



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 1st December 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports NSW Health Minister Ryan Park has announced \$200 million in funding to address overdue surgery waitlists that have been exacerbated by industrial action, with Mr Park saying "We are determined to ensure everyone who needs surgery in NSW gets it as quickly as possible ... this investment will help address this setback and ensure we are continuing to see everyone as quickly as we can".
- **[The Sunday Herald Sun](#)** (page 1) reports a blood test utilising micro RNA biomarkers to detect melanomas before they are visible has been developed in Melbourne, with the test to be available by next year if approved. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#)
- **[The Sunday Herald Sun](#)** (page 5) reports the addition of a new medication to treat endometriosis to the PBS that suppresses the growth of tissue has been welcomed by gynaecologists and advocacy groups, with Health Minister Mark Butler saying "Women's pain is real and it's time we stop telling women to just suck it up". *Also reported by:* [Sunday Telegraph](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#)
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports Australians are being urged to stay up to date on their vaccinations as Covid-19 cases have risen 44 per cent across the country in the last month, with a new vaccine designed to target the latest JN.1 strain to be available from December 9.

- [The Sunday Mail Brisbane](#) (page 12) reports nurses in Queensland say they are cancelling night shifts due to a lack of safe or affordable parking and increasing cases of verbal, physical and sexual assaults occurring while walking between hospitals and parking in poorly lit streets and alleys. Unions representing Queensland hospital workers are calling on the state government to subsidise parking for nurses and midwives at all public hospitals.
- [The Sunday Mail Brisbane](#) (page 13) reports the AMAQ, RACGP and RDA are joining with the Queensland government to design a workforce recruitment drive in an attempt to hire 46,000 additional health workers by 2032.

MINISTER BUTLER

Ending the pain of 'endo'

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 01/12/2024, Linda Silmalis, Page 5

Thousands of women suffering from the "invisible" but crippling disease of endometriosis will for the first time in three decades have access to a new affordable treatment. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said women with endometriosis had suffered in silence for too long: " Women's pain is real and it's time we stop telling women to just suck it up".

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

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MINISTER WELLS

Win for aged care crusader in fight for system shake-up

A Current Affair, Other, 30/11/2024

A woman whose father suffered an agonising death in a Queensland nursing home has had a small win, finally meeting with the aged care minister to advocate for a system shake-up. [...] But despite trying to arrange a meeting with Aged Care Minister Anika Wells since June, Sutton and fellow advocates' requests have fallen on deaf ears.

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Channel 9, A Current Affair (Weekend), 30/11/2024, Deborah Knight

Interview with Kim Sutton, Jude Heppies and Jill Severenson, who all say their family members were neglected in aged care. Kim attends a meeting with Aged Care Minister Anika Wells and says she welcomes the Minister's words and recently passed aged care reforms that will improve the quality of life for the elderly in aged care.

Similar content in: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

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Sky News Live, Weekend Live , 30/11/2024, Lauren Forbes

Forbes says a seven-person panel has been set up to conduct a 100-day review into venues and infrastructure for the Brisbane Olympics. She says key leaders, including Federal Sport Minister Anika Wells, Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner and former Sydney Olympic boss Rod McGeoch joined Premier Crisafulli on stage for the announcement and to discuss the review.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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DEPARTMENT

'Significant' jump in COVID-19 cases ahead of Christmas

Batemans Bay Post, Other, 29/11/2024, Melissa Meehan

A "significant" jump in COVID-19 hospitalisations and infections has health authorities urging caution as the festive season heats up. [...] According to the Department of Health and Aged Care vaccination rates were down for all states and territories in the November reporting period.

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South Gippsland Hospital on amber alert, as COVID cases increase in Victoria

South Gippsland Sentinel-Times, Other, 30/11/2024

An amber alert was issued on Thursday at South Gippsland Hospital as COVID transmissions rise in the region. [...] According to the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, Comirnaty JN.1 (the new Pfizer vaccine) contains nucleoside-modified mRNA encoding the spike glycoproteins of SARS-CoV-2 JN.1 strain.

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2CC, 12:00 News (Saturday), 30/11/2024

Canberrans are being urged to be careful with the number of Covid 19 cases expected to rise. Health authorities across the country are on high alert, with the number of cases in Victoria climbing by 59% between October and November. According to the Department of Health and Aged Care, vaccination rates were down for all states and territories in November.

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VACCINES

COVID-19 wave hits Victoria with cases and hospitalisations on rise ahead of festive season

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024

Covid-19 cases are on the rise across the country, with the latest wave of the virus most advanced in Victoria. Ahead of the busy festive season, health experts are urging people to stay up to date with vaccinations and take steps to protect each other going into the summer.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Nasty shock ruining the party for sexy seniors

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01/12/2024, Kate Uren, Page 22

One-track minds and men in their 60s, 70s and 80s behaving like teenage boys - that's the expectation-defying reality for singles in South Australia's seniors dating scene. And it's leading to a significant rise in the number of sexually transmitted infections in the over-60s age bracket as many grandparents emerge from years of being in a relationship with very limited knowledge about sexual protection.

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If retirement enters the Christmas family conversation

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 01/12/2024, Noel Whittaker, Page 56

With the festive season just around the corner, you can expect family gatherings to bring up tricky conversations, like whether it's time for the oldies to think about moving to a retirement village. There are fees at every stage: when you move in, during your stay, and upon departure.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Major funds boost for mental health, addiction services

Canberra Times, Other, 01/12/2024

Children, pregnant women and people with mental health conditions will receive better support for alcohol and drug issues in a major funding boost. The \$235 million package, expanding or establishing more than a dozen services, comes as policing, health and political leaders prepare to chart a new course for drug policy in NSW.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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20 people in a two-bedroom apartment: the growing health and safety risks of 'hot bedding'

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024, Zahra Nasreen

Rental costs have hit record highs across Australia — in Sydney, for example, tiny two-bedroom apartments can fetch weekly rents well beyond \$700. The housing crisis is forcing some people into an impossible choice: homelessness or sharing not just an apartment but a bedroom with strangers.

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IVF clinics brace for Christmas rush after sudden rebate change in NSW

The Guardian, Other, 30/11/2024, Kate Lyons

IVF providers are bracing for an influx of patients scrambling to access fertility treatments over the Christmas break after the government said it would cut a rebate for fertility treatments for many patients from February. The \$2,000 rebate, an Australian-first program, was available to all NSW women accessing fertility services for the first time to cover some out-of-pocket expenses.

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Public health achievement? 'Industrial waste'? Behind the fluoride debate

SBS, Other, 30/11/2024

The United States could experience several changes as Donald Trump takes office: from deporting undocumented migrants to cutting climate regulations. Even the water could be different under a Trump presidency.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Cancer life saver

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 01/12/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 1

A blood test that detects melanoma before it's visible on the skin could be available in months. The test, which measures biomarkers for cancer, could be offered to patients next year if approved by the regulator.

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

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Teenagers use music therapy to support healing from grief and medical conditions

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024, William Howard

Georgia vividly remembers the night she had her first seizure. She was 10 years old and staying with her grandparents. "I went to bed feeling stressed and anxious ... I felt like something bad was going to happen to my grandparents," she said.

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Millions make this common mistake every summer – it could kill you

NEWS.com.au, Other, 30/11/2024, Alexandra Feiam & Tsn Flex

As summer barrels towards us at a startling rate, people are urged to remember the dangers of UV rays, no matter how sunny (or cloudy) it is outside. Every year, millions of Australians are diagnosed with skin cancer, one of the most common kinds of cancer diagnosed in the country.

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

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PRIMARY CARE

Truth about how woman who died in Sarco suicide pod got those 'strangulation marks' - and why I'm now coming to Britain: Its inventor 'Dr Death' in world-first interview

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 30/11/2024, Beth Hale & Sanchez Manning

It has hardly been the most auspicious of starts for Dr Philip Nitschke, the controversial Australian on a mission to revolutionise the way we die. His futuristic suicide pod the Sarco (short for sarcophagus), dubbed 'the Tesla of euthanasia', has been confiscated by police.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Our move sparks global demands for age limits

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 01/12/2024, Tom Minear & Sophie Elsworth, Page 16

Politicians, parents and psychologists around the world are clamouring for their countries to match Australia's historic move to ban social media for children under the age of 16. The world-first reform delivered by the Albanese government in response to News Corp's Let Them Be Kids campaign is generating momentum to similarly protect kids overseas.

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

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Murder victims' families call for NSW forensic patient and mental health reform

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024, Zaarkacha Marlan

When the person who killed Wendy Robinson's parents was granted escorted day leave, she says she felt "sick and fearful". "He could bump into community members he may know, and that concerns me," she said.

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We asked Australian parents what they made of the social media ban for under-16s — here's what they said

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024, Geraden Cann

Dani said it took just four months for her 13-year-old son to become "addicted" to the mobile phone app Snapchat. "When he woke up in the morning ... he'd go straight to the phone," she said.

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During the pandemic, 'Deepak Chopra' intervened in over 5,000 suicide attempts. But it wasn't him.

Mamamia, Other, 30/11/2024, Ailish Delaney

Every 40 seconds, someone takes their life. If that wasn't heartbreaking enough, there are indications that for every adult that dies by suicide, there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

State's surgery waitlist doubles in three months

Sun Herald, General News, 01/12/2024, Cindy Yin, Page 1

The number of people overdue for elective surgery had already doubled in the three months before hundreds of operations were cancelled amid an ongoing wage battle between the government and the state's nurses and midwives. There were 3991 people waiting longer than recommended on NSW's surgical lists in September, new data from NSW Health shows, more than double the 1859 people overdue in June.

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Night shift nurses living in fear

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 01/12/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 12

Petrified Queensland nurses are ditching night shifts as they report being verbally, physically and sexually harassed while walking down dark alleys to their cars far outside hospital grounds. In the

middle of a health workforce crisis, fear of attack is causing nurses to cancel afterhours shifts and their partners to take the unsustainable step of getting kids out of bed in the night to pick them up.

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

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Push to recruit health workers

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 01/12/2024, Taylah Fellows, Page 13

Three of Queensland's leading health organisations are joining forces to tackle the state's critical shortage of healthcare workers, with at least 40,000 additional staff needed by 2032 to keep up with the state's extraordinary population growth. In the past two years Queensland's population grew nearly 5 per cent more than 260,000 people placing unprecedented pressure on healthcare services, particularly in regional areas.

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

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Don't park this issue; nurses must be safe

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 01/12/2024, Page 64

Is it any wonder that we have a nurses shortage in our hospitals. Revelations that Queensland nurses are being verbally, physically and sexually assaulted as they walk back to their cars parked far away from hospital grounds after gruelling night shifts is deplorable.

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10,000 more in cash for diplomas scandal

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 01/12/2024, Linda Silmalis & Emily Kowal, Page 4

The cash-for-diploma scandal has exploded with another 10,000 students asked to provide evidence of their study to achieve qualifications and another two training colleges shut down for allegedly selling bogus qualifications. Three weeks after The Saturday Telegraph revealed the federal government had quietly cancelled the early childcare, mental health and first aid qualifications of more than 6300 Luvium college students, education authorities have deregistered another two training businesses.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Voters clamour for affordable health in election lead-up

The Australian, Other, 30/11/2024, James Dowling

The vast majority of Australians would support a rise in medicine subsidies, despite the taxpayer cost, with new polling indicating affordable healthcare is the highest priority for Australians behind the cost of living. [...] Medicines Australia chief executive Liz de Somer, who represents Australia's pharmaceutical companies, argued Australians would punish a government that went to the next election without committing to reforms of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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Medical society lodges protests about AHPRA investigations after doctor suicides

Northern Territory News, Other, 30/11/2024, Judith Kerr

The suicide deaths of 16 medical practitioners in four years has prompted a Queensland-based professional association to challenge the nation's medical watchdog. Queensland-based Australian Medical Professionals' Society, AMPS, has lodged complaints and submissions with two investigations underway into the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

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

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Albury doctor who took \$10,558 from Medicare might never practice again

The Border Mail, Other, 30/11/2024

An Albury doctor who defrauded Medicare of more than \$10,000 might never practice medicine again. [...] She surrendered her registration to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency on August 26 this year.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Narromine High School's social wellbeing hub gets a big tick from NSW students, families

ABC Online, Other, 30/11/2024

Nash was having a tough time adjusting to life at Narromine High School in western New South Wales. But being part of the school's wellbeing hub changed everything.

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SPORT

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Your true age is s anyone's guess

Sunday Times, General News, 01/12/2024, Gretchen Reynolds, Page 30

Scientists at Stanford University recently began to wonder why identical lab mice, bred with the same DNA and brought up in identical conditions, wound up so different in their old age. Some mice could ace cognitive tests and race around on their running wheels.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Contagion unease

Sunday Times, Edition Changes, 01/12/2024, John Flint, Page 26

The World Health Organisation has urged countries to lift efforts to counter a strain of bird flu that could spark another human pandemic. The strain of the H5N1 virus has infected people, but crucially, there are no confirmed cases of human-to-human spread so far.

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ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, 30/11/2024, Johanna Nicholson & Fauziah Ibrahim

Interview with Larissa Braz Sousa, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Sydney University. Compere says the recent combination of wet weather and high temperatures on the east coast of the country has led to a rise in mosquito swarms. Sousa says if you compare the number of mosquito-borne diseases like Ross River Virus in all over Australia, we can see a spike in cases comparing to the last five years.

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