



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 30th March 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [**West Australian**](#) (page 1) reports WA Premier Roger Cook has told the Commonwealth's COVID inquiry that the Australian Defence Force should play a greater role in providing quarantine facilities and border enforcement in a future pandemic.
- The [**Saturday Age**](#) (page 3) reports the owner of a Moonee Ponds sports clinic has been charged with trafficking in steroids and growth hormones and sourcing blank prescriptions from a doctor in NSW. *Also reported by:* [Sydney Morning Herald](#), [Canberra Times](#), [Daily Mail Australia](#)
- The [**Hobart Mercury**](#) (page 5) reports Minister for Health Mark Butler has stressed that the latest approved increase to health insurance premiums, the greatest in 5 years, is still below the inflation rate. *Also reported by:* [Northern Territory News](#), [Weekend Post](#), [Geelong Advertiser](#), [7news.com.au](#)
- The [**Weekend Australian**](#) (page 7) reports that immunotherapy drugs could be an alternative to preventative mastectomies for women possessing the BRCA gene mutation that predisposes them to breast and ovarian cancers.

- The [Weekend Australian](#) (page 9) reports the former director-general of Western Australia Health has joined private health providers in calling on Minister for Health Mark Butler to assist with private health insurance payouts or risk more private hospital closures.
- The [Weekend Australian](#) (page 9) reports Meta's moderation of harmful content is under fire as eating disorder survivors note the amount of dieting content being pushed on its platforms.
- The [Saturday Age](#) (page 9) reports the AFL has condemned a racist attack on the children of Indigenous former great Eddie Betts, with CEO Andrew Dillon and head of inclusion Tanya Hosch calling on Australians to stand together and call out racism. *Also reported by:* [Weekend Australian](#), [Herald Sun](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Courier Mail](#), [West Australian](#)
- The [Courier Mail](#) (page 10) reports this weekend's Rabbits Eat Lettuce music festival on the Southern Downs is the first multi-day festival in Australia to host on-site pill testing. *Also reported by:* [Courier Mail](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle](#)

MINISTER BUTLER

Private hospitals flailing, on life support

Weekend Australian, General News, 30/03/2024, Paul Garvey, Page 9

More private hospitals will close in coming months without government intervention to address private health insurance payouts, says Neale Fong, former director-general of Western Australia Health. Now running the not-for-profit operator Bethesda, which in February announced the closure of a near-new private mental health hospital in Perth's south, he said growing pressures on private hospitals would ultimately spill over into the public health system. [...] The Australian this month revealed that several private hospital providers had briefed Health Minister Mark Butler on their increasingly difficult financial positions.

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

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Committee mania little more than MPs drunk on ego

Weekend Australian, General News, 30/03/2024, Peter van Onselen, Page 15

[...] But why is this committee – with its Labor majority – focusing on reducing bottleshop prices anyway? Has it discussed the need to do so with Labor Health Minister Mark Butler?

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

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Sting in health fund increase

Hobart Mercury, General News, 30/03/2024, Jack Quail, Page 5

Australians will wake up on Monday paying more for their private health insurance cover – and it's no April Fool's joke. More than 15 million people will see their premiums rise by more than 3 per cent in the biggest increase in five years. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler approved the average 3.03 per cent increase across the 31 insurers in early March, stressing it was lower than the annual rise in wages and inflation.

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

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Millions of Aussies to be hit by extra \$159 cost in just days

7news.com.au, Other, 29/03/2024, Rhiannon Lewin

Private health insurance premiums are set to rise by more than 3 per cent on April 1, the biggest increase in five years. The federal government has approved an average industry premium rise of 3.03 per cent. [...] This year's rise is smaller than the annual rise in wages, the age pension and inflation, Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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Inside the Ozempic war

Daily Telegraph, General News, 30/03/2024, Cydonee Mardon, Page 38

It may be the "It" drug revolutionising the weight loss industry but it is also at the centre of a multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical war. On one side of the Ozempic debate are the original beneficiaries, the people who suffer from diabetes and struggling to get access to the drug that is helping to manage blood glucose levels, and on the other side are people with obesity issues, hungry for the drug for its weight-loss qualities. [...] And quite simply it doesn't make sense, says Elyse Wilkinson, one of at least 100 Australians who have written to Federal Health minister Mark Butler.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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ABC News, ABC News Day, 29/03/2024, Kathryn Robinson

Interview with Curtin University School of Population Health Professor Jonine Jancey regarding a study on e-cigarette content on social media. [...] I'd like to applaud the Minister for Health Mr Butler on these new regulations. What they are is they're going to try and address this kind of content that we've seen in our research around e-cigarettes and kerb them.

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MINISTER WELLS

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DEPARTMENT

Top doctors want ban on junk food adverts

Canberra Times, General News, 30/03/2024, Steve Evans, Page 28

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". [...] The doctors have made their recommendations in a detailed document to the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Health experts push for less junk in advertising

Canberra Times, Other, 29/03/2024, Sophia McCaughan

The federal government should move to limit junk food advertising to put the health of children ahead of the profits of the industry, experts say. In a submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Australian Medical Association said research suggests young people see 168 unhealthy food and drink promotions through social media each week.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [The West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#), [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#). *Similar coverage:* [Mumbrella \(Online\)](#).

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ABC Radio Sydney, 15:00 News, 29/03/2024

The nation's doctors want the federal government to ban online junk food marketing in a bid to improve children's health. In a detailed submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Australian Medical Association is urging the federal government to bring in tougher laws on advertising for unhealthy food and drink.

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6PR, Mornings, 29/03/2024, Gary Adshead

The Australian Medical Association have made a submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care feasibility study that's looking into ways of perhaps limiting unhealthy food marketing to children in Australia. We're joined by Professor Steve Robson, the AMA president.

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Is there no escaping Medicare's tentacles?

Australian Doctor, Other, 29/03/2024, Paul Smith

This week many doctors learnt something new about Medicare's compliance unit and the reach of its numerous tentacles. Since 2020, legislation has been in effect allowing the Department of Health and Aged Care to match MBS claims data with passenger movement records it gets from the Department of Home Affairs.

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CORONAVIRUS

Chief health officer Dr John Gerrard slammed over calls to scrap term 'long Covid'

The Courier Mail, Other, 29/03/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

Queensland's chief health officer has been accused of "medical gaslighting" following his comments on long Covid. Dr John Gerrard issued a statement that said the name "long Covid" implied the long-term viral symptoms were unique and exceptional to other viral infections and that the name should be scrapped as it stirred up unnecessary fear.

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

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Ex-cop, former NRL star, Justin Poore speaks out after being stood down from NSW Police over vaccine

NEWS.com.au, Other, 29/03/2024, Jack Evans

Former NRL player turned cop Justin Poore found himself all but begging for his job back as he and dozens of former NSW police colleagues seek to overturn a vaccine-based sacking. Poore, who once donned jerseys for the Dragons, the Eels, and the NSW Blues in the State of Origin, has spoken out about his contentious dismissal from the NSW Police Force over Covid-19 vaccination mandates.

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

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A COVID vaccine mandate could be dumped. That doesn't mean it was a bad idea

SBS, Other, 29/03/2024, Jessica Kaufman and Katie Attwell

Months after COVID-19 vaccines were introduced in 2021, governments and private organisations mandated them for various groups. Health and aged care workers were among the first to need two doses to keep their jobs.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Aged care worker sentenced for assault

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 30/03/2024, Grace Crivellaro, Page 2

An aged care worker has been sacked and convicted after he assaulted a vulnerable 95-year-old resident in a bid to "startle" her. Gaurav Ramavtar Singh, a former assistant in nursing at the Greenhills Aged Care Home in Figtree, fronted Wollongong Local Court on Tuesday, after pleading guilty to common assault.

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Esperance aged care facility says federal funds will be critical to cover sector-wide pay rise

ABC Online, Other, 29/03/2024, Emily JB Smith

A remote country town's only aged care facility will be lobbying the federal government to help it source more than \$1 million for staff pay rises. This month aged care workers won a long-running Fair Work case and secured a wage rise of up to 28.5 per cent across the sector, which is inclusive of an interim 15 per cent pay rise awarded two years ago.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Drinking less big difference

Daily Telegraph, General News, 30/03/2024, Page 33

Men who drink more than four drinks a day or more than 14 drinks per week and women who drink more than three drinks per day or more than seven drinks per week could help lower their risk of major heart issues and strokes by cutting back on the booze. Researchers at Korea University and Chungbuk National University found that reducing alcohol consumption was associated with a 23 per cent lower risk of major cardiovascular issues, including heart attacks, angina, stroke or death.

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

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Breast cancer drug breakthrough gives hope for women with the 'Jolie gene'

Weekend Australian, General News, 30/03/2024, Eleanor Hayward, Page 7

Healthy women with cancer-causing genes could be given drugs normally used to treat an advanced form of the disease as a preventive measure, a study suggests. About one in 400 people carry a BRCA gene mutation that puts them at high risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer.

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

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How to tell if you have an auto-immune disease

Hobart Mercury, General News, 30/03/2024, Ashley Lowe, Page 35

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: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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Hats on to sun safety

Townsville Bulletin, NQ Life, 30/03/2024, Bettina Warburton, Page 10

A regular day at his children's surf lifesaving carnival became a life-changing moment for Kurt Rehbein and his family. Kurt and his wife Trace's encounter with melanoma, a potentially deadly skin cancer, began innocently enough.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 29/03/2024, Mark Burrows

Australia's first ever screening programme targeting people at risk of heart disease could be a reality within two years. The Heart Foundation is calling on the federal government to fund the cost of designing the program to help save more lives.

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PRIMARY CARE

'Birth is just a snapshot': Why boutique post-natal services are on the rise

The Saturday Age, General News, 30/03/2024, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 2

Larissa Leone struggled with postpartum depression and anxiety following the birth of her daughter almost a decade ago. Despite being a successful business owner and "having everything in check", she says "having a child really knocked me for a six". "I was really considering doing harm to myself in order to get a break," she says. "It just didn't need to be like that." Next month, Leone will open the doors to Homb, a not-for-profit postpartum recovery space catering to mothers in their first year of parenthood

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Hell inside our emergency ward 'war zones'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 30/03/2024, Madeline Crittenden, Page 62

Sick and vulnerable patients are falling through the cracks, forced to wait hours for treatment in emergency departments that can resemble a "war zone" according to struggling frontline workers. Nurses in hospitals across NSW say they are working double shifts, skipping meal breaks and

returning to work less than eight hours after finishing their prior shift yet there still isn't enough staff to keep on top of their patient loads.

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

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Plan pulled: Health bosses admit error

Launceston Examiner, General News, 30/03/2024, Benjamin Seeder, Page 2

A new hospital protocol to help facilitate the government's ban on ambulance ramping has been withdrawn a day after its introduction, after hospital bosses admitted making an error. The Priority Inpatient Transfer Hospitals Protocol was sent to southern hospital staff on Wednesday, and described how emergency department patients would be rapidly transferred to inpatient wards.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#).

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Dire diagnosis for rural healthcare RFDS report

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 30/03/2024, Phoebe Doyle, Page 12

Disturbing statistics were released this week about the state of rural and remote healthcare across Australia, with people in remote places nearly twice as likely to die from potentially avoidable deaths compared to city dwellers. The Royal Flying Doctors Service's Best for the Bush baseline report detailed and benchmarked the health of rural and remote Australians, examining the health disparities faced by people living in these communities and how diverse and complex factors influenced their access to healthcare services.

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

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Fresh blood for hospital board

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 30/03/2024, Chris Burns, Page 24

Former mayor Tony Mooney continues his chairman role on the Townsville Hospital and Health Board as three new members are appointed. Mr Mooney said the new term would be focused on developing services for patients closer to their home, seeing more patients within clinically recommended times, and overseeing the multimillion-dollar infrastructure program.

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

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New role for ex-rugby league star

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 30/03/2024, Natasha Emeck, Page 24

A retired football player, experienced board director, and finance professional will join the North West Hospital and Health Board. The newly appointed board will continue under the leadership of Chair Cheryl Vardon AO.

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

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Former CEO's health merger warning

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 30/03/2024, Jessica Greenan, Page 4

South-west patients "will get lost" in a merged health system, a former hospital CEO warns. Less transparency and high travel costs are former Portland District Health Service chief executive officer Chris Giles' top fears in response to the ever-increasing likelihood of public health services amalgamating as part of the state government's Health Plan.

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A proposed mega merger could see chemist prices rise and patient care put at risk, critics warn

NEWS.com.au, Other, 29/03/2024, Shannon Molloy

As the competition watchdog begins probing a planned mega merger between two pharmacy giants,

critics warn Australian consumers could end up paying dearly for the move. In December, it was announced Chemist Warehouse and Sigma Healthcare, which owns brands like Amcal and Discount Drug Store, would join forces to become one enormous \$8.8 billion conglomerate.

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

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Thousands of tourists strain health service in Exmouth as locals warn of mental health crisis

ABC Online, Other, 29/03/2024, Alistair Bates

Residents of a remote West Australian tourist town say their health service is buckling under the strain of more than 150,000 visitors each year. The Easter long weekend kicks off the peak season at Exmouth, 1,200 kilometres north of Perth, on the edge of the Ningaloo Reef in the state's north west.

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On the Canberra Hospital's children's ward, these clown doctors offer a unique sort of healing and support

ABC Online, Other, 29/03/2024, Geo Donaldson

The wards of Canberra Hospital are usually filled with medical staff attending to sick patients on what can be some of their patients' worst days. But among the familiar white lab coats and scrubs on the paediatric floor, two slightly more colourful characters can be found.

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'Take it or leave it': funding runs dry for regional hospital developments

Warrnambool Standard, Other, 29/03/2024, Ben Silvester

The funding has run dry for regional Victorian hospital redevelopments as the state government faces historic debt and Melbourne projects are given priority. Two major hospital builds at opposite ends of the state - Warrnambool in the south-west, and Albury-Wodonga in the north-east - have been told they will receive no extra money despite strong evidence neither redevelopment will be fit for purpose at its current budget.

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

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60-day savings will grow: MP

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 29/03/2024, Nicholas O'Donoghue

Savings stemming from Labor's cut to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) general co-payment and 60-day dispensing "will grow", backbencher Tina Lawrence claims. Speaking during a debate on the cost-of-living on Wednesday (27 March), the Western Australian MP said the government was undertaking a ...

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Channel 9, Nine News, 29/03/2024, Kate Collins

A growing number of South Australians are stuck in limbo tonight as elective surgery disruptions drag on into next week. Authorities say they have to free up beds for the sickest patients, the Opposition raising concerns about what it means for winter.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 29/03/2024, Mike Smithson

A controversial ban on elective surgery will last longer than first planned, with cancellations now extending beyond Easter.

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Meta under the microscope on eating disorders

Weekend Australian, General News, 30/03/2024, James Dowling, Page 9

Facebook and Instagram are putting the onus on eating disorder survivors to avoid content that can trigger their anorexia and bulimia, with their attempts to crack down on unhealthy posts failing, experts and advocates warn. Meta has sought to limit harmful diet posts, introducing in 2021 a reform that would direct users towards relevant helplines when accessing content that may be deemed harmful.

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Second free mental health clinic on track to open for south Canberra residents

Canberra Times, General News, 30/03/2024, Bageshri Savvasachi, Page 7

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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Ray of hope

Courier Mail, Qweekend, 30/03/2024, Tonya Turner, Page 14

Young children aged under 12 are experiencing suicidal thoughts more than ever before, health workers warn. But there is an opportunity to turn this around.

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

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One in 10 emergency workers develops PTSD. Finally, help is on its way

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 29/03/2024, Sarah Berry

At first, Elisabeth Goh thought her anxiety, insomnia and short temper were about everything except what they were really about. She couldn't sleep because her bed was too hard. She found herself unable to concentrate in meetings or skipping them altogether because she knew she'd lose her cool at someone. Her closest relationships were becoming fraught.

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

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Tour gives our future doctors a taste of life in the bush

Daily Liberal, General News, 30/03/2024, Allison Hore, Page 3

A new initiative is hoping to address the regional health workforce shortage by bringing future doctors on weekend trips to regional centres. Dubbo hosted more than 30 "ambassadors for the future rural health workforce" as the final stop on an inaugural tour for medical cadets to explore country NSW.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Sports clinic raided over alleged drug trafficking

The Saturday Age, General News, 30/03/2024, Erin Pearson, Page 3

A sports medicine and anti-ageing clinic owner with a "colourful" past has been accused of running an elaborate drug trafficking operation, including paying an interstate doctor \$2000 a week for signed blank prescriptions. Police seized hundreds of vials of testosterone, human growth hormone and anabolic steroids, luxury cars worth more than \$3 million and a safe of cash in raids at a Moonee Ponds business, a Somerton factory and a Yarrambat home this week all allegedly connected to accused drug trafficker Robin James Taylor.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#). Similar coverage: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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We're watching you

Courier Mail, General News, 30/03/2024, Vanda Carson and Jackie Sinnerton, Page 6

A controversial surgeon accused of letting his pants fall down and blowing his nose on the sterile curtain screen during surgery has been slapped with strict conditions on his registration by the health watchdog. In 2022, the Sunday Mail ran a series of stories highlighting the shocking list of complaints against Mackay Base Hospital urologist Daryl Stephens.

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

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Loved 'endlessly', little Vann has had a tough journey

Burnie Advocate, General News, 30/03/2024, Sarah Fittock, Page 1

Vann Gale's parents are grateful for a midwife who spotted something wasn't right a few days after he was born. It led to treatment for his genetic condition and a new screening test for newborns in Tasmania. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health said screening for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) now occurs in Tasmania as part of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening program.

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SPORT

Police called in after footy legend's family targeted by 'sickening' racist slurs

Weekend Australian, General News, 30/03/2024, Mikaela Mulveney and Alexi Demetriadi, Page 4

Victorian police are investigating "sickening" footage of Eddie Betts' children and friends targeted by racial abuse, as the Premier and the AFL world came out in force for the former champion. The Indigenous great, who played for Carlton and Adelaide, shared the video to Instagram on Thursday night, which showed a car slowly driving past his Victorian home about 8.30pm where children were playing basketball, yelling the N-word multiple times.

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Betts shares footage of racial abuse of children

The Saturday Age, General News, 30/03/2024, Lachlan Abbott, Page 9

Victoria Police are investigating after Indigenous football great Eddie Betts shared footage of children being racially abused while playing basketball in their Melbourne yard. [...] The AFL has condemned the racist remarks directed at the family, saying it had reached out to the Betts family to offer support. AFL chief Andrew Dillon and the league's head of inclusion and social policy Tanya Hosch urged people to call out racism.

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Betts has backing of AFL

Herald Sun, General News, 30/03/2024, Sam Landsberger and Mitch Clarke, Page 9

The AFL has commended Indigenous champion Eddie Betts for calling out racism targeting his children, who were playing basketball in the front yard of their home on Thursday night. Betts posted on social media security camera footage of a white car slowly driving past his house in Melbourne's eastern suburbs before someone in the vehicle venomously screamed a vile racist slur multiple times.

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It's time to end this racist crap

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 30/03/2024, Dasha Havrilenko and Sam Landsberger, Page 11

The Crows have rallied behind Eddie Betts after he called out racist behaviour that, alarmingly, targeted his children outside their Victorian family home. The Indigenous champion – a former Adelaide and Carlton player – took to Instagram on Thursday night to post security footage that shows a car slowly driving past the house and its occupants yelling racial slurs multiple times.

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Betts' kids in racism shock

Courier Mail, General News, 30/03/2024, Liam Beatty, Page 10

Video of a driver hurling racist abuse at AFL great Eddie Betts' children outside their home has been condemned as "disgusting". The Indigenous former football player shared a clip of the incident on social media on Thursday.

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Cops act after AFL icon's kids abused

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 30/03/2024, Holly Hales and Shayne Hope, Page 7

Police have launched an investigation into a distressing racist attack against Eddie Betts' children, which was captured on home security footage. And the incident – which took place while the siblings played basketball in their own front yard – has prompted the AFL to reiterate that such behaviour has no place in sport or wider society.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).
Similar coverage: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#).

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AFL drug policy a 'fail' for majority

Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge has declared the AFL's illicit drugs policy fails to protect "99 per cent" of players and has called for a new model in the wake of revelations about a secret testing and protection regime. Several AFL coaches reacted with surprise this week to learn of the full extent of the protection given to players who self-report illicit drug use to club doctors and "off the books" tests to prevent them from match-day positives.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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Beveridge attacks AFL drugs policy

The Saturday Age, Sport, 30/03/2024, Andrew Wu, Page 50

Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge has called for revamp of the AFL's illicit drugs policy, saying the current model does not satisfactorily look after the "99 per cent" of players who do not use drugs. Beveridge said the policy did not protect the vast majority of players, and was adamant players did not withdraw from games to avoid match-day testing, as alleged by federal MP Andrew Wilkie in parliament on Tuesday.

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Game must guard 99pc who abide by the rules

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 30/03/2024, Steve Larkin, Page 5

The AFL's illicit-drugs policy fails to cater for the vast majority of players who don't use drugs. So says Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge, who wants an overhaul of the current policy amid this week's revelations of a secret regime protecting drug-taking players from testing positive on match day.

Similar coverage: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Club doctor: Dees drug use, not drug policy, the problem

The Saturday Age, General News, 30/03/2024, Chip Le Grand, Page 1

Zeeshan Arain, the former Melbourne club doctor who ignited the latest drugs scandal to engulf the AFL, never intended to blow up the league's illicit drugs policy or the use of "off-the-books" tests to stop players running foul of anti-doping rules. Arain says the national competition's approach towards illicit drugs is one of the better things the AFL has done.

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The AFL must clarify its stance on drug use

The Saturday Age, Editorials, 30/03/2024, Page 34

Federal MP Andrew Wilkie put the AFL's drug policy in the spotlight this week, when he claimed under parliamentary privilege that off-the-books drug tests were carried out by AFL clubs to protect players from detection on game days. Players testing positive to drugs under the AFL's drug policy are advised by club doctors to fake an injury to avoid punitive match-day testing, the Tasmanian independent MP alleged.

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AFL must be open about its ethical drugs policy

Herald Sun, General News, 30/03/2024, Matt Finnis, Page 57

When I joined the AFLPA as an in-house lawyer in 2005, the ink was barely dry on a new policy just agreed between the league and its players and trumpeted by health experts as a world-leading medical approach to illicit drug use. This week, the same policy was labelled by Senator Andrew Wilkie in parliament as being the basis upon which the AFL had committed a multi-hundred-million-dollar fraud on governments and taxpayers, signalling perhaps the lowest point in the 19-year history of the much-maligned Illicit Drugs Policy.

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A failed drug test? Don't want to know

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 30/03/2024, Mitchell Woodcock, Page 5

Adam Simpson claims he has never heard of a player being withdrawn for a fake injury as cover for failing a drug test and the West Coast coach says he doesn't want to be told if his players test positive for drugs. The AFL is in turmoil after bombshell claims that club doctors were being told by the league to test players for drugs before games in a bid to dodge breaches.

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

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

AFL boss reportedly rejects idea '100 players' exploit drug policy

NEWS.com.au, Other, 29/03/2024

AFL chief executive Andrew Dillon has reportedly informed all 18 clubs that the league's Illicit Drugs Policy will retain its current "health-based" form, despite reports that a major revamp to a more "punitive" rule was pending. According to The Age, Dillon held a private briefing with the club chiefs where he told them bombshell claims that up to 100 players were involved in knowingly circumventing current rules were "wildly exaggerated".

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

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 29/03/2024, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

AFL boss Andrew Dillon has held a briefing with all 18 clubs overnight over the growing drug testing scandal. He says the league will continue with a health-based approach to illicit drug use, meaning no sanctions for players on the first offence.

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Malaysia declines to host Games

Herald Sun, General News, 30/03/2024, Page 10

The future of the Commonwealth Games has once again been plunged into doubt since Malaysia declined to host the 2026 edition last week, but according to former Olympic marketing guru Michael Payne "it would be wrong to write the event off just yet." Malaysia's decision came despite the offer of a 100m (\$126m) sweetener from the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) towards the costs of hosting the event.

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

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'It's a celebration of how life is getting better'

Canberra Times, Sport, 30/03/2024, Lucy Arundell, Page 53

Ariana Ford was just five-years-old when doctors diagnosed her with aplastic anaemia. [...] Now back in full health, she and her brother are looking forward to competing at this year's Australian Transplant Games. The Games are back after a six-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 500 athletes, donors and families expected to attend the event in Canberra.

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

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Revealed: Real reason Coast's Olympics bid axed

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 30/03/2024, Keith Woods, Page 3

The Gold Coast's Carrara Stadium was ruled out as the athletics venue for the 2032 Olympics because competitors would have to travel too far to get there, the Premier says. In a submission to ex-Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk's Games venues review, the city council suggested using existing Gold Coast venues including Carrara could save about \$5bn on new infrastructure.

Editorial: [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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The IOC is backing the Queensland Premier's plans not to build a brand new stadium for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games. Live to Carla Tooma on the Gold Coast, Carla, it follows a round-table meeting.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Health risks linked to miscarriages

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 30/03/2024, Page 37

New Curtin University research has revealed a link between miscarriage and the increased risk of developing complications of gestational diabetes and high blood pressure-related disorders in later pregnancies. Researchers from the Curtin School of Population Health analysed 52 studies involving more than four million pregnancies in 22 countries to investigate the health impacts of miscarriage, abortion and recurrent pregnancy loss.

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

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'People assume you're crazy for doing it': the Melbourne clinic infecting healthy patients

The Guardian, Other, 29/03/2024, Charlotte Lytton

Australia's first unit dedicated to human challenge trials for novel vaccines and treatments has opened. But what are the ethics of infecting healthy people and who would do it?

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Gidgee Healing and Heart of Australia extend heart health services to Mount Isa and Lower Gulf

National Indigenous Times, Other, 29/03/2024, Joseph Guenzler

Gidgee Healing is partnering with Heart of Australia to provide heart healthcare services to the communities of Mount Isa, Mornington Island, Normanton, and Doomadgee. The collaboration aims to make heart care more accessible by offering essential mobile heart care and specialist services directly in these communities.

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Doof of concept for pill testing

Courier Mail, General News, 30/03/2024, Andreas Nicola and James Hall, Page 10

A piece of wilderness in the heart of Queensland's Southern Downs region has become ground zero for the biggest pill testing operation in Australian history this weekend. Shrugging off loud, conservative critics, Rabbits Eat Lettuce festivalgoers jumped at the opportunity to have drugs tested at a Pill Testing Australia tent – the first time ever nationally that a multiday festival has supported such a service.

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

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Pill testing is tacit approval of crime

Courier Mail, Editorials, 30/03/2024, Page 54

The pill testing taking place this Easter weekend at the Rabbits Eat Lettuce Festival in the state's southeast represents a conundrum not easily resolved for most thinking Queenslanders. This will be the first time that attendees of a multi-day festival will be able to access a free, voluntary, and confidential pill testing service designed to reduce the risks and harms associated with illicit drug use.

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

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First pill testing at event

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 30/03/2024, Michael Hudson, Page 3

A festival on the Southern Downs will be Queensland's first pill testing site, with organisers hoping to "avoid tragic consequences". Punters at this year's Rabbits Eat Lettuce music festival over the Easter long weekend will be safer, educated and aware as they make history for being the first site to use pill testing in the state's history.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#)

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SA stalls on free virus jab

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 30/03/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 17

South Australia has yet to commit to providing a free new vaccine for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for infants despite several states agreeing to it. SA has had 691 cases of the chest infection reported so far this year compared to 516 cases at the same time last year which went on to record 12,217 cases.

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Parents urged to get babies jabbed as RSV cases surge

NEWS.com.au, Other, 29/03/2024, Aisling Brennan

Parents are being urged to protect their children ahead of a possible horror winter of respiratory problems. Queensland hospitals are being overrun with sick kids, with 7000 cases of RSV being recorded since January 1, which is double the number of cases in 2023 between the same period, January 1 to March 21.

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

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Contaminated food caused mass illness

Canberra Times, General News, 30/03/2024, Steve Evans, Page 3

A government investigation has concluded that "the consumption of contaminated food" was the cause of an outbreak of vomiting and diarrhoea after a private function in Gunghalin nearly two weeks ago. More than 60 people fell ill, with some going to hospital, after the event at the Eastlake venue on Sunday, March 17.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#)

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Cook's army hard border

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 30/03/2024, Josh Zimmerman, Page 1

Roger Cook wants the army to "patrol and secure" WA's hard border and for sick people to be quarantined on military bases if Australia is ever forced to deal with another pandemic. The Premier's

contribution to the Commonwealth's COVID inquiry suggested he would not hesitate to repeat the "island within an island" elimination strategy employed by Mark McGowan.

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Indecision the new epidemic

Herald Sun, General News, 30/03/2024, Page 35

Two years of talks aimed at striking a global agreement on the handling of future pandemics failed to seal a deal in time on Thursday, and will restart next month for one last push. Scarred by Covid-19, which shredded economies, crippled health systems and killed millions, countries are trying to craft an international accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Early flu and cold season

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 30/03/2024, Blair Jackson, Page 19

The early cold and flu season is bringing tens of thousands of confirmed cases across the country. In Queensland there has been more than 6200 influenza cases this year, well ahead of the mean for this time each year since 2019 though that obviously includes periods of pandemic restrictions.

Similar coverage: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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2CC, Canberra Live, 29/03/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT Branch President Simon Blacker regarding the future Australian Centre for Disease Control.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Drug has given me a glimmer of hope

Daily Telegraph, General News, 30/03/2024, Madeline Crittenden, Page 29

When Luca Cacciotti was diagnosed with motor neurone disease eight months ago, he felt like he had been "hit with a sledgehammer". Now, for the first time since that day, he feels a sense of hope about his future.

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

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AstraZeneca calls for reform after claims Australian rules stopped it defending its vaccine during pandemic

The Guardian, Other, 29/03/2024, Josh Butler

AstraZeneca has called for reforms to Australia's rules around discussion of medicines, saying public confusion over its Covid vaccine was created because the company was restricted in explaining health warnings by the nation's medicines regulator. The call is contained in more than 2,000 submissions to the federal government's inquiry into Australia's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

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