



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 2nd June 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#) (page 1) reports a Port Lincoln pensioner is \$800 out of pocket after South Australia's hospital bed shortage led to his scheduled spinal surgery in Adelaide being cancelled three times last week.
- The [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#) (page 7) reports a total of 4733 hours were lost to ambulance ramping at South Australian emergency departments in May, surpassing the monthly high of 4285 last November.
- The [Sun Herald](#) (page 8) reports more NSW residents are vaping than ever before – including nearly one in five people aged 16 to 24 – but more than half the state's vapers and smokers say they are considering quitting.
- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 8) reports that there are active COVID-19 outbreaks at 460 residential aged care facilities in Australia, 168 of them in Victoria, according to data released by the Department of Health and Aged Care this week.
- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 9) reports that in an insurer's survey of parents of primary schoolchildren, almost a fifth said a child was missing school every week because of mental health issues.

- [NEWS.com.au](#) (online) reports Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong has unveiled plans for a new sports diplomacy consultative group. Minister for Sport Annika Wells said Australia's slate of major international events in the runup to Brisbane 2032 provides "an unprecedented opportunity to showcase Australian excellence and expertise".

## MINISTER BUTLER

No relevant coverage

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## MINISTER WELLS

### Penny Wong signals coupling of sport and diplomacy to boost 'national power'

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/06/2024, Blair Jackson

The federal government has pulled together a sports diplomacy roundtable. "Sport is one of Australia's strengths," Foreign Minister Penny Wong said. [...] Sport Minister Anika Wells said competition on the field had multi-pronged benefits.

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

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## DEPARTMENT

### Covid hits aged care centres

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 8

More than 160 aged care homes have been hit by Covid outbreaks in Victoria, after the state recorded more cases in the sector than anywhere else in Australia. [...] Federal Health and Aged Care Department data released this week shows 1125 residents and 384 staff members from 168 homes were infected.

## Gloria has spent her life caring for people. Now, the system won't care for her

SBS, Other, 01/06/2024, Edwina Guinan

Older Australians with disabilities say the current system is leaving them behind. They hope a new Aged Care Act will change things. [...] A spokesperson from the Department of Health and Aged Care told SBS the new Aged Care Act "recognises the unique needs of people with disabilities in The Statement of Principles, and includes a specific reference to individuals with disability, mental ill health and neurodiversity".

Also reported by: [SBS World News](#)

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## CORONAVIRUS

### Victorian Government's covid lockdown documents to be released

The Australian, Other, 01/06/2024, Isabella Pesch

The Victorian Government is expected to release the briefing documents behind the for the first time despite the Department of Health's fight to keep the pages secret. The order comes after a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal decision was handed down this week where Vice President Judge Caitlin English ruled there was a in the release of the material that underpinned dozens of pandemic orders.

Similar coverage: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Time for grey to go hi-vis

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 02/06/2024, Sue Bailey, Page 13

The new head of the Council on the Ageing Tasmania has vowed to tackle ageism, saying everyone should be treated the same irrespective of their age. Brigid Wilkinson said many older Tasmanians felt "invisible" and ageism awareness needed to start with children and updating legislation to remove birth dates in some Acts.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### More vapers seek to quit within months

Sun Herald, General News, 02/06/2024, Mary Ward, Page 8

The number of people using vapes in NSW rose last year, but data suggests more than half are considering quitting in the next six months. Data from the latest NSW Population Health Survey, published by the Health Ministry on Friday, shows almost 19 per cent of people aged 16 to 24 identify as a current user of vapes, also known as e-cigarettes.

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### 'It will all be illegal soon'

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Mark Buttler and Regan Hodge, Page 6

The head of one of Australia's biggest supermarket chains predicts the illicit tobacco sector will completely control the cigarette trade within a few years. Ritchies-IGA chief executive Fred Harrison said that in recent years his business had lost between 20 and 25 per cent of its tobacco sales annually.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#).

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## Calls for more investment in life-changing rehab facilities as methamphetamine use grows nationally

ABC Online, Other, 01/06/2024, Hayden Smith and Emily JB Smith

Jonathan Bolwell is seeing the world in colour again. He now spends his days helping those, like himself, whose lives have been derailed by addiction. "I'm waking up sober with a clear mind," he says. "I can see all the colours everywhere, it's not grey ... I feel happy."

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## From wedding celebrant to end-of-life care: How grief inspired a new career

Geelong Advertiser, Other, 01/06/2024, Lucy Crock

Jo Betz was just 35 years old when her husband passed away. It was sudden – an asthma attack – and it left her shell-shocked, and a widowed single mother. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, palliative care cases across Victoria are up 82 per cent over four years.

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

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### 'It is a hidden disease': Tamworth MS peer support group here to help

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 01/06/2024, Rachel Clark

Brenden George was first diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) 12 years ago, but his doctors suspected he had had it for longer. He views himself as one of the lucky ones, because he was able to get on top of his condition "fairly quickly".

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### 4BC, Weekend Breakfast, 01/06/2024, Olympia Kwitowski

It's been revealed one in every nine new cases of bowel cancer in Australia are in people aged under 50. Today marks the start of Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. Bowel cancer claimed the lives of 103 Australians every week. Medical director of Bowel Cancer Australia, Professor Graham Newstead, says it's one of the most treatable types of cancer when detected early.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Women bypass GP for antibiotics

Sun Herald, General News, 02/06/2024, Amber Schultz, Page 16

New prescribing powers for NSW pharmacists allowing them to treat women who present with uncomplicated urinary tract infections have come into effect today. Bypassing the need for a GP appointment, women aged 18 to 65 can pay for a private consultation with a pharmacist trained specifically to deal with UTIs, to be prescribed antibiotics.

## Flu, COVID testing health system

Sunday Age, General News, 02/06/2024, Ashleigh McMillan, Page 18

Victoria's ambulance crews were pushed into serious code orange situations 20 times in May due to the rising rates of respiratory illness, as the number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals doubled in a month. Ambulance Victoria says influenza cases alone have increased by 65 per cent in the past fortnight across the state.

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

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## 'Duress alarms not working' when nurse died in room

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 02/06/2024, Madeline Crittenden, Page 23

Investigations are under way at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital after a nurse was found dead in an emergency department storeroom. The man, aged 26, was found dead in the drug storeroom on December 13, 2022, after it's understood he failed to return from a scheduled break.

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## Flying into health hell

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/06/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 1

A diabetic pensioner who had major spinal surgery cancelled three times last week is out of pocket more than \$800 after flying in from Port Lincoln and paying for multiple taxi trips and extended hotel stays. Joe Morrison, 70, a former schoolteacher who went on to work in the country health system, was given no future date for the neurosurgery after the third cancellation, blamed on a lack of beds at Flinders Medical Centre.

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## Perennial problem has no easy fix

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/06/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 6

From Lea Stevens with her Generational Health Review to John Hill with his Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital (which became the \$2.7bn Royal Adelaide Hospital) to Jack Snelling with Transforming Health, there have been no shortage of Labor health ministers over the past two decades with grand plans to "fix" health. So how did we end up here?

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## Painful record as EDs struggle

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/06/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 7

Ambulance ramping hit a grim new record in May as the health system staggered under such demand that SA Health declared a statewide internal emergency and cancelled most elective surgery for the foreseeable future. As embattled hospital emergency departments operated at over capacity and intensivecare and general-ward beds were full, ambulances spent 4773 hours ramped, eclipsing the previous record of 4285 hours set in November.

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

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## Ambulance ramping smashes previous record in SA as war of words erupts over election

ABC Online, Other, 01/06/2024

Ambulance ramping in South Australia has soared to a new record high, prompting the opposition to accuse the government of winning the last election on the "basis of [a] lie", and the government to respond by condemning the remark as "hysterical". Patients spent 4,773 hours on the ramp in May, according to the latest South Australian government figures published online.

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## Hospital crisis sees elective surgeries cancelled

Canberra Times, Other, 01/06/2024, Alex Mitchell

South Australia's emergency departments are in crisis, with staggering wait times on the first day of winter as respiratory illnesses including COVID-19 sweep the state. A system-wide 'code yellow' was declared for the state's public hospitals, meaning some elective surgeries will be cancelled for up to a week.

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## 'They're not scared of dying, they're scared of suffering'

Sunday Times, General News, 02/06/2024, Rebecca Parish, Page 14

Suffering with terminal cancer, the last thing Pieter Jagtenberg's family wanted was for him to live in constant pain. It was far from an easy decision, but with his family's support he made a voluntary assisted dying application so he could pass away on his own terms.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), Editorial: [Sunday Times \(Perth\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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## Inquiry recommendations 'fall short' of stopping preventable birth trauma

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 01/06/2024, Kate McIlwain

The Illawarra mothers who have helped to push for change by exposing stories of birth trauma in the Wollongong health system say the report released last week by the landmark inquiry into the widespread issue does not go far enough.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Forget Barbie: the battle to teach girls their genitals are normal

Sunday Age, General News, 02/06/2024, Jewel Topsfield, Page 12

Associate Professor Gemma Sharp never thought she would find herself in a theatre urging the audience to yell, "Vulva!" A senior clinical psychologist and associate professor in the Department of Neuroscience at Monash University, Sharp has seven university degrees. And yet, here she was "vulva shouting" on a Ted X talk.

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### Struggling kids miss classes every week

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 9

Almost one in five parents say their child misses primary school every week over mental health concerns, prompting concern for our youngest student's education and welfare. A new survey of more than 500 Australian parents of primary school students has found high rates of distress in children and an alarming flow-on effects to their education.

Also reported by: [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#).

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### Fighting the bullies was worse than cancer

Sunday Territorian, General News, 02/06/2024, Adella Beaini, Page 17

Battling cancer should be hard enough as it is but Teagan Ferguson found what was worse was returning to school to face the cruel taunts of her classmates. Diagnosed with lymphoblastic leukaemia at age 13, Ms Ferguson spent 12 months undergoing several debilitating treatments. But, after returning to school with a changed physical appearance from the cancer medication, Ms Ferguson's friends became her bullies.

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## Many blame social media for poor mental health among teenagers, but the science is murky

ABC Online, Other, 02/06/2024, Ange Lavoipierre

If Jordy had a switch to instantly shut down social media, she would flip it. "I'd switch it off, 100 per cent, even if it was for a week, just so people could have that taste of what it would be like," she said.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### Calls to include newer menopause drugs on PBS, as \$60-a-month cost for treatment adds up

ABC Online, Other, 01/06/2024, Kim Napier

Australian women are being misled by outdated and old-fashioned medicines for menopause on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), a women's health physician says. While there have been advances in menopause drugs, the list of subsidised drugs available cheaply to Australians on the PBS has not kept up, Dr Lucy Caratti says.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### In good health at a distance

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 02/06/2024, Madeline Crittenden, Page 26

When Will Drysdale and his young family moved from Sydney to regional NSW, they were seeking a quieter life and a slower pace but one thing that came with that was a lack of options for medical care. Local doctors were booked up for months in advance, and most weren't taking new patients.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

## SPORT

### Pressure rises on Games papers

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Shannon Deery, Page 13

The state upper house could appoint an independent arbiter to force the government to hand over secret documents related to its \$589m failed 2026 Commonwealth Games bid. The government is fighting the release of 353 documents, with Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes telling parliament on Friday they were protected by executive privilege.

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

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### Knee-d a register for bad injuries

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/06/2024, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 19

An "epidemic" of serious knee injuries in very young athletes has the nation's leading orthopaedic surgeons calling for the creation of an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury registry, to be based in South Australia. They say it is not uncommon to now see children aged seven and eight with torn ligaments and they are treating more girls than ever before.

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

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### Paris 2024 Paralympics too soon for some Australian teams, but they are building towards Brisbane 2032

ABC Online, Other, 01/06/2024, Henry Hanson and Elizabeth Wright

When Australia's Paralympians set sail for Paris in August, the Australian men's blind football team and the Australian women's goalball team will have their feet planted firmly on the ground. Funding, amongst other issues, impacted their ability to qualify for the Games.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Maisie's big head start

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 23

A major study of vulnerable Victorian babies shows it is possible to accurately predict those likely to develop cerebral palsy years earlier than previously thought. Cerebral palsy (CP) is the most common physical disability in children and is often the result of a brain injury caused by either a traumatic or complicated birth, low birth weight or extreme prematurity.

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

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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### Babies' lives bet on 'postcode lottery'

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 02/06/2024, Sue Dunlevy, Page 25

A postcode lottery affecting the rollout of a lifesaving new childhood vaccine for the Respiratory Syncytial Virus infection could come to an end next month. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), a government committee that decides which medicines are subsidised, will consider whether to fund pharmaceutical company Sanofi Aventis's RSV immunisation Beyfortus in July.

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

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### COVID cases on the rise in WA, residents urged to get immunised and wear masks

West Australian, Other, 01/06/2024, Joe Spagnolo

The pandemic might be over, but COVID-19 is still rearing its ugly head as health chiefs warn people to get immunised - as well as consider wearing a mask in crowded areas. On the back of new Department of Health data which shows an increase of 20 per cent in WA COVID cases this past week - 650 PCR positive cases recorded - acting chief health officer Dr Paul Armstrong said eligible West Australians were "encouraged to get their COVID-19 booster vaccination".

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### Flu shot uptake falls to lowest level in years, despite surging flu cases

9News, Other, 01/06/2024, Lara Pearce

Australians' uptake of the annual influenza vaccine heading into winter is at its lowest level in years, with top doctors pointing the finger at increasing barriers to accessing GPs as a key culprit. Just over one in five Australians (21.8 per cent) had received a flu shot by May 19.

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### Illawarra hit by triple threat of respiratory illnesses as winter kicks off

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 01/06/2024, Kate McIlwain

Illawarra health authorities are urging people to get vaccinated and protect themselves as a cocktail of winter illnesses circulates in the community. As winter begins, the medical director of the region's primary health network Dr Katherine Micheltore said flu and COVID numbers had started to spike in recent weeks, while RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) remained at elevated levels.

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### As avian flu outbreaks spread around the world, experts weigh in on the risk of a future pandemic, and how the world can prepare

ABC Online, Other, 01/06/2024, Lucy Sweeney

When Victorian health officials confirmed Australia's first human case of avian influenza last week, there were a few key details that struck some of those listening as odd. The announcement came on the same day that the state's agriculture department reported an outbreak of bird flu at a poultry farm near Meredith. But the Department of Health made clear that the two incidents were totally unrelated.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Lung cancer drug hope

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/06/2024, Page 29

A Pfizer lung cancer drug has been shown to greatly reduce tumour progression and improve survival outcomes for people in the advanced stages of a rare form of the disease, according to new trial results. Lorlatinib was tested in a clinical trial of hundreds of people with anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK)-positive advanced non-small cell lung cancer.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [Sunday Territorian \(Darwin\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), Similar coverage: [The Guardian \(Online\)](#).

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### New hope in lung cancer battle

Sunday Times, General News, 02/06/2024, Kate Pickles, Page 30

Patients with incurable lung cancer could see their lives extended by several years thanks to a once-a-day tablet hailed the "best ever" treatment for the disease. About six in 10 patients given lorlatinib as part of a trial survived for five years without their cancer progressing, compared with just 8 per cent receiving standard care.

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

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### NZ students just the tonic for ACT pharmacies

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 02/06/2024, Isabella Oakley, Page 3

A new outreach program with New Zealand students is aiming to solve the pharmacist shortage in the ACT and surrounding regions. Three students from the University of Otago have been working on the front line in the territory to experience what it's like working in the capital. [...] "We do lose fantastic pharmacists to the public service, such as the TGA, and perhaps they're not using the clinical expertise they've had as much, so we're always looking for opportunities to find keen pharmacists," Mr Blacker said.

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### 'No, taking drugs like Ozempic isn't "cheating".'

Mamamia, Other, 01/06/2024, Clare Collins

Obesity medication that is effective has been a long time coming. Enter semaglutide (sold as Ozempic and Wegovy), which is helping people improve weight-related health, including lowering the risk of having a heart attack or stroke, while also silencing 'food noise'. [...] Australia's regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), has approved semaglutide, sold as Ozempic, for treating type 2 diabetes.

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