



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 31st March 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[Sunday Times](#)** (page 3) reports parents are being urged to immunise their children after 434 cases of RSV were reported to the WA Health Department in the first three months of the year.
Also reported by: [Sun Herald](#), [ABC Online](#)
- **[Sunday Mail Adelaide](#)** (page 6) reports that Victorian-based Medmate Australia is offering South Australians with GP consultations within 15 minutes in an effort to grow its SA market.
- **[Sun Herald](#)** (page 12) reports the Black Dog Institute and the University of NSW has launched updated guidelines for the treatment of PTSD among emergency workers, with estimates at least one in 10 develop PTSD.
- **[Sunday Tasmanian](#)** (page 16) reports Tasmanian researchers are calling for money to be allocated in the next budget for a federally funded national action plan to combat Parkinson's disease.
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports the South Australian government has establish a state-first Parliament Select Committee into the prevalence and effects of endometriosis, with suffers stating they expect the rate of endometriosis suffers to be higher than the estimated one in seven as reported by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

MINISTER BUTLER

Health insurance costs up

Sunday Times, General News, 31/03/2024, Jack Quail, Page 28

Australians will wake up tomorrow paying more for their private health insurance cover and it's not an April Fool's joke. [...] 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.

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The many faces of community trauma

Mudgee Guardian, Other, 30/03/2024, Adrian Black

The streets of Victoria's Ballarat are steeped in history and heritage, but this year will be etched in locals' memories for all the wrong reasons. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler has rejected calls to redouble subsidised sessions under Better Access, claiming the scheme was intended for mild to moderate disorders, was limited by inequitable access and ultimately constrained availability.

Also reported by: [Canowindra News \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Bega District News \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Muswellbrook Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Rural \(Online\)](#), [Lithgow Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The North West Star \(Online\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend), 30/03/2024, Chris Bath

There's new hope for Australian women who are battling ovarian cancer with the life-changing drug Zejula that's now available at an affordable price. It comes as the survival rate for ovarian cancer is shockingly low. Ovarian cancer patients with the HRT gene variant will be able to access maintenance medication Zejula on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme costing just \$31 seven for concession card holders with Mark Butler, Health Minister saying it'll help 200 women every single year.

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MINISTER WELLS

Wealthy to feel taskforce's aged care costs as best nursing homes rated

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 30/03/2024, Judith Kerr

Luxury micro towns for the elderly was a solution put to a federal taskforce into aged care, which handed down its report this month, weeks after Queensland's best nursing homes were named. [...] The taskforce, headed by Aged Care Minister Anika Wells, recommended that seniors with larger superannuation balances should co-contribute more for their accommodation, meals and everyday living items.

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

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

Endometriosis inquiry to explore how widespread it is, what can be done to improve treatment and support

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2024, Annabel Francis

Leah Trenberth has experienced extreme pain and nausea ever since she got her period, but was only diagnosed with endometriosis in her late 20s after doctors dismissed her symptoms as "needing to go to the toilet". [...] Ms Trenberth also thinks the inquiry will find the number of women with endometriosis is higher than then the estimated one in seven, as reported by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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CORONAVIRUS

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

How to finally get a good night's sleep

Sunday Telegraph, Body and Soul, 31/03/2024, Miranda Levy, Page 1

Whether it's the odd restless night or chronic insomnia, slumber issues are on the rise but there are solutions. So we asked leading experts for life-changing advice that actually works

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

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Easter and the wowser paradox

Sun Herald, General News, 31/03/2024, Parnell Palme McGuinness, Page 27

Addiction is not good but nor are some of the simplistic solutions, writes Parnell Palme McGuinness. For the non-religious, for whom there is no holy telephone, Easter can still contain a moral lesson.

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Meditation and mindfulness offer an abundance of health benefits and may be as effective as medication for treating certain conditions

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 31/03/2024, Hilary A. Marusak

Many people look to diet trends or new exercise regimens – often with questionable benefit – to get a healthier start on the new year. But there is one strategy that's been shown time and again to boost both mood and health: meditation.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Benefit in cutting booze

Sunday Times, General News, 31/03/2024, Page 13

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 from the Korea University College of Medicine and Chungbuk National University College of Medicine found that reducing alcohol consumption from these high levels to more mild or moderate levels was associated with a 23 per cent lower risk of major cardiovascular issues, including heart attacks, angina, stroke or death.

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Parkinson's surge sparks action plea

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 31/03/2024, Duncan Abey, Page 16

Researchers push for federal cash Tasmanian researchers have joined interstate colleagues in calling for a federally funded national action plan to combat Parkinson's disease with the neurological condition now affecting more than 200,000 Australians and its prevalence forecast to double by 2040.

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Multivitamins can help survival from bowel cancer

Australian Financial Review, Other, 31/03/2024

Moderate doses of multivitamins – three to five tablets a week - appear to lower the risk of death in people with colorectal cancer that has not yet spread, according to a study published in the leading journal, Cancer.

[Read More](#)

Emface and Exion dermal treatments now available in Tasmania for the first time

The Mercury, Other, 31/03/2024, Simon Mcguire

With the state grappling with high skin cancer rates, a pair of new dermal therapies are being offered for the first time in Tasmania. A pair of dermal therapy treatments now available for the first time in Tasmania have been called "game-changing".

[Read More](#)

I was just like Kate: Mum's cancer shock in her early 40s

Northern Territory News, Other, 30/03/2024, Kate Uren

An Adelaide mum was shocked to find out she had cancer when she was just 43 and – just like Princess Kate – faced the task of breaking the devastating news to her daughter. [...] Ms Potoczky is now an ambassador for the Ovarian Cancer Australia support group and wants to share her message with other women facing a cancer diagnosis.

[Read More](#)

Luca Cacciotti becomes first person in NSW to try drug that could slow

progress of motor neurone disease

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 30/03/2024, Madeline Crittenden

What started as some weakness in his ankle and a slight limp has progressed to Luca Cacciotti needing a wheelchair to get around. A new drug treatment has given him hope for the first time in months.

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PRIMARY CARE

Appeal's state of generosity

Sunday Herald Sun, Editorials, 31/03/2024, Page 58

As Victorians today celebrate Easter, it's also a time to rejoice in the fact that we live in such a wonderful part of the world. Along with the holiday joys of the chocolate hunt, the family lunches, the camping trips and the catch-ups with mates, this is also the time of year that we are reminded of how generous Victorians are with the annual Good Friday Appeal.

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Talk to GP 'in 15 mins'

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 31/03/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 6

A telehealth firm is targeting South Australia with the lure of GP consultations within 15 minutes and prices from \$20, with prescriptions sent to your smartphone. Victorian-based Medmate Australia says telehealth consultations are a "natural progression" turbo charged by the Covid lockdowns

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

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Former Townsville mayor continues chairman role on hospital board

The Mercury, Other, 30/03/2024, Chris Burns

The Townsville Hospital and Health chairman explains the board's goals for the new term as three new board members are appointed. Former mayor Tony Mooney continues his chairman role on the Townsville Hospital and Health Board as three new members are appointed.

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Private health insurance premiums set for biggest jump in five years on April 1

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 30/03/2024

Private health insurance premiums are set for their biggest jump in five years. Premiums are to increase by more than three per cent after approval by the federal government.

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

What is driving the huge rise in autism?

Sunday Age, General News, 31/03/2024, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 20

An evolution in understanding has seen a thousand-fold increase in diagnoses, writes Natassia Chrysanthos. In the late 1980s, when Professor Cheryl Dissanayake started researching autism, she estimated in her doctoral thesis that three or four babies out of 100,000 would be diagnosed with the condition.

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

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Menopause link to suicide

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Page 17

One in five perimenopausal and menopausal women taking part in a groundbreaking Adelaide-based survey has admitted to being so devastated by their crippling symptoms that they have contemplated suicide. The shocking revelation comes as menopause advocates push for the federal government to take action such as including newer and safer menopause hormone treatments on the PBS to help a generation of women who are "suffering in silence".

Also reported by: [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#).

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Tasmanians encouraged to 'take a minute' at Easter time

Sunday Examiner, General News, 31/03/2024, Hugh Bohane, Page 8

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) encourages anyone struggling during Easter to 'take a minute'. The Council is encouraging people to view the 'Take a Minute' challenge online via its website and visit the Head to Health walk-in centres.

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They are among the most trusted members of our community. They deserve support

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 31/03/2024

They are a reassuring presence in times of crisis, rising to the occasion when Australians are most in need. Whether it's bushfires, floods or a road accident, emergency workers play a front-line role in ensuring our safety.

[Read More](#)

Hayley felt isolated every day. A book club changed everything

SBS, Other, 30/03/2024, Jessica Bahr

As TikTok and viral book reviews spark an increase in young people reading, in-person book clubs are creating connections and reducing loneliness. When she moved back to Australia in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic after living in the United States, Hayley Shields

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Some parents need a village too

Sun Herald, General News, 31/03/2024, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 20

Boutique postnatal services are on the rise to ease the shock after birth, writes Lauren Ironmonger. Larissa Leone struggled with postpartum depression and anxiety following the birth of her daughter almost a decade ago.

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If one baby is a handful, try doubling it

Sunday Age, General News, 31/03/2024, James Massola, Page 25

Having twins is exhausting and expensive, but the prime minister can make simple changes to help, writes James Massola. Nothing can prepare you for the birth of twins.

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

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

One in 10 emergency workers gets PTSD. Help is on the way

Sun Herald, General News, 31/03/2024, Sarah Berry, Page 12

Elisabeth Goh thought her anxiety, insomnia and short temper were about everything except what they were really about. Goh couldn't sleep; her bed was too hard.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

The women getting pregnant on weight loss medication.

Mamamia, Other, 30/03/2024, Erin Docherty

We need to talk about weight loss drugs and pregnancy . Because according to social media, a whole lot of women who a) have fertility issues or b) are on contraception are getting suddenly getting pregnant.

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Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend) , 30/03/2024, Chris Bath

There's new hope for Australian women battling ovarian cancer, with a life-changing drug now available at an affordable price for hundreds more patients. From Monday, ovarian cancer patients with the HRD gene variant will be able to access maintenance medication Zejula on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme costing just \$31 seven for concession card holders to help 200 women every single year, who otherwise would be paying as much as \$130,000 for a course of treatment.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, National Nine News (Saturday), 30/03/2024, Mark Burrows

Thousands of heart disease patients are tonight being promised cheaper access to life-saving medication, which can cut cholesterol levels in half. The treatment called Inclisiran known by the brand name LEQVIO, is for patients with atherosclerotic heart disease. From 1 April, LEQVIO will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme slashing the cost of the injection from \$4,000 a year to around \$30 per script.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Extravagant supercars-loving Le Thach, partner of Ben Huynh accused of defrauding Australia's PBS scheme, re-emerges to flash a new blue Lamborghini

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 30/03/2024, Brett Lackey

The wife of a Sydney pharmacist who is accused of defrauding Australia's pharmaceutical benefits scheme, famous for displaying her lavish lifestyle on social media, has flaunted a blue Lamborghini. Le

Thach, who is the wife of suspended chemist Ben Huynh, took to social media to share a picture posing next to the \$700,000 supercar, which is understood to be leased.

[Read More](#)

Le Thach shows off \$700k Ferrari as husband Ben Huynh faces charges of defrauding PBS

The Courier Mail, Other, 30/03/2024, Briana Domjen

Le Thach has been quiet on social media since her pharmacist husband was charged with defrauding the PBS. But she's back, with a new Ferrari and some words of wisdom.

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

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Bluesfest boss: Pill testing 'will save lives'

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Edition Changes, 31/03/2024, Greg Stolz, Page 15

Byron Bay Bluesfest boss Peter Noble has backed pill testing at major music festivals, saying it will save lives. He was speaking as pill testing is used for the first time in Queensland at the Rabbits Eat Lettuce festival, also being held over the Easter weekend, on the Darling Downs.

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

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Australia's organ donation rates mildly improved, but transplant recipients say the numbers aren't good enough

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2024, Jesse Hyland

Vas Kontis was told he was one of the lucky ones when he left the ICU after what began as a searing pain in his stomach. It was in early April 2021 when Mr Kontis got out of bed and felt his abdomen "explode".

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SPORT

Why the MCG will remain a stadium like no other

Sunday Age, General News, 31/03/2024, Tom Cowie, Page 6

Every 20 years, on the Japanese island of Honshu, the people of Mie Prefecture tear down and then rebuild the Grand Shrine of Ise with new wood. They have been doing this for more than 1000 years, using the same ancient techniques, with the Shinto temple now up to its 63rd iteration.

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Investing in athletes for golden return

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Page 47

It's time to take a serious look at Australia's funding model for the majority of our Olympic sports and their athletes as we countdown to Paris 2024. As legendary Aussie swim coach Laurie Lawrence once said: "You can't eat gold medals".

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#), [Sunday Territorian \(Darwin\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

Paralympics man of steel

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 31/03/2024, Jamie Pandaram, Page 52

The man leading the resurgence of Australia's wheelchair rugby team knows all about comebacks. At just 19, promising rugby league star Chris Bond was told in a doctor's office that not only did he have a flesh-eating disease that would lead to amputation, but also a rare form of cancer with no guarantee of survival.

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Boxed out

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Julian Linden, Page 47

Australia has always punched above its weight at the Olympics, without ever landing the knockout blow. Pound for pound, Aussie athletes have long been overachieving at the greatest sports event on the planet, capturing around 550 medals since the modern Olympics began in 1896.

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

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Sponsor seekers ring the changes

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Robert Craddock, Page 63

Australia's Olympic sports will stand shoulder to shoulder in a fund-raising revolution designed to stop them being trampled by sponsor-snatching football clubs. From tiny table tennis to powerhouses basketball and swimming, sports are united in support of a new plan to enable them to individually market the Olympic rings.

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

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Battling to keep dream alive

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Page 64

Australia's Olympic team has its millionaires ... and the GoFundMe kid. When Tweed Heads 16-year-old Jeff Dunne found out he would be the first male breakdancer to represent Australia in the new Olympic sport, his family were overjoyed.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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Legacy matters for Para sports

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 31/03/2024, Erin Smith, Page 47

The 2032 Paralympic Games have the power to change the lives of Australians living with disabilities, but Paralympian Michael Dobbie-Bridges has warned there won't be much of a legacy if organisers aren't willing to foot the bill for more infrastructure. Dobbie-Bridges represented Australia in wheelchair tennis at the Beijing Games and at six World Team Cups and is now the chair of the board for Sporting Wheelies.

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Female exodus a big worry

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2024, Robert Craddock, Page 49

Don't worry about the US or China - the greatest threat to Australia's Olympic future comes from ... Australia. There's a war starting to bubble behind the scenes of our Paris Games campaign for the hearts of Australia's most precious and underrated Olympic asset - women.

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

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AFL playing by its own rules

Sunday Times, Sport, 31/03/2024, Mitchell Johnson, Page 57

After a week of controversy over the AFL's illicit drugs cover-up - and the league's "unapologetic" stance there remains a question the AFL has never really answered. Why does the AFL think it is above Sports Integrity Australia and all other sports in Australia?

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AFL players are subjected to more rigorous scrutiny and control than most other Australian athletes

Adelaide Now, Other, 30/03/2024, Graham Cornes

From the days of players having a cheeky pint, to athletes nowadays subjected to rigorous scrutiny more than ever, fans may be missing the point writes Graham Cornes. This is an old but true football story.

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Madonna King: AFL's clandestine drug testing a stain on the game

The New Daily, Other, 30/03/2024, Madonna King

A litany of scandals and a lack of transparency have stolen the trust we've placed in big organisations for decades. The big banks, for example, and how they dealt with grieving families and others who were unable to put food on the table.

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4BC, Weekends, 30/03/2024, Peter Fegan

Fegan discusses massive controversies coming into the AFL in the last 24 hours, particularly about drugs and racism. He believes that they might all be connected. He states that according to Member for Tasmania Andrew Wilkie, the AFL has covered up some of the drug testing results of some players. Fegan says the AFL have defended themselves and claimed that the allegations are untrue.

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4BC, Weekend Breakfast, 30/03/2024, Olympia Kwitowski

Labor and the LNP have both called for an end to political bickering over the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Premier Steven Miles and Opposition leader David Crisafulli have called a truce over the event in a bid to get the games back on track.

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4BC, Weekend Breakfast, 30/03/2024, Olympia Kwitowski

Construction on one of the key stadiums for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics is unlikely to start before the state election. The first tenders for three Sunshine Coast stadiums and an upgrade to a Chandler site will go out next week. But according to Qld Infrastructure Minister Grace Grace they are unlikely to see shovels in the ground at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre before 26 October.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Miscarriage health risks

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 31/03/2024, Page 21

Research 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.

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ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, 30/03/2024, Johanna Nicholson and Fauziah Ibrahim

Interview with Dave Marchese, host, Triple J Hack. Nicholson points out that they will be discussing WA's crackdown on "Nangs" and pill testing on music festivals as the Splendour In The Grass event was canceled this week. Marchese notes that the cancellation has devastated the industry of concerts and events when this was announced as they feared that if the cancellation happened to a big event like the Splendour then it could happen to anyone. He states that the concert has gone on for 20 years and they've had only a few years that it did not run.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Flu, RSV strike amid surge of whooping cough

Sun Herald, General News, 31/03/2024, Mary Ward, Page 5

Australians are being struck down with respiratory infections at an unseasonably high rate, with above-average cases of flu and RSV, as well as the nation's first surge in whooping cough since the COVID-19 lockdowns. Traditionally, flu season in Australia has run from May to September.

Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#). Similar coverage reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

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

Bub jab urged to beat virus

Sunday Times, General News, 31/03/2024, John Flint, Page 3

Parents are being urged to take up free RSV immunisations for babies after more than 400 cases of the potentially deadly virus were recorded in WA in the first three months of the year. From Monday, the new drug, Nirsevimab, is available at no cost for all babies under eight months in WA.

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Nations fail to reach pandemic accord: talks to resume April

Northern Territory News, Other, 30/03/2024

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

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

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

HPPD, the drug-induced disorder which can be brought on by psychedelic substances

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2024, Fiona Blackwood

It's a condition described as a living hell by sufferers, and it's marked by stigma and shame. Sheree da Costa lost her son Joey to suicide and believes he would still be alive if he hadn't developed hallucinogenic persistent perception disorder (HPPD) as a teenager. [...] In 2023 Australia's TGA made the decision to take some psychedelic drugs off the prohibited list but the medical fraternity is split over the expectation of what they can do for people versus the reality of prescribing them.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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