



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 28th July 2024

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports that health experts have told an inquiry into federal and state government responses to Covid-19 that things such as cross-border healthcare and monitoring, chronic disease monitoring and cancer screening delivery are among the things that need to be planned for in future pandemics as the effects of delays in these systems are still ongoing.
- **[The Canberra Times](#)** (page 4) reports that the ACT Greens have called for an independent board to oversee the health system in a move they say would increase transparency and drive better outcomes.
- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 5) reports that a declining number of registered organ donors has led to an increase in deaths of people awaiting organs, with NSW state medical director for DonateLife, Dr Michael O'Leary saying "we are nowhere near being able to provide organs as required for transplantation in Australia".
- **[The Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)** (page 7) reports that the AMAQ has sent a letter to Queensland Health claiming that emergency department staff are being pressured to prioritise ramped patients in an effort to improve hospital data, leading to severely ill patients being neglected. A Queensland Health spokesperson denied the claims around triaging, saying that "the most critical patients" are seen immediately.

- [**The Sunday Mail Brisbane**](#) (page 7) reports that data from Education Queensland reveals children as young as six have been suspended for vaping, prompting warnings of chronic lung damage and seizures as health experts grapple with a growing cohort of children consuming nicotine products.
- [**ABC News**](#) (online) reports that a global shortage of IV fluids, including saline, has led health professionals in Australia to conserve stock levels, with Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney calling saline “an essential part of care”, while a TGA spokesperson said the shortage may continue for the rest of the year. *Also reported by:* [**The Guardian**](#)
- [**The Sunday Territorian**](#) (page 10) reports that the RACGP has warned a Country Liberal Party plan to allow pharmacists to administer drugs for 21 conditions without a script from a GP could lead to incorrect diagnoses and subsequent incorrect treatment after a similar pilot program in Queensland led to hospitalisations.
- [**The Sunday Tasmanian**](#) (page 10) reports that wait-times for surgery in Tasmania have increased by 5 per cent since last year, with data showing category 3 patients are waiting, on average, for 230 days beyond the recommended times for surgery.
- [**The Sunday Herald Sun**](#) (page 11) reports that Box Hill Hospital has paid \$495,000 in compensation to a nurse who was assaulted in the psychiatric unit, with other nurses unable to assist after being locked out of the room due to faulty swipe cards that staff said management was aware of.

MINISTER BUTLER

2SM, 07:00 News (Weekend), 27/07/2024

Psychologists are calling on the Federal Government to increase the number of Medicare rebate psychology sessions for victims of complex childhood trauma, from 10 to 40. Some have presented examples of victims rationing their sessions to ensure they last as long through the year as possible. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says additional sessions are not the solution, instead funding 61 free walk-in mental health clinics.

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MINISTER WELLS

Aussies soak up wild riverdance

Sunday Telegraph, Wrap, 28/07/2024, Robert Craddock, Page 4

As a drenched Jess Fox waved the Australian flag on the Seine river, an Olympic star watching from the river bank reckons she saw a bar being raised as well. [...] " Federal sports minister Anika Wells is the only Australian politician on town and she also watched the ceremony from the river bank.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

A critical fluid used in health care to rehydrate and administer drugs to

patients is experiencing a global supply shortage. Here's how it'll affect you

ABC Online, Other, 27/07/2024, Isabella Carbone

If you have ever had general surgery, chances are you would have been administered intravenous (IV) fluids. [...] Federal Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney described saline as "one of the go-to fluids" and "an essential part of care" in Australia's health system.

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Australia is facing a shortage of 'crucial' IV fluids. What does it mean and who will be affected?

The Guardian, Other, 27/07/2024, Natasha May

The peak doctors' body is warning the health system could come to a grinding halt" next week if an unprecedented shortage of intravenous (IV) fluid isn't resolved. [...] The assistant minister for health, Ged Kearney, who is a former nurse, said IV fluids are "crucial" with "a myriad of uses" in the health system.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

Territorians pay tribute to Linda Burney as she announces retirement from politics

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 27/07/2024, Fia Walsh

Linda Burney is being honoured as a trailblazing politician who dedicated her life to improving outcomes for First Nations people. [...] Senator Malarndirri McCarthy has been tipped to replace Linda Burney as the new Minister for Indigenous Australians.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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DEPARTMENT

New Aussie data that snuffs out a load of viral misinformation

Sunday Times, General News, 28/07/2024, John Flint, Page 23

A raft of new evidence has killed off claims COVID-19 vaccinations were behind excess deaths during the pandemic. [...] The Department of Health and Aged Care also told the inquiry there had been delayed deaths of people with underlying health problems because of fewer cases of respiratory and other diseases, like influenza.

Also reported by: [Albany Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Albany Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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CORONAVIRUS

COVID left us sicker, poorer, inquiry told

Sun Herald, General News, 28/07/2024, Shane Wright, Page 1

COVID-19 has left Australians with poorer physical and mental health, helped fuel inflation because of too many government handouts and encouraged people into the black economy, the first wide-ranging inquiry into the pandemic has heard. Businesses, unions, health experts and the education sector have

told the inquiry, due to report in weeks, that Australia needs to prepare for future pandemics to avoid repeating mistakes made across all levels of government that are still being felt in some parts of the nation.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Should retirees dip into home equity?

Sun Herald, General News, 28/07/2024, Bec Wilson, Page 33

How we fund our retirements is changing. Anyone feel the winds?

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

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POPULATION HEALTH

Alarm on cancer screen snub

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 28/07/2024, Page 36

Seven out of 10 men in their early fifties are not participating in the national bowel cancer screening program, a new report shows. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report shows screening participation has dropped to an alarming 29 per cent in males aged 50-54, with only about 250,000 men in this age group returning a bowel cancer screening test in 2021-2022.

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

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6yo kids caught vaping

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 28/07/2024, Rose Innes, Page 7

Children as young as six have been suspended or expelled for vape and e-cigarette related incidents, with a shocking 620 cases logged in Queensland primary schools in just 18 months. New Education Queensland data lays bare the horrific impact of the vaping scourge on children, showing even primary school students are not immune sparking warnings of irreversible lung damage and nicotine-induced seizures.

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

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Why scientific support for alcohol's health benefits is fading

The Guardian, Other, 27/07/2024, Oscar Allan

Humans have been drawn to the idea that alcohol may have health benefits for almost as long as they have been drinking it. In ancient China, rice wine was widely used for medicinal purposes, while Hippocrates, the ancient Greek "Father of Medicine", advocated moderate amounts of alcohol for the mind, body and soul.

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ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, 27/07/2024, Johanna Nicholson & Lorna Dunkley

Interview with Alexandra Jones, Food Governance Conjoint Senior Lecturer, The George Institute for Global Health. Nicholson says in 2014, the Federal Government introduced a Health Star rating system, which was a simple way to assist Australians in creating better choices in supermarkets.

Dunkley says a decade later, the system is in desperate need of an overhaul, partly because food manufacturers are using it to distract people from harmful ingredients in ultra-processed food. Jones says the health star rating, at a glance, is a simple food rating and its among the kinds that are recommended by the WHO.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

'Incredible he is still with us'

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 28/07/2024, Sue Bailey, Page 7

Karelle Logan is in no doubt that her son Spencer, "the happiest person on the planet", owes his life to the Tasmanian community. After battling serious health issues all of his life, Spencer has just celebrated his 18th birthday a milestone few thought he would reach.

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Australians living with chronic pain are fighting to be heard. It's a 'vicious cycle'

7news.com.au, Other, 27/07/2024

Ten metres. It's a distance most people would cover in a few strides without much second thought.

[Read More](#)

Rural women with endometriosis fight stigma and isolation in 'man's world' of agriculture

ABC Online, Other, 27/07/2024, Abbey Halter & Maddelin McCosker

Donning a black western hat and dressed in statement pink, Ella Brady holds herself as a stoic Queensland woman. But her strength runs deeper.

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Aussie mum-of-five who was too busy and 'embarrassed' to have a medical check reveals how it nearly cost her life

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 27/07/2024, Shania Obrien

Tarn Davies was a few years overdue for a pap smear when she finally made time to see her GP. [...] Cancer Council revealed 80 per cent of people are likely to have HPV at some point in their lives, often without visible symptoms.

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PRIMARY CARE

Health board in Green pitch

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 28/07/2024, Jasper Lindell, Page 4

The ACT Greens want an independent board appointed to oversee Canberra's health system, in a move the party says would deliver more transparency and better care. Emma Davidson, the Greens' health spokeswoman and member for Murrumbidgee, said the board would drive higher standards and ensure better outcomes in the territory's health system.

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Ramping is top priority

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 28/07/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 7

Desperately ill Queenslanders are being overlooked in emergency departments as bureaucrats force

doctors to prioritise ambulance-ramped patients in a bid to influence performance data, according to the state's top medical body. In a letter to the boss of Queensland Health, Australian Medical Association Queensland president Nick Yim said the practice was "putting patients in danger and demoralising staff".

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

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Cancer in a corridor

Sunday Times, General News, 28/07/2024, Bethany Hiatt, Page 9

Another cancer patient who has experienced the indignity of spending the night in a cold hospital corridor has stepped forward to share her story. As revealed in The West Australian, retired farmer Ian Hay, 83, who is battling the incurable cancer mesothelioma, was last week forced to spend more than 24 hours on a bed in a hallway at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital because it didn't have a room for him.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#).

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Doctors diagnose issues with pharmacist policy

Sunday Territorian, General News, 28/07/2024, Fia Walsh, Page 10

Doctors have warned against the opposition's plan to expand the role of pharmacists in the NT, citing the potential for misdiagnosis and incorrect treatments. Under the CLP's proposal, pharmacists would be allowed to provide drugs for 21 conditions without a GP diagnosing and prescribing them to a patient, including for urinary tract infections, school sores, shingles and asthma.

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

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Labor laments health morale

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 28/07/2024, Duncan Abey, Page 10

Workplace morale in Tasmania's public health system continues to plummet as government funding cuts and growing surgery waitlists take their toll on both patients and staff, the state's Opposition says. Labor spokeswoman for health Ella Haddad said new dashboard figures showing 8303 patients are on the elective surgery waitlist represented a 5 per cent increase on the same time last year, with category 3 patients waiting an average of 230 days beyond recommended times for surgery.

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Libs tally up ramping win

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 28/07/2024, Sue Bailey, Page 12

The state government is lauding the latest data it says shows ambulance ramping at the state's four public hospitals has been dramatically reduced. The release of the figures comes just days after the Health and Community Sector Union raised concerns about ramping at the Royal Hobart Hospital and called for a roundtable of stakeholders to address safety issues for patients, paramedics and emergency department staff.

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We thought angelic Holly was going to die

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 28/07/2024, Emily Olle, Page 29

A western suburbs family believes the Women's and Children's Hospital is desperately under-resourced after they were left anxiously awaiting an MRI to diagnose their toddler's rare genetic disease. West Lakes couple Tania and David Davis spent weeks believing their "angelic baby girl" Holly's first birthday would be her last and now she is among hundreds of children whose "non-urgent" cases face a long wait for scans.

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The look belies the reality

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 28/07/2024, Page 74

Ambulance ramping is a huge issue facing this state. It goes without saying that it is also a huge issue hurting the state government as it tries to convince voters to give them a fourth term in government.

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Government hails ambo protocol a success

Sunday Examiner, General News, 28/07/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 3

The state government has called its Transfer of Care protocol a success after end-of-year data for 2023-24 reported ambulances spent 9276 less hours ramped compared to 2022-23. Health Minister Guy Barnett said this was a "fantastic outcome".

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'Let them rot in jail': Calls to ban euthanasia for rapists, murderers

The Mercury, Other, 27/07/2024, Jake Mccallum

Victims' advocates and corrections staff are pleading with the state government to ban prisoners from accessing voluntary assisted dying laws, claiming the process perverts the course of justice. Moral warfare has broken out over the issue, with violent criminals and murderers who are serving decades-long sentences behind bars now having access to taxpayer-funded voluntary assisted dying support.

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

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Big payout to bashed nurse

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 28/07/2024, Olivia Jenkins & Sarah Booth, Page 11

A major hospital has been forced to pay a traumatised nurse almost half a million dollars in compensation after she was locked in a room with a notoriously violent patient who repeatedly beat her while hidden from view. Elly - not her real name - was working in Box Hill Hospital's psychiatric unit in 2021 when the patient began hitting and punching her and another young patient.

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

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Why we have to scream for help

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 28/07/2024, Lisa Wachsmuth, Page 29

When a patient grabbed hospital radiographer Trish Hann by the hair during a scan, she had to scream for help and hope someone heard her from inside the lead-lined room, which had just one exit. There was no duress alarm or security guard and she said the chronic understaffing in her department at one of Sydney's major hospitals meant she had little backup.

Nurses from across the world join LGH

Sunday Examiner, General News, 28/07/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 5

Three nurses from the other side of the globe have joined the Launceston General Hospital (LGH) as part of the state government's "biggest ever" healthcare recruitment blitz. It follows a recruitment drive into the UK late last year promoting the Department of Health as an employer of choice and Tasmania as an "attractive destination" to relocate to.

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Victoria's ambulance service accused of discrimination due to religious beard ban

ABC Online, Other, 27/07/2024, Richard Willingham

Victorian men with religious beards have been banned from working as paramedics due to a rigid face mask policy, despite alternative respirators for men of faith being used in other states and countries. Currently, Ambulance Victoria requires men to be closely shaved to ensure that paramedics pass a mask fit test.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Drug doctor cops ban

Sunday Territorian, General News, 28/07/2024, Jason Walls, Page 7

A Top End doctor who practised while high on meth hopes to return to work as a GP so others can "learn from my mistakes" after copping a six-month ban from medicine. The Medical Board of Australian cancelled former Gove District Hospital medico Tim Blake's registration after he was convicted of a string of drugs charges including possession of trafficable quantities of methamphetamine and cocaine in 2022.

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

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Deaths rise as donors decline

Sun Herald, General News, 28/07/2024, Mary Ward, Page 5

In 2016, the Burrows family were living in San Diego while dad Anthony served with the Australian navy. In the middle of his three-year stint, Anthony and wife Clare welcomed a baby girl, Kate.

'I get teary when I think of the sacrifice': father

Sunday Examiner, General News, 28/07/2024, Isabel Bird, Page 11

With a failing heart, former coal miner and father-of-six John Kuhn began ticking off the places he wished to go before his looming death. He visited Tasmania, travelled to Australia's red centre to see Uluru, and visited the top end at Kakadu National Park.

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'I knew what Sam wanted': State Minister Nat Cook opens up about death of her son and organ donation

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 27/07/2024, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker

State Minister Nat Cook knows she will never get over losing her beloved teenage son in the most abhorrent of ways – a one-punch attack. But there are moments which are especially hard and emotionally triggering.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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'Life-saving': Qld's shockingly low organ donor registry revealed

Adelaide Now, Other, 27/07/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

For the first time Queenslanders are able to register as an organ donor when they renew their license or vehicle registration online. In a bid to boost lagging organ donations in the state, the government has joined forces with DonateLife, the national organ and tissue authority, to launch a new feature on the TMR that allows Queenslanders to lodge their donation status.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#).

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SPORT

Shane Warne Stand at the MCG could be upgraded

Sunday Age, General News, 28/07/2024, Mathew Dunckley, Page 1

Bumper AFL crowds and Taylor Swift's record-breaking trio of concerts at the MCG have led to a stellar financial performance for the Melbourne Cricket Club in the past year, paving the way for potential improvements to the world renowned venue. The result, published in the MCC's annual report on Thursday, meant the club could pay down the remaining debt on the redevelopment of the Northern Stand two years early.

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Politics, security and the Seine

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 28/07/2024, Keith Rathbone, Page 11

Two high-profile assaults on Australians in Paris have raised concerns about security ahead of the Olympic Games. On Saturday evening, a young woman was allegedly sexually assaulted by a group of men.

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Tasmanian researchers closer to at-home computer test for dementia

Adelaide Now, Other, 27/07/2024, Sue Bailey

In a world first, Tasmanian researchers are closer to developing a computer test that can be done at home to detect dementia – decades before symptoms emerge. Neurologist Associate Professor Jane Alty, from the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, said in 2020 researchers developed TAS Test a computer screening test that picks up changes in hand movements that could indicate increased risk of dementia occurring 10 – 20 years later.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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Common bacteria could 'melt' and destroy cancer with up to 99 per cent success, research finds

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 27/07/2024, Xantha Leatham

A bacteria commonly found in the mouth appears to 'melt' away and destroy certain cancers, scientists have discovered. Researchers were 'surprised' that patients with head and neck cancer who had Fusobacterium within their tumours had 'much better outcomes'.

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One man's mission to revive a forgotten, life-saving cancer drug

The Guardian, Other, 28/07/2024, Eva Amsen

For the past decade, the Dutch immunologist Jacques (Sjaak) Neefjes has been on a mission to bring back a cancer drug that hasn't been available in Europe since 2004. "I'm still flabbergasted that a compound that could have helped thousands of people was taken off the market," says Neefjes.

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Type of mouth bacteria 'melts' some cancers, study finds

The Guardian, Other, 27/07/2024, Sammy Gecsoyler

Scientists have discovered that a common type of mouth bacteria can make certain cancers "melt". Researchers at Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College London said they had been "brutally surprised" to find that fusobacterium – a type of bacteria commonly found in the mouth – appears to have the ability to kill certain cancers.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Doctors fear surgery delays as saline drips rationed at Queensland hospitals

Adelaide Now, Other, 27/07/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

Saline drips are being rationed at Queensland hospitals to cope with a global shortage and doctors fear surgeries could be delayed to ensure the critical IVs are available for medical emergencies. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) told The Courier-Mail that the shortages in the state's hospitals and across the country are due to manufacturing issues and unexpected increases in demand.

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

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Common vaccinations linked with lower risk of Alzheimer's

The New Daily, Other, 27/07/2024, John Elder

Up to date with your tetanus shots? What about flu?

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