



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 21st August 2024

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister Wells](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#)
| [Assistant Minister Kearney](#) | [Assistant Minister Thwaites](#) | [Department](#)
| [Coronavirus](#) | [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Population Health](#)
| [Cancer, Hearing and Chronic Conditions](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
| [Medicare Benefits and Digital Health](#) | [Benefits Integrity](#)
| [Health Systems Strategies](#) | [Sport](#) | [Health Economics and Research](#) |
[First Nations Health](#) | [Interim Australian CDC](#) | [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#)
| [Office for Drug Control](#) | [Food Standards](#) | [AICIS](#)

LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 1) reports that under a new federal aged care bill negotiated by Labor and the Coalition in response to the aged care royal commission, wealthier retirees will pay a larger share of their daily living expenses while in aged care. The parties reached an agreement after Minister for Health Mark Butler agreed to drop criminal penalties for breaches of rules and standards by nursing home directors from the proposed legislation.
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 3) reports that a supply shortage of medications used to relieve the pain of palliative care patients has resulted in patients paying high costs for alternative drugs that are not PBS-listed. According to the president of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine, Minister for Health Mark Butler was warned of potential price increases several months ago.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 1) reports that MRIs at Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre are being disrupted by train testing in the new Metro Tunnel, with temporary MRI facilities in place at locations in East Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Hospital as it works with the state government to finalise a solution.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 1) reports that alcohol-free areas in central Sydney have been reduced by half by the City of Sydney council, amid concerns that drinking bans promote over-policing of vulnerable populations without improving public safety.

- **The Age** (page 2) reports that Jane Miller has resigned as chief executive of Ambulance Victoria after only 18 months in the role, following an industrial dispute, concern over paramedics' working conditions, and a vote of no-confidence.
- **The West Australian** (page 3) reports that the family of a toddler who died of undiagnosed leukaemia at Joondalup Health Campus in March is seeking a royal commission into WA's health system.
- **The Northern Territory News** (page 5) reports that a Northern Territory coroner's investigation into the death of a patient ten days after routine elective knee surgery in 2021 has found that her treatment at Royal Darwin Hospital was "potentially grossly lacking."
- **The Australian** (page 7) reports that a world-first study from the Perth-based Mindaroo Foundation reviewing research into the effects of plastics and microplastics on human health has found that plastic chemicals, including bisphenols, phthalates, PBDE, PCBs and PFAS are associated with a wide range of poor health outcomes, including miscarriage, infertility, and endocrine dysfunction. *Also reported by: Cairns Post, Courier Mail, Geelong Advertiser, Gold Coast Bulletin*
- **The Guardian** (online) reports that a coronial inquest into the preventable death of an Indigenous man has found that the diagnosing doctor should be referred to NSW's healthcare watchdog for potential unsatisfactory professional conduct.

MINISTER BUTLER

Wealthy to pay more for aged care

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Stephen Lunn & Sarah Ison, Page 1

Self-funded retirees will be asked to pay more out of their own savings for their aged care under a deal set to be struck between Labor and the Coalition that will chart a new course for the care of older Australians. [...] In a major concession to the Coalition, Health Minister Mark Butler last week wrote to opposition aged care spokeswoman, Anne Ruston advising that Labor would drop its proposal to include criminal penalties on nursing home directors who breach care rules and standards.

Also reported by: The Australian (Online).

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

High cost of relief for dying patients

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Stephen Rice, Page 3

Dying patients may have to pay more than \$4000 for a box of imported pain-killing tablets after the existing product was removed from the market, while the overseas alternative - 23 times more expensive - has not been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler was warned about some of the shocking price hikes which put vital medicines out of reach of many Australians nearing the end of their lives more than nine months ago.

Also reported by: The Australian (Online).

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'Put pressure on doctors' to publish their fees: Finance minister

Australian Doctor, Other, 20/08/2024

Just over 50 non-GP specialists have listed their fees on the \$24 million government website. [...] Asked for detail on how the government could push doctors onto the site, Ms Gallagher's office pointed 6minutes to a statement from the Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler.

[Read More](#)

Sky News Live, The Rita Panahi Show, 20/08/2024, Rita Panahi

Now, the Australian has obtained evidence that Health Minister Mark Butler was warned months ago that palliative care patients were in danger of losing access to vital pain medicines, particularly liquid morphine. And despite these warnings, the country is now grappling with severe shortages, including morphine and incredibly, I.V. fluids.

ABC Western Queensland, Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Danny Kennedy

The Australian reports the country is facing severe shortages of several crucial medicines, including morphine products essential for palliative care. Despite earlier claims by health ministers that the shortage of IV fluids is easing, some medical specialists disagree. Correspondence reveals that Federal Health Minister Mark Butler was warned nine months ago about the risk of losing access to essential opioid analgesics, but no effective action seems to have been taken.

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MINISTER WELLS

Australians brace for 'tragic' summer of drowning after worrying increase in deaths in pools, ocean and rivers

9News, Other, 20/08/2024

Australia is bracing for another tragic summer of drowning incidents after a major increase in deaths at beaches, rivers and swimming pools. [...] Federal Minister for Aged Care and Sport, Anika Wells MP, said the Australian government is committed to supporting raising water safety awareness.

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Legislative bottleneck: the stalled Aged Care Act and its implications

HelloCare, Other, 20/08/2024, Jakob Neeland

The delay in advancing the Aged Care Act has prompted significant concern from aged care advocates and provider groups, who are urging both sides of federal Parliament to prioritise this crucial legislation. [...] The Albanese government's reform agenda, initially outlined 14 months ago, aimed to address the financial strain on the aged care sector through the establishment of an expert taskforce led by Minister Anika Wells.

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\$3.7M in funding for infection control research

Third Sector, Other, 20/08/2024, Menchie Khairuddin

The Australian government has announced an investment of \$3.7 million to improve infection prevention and control (IPC) in aged care homes. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells said, "For our aged care sector, we need to remain vigilant on our approach towards infection prevention and control – it is an integral part of quality and safety standard improvement."

[Read More](#)

ABC Gippsland, Regional Statewide Mornings, 20/08/2024, Jonathon Kendall

Interview with Corey Irlam, acting CEO, Council on the Ageing (COTA). Kendall reports on the user-pays model for aged care, as recommended by the Aged Care Task Force earlier this year. He recalls Aged Care Minister Anika Wells highlighting that the large baby boomer generation is reshaping every system. Irlam notes the need to assess the proposal for fairness and to ensure sector viability.

[Play Now](#)[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

Little to show after \$340m spent on IT

Canberra Times, General News, 21/08/2024, Connor Pearce, Page 3

After \$340 million and five years, there are no parts of the scuppered GovERP platform that can be used by departments without more work and investment, a review of the system has found. [...] While departments including Services Australia and the Department of Health and Aged Care intend to use the system, its final implementation remains a way off, with the review finding "system integration or user acceptance testing has not yet occurred for any of the functional capabilities identified".

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

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Mpox declared a global emergency

cesphn.org.au, Other, 20/08/2024

Australian health authorities are monitoring the evolving epidemiology of mpox after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared mpox a global emergency. The Department of Health and Aged Care has updated its mpox webpage to reflect this.

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Hunter Opal aged care workers vote to take industrial action

Newcastle Weekly, Other, 20/08/2024, Rod Thompson

In an historic move, Hunter Opal aged care workers have voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action against the country's largest for-profit provider. [...] "The latest quarterly data from the Department of Health and Aged Care shows 20 out of Opal's 47 facilities did not meet their registered nurse care minutes targets, while 42 did not meet their total care minute targets," she explained.

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Opal HealthCare's NSW aged care staff back industrial action over additional pay demand

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/08/2024, Caroline Egan

The majority of union members at Australia's largest residential aged care provider, Opal HealthCare, have voted in favour of taking protected industrial action at the provider's New South Wales aged care homes, saying the latest pay offer is "unacceptable" and does not keep pace with rising inflation and cost of living pressures. [...] The latest care minute data from the Department of Health and Aged Care showed 20 of Opal Healthcare's 47 NSW facilities did not meet the Registered Nurse care minutes targets, while 42 did not meet their total care minute targets.

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[Back to Top](#)

Big hit from long COVID

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/08/2024

Lost working hours in 2022 due to lingering effects from Australians suffering from long COVID cost the Australian economy around \$9.6 billion, or one-quarter of the country's GDP that year, a new study has uncovered. The stunning economic hit was calculated by researchers from The Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney with The Australian National University (ANU) and the University of Melbourne in a study published in The Medical Journal of Australia.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

Contribution caps lowered to secure aged care deal

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/08/2024, Phillip Coorey, Page 4

The Albanese government is set to lower its proposed caps on how much people can spend on their aged care in a lifetime in order to secure a deal with the Coalition to put the sector on a sustainable funding footing.

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Labor deserts jail threat in reform push

Canberra Times, General News, 21/08/2024, Eleanor Campbell, Page 11

Amina Schipp is certain the nursing home owner who oversaw a medication error that led to the death of her 98-year-old mother would be jailed for negligence. Her friend, Yvonne Buters, expected that her family would see justice after her father Hank died from an open wound in a Perth residential care facility in 2017.

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Govt reportedly backs away from contentious clause to try and get new Aged Care Act before Parliament

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/08/2024, Caroline Egan

With time running out to enact the new Aged Care Act by 1 July 2025, the Australian Government has reportedly abandoned its 2022 election promise to impose criminal penalties, including jail time, on "dodgy aged care providers" who neglect or mistreat residents. Vehemently opposed to by aged care boards, the last-gasp decision to drop the criminal penalties clause would remove a major block in achieving consensus with the Liberal/Nationals in Opposition.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/08/2024, Hugh Riminton

The Federal government has abandoned its plan to imprison negligent aged care providers as part of its sector overhaul. Following a lengthy negotiation process, the government is set to introduce reforms based on recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission. The reforms include new guidelines and rules aimed at improving standards and a revised funding model for both home and residential care.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 20/08/2024, Peter Overton

A significant development in Australia's aged care sector is on the horizon, with reforms expected to address the deep-rooted issues tied to the nation's ageing population. The reforms are set to remove proposed prison sentences as penalties and introduce higher lifetime costs for wealthier Australians entering aged care.

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ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Adam Shirley

Interview with Craig Gear, CEO, Older Persons Advocacy Network. Shirley reports Labor has made some concessions on aged care reforms and is set to drop its plan to impose criminal penalties on nursing home directors. The Albanese government aims to have wealthier Australians pay more for their aged care to ensure financial sustainability. Gear says he supports the legislation if it includes transparency and fair safety nets, but stresses the need for quality care and appropriate protections for all older Australians.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

I am menopausal ... hear me roar

Age, General News, 21/08/2024, Kerry Fox, Page 19

Is the new menopause awareness movement "catastrophising" and "monetising" menopause to the potential detriment of working women? That is what Professor Susan Davis and Dr Sarah White warn against in their submissions to the Senate inquiry into issues relating to menopause and perimenopause.

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'Incorrect and damaging': Babies as young as six months put on diets

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 19/08/2024, Sarah Berry

A fixation with an "ideal" weight range is driving poor advice, including that young children be put on diets. Obesity expert Dr Nick Fuller says he's seen parents with children as young as six months old being told to restrict their baby's food intake because they are too high on weight-for-age charts.

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PSA calls for removal of vaccination red tape

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 20/08/2024

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is calling for the removal of vaccination red tape and for national harmonisation of pharmacist vaccination scope to ensure access to equitable vaccination services. PSA National President, Associate Professor Fei Sim said, "Pharmacists are underutilised in many states and territories, with regulatory barriers preventing them from practising to their full potential when providing vaccination services.

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[Back to Top](#)

CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Camilla and Marc campaign achieves win in fight against silent killer

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Sophie Howe, Page 12

Every eight hours, a woman in Australia dies from ovarian cancer. Despite being the most lethal form of cancer to affect women, this devastating disease remains largely undetected until it's too late, with minimal progress towards early diagnosis until now.

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Keeping close eye on safety

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/08/2024, Page 4

Like many, Hobart commercial plasterer Andrew Hughes has learned about the importance of eye

safety the hard way. The 35-year-old tradesman, who works for Plastering Solutions Tasmania, said he's always been careful but his work involves a lot of overhead work and even with safety glasses, debris can get in his eyes.

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Raising awareness of brain injuries

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/08/2024, Oliver Hovenden, Page 33

This week from August 19 to 25 is Brain Injury Awareness Week in Australia. Brain Injury Awareness Week is held annually to raise awareness of brain injury and its impact on everyday Australians.

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'Eureka' cancer win

West Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Rebecca Parish, Page 15

Most cancer patients involved in a landmark Perth clinical trial remain in remission years later after a breakthrough treatment that bypasses the need for chemotherapy. The remarkable development is the result of a eureka moment for Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital consultant haematologist Professor Chan Cheah, who first thought of the treatment while out running in 2016.

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With more research dollars we can beat cancer

Daily Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2024, Keith Wheeler, Page 11

Daffodil Day is this Thursday. The Cancer Council will be seeking your donations to advance cancer research.

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Clues for cancer pain

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2024, Page 3

Twenty minutes of mindful breathing could reduce the intensity and unpleasantness of cancer pain and relieve associated anxiety, Malaysian researchers say. Subang Jaya Medical Centre team split 40 cancer patients with moderate-to-severe pain into two groups.

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Campaign to end mortality rate

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 21/08/2024, Monique Patterson, Page 2

Men in the south-west are more likely to die from prostate cancer than in other areas, according to South West Healthcare prostate cancer specialist nurse Bridget Hill. She said the mortality risk for south-west men with the disease was 50 to 60 per cent higher than the nation's average.

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Rare cancer patients 'slipping through cracks'

Daily Liberal, Other, 20/08/2024, Kat Wong

Survival rates for people with some rarer cancers have declined and advocates say the government is not doing enough to tackle the health inequities these patients face. Though there is a low incidence of each rare or less common cancer, the 40,000 people who receive these diagnoses each year make up one quarter of Australians with cancer - more than any single common cancer type.

Also reported by: [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

Huge cost as \$14b tunnel rattles MRIs at Peter Mac

Train testing in the new Metro Tunnel is disrupting sensitive medical equipment in Parkville's hospitals, despite the issue being identified a decade ago, and it is now costing Victorians tens of millions of dollars a year to address. A leaked government document reveals that in June, magnetic resonance imaging machines (MRIs) at Parkville's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre failed to meet strict standards on multiple occasions, when tested as trains ran on the subway line beneath the hospital.

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Ambulance chief quits amid turmoil

Age, General News, 21/08/2024, Jewel Topsfield, Lachlan Abbott & Rachel Eddie, Page 2

Ambulance Victoria's chief executive has resigned after just 18 months at the helm following a vote of no-confidence in the troubled emergency service's leadership, a protracted industrial dispute and concern over paramedics working excessive overtime. In a statement yesterday afternoon, the agency said Jane Miller had resigned "to pursue a new opportunity within the Victorian health sector".

Similar coverage reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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Cop picked to revive ambos

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2024, Shannon Deery & Sarah Booth, Page 4

Another former police officer has been appointed to run the embattled Ambulance Victoria following the sudden resignation of its chief executive. Former deputy commissioner Andrew Crisp, who also served as Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner, has been appointed to replace Jane Miller for six months.

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New LGH scanner a 'huge relief'

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/08/2024, Stephanie Dalton, Page 9

State-of-the-art advanced technology introduced at the Launceston General Hospital could lead to quicker diagnoses and more efficient treatment for patients, say health bosses. The first of two new CT scanners has been hailed as "a step forward in advancing patient care and diagnostic capabilities", with a second hi-tech machine expected to be operational in October.

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Hospital left her to die alone

Northern Territory News, General News, 21/08/2024, Zizi Averill, Page 5

A routine elective surgery to fix a grandmother's knee ended with the 66-year-old being left to die alone in a dark "distressing" ward, gasping for breath due to the "potentially grossly lacking" treatment at Royal Darwin Hospital. On Monday, Northern Territory coroner Elizabeth Armitage Zizi Averill opened her investigation into the death of Judy Smart, who died 10 days after what was meant to be routine elective surgery in 2021.

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

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Sandipan family demand answers

West Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Josh Zimmerman, Page 3

The family of Sandipan Dhar wants a royal commission into WA's health system and a review of the decision to extend Ramsay Health Care's contract to run Joondalup Health Campus. Both demands will be outlined in a pair of petitions that Sandipan's father, Sanjoy Dhar, plans to present to Parliament at the end of the month.

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Scabies blitz just what doctor ordered

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 21/08/2024, Angela Thompson, Page 3

There are hopes the end is in sight for an outbreak of scabies in the region's health facilities, with the bulk of impacted workers and patients now treated against the dreaded mite. Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District has secured enough prophylactic medication for 14,000 people in response to an outbreak last month at four of its hospitals - Wollongong, Shellharbour, Bulli and Coledale.

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New state-of-the-art scanning facilities

Launceston Examiner, General News, 21/08/2024, Duncan Bailey, Page 4

A new state-of-the-art CT scanning machine is now in use at the Launceston General Hospital emergency department. It's the first of two \$2.6million CT scanners, with a second machine expected to be operational in October, replacing the hospital's single existing scanner.

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Antibiotic shortage needs action

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/08/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 5

GPs should have rapid tests for viral and bacterial infections to know if they should give patients antibiotics, Newcastle virologist Nathan Bartlett says. A shortage of antibiotics occurred this winter, with GPs prescribing more medication to treat a four-fold rise in pneumonia cases.

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Perth teenager dies of the flu days after being discharged from hospital

Adelaide Now, Other, 20/08/2024, Alexandra Feiam

A 13-year-old girl has been found unconscious in her Perth home just days after being sent home from the hospital with the flu. She was not able to be revived.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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Man died after getting wrong advice post surgery

Canberra Times, Other, 20/08/2024, Tara Cosoleto

A man who died from a ruptured spleen the day after a colonoscopy could have been saved if an on-call nurse gave him correct medical advice. Alan Edward Stewart, 70, underwent the routine medical procedure at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 2018, after returning an abnormal bowel cancer screening test.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#) and widely syndicated across regional outlets.

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Preventable hospitalisations soar in GPs' absence: AIHW

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/08/2024

Patients without GP access are hospitalised three times more than their city counterparts, and the RACGP warns this will only worsen without a funding shakeup. There is a current health-spend shortfall between urban and rural citizens of \$848.02 per person, per year.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/08/2024, Natalie Forrest

Health authorities are warning about the dangers of influenza after a young girl passed away shortly after being discharged from Joondalup Hospital in WA. The incident has sparked calls for a Royal Commission into the hospital by another family whose child was also treated there. More than 10,000 influenza cases have been reported in WA this year, with seven fatalities. A significant concern in the state is its low vaccination rates, which are among the lowest in the country across nearly every age group.

Also reported by: [Channel 10 \(Perth\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/08/2024, Jennifer Keyte

Jane Miller has resigned as CEO of Ambulance Victoria following a recent vote of no confidence from the Ambulance Union and ongoing industrial action over a pay dispute with paramedics. Vic Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas says the new leader must prioritise finalising the pay deal. Ambulance Victoria faces ongoing challenges, including missed response time targets, lengthy ramping times at hospitals, and a recent Code Orange.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Today , 20/08/2024, Alex Cullen and Sarah Abo

Adelaide's major hospitals are struggling under intense pressure, with emergency departments treating 563 patients overnight despite a capacity of only 332. On Monday afternoon, a code white was declared at all city hospitals. Health authorities have partly blamed the federal government for the crisis, citing a shortage of aged care and NDIS places which leaves many patients unable to be discharged.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Sonya Feldhoff and Julian Schiller

Interview with Bernadette Mulholland, Chief Industrial Officer, Salaried Medical Officers Association. Host reports SA Health has lifted a long-term code yellow alert, but the hospital system still faces significant challenges. Mulholland says 51 patients are still waiting for ward access and the system remains overwhelmed, with a high flu incidence adding to the strain. She says GPs being pulled from private practices to staff urgent Medicare and virtual care clinics is worsening the shortage of general practitioners in the community.

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[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Gender shock: why young women aren't happy

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Stephen Lunn, Page 7

Young women in Australia have worse mental health and are generally less happy with who they are than young men, new research finds. They also feel silenced while at school, treated less seriously than males in the workplace and in healthcare settings, and more held back in their careers due to their gender, the study reports.

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Support through heartbreak

Border Watch, General News, 21/08/2024, Caroline Hammat, Page 9

The heartbreak of stillbirth has led one local mother to create a foundation in memory of her daughter, Charlotte. Rhianna Davy is a local mother of four who lost her third child in the days before Christmas, December 2020.

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Call for investigation into possible link between semaglutide weight loss drug Ozempic and mental health risks

7news.com.au, Other, 21/08/2024

International researchers have called for an investigation into the potential link between thoughts of self-harm and popular weight loss treatments. A disproportionately high risk of suicidal thoughts was identified in an already vulnerable cohort of people using semaglutide, which is sold as injectable prescription medications Ozempic and Wegovy.

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

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ABC Radio Darwin , Drive, 20/08/2024, Liz Trevaskis

Interview with David Chapman, Chair, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists NT. Chapman notes the severe shortage of psychiatrists in the Northern Territory, with only 11 per 100,000 people. He calls for modern, comprehensive facilities that address a wide range of mental health issues, not just acute cases.

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Channel 9, A Current Affair, 20/08/2024, Allison Langdon

Hannah Friebel, a 27-year-old with bipolar disorder, took her own life after the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) demanded nearly \$28,000 in repayments for what it deemed non-compliant spending. A former NDIS staff member has revealed that the rise in self-managed plans has become unmanageable, questioning whether Hannah should have been on such a plan. Hannah's family say the NDIS's debt collection efforts were a significant factor in her worsening condition.

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ABC Radio Darwin , Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Adam Steer

A coalition of mental health NGOs has challenged the incoming Northern Territory government to address mental health through legislative reforms. The NT's Mental Health Coalition and Lived Experience Network have called for increased investment in a mental health workforce, highlighting that NT's mental health laws are outdated and lack a representative peak body for active users.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

5AA, Mornings, 20/08/2024, Matthew Pantelis

Interview with Dr Joanna Howe, law professor, University of Adelaide, on testifying at a Qld parliamentary committee hearing on abortion laws. Pantelis plays audio of midwife Lou Adsett giving distressing testimony on babies left to die after abortions. Howe supports changes to protect newborns and criticises existing practices. She points out the disparity between states, with SA having birth equality protections since 2021, while the NT does not.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Ryk Goddard

The Tasmanian Nurses Union reports that Launceston General Hospital's emergency department was at full capacity yesterday, with continued patient ramping. Nurses across the state are intensifying their industrial action, including distributing campaign materials and speaking publicly about their concerns. They criticise the government's new transfer of care procedures.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Pay prac sessions for physio therapy'

The Australian, Higher Education, 21/08/2024, Joanna Panagopoulos, Page 21

Australia's allied health deans are demanding the federal government pay physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology students for university placements, to mirror taxpayer support for teaching and nursing students. The Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences said in a statement that "placement poverty" exacerbated the acute shortage of allied health professionals, which was set to increase massively over the next decade.

Call to extend 'poverty' pay

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2024, Rebecca Borg, Page 19

The federal government faces pressure to extend its Commonwealth Prac Payment to allied health students as the sector struggles to overcome skill shortages. The Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences is calling for students of psychology, physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy and podiatry to have access to the \$319.50 weekly payment announced in the federal budget.

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More Ramsay staff walk off the job

Nursing Review, Other, 20/08/2024, Stefanie Schultz

Nurses and midwives have walked off the job during historic industrial action against Ramsay Health Care, as the healthcare giant makes a second request for staff to vote on pay and conditions. Industrial action commenced last month, with unions issuing warnings that action would escalate to work stoppages should their demands not be reasonably met.

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[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Winning strategy: A virtual lifeline for emergency departments

Australian Financial Review, Features, 21/08/2024, Page 4

Emergency departments worldwide are struggling under the weight of surging demand. Overcrowding, long waiting times and burnt-out staff are becoming the norm.

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[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Sydney pharmacist guilty of misconduct

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/08/2024

A Sydney-based pharmacist has been found guilty of professional misconduct and unsatisfactory professional conduct before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The Health Care Complaints Commission filed a case against Dr Mualla Akinci for allegedly dispensing or permitting the dispense of an unlawfully imported medicine to a patient between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020.

[Read More](#)

Brisbane psychiatrist charged with rape

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/08/2024, Nicola McNamara

A registered psychiatrist has faced court after being charged with rape and sexual assault in Brisbane. [...] Dr Scheepers, who was born in South Africa, has been registered as a medical practitioner in Australia since 2002, according to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

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Former Canberra psychiatrist suspended from practising

Canberra Times, Other, 20/08/2024, Lanie Tindale

A psychiatrist who Canberra patients accused of going "AWOL" has been suspended from practising in Australia.[...] Several complained to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), saying they were unable to get in touch with the psychiatrist.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Booze bans halved in heart of city

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/08/2024, Michael Koziol, Page 1

The City of Sydney council has halved the number of alcohol-free areas in central Sydney amid NSW Police concerns that the drinking bans don't work. At its final meeting before the election, the council passed a proposal to renew only 218 alcohol free zones or alcohol-prohibited areas, usually streets and parks.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Emma Rebellato and Lisa Millar

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood is facing a critical shortage due to a surge in appointment cancellations, with one in five donors rescheduling or cancelling because of cold and flu symptoms. It has issued an urgent call for 8,500 donors nationwide over the next week to replenish supplies. Lifeblood is urging eligible Australians, especially as cold and flu rates peak, to book appointments and donate.

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2GB, Mornings, 20/08/2024, Ray Hadley

Interview with Steve Eldridge, Director of Donor Relations, Lifeblood, on an urgent need for new and returning blood donors due to a sharp rise in appointment cancellations caused by cold and flu symptoms. Eldridge says Lifeblood is calling for 8,500 donations nationwide over the next week to replenish supplies.

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[Back to Top](#)

SPORT

Our codes must learn to say no to gambling ads

Age, General News, 21/08/2024, Tony Robinson, Page 18

Amid the growing furore over gambling advertising, Australian sporting codes are hoping for a watering down of the late Peta Murphy's proposed reforms. The basis of their claim is that the substantial revenue they receive from their association with wagering firms is essential to the health of sporting codes across Australia.

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

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

'Sad day' without Tests at Gabba

Courier Mail, General News, 21/08/2024, Marco Monteverde, Page 5

Star batsman Marnus Labuschagne says it will be a "sad day" if the Gabba loses its status as a Test cricket venue. [...] The Gabba had been scheduled to be the main stadium for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics, but the planned upgrade of the venue was scrapped by the Queensland government due to costs.

Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/08/2024, Kate Freebairn

Parents are being warned about the seriousness of concussions in children after a high number of presentations to the Women's and Children's Hospital this year. Former footballer Mark Bickley has shared the story of his own son's injury, taking months to recover after coming off his bike. Georgina Leov, Women's and Children's Hospital, notes the brain rehab service has seen 121 patients, with boys making up 60% of cases.

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Channel 9, Today , 20/08/2024, Alex Cullen and Sarah Abo

AFL star Willie Rioli has faced racial abuse online following the Port Adelaide and Adelaide Crows showdown. Both clubs have quickly condemned the comments, with the AFL Integrity Unit investigating the incident.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Canberra Live, 20/08/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with Justin Scarr, CEO, Royal Life Saving Australia, on the 2024 National Drowning Report. Scarr says it shows a 14% increase in drowning deaths, driven by hot weather and a decline in swimming skills. He notes an increase in drownings among individuals over 75 and those born overseas, noting the need for better access to swimming lessons in disadvantaged areas.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Winning strategy: Love hormone research bears multimillion-dollar deal

Australian Financial Review, Features, 21/08/2024, Page 8

For nearly a decade, Professor Michael Kassiou from the University of Sydney was on the hunt for small molecules that could enter our brains and mimic oxytocin, known as the love hormone, given its association with moments of human intimacy.

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Honey benefit

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2024, Page 4

Manuka honey could potentially be an alternative, natural option for breast cancer prevention and treatment. In preclinical experiments, UCLA Health Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Centre researchers in the US found that Manuka honey significantly reduced tumour growth in mice with oestrogen receptor-positive breast cancer cells by 84 per cent without affecting normal breast cells or causing major side-effects.

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A bright spark in health

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 15

The next generation of wearable health tech popularised through the likes of FitBits and Apple Watches could measure our exposure to light instead of step counts or heart rates. Monash University researchers have developed a small badge the size of a 20c coin that can be clipped onto a shirt and measure our exposure to different types of light, from sunsets to screens.

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

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How medical research is failing women

For years, the process for developing and testing new drugs has focused disproportionately on male bodies — to the detriment of female patients. Female breasts were not included in the curriculum at medical schools until the 2010s.

[Read More](#)

How silkworms and zebrafish are being used to heal wounds, and even regrow a human heart

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/08/2024, Angus Dalton

It's the most basic of medical matters: how do you heal a wound? You might think modern science has the problem all sewn up, but the global burden of chronic wounds is estimated at \$250 billion.

[Read More](#)

Research finds genetic link between Alzheimer's and heart disease

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/08/2024

It is hoped the new insights into the connection between the two conditions could significantly change patient care. Dementia and coronary artery or heart disease are the two leading underlying causes of death in Australians.

[Read More](#)

Simple, low-cost change may save many little lives

SBS, Other, 20/08/2024, Alex Anyfantis & Cameron Carr

New research from Australian doctors suggests a simple change to infant care could save lives. Researchers at the University of Sydney have found that giving premature babies higher concentrations of oxygen has a dramatic effect on the child's chances of survival.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 20/08/2024, Leon Compton

Interview with Professor Anne-Louise Ponsonby, The Florey Institute, on research that shows a potential link between BPA-style plastic exposure during pregnancy and an increased risk of autism in boys. Ponsonby says while the connection between BPA and autism has been observed before, their study provides a detailed molecular mechanism and suggests a possible treatment.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Family's 'hell' after coroner finds beloved father's death was 'preventable'

The Australian, Other, 20/08/2024, Steve Zemek

A doctor who misdiagnosed an Indigenous man as suffering a drug-induced condition before he later died in excruciating pain due to perforated abdominal ulcers should be referred to the health watchdog, a coroner has found. The NSW Coroner's Court on Tuesday handed down its findings into the death of Ricky "Dougie" Hampson, who died in August 2021 less than 24 hours after being discharged from hospital.

[Read More](#)

Doctor should be investigated over Indigenous man who died after hospital misdiagnosis, NSW coroner says

The Guardian, Other, 20/08/2024

Sokol Nushaj should be referred to healthcare watchdog for potential unsatisfactory professional conduct after incorrectly diagnosing Ricky 'Dougie' Hampson in Dubbo in 2021, coroner says A doctor who misdiagnosed an Indigenous man as suffering from complications linked to excessive cannabis

use should be referred to the New South Wales healthcare watchdog, a coroner overseeing the inquest into his subsequent death has found.

[Read More](#)

Doctor who misdiagnosed Aboriginal man leading to his "preventable" death referred to medical complaints board

National Indigenous Times, Other, 20/08/2024, Dechlan Brennan

A doctor who misdiagnosed an Indigenous man with a drug-induced syndrome who later died has been referred to the NSW health care complaints commission. The findings into the death of 36-year-old Kamilaroi-Dunghutti man Ricky 'Dougie' Hampson Jr were released on Tuesday, with Coroner Erin Kennedy finding his death in the aftermath of being released from Dubbo hospital was "preventable".

[Read More](#)

NSW doctor should be referred to the health-care watchdog over fatal misdiagnosis, coroner finds

SBS, Other, 20/08/2024

A doctor who fatally misdiagnosed a Kamilaroi-Dunghutti man as suffering from complications linked to excessive cannabis use should be referred to the health-care watchdog, a coroner has found. Ricky "Dougie" Hampson died from ruptured stomach ulcers on August 16, 2021, less than 24 hours after he was discharged from Dubbo Base Hospital in western NSW.

[Read More](#)

ABC News, ABC National News, 20/08/2024, Meredith Sheehan

A New South Wales coroner has referred a doctor to the health complaints watchdog over a fatal misdiagnosis of an Aboriginal man. Ricky 'Dougie' Hampson died from ruptured stomach ulcers in 2021, a day after being discharged from Dubbo Base Hospital. Hampson had been misdiagnosed with a drug-related disorder, and the coroner found that his Aboriginality had not been communicated among the medical professionals treating him. The coroner further recommended statewide reforms to ensure First Nations patients are properly identified and receive appropriate care.

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

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Radio National, AM, 20/08/2024, Sabra Lane

Report by Jane Bardon on the reinstatement of alcohol bans and additional restrictions in Alice Springs. Data reveals that domestic violence presentations at Alice Springs Hospital's Emergency Department fell by over 50% following two takeaway-free days. The Country Liberal Party (CLP) aims to reinstate mandatory alcohol treatment, despite previous evaluations showing the latter was ineffective. Michael Liddle, who runs a men's behaviour change program at Congress Aboriginal Health Service, argues that mandatory treatment is ineffective.

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[Back to Top](#)

INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Premier Roger Cook disputes low supply of IV fluids while AMA WA warns of hospitals conserving product

West Australian, Other, 20/08/2024, Claire Sadler

WA's peak body for doctors is at odds with the State Government over its assertion that hospitals have enough intravenous fluids, despite the State's premier paediatric hospital this week issuing a directive to conserve the crucial fluids. [...] Most of Australia's IV fluids come from three Australian suppliers — Baxter Healthcare, B.Braun, and Fresenius Kabi — which the Therapeutic Goods Administration says are all having shortages due to unexpected increases in demand, manufacturing issues, and global supply limitations.

[Read More](#)

Emergency response group to address shortage of IV fluids

Nursing Review, Other, 20/08/2024, Stefanie Schultz

Australian hospitals are expected to face an ongoing shortage of critical IV fluids until at least the end of the year, with reports that healthcare providers are paying up to 10 times as much for imported substitutes. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) reported the supply issues on July 26 and puts the shortage down to "global supply limitations, unexpected increases in demand, and manufacturing issues," approving the importation and supply of overseas-registered substitutes.

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PAG slams PBS delays

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/08/2024

Australian patients are facing significant delays in accessing new medicines, according to Amgen's latest Australian Patient Access Gap (PAG) report. On average, it takes 591 days from the time a medicine is registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to when it is available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

[Read More](#)

6PR, Mornings, 20/08/2024, Gary Adshead

Interview with Joe Hooper, CEO, Australian and New Zealand Society for Palliative Care. Adshead reports on significant disruptions in Australia's medical supply chain, impacting intravenous fluids and morphine. He notes a growing crisis in palliative care due to a shortage of morphine, worsened by the withdrawal of certain medications and insufficient substitutes. Hooper criticises the regulatory system, specifically the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), for failing to address these shortages effectively.

Interview continues on: [6PR \(Perth\)](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Patients to get access to cannabis

Cairns Post, General News, 21/08/2024, Cameron Bates, Page 9

A new research program will allow regional and rural North Queenslanders battling terminal medical conditions access to medicinal cannabis to help manage pain. Professor Phillip Good, director of palliative and supportive care at Mater, said patients receiving end-of-life care could experience a range of distressing symptoms.

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[Back to Top](#)

FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

'Red flag for the world': plastics proven to devastate human health

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 7

The world's first major scientific review into the effects of plastics and microplastics has found the chemicals in many common products are associated with a wide range of health risks, including poor birth outcomes and mis - carriage, infertility, metabolic disease and endocrine dysfunction. The Australian researchers who conducted the study say it "categorically proves" none of the chemicals examined, including BPA, flame retardants, PFAS and an array of other common chemicals found in plastics that infiltrate people's bodies in small quantities every day, can be considered safe.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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Drinking water must be protected from PFAS threat

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 21/08/2024, Page 22

Sydney Water's confirmation that cancer-linked "forever chemicals" have been detected across the city's drinking water supplies is confronting for citizens who have been comforted by the government's reassurances that our catchments are sequestered in pristine bushland, far from any human activity or pollution. But to anyone who has been paying close attention to the unfolding forever chemicals scandal, it is completely unsurprising.

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'Forever chemicals' found in Sydney drinking water

Canberra Times, Other, 20/08/2024

Probable cancer-causing "forever chemicals" have been found in Sydney's drinking water supplies at levels that exceed overseas standards. But an expert says the discovery is no cause for alarm due to residents' existing exposure through a string of other sources.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Today , 20/08/2024, Alex Cullen and Sarah Abo

Recent data from Sydney Water reveals the presence of cancer-linked PFAS chemicals in several drinking water catchments across Sydney. While key filtration plants, such as those at Warragamba, Prospect Reservoir, and Illawarra, show low levels of these chemicals, higher concentrations have been found at Cascade Dam in the Blue Mountains and North Richmond.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 20/08/2024, Emma Rebellato and Lisa Millar

Recent data from Sydney Water reveals the presence of PFAS chemicals in Sydney's drinking water, with tests showing low levels at Warragamba Dam, Prospect Reservoir, and Orchard Hills, and higher concentrations at Cascade Dam and North Richmond. Sydney Water has notified New South Wales Health and maintains a risk-based approach to monitoring.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 20/08/2024, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

Concerns are growing over the safety of Sydney's drinking water after cancer-linked PFAS chemicals were detected in major sources like Warragamba Dam, Prospect Reservoir, Cascade Dam, and North Richmond. Despite Sydney Water's assurance that the water meets Australian safety standards, it falls short of the stricter US guidelines, which classify any level of PFAS as unacceptable.

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[Back to Top](#)

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