



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 16th June 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The **[Sunday Age](#)** (page 1) reports Victorian Premier Jacinta Allen is backing a cabinet proposal for a twelve month trial of pill testing at music festivals, in response to a string of overdoses and seven separate coronial recommendations. *Also reported by:* [Sun Herald](#)
- The **[Sunday Telegraph](#)** (page 1) reports this week's NSW state budget contains \$450 million to construct up to 400 apartments in Sydney to house essential workers including nurses, paramedics, police and firefighters. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#)
- The **[Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)** (page 1) reports veteran Queensland athletics coach Bailey Pashley has called on Opposition Leader David Crisafulli and Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner to exclude QSAC as a 2032 Games venue as unsafe and disability-unfriendly.
- The **[Sunday Mail Adelaide](#)** (page 1) reports South Australian emergency departments are described as chaotic, unclean and inherently unsafe in workplace inspections by the SA Salaried Medical Officers Association. *Also reported by:* [Adelaide Now](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia](#), [The Courier Mail](#), [Northern Territory News](#)
- The **[Sun Herald](#)** (page 3) reports the NSW budget allocates \$2.5 million for workplace inspectors and other measures to enforce the imminent ban on engineered stone. *Also reported by:* [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

- The [Sun Herald](#) (page 3) reports the number of COVID-19 infections in aged care residents has hit an 18-month high with vaccination coverage in the aged care population falling to near 40 per cent. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Age](#)
- The [Sunday Canberra Times](#) (page 3) reports the ACT budget contains a \$15 million package for mental health services that includes ongoing funding for a combined police, ambulance and clinician mobile response team and a youth early intervention and treatment program.
- The [Sunday Tasmanian](#) (page 3) reports RACGP Tasmania is warning of an early winter spike in acute respiratory illnesses, especially RSV in children.
- The [Sunday Telegraph](#) (page 9) reports the NSW government has committed \$15 million for programs to lift vaccination rates in low-coverage cohorts such as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and sufferers of chronic disease. *Editorial:* [Sunday Telegraph](#)
- The [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#) (page 9) reports the Sunshine Coast will host a trial of government-funded homebirths from next month, with plans for eventual statewide rollout. *Also reported by:* [The Courier Mail](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia](#), [Adelaide Now](#), [The Mercury](#), [Northern Territory News](#)

MINISTER BUTLER

Minister 'prefers' national inquiry into gender clinics

Sunday Examiner, General News, 16/06/2024, Benjamin Seeder, Page 8

A senior state cabinet member has written to the federal government asking for it to consider staging a national review into public medical services for children experiencing gender dysphoria. Health Minister Guy Barnett confirmed he wrote to his federal counterpart, Mark Butler, this week, requesting he consider a review of gender clinics, following the publication of the Cass review in the UK.

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Channel 7, Weekend Sunrise, 15/06/2024, Angela Cox and Michael Usher

A controversial move to allow chiropractors to resume spinal manipulation on children under two years of age has been met with fierce backlash, some doctors labelling it scary. Health Minister Mark Butler has echoed their concerns, asking for an urgent explanation. Let's bring in the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' Dr James Best.

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MINISTER WELLS

Matildas' own goal

Sun Herald, Sport, 16/06/2024, Danny Weidler, Page 43

The Matildas are darlings of the Australian sporting public, but they aren't as well loved by a media finding them increasingly frustrating to deal with. An example during the week: The Matildas were announcing \$15 million in federal government funding for the 2026 Asian Cup, which Australia is hosting. Sports Minister Anika Wells and Football Australia CEO James Johnson were in attendance at The Rocks, as were three Matildas only one of whom, Cortnee Vine, is in the 18-player squad for the Paris Olympics.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

Online program helps rural Australians defeat diabetes

Partyline Magazine, Other, 15/06/2024, Katie Hull

Every five minutes, someone in Australia is told they have type 2 diabetes. More than 1 in 20 Australians are now living with the condition that can cause life-threatening complications like heart disease and kidney disease, and it's the leading cause of amputation. [...] Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, the Hon. Emma McBride MP says the disparity in Australia's healthcare system is stark.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Life with this disease is 'misunderstood'. Here's how that could change

Canberra Times, Other, 15/06/2024, Jessica O'Bryan

Amanda Gainey can only imagine her dad's frustration when he struggles to speak. "I have noticed there's been a couple of times recently, even just twice in one phone call where dad's just stopped and cried because he can't get the words out," Ms Gainey said. [...] Earlier this week Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, announced the federal government's \$2 million investment towards finding a cure.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

New funding and four-year guarantee boosts Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations nationwide

National Indigenous Times, Other, 15/06/2024, Dechlan Brennan

First Nations health services will have certainty to plan for the medium-term future, as the federal government announced four-year rolling funding agreements from July 1, along with a \$300 million funding boost. [...] Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians, Malarndirri McCarthy told ABC Darwin ACCHOs have always been focussed on self-determination in working towards better life expectancy and health outcomes for First Nations people, noting the rolling guarantee would offer job security for ACCHOs to help retain staff long-term.

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DEPARTMENT

COVID cases in aged care up as vaccinations fall

Sun Herald, General News, 16/06/2024, Mary Ward, Page 3

Residential aged care facilities nationally are dealing with the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases among residents in 18 months, as vaccination coverage wanes. [...] Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly and Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Janet Anderson wrote to the board chairs of residential aged care providers last month, calling COVID-19 vaccination rates among residents "disappointingly low".

Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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In virus season, age care homes must give jobs

Sun Herald, Editorials, 16/06/2024, Page 32

Winter virus season is in full swing. State and territory health departments are reporting rising numbers of COVID-19 and influenza cases, as well as unseasonably high rates of whooping cough and pneumonia. [...] According to data from the federal Department of Health and Aged Care, barely two in five residents are up to date with their shots.

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CORONAVIRUS

New COVID sub-strain spreads across WA

Sunday Times, General News, 16/06/2024, John Flint, Page 13

A new COVID sub-strain is adding to the current wave of infections in WA. KP.X has emerged in the past fortnight as the dominant sub-strain in wastewater sampling, replacing the JN.1 which a few weeks ago had accounted for all new infections.

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

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

Threats end our 'vape squads'

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 16/06/2024, Jake McCallum, Page 19

A team of pint-sized, undercover operatives fighting the war on the sale of vapes and cigarettes to minors has been disbanded after serious threats to their safety. NSW Health has been forced to shelve the team of underage teenagers, who worked alongside investigators to catch vape stores and tobacconists selling products to teens under 18, amid safety concerns.

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Rise in women caught dealing

Sunday Times, General News, 16/06/2024, Emma Kirk, Page 25

Women in their 30s and 40s are becoming the new face of drug dealers on Aussie streets, with experts saying "the stereotypical dodgy-looking guy" is no longer the norm. One of those women, who wished to remain anonymous, is now preparing for jail after she was caught supplying to others the drug she became hooked on. [...] The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data showed that meth, alcohol and cocaine were the biggest issues that presented in women aged over 40.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Years after Baryulgil's asbestos mine closed down, a deadly legacy remains with the people of this land

ABC Online, Other, 15/06/2024, Lara Smit

Tucked into the banks of the Clarence River in Bundjalung Country, north-eastern New South Wales, lies a small town called Baryulgil. It's a quiet community that, to an outsider, perhaps seems as peaceful as any other rural pit stop. [...] Australia has one of the highest rates of mesothelioma in the

world, with on average two people being diagnosed with the cancer every day, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

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PRIMARY CARE

War of the wards

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 16/06/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 1

Dangerously clogged corridors, patients jumping queues to cut ambulance ramping numbers, and a jam-packed emergency department - welcome to the "Wild West" of hospital care, revealed by fed-up medical staff. Fatigued ED clinicians have opened up on their punishing workloads, candidly telling of the "chaos" they are experiencing daily - and what they see as a lack of support from managers.

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

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Stress relief is overdue for our superb ED teams

Sunday Mail Adelaide, Editorials, 16/06/2024, Page 71

Stress on the public hospital system usually focuses on patients those left in ramped ambulances for unacceptable times, or languishing in overcrowded emergency department waiting rooms, or generally slipping between the cracks. Rarely do we hear first-hand of the stress of the frontline ED clinicians dealing with each new, and very much individual, case arriving at the door.

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Free homebirth is born

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 16/06/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 9

For the first time, Queensland women will be able to have a baby at home under a publicly funded homebirth scheme to begin next month. In a bid to enhance the beleaguered maternity sector, the state government has announced the service will be available to women on the Sunshine Coast and, if the trial is successful, free homebirths are likely to be rolled out across Queensland.

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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Masking the problem LGH nurses in 'wage theft' accusation

Sunday Examiner, General News, 16/06/2024, Benjamin Seeder, Page 1

A nurses' union has accused the Department of Health of wage theft, claiming that clinical staff at the Launceston General Hospital are owed thousands of dollars for the extra allowance they are entitled to for shifts in which they are required to wear an N95 mask. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation state secretary Emily Shepherd said last year's industrial agreement allowed for clinical staff that are required to wear the uncomfortable, heavy-duty masks would be entitled to an additional \$2.70 per hour in their paycheques.

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Geeveston Medical Centre reduced to two days a week, operates at huge loss

Huon Valley mayor Sally Doyle says council run medical centres are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and there are fears the clinics are unsustainable as the council's Geeveston doctors cut back to two days a week. From next week the Geeveston Medical Centre will only operate on Thursdays and Fridays.

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Patient Assisted Travel Scheme leaving country WA residents unfairly out of pocket for medical treatment, advocates say

ABC Online, Other, 15/06/2024, Hayden Smith

Katie Willcocks was attacked by a swarm of bees while mowing her lawn. The terrifying incident, days before Christmas last year, sent her into preterm labour, with the 42-year-old flown to hospital in Perth. It was about five months before she returned to her home near Lake Grace in Western Australia's eastern Wheatbelt. But her time in the city also had a financial impact — with family-friendly accommodation near the hospital, transport and childcare totalling about \$68,000.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health services secure extra ACT budget funding

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 16/06/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 3

A mental health response service, combining police, paramedics and clinicians will receive continued funding in upcoming ACT budget. The Police, Ambulance, Clinician Emergency Response program, known as PACER, will be funded to continue providing a second response team for the next four years.

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Battle to save mums from the baby blues

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 16/06/2024, Emily Kowal, Page 33

It should have been the happiest time of her life. Lisa Carrick had just given birth to her third child, a bouncing baby boy and had a "wonderful husband." Instead, the 32-year-old felt hollow.

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New national health service set to help bereaved mums

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 16/06/2024, Stephanie Gardiner, Page 13

Cassidy Barlow's friends didn't understand when she told them her daughter was born sleeping. Health workers and relatives couldn't always find the right words to comfort the 18-year-old after Delylah was stillborn at 24 weeks in 2020.

Also reported by: [Sunday Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Homes for heroes

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 16/06/2024, Linda Silmalis, Page 1

Police officers, fireys, teachers and paramedics will be given the keys to the city with the state budget to fund hundreds of build-to-rent properties at four Sydney sites exclusively for essential workers. Designed to keep Sydney functioning, as many as 400 apartments will be offered to frontline workers including cleaners and allied health care workers at a cheaper rent to the market, in areas closer to the city, their jobs and services.

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

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Cash in on migrants

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 16/06/2024, Matt Johnston, Page 19

Matching migrants to jobs that use their skills and qualifications could benefit the economy by more than \$10bn over five years, a new study has found. Commissioned by migrant and refugee settlement agency AMES Australia, the study shows that about half of arrivals to Australia have skills that are being wasted because they are not recognised or they struggle to connect to local job networks. As a result, many take up low-skilled jobs, such as driving taxis, rather than continue to work in areas of skills shortages such as engineering or medicine.

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

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Pharmacist Fady Takla's registration cancelled, still on the run pending criminal drug charges

West Australian, Other, 15/06/2024, Hannah Cross

A pharmacist who fled the country after being charged with drug offences is still on the run five years later, but that hasn't stopped the State Administrative Tribunal from cancelling his registration. While his criminal prosecution is in limbo, the Pharmacy Board of Australia brought the matter before the SAT in a bid to enforce its own laws.

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Former head of Perth physio clinic chain Luke Tham Sheng-En jailed for sexually assaulting staff during free 'treatments'

ABC Online, Other, 15/06/2024, Rebecca Trigger

The former part owner of what is now one of Western Australia's biggest physiotherapy chains has been jailed for sexually assaulting five teenagers and young women during massage treatments at his clinics. Luke Tham Sheng-En, 42, was a "managing partner" of three Life Ready Physio branches when he carried out the attacks between 2017 and 2020. [...] The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency told the ABC Tham's licence to practise as a physiotherapist was suspended pending the outcome of his case.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Twist in Chinese doping scandal hangs over pool

Sunday Age, Sport, 16/06/2024, Emma Kemp, Page 38

It felt remarkably appropriate that Mack Horton made an appearance at the Australian Olympic trials yesterday. The retired Olympic gold medallist's presence at the Brisbane Aquatic Centre during the week's last heats session was brief and low-key, and would have flown under the radar if not for his Instagram story promoting Zac Stubblety-Cook's pop-up coffee shop.

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

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Australia Swimming head coach Rohan Taylor says he has to trust WADA after latest Chinese drugs report

ABC Online, Other, 15/06/2024, Simon Smale

Swimming Australia head coach Rohan Taylor says Australia's swimmers have to focus on themselves and not let the latest doping controversy surrounding Chinese swimmers affect their preparation for the Paris Olympic Games. In April, the New York Times reported that 23 Chinese swimmers had tested positive for a banned drug ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but were still allowed to compete, reports confirmed by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

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

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Stadium proposal shocker

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 16/06/2024, Rose Innes, Page 1

A Queensland athletics legend is calling for QSAC to be axed as a 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games venue, highlighting accessibility and safety concerns, including a devastating fall he had there himself. Bailey Pashley, who helped develop hundreds of athletes including a number who went on to state and national honours, has written to LNP leader David Crisafulli and Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner about the Nathan stadium after The Sunday Mail exposed just how difficult it is for disabled sports fans manoeuvring through the "tired" Gabba stadium.

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Council's golden tickets

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 16/06/2024, Taylah Fellows, Page 4

Brisbane ratepayers have paid \$325,000 for council staff to travel overseas on Olympic and Paralympic Games business in the past three years. That is despite Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner repeatedly saying planning of the Games was the state's responsibility.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Pelvic pain breakthrough

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 16/06/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 26

The answer to a simple test and better treatments for endometriosis may lie within women themselves. One of the country's top endometrial stem cell scientists is pioneering a menstrual fluid biobank that she believes holds the key to earlier and easier diagnosis of the painful condition affecting more than one in seven women.

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

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'I became a medical mystery': sepsis treatment breakthrough

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 16/06/2024, Savannah Meacham, Page 7

An infected wisdom tooth nearly killed Caitlin Alsop when it deteriorated into a "mystery" illness. [...] The University of Queensland and George Institute found a continuous intravenous infusion of antibiotics instead of short stints is more effective in curing infection.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Young Aussie invents life-changing patch

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 16/06/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 18

An Australian doctor has been named in the prestigious Forbes 30 under 30 list. At 28, Helena Franco is one of a handful of females who work in orthopaedic medicine, but it was her invention of a smart patch worn on the ankle to treat patients with urinary incontinence that attracted the attention of the Forbes judges.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

\$2.5 million to enforce engineered stone ban

Sun Herald, General News, 16/06/2024, Mary Ward, Page 2

More work safety inspectors will be hired to enforce an imminent ban on engineered stone. The move comes after a six-month blitz of NSW businesses, whose workers may be inhaling dangerous dust, revealed compliance concerns.

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Pentagon ran clandestine anti-vax campaign aimed at the Philippines

Sunday Age, International News, 16/06/2024, Christopher Bing, Page 24

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the US military launched a secret campaign to counter what it perceived as China's growing influence in the Philippines, a nation hit especially hard by the virus. It aimed to sow doubt about the safety and efficacy of vaccines and other life-saving aid that was being supplied by China, a Reuters investigation found.

Also reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#). Similar coverage: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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

\$15m funding jab to get vax rates boosted

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 16/06/2024, Madeline Crittenden, Page 9

Communities with low vaccination rates will be the target of a multimillion-dollar initiative to boost awareness and access to vaccines. The state government has committed \$15m to improving vaccination rates for target groups with low coverage, and those that face barriers to vaccination - including people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and those with chronic illnesses who may be more susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases.

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We must not let no-vaxxers win

Sunday Telegraph, Editorials, 16/06/2024, Page 92

Some of the responses to our Get Back to the Vax campaign we launched last week were grossly illinformed and frightening - but they also underscored why the campaign was necessary. Get Back to the Vax is designed to remind a hesitant community that the long-established and proven childhood immunisation program is necessary to protect the lives of children and babies.

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Winter virus spike fears

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 16/06/2024, Sue Bailey, Page 3

Doctors are worried about an early winter spike in acute respiratory illnesses and viruses hitting Tasmanians, especially children. The health department has confirmed that cases of Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are increasing, particularly in the 0-4-years age group.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Turns out severe morning sickness is neither 'harmless' nor 'normal'

Sunday Age, General News, 16/06/2024, Sarah Berry, Page 28

When she was 31 in 1999, geneticist Marlena Fejzo was pregnant for the second time and expecting some of the nausea that affects about 70 per cent of pregnancies. But she didn't expect to be so flattened by it that she couldn't eat or drink. [...] Plus, she says, there is no standard medication recommended by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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'We're owed an apology for vaccine mandates'

NEWS.com.au, Other, 15/06/2024, Caleb Bond

We are owed an apology for Covid vaccine mandates. Mounting evidence shows the vaccines were rushed, less effective than you'd expect of a jab, and, in some cases, dangerous. [...] The last regular report of Covid vaccine safety by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, in November last year, showed 139,654 known adverse reactions.

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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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Allan to consider pill-testing trial

Sunday Age, General News, 16/06/2024, Rachael Dexter, Page 1

A year-long pill testing trial could be announced in Victoria within weeks, as the proposal will be taken to cabinet with Premier Jacinta Allan's support. The trial would likely include mobile teams attending

music festivals to test illicit drugs for potency and contaminants.

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

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FOOD STANDARDS

Popular Woolworths meal Indya Foods Ashoka Palak Paneer pulled from shelves over allergen fear

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 15/06/2024, Antoinette Milienos

A popular pantry meal sold in Woolworths stores across the country has been pulled from shelves over fears it contains a hidden allergen. Indya Foods' Ashoka Palak Paneer 280g was urgently recalled on Saturday as its packaging failed to declare the presence of cashews in its listed ingredients. [...] Food Standards Australia New Zealand urged Woolworths shoppers who have a cashew allergy to check their products.

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