for laying strong foundations ahead of the 2032 games. The virtual meeting, held overnight, comes less than two weeks after the state government's decision to scrap construction of a new stadium caused political turmoil. The Queensland Government initially proposed a \$3 billion rebuild of the Gabba, which included a new stadium at Victoria Park, but the Independent Games Review recommended a world-class stadium be built instead.

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### **SBS, World News Australia, 28/03/2024, Janice Petersen**

The AFL Players Association has responded to reports that up to 100 players were involved in illicit drug controversy. They added that only an incredibly small number of players are being protected by their club doctors. The claims of club doctors running protection for players were made under parliamentary privilege on Tuesday night, but the AFL remains unapologetic. In the AFL, Sport Integrity Australia says it's opened an investigation but wouldn't comment further

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### **Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 28/03/2024, Laura Jayes**

The extent of AFL's secret drug system is being revealed today. Multiple reports claim up to 100 players could be avoiding the league's three-strike drug policy. If a player is picked up by Sports Integrity Australia testing positive to an illicit substance on game day, that player could face a ban of up to four years.

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### **ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 28/03/2024, Rick Hind**

The decision to reject a proposal to build a new multi-billion dollar stadium and instead upgrade three existing venues. Kirsty Coventry, Chair of the IOC Coordination Commission for Brisbane 2032, says no matter what happens, organisers will deliver incredible games for athletes whether they are in a temporary venue or in a newly built venue or an existing venue that's had some small upgrades.

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### **3AW, Breakfast, 28/03/2024, Ross Stevenson and Russel Howcroft**

Stevenson and Howcroft discuss the recent AFL controversy involving illicit drug tests for players. Stevenson says the teams shouldn't have involved their team doctors if they think that the players have gone over.

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### **ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 28/03/2024, Sonya Feldhoff and Jules Schiller**

Feldhoff says according to The Age, Sport Integrity Australia mentioned that it will assess allegations against illicit drug tests in the AFL as the League admits it empowers club doctors to remove players from matches if they are at risk of testing positive on match day.

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### **ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 28/03/2024, Nadia Mitsopoulos**

Interview with Associate Professor Catherine Ordway, Sports Integrity Research Lead, University of Canberra. Ordway says Sport Integrity Australia is currently looking into the illicit drug tests claim on the AFL and they are even going beyond the illicit drug testing policy. She states that additional tests are being provided to make sure that they're going to go positive under the Anti-Doping Code Policy.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### New use for mRNA process

Herald Sun, General News, 29/03/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 6

The same technology that created Covid vaccines is being used by Victorian researchers to develop a possible preventive therapy for Alzheimer's. A team from The Florey is the first to explore the use of mRNA technology to treat a cause of Alzheimer's disease, a toxic protein called tau.

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### Grant a lifeline for transfusion research

Navy News, General News, 28/03/2024, Jacob Joseph, Page 5

ADF medical researchers are leading a world-first study to better understand when critically ill patients need a platelet transfusion. The team recently secured a \$1.8 million grant from the Medical Research Future Fund to conduct Australian clinical trials in partnership with the UK's University of Oxford.

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### Common hormones used for contraception linked to brain tumours

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/03/2024

Prolonged use of a common hormone used in some contraceptives has been linked to an increased risk of a tumour that grows in the membranes around the brain. A large French study, published in the British Medical Journal on Thursday, says women who use one...

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance backs Mparntwe curfew, calls for community-led initiatives as lasting solution

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Dechlan Brennan

The peak body for Indigenous Community Controlled Health Services in the Northern Territory says the curfew put in place by the NT government in Mparntwe/Alice Springs is necessary to ensure community safety. The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) said protecting public safety required "substantial investment" in community-led initiatives to prevent crime, in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

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### Indigenous children 28 times more likely to spend a night in detention, data reveals

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Dechlan Brennan

New data from 2022-23 has revealed First Nations children are 28 times more likely to spend a night in detention than non-Indigenous children. It comes as several states look to enact - or continue with - laws that experts say will only exacerbate the number of children behind bars, despite calls for Indigenous people only to be incarcerated as a last resort and the federal government ostensibly committing to do more to close the justice gap.

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## OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## Schools hit by whooping cough

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/03/2024, Megan Gorrey, Page 13

An escalation in whooping cough cases among school students in NSW has sparked a push for children and adults whose immunity is waning to get a booster shot for the potentially fatal disease. Whooping cough diagnoses, which dropped dramatically during the pandemic, surged in schoolaged children during the first quarter of this year, NSW Health data published yesterday shows.

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

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## Here's what you need to know about flu season

Canberra Times, Other, 28/03/2024, Sophia Baker

Flu season is nearly here and pharmacists are encouraging people to get their flu vaccine. Influenza vaccines are available from the start of April, but pharmacists recommend waiting until the end of the month to early May before getting the jab for the best protection over the winter months.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Pete Evans is embracing a whole different look since leaving his TV career

NEWS.com.au, Other, 28/03/2024, Mary Madigan

Former television star Pete Evans has been spotted rocking a wispy mullet in new photos. Evans, 51, formerly a judge on Seven's My Kitchen Rules and the owner of several popular restaurants, including Hugo's Manly and Hugo's Lounge in Sydney, has been living a much less public life since 2020. [...] He was slapped with a \$25,000 fine by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for selling a \$15,000 "BioCharger" device he falsely claimed could fight Covid.

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## OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

### Hearing in city on cannabis legalisation

Newcastle Herald, General News, 29/03/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 8

The push to legalise cannabis will be examined in a new inquiry, with regional hearings to be held this year including in Newcastle. A NSW Upper House committee will examine cannabis regulation, including the effects of the laws in regional areas and disadvantaged communities.

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### Rabbits Eat Lettuce is the first multi-day festival in Australia to have pill testing. How will it work?

ABC Online, Other, 28/03/2024, Lexy Hamilton-Smith

Five thousand partygoers will have the opportunity to get their illicit drugs tested for purity at the iconic "bush doof" Rabbits Eat Lettuce Festival that begins on Thursday on Queensland's Southern Downs. A team of analytical chemists from Canberra will work in a pill testing hub at the four-day festival, near Warwick, where they can determine if the drugs are cut with dangerous chemicals or synthetic opioids.

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

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## FOOD STANDARDS

### Top doctors want ban on junk food adverts

Canberra Times, Other, 29/03/2024, Steve Evans

The nation's doctors have urged the government to ban online adverts for "junk food" like burgers, fries and sugary drinks. Their organization the Australian Medical Association said that this would "put the health of children ahead of the profits of harmful industries".

[Read More](#)

### Vegetables are losing their nutrients. Can the decline be reversed?

The Guardian, Other, 29/03/2024, Miranda Lipton

In 2004, Donald Davis and fellow scientists at the University of Texas made an alarming discovery: 43 foods, mostly vegetables, showed a marked decrease in nutrients between the mid and late 20th century. According to that research, the calcium in green beans dropped from 65 to 37mg. Vitamin A levels plummeted by almost half in asparagus. Broccoli stalks had less iron.

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