



# TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 17th November 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sunday Age](#)** (page 1) reports assaults on hospital staff in Victoria have reached record levels, with ANMF Victoria calling for “real action” to address the crisis, while a state government spokesperson said the Victorian government has invested over \$47 million in workplace violence training since 2015 and introduced increased penalties for assaults on emergency workers.
- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports the NSW EPA has detected a number of toxic pesticides in air samples in the Central West, including dinitro-ortho-cresol (DNOC), which has been banned in the US since 1991 and never approved for use in Australia.
- **[The Sunday Age](#)** (page 5) reports health economist Stephen Duckett is calling for doctors who overbill their patients to be “named and shamed” following allegations of a group of Mornington Peninsula doctors overcharging patients by as much as \$5000 in hidden out-of-pocket costs.
- **[The Sunday Territorian](#)** (page 5) reports a preterm birth prevention program has been launched in Darwin, with the See. Stop. Scan campaign seeking to improve communication between expecting indigenous mothers and health providers, with First Nations mothers experiencing double the rates of preterm births than non-indigenous women.

- [The Sunday Canberra Times](#) (page 6) reports FOI documents have revealed Defence Housing Australia continued the use of engineered stone for six months after being directed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to cease its use in line with a ban on the silicosis-causing material on July 1.
- [ABC Online](#) reports Carers Australia is calling for superannuation to be included in the Carer Payment as more Australians move into residential aged care and critics of changes to the Aged Care Act say costs will increase for many Australians. A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Aged Care said the government will continue to be the main funder of aged care and that “the amount that an individual pays will continue to be determined based on their individual means”.
- [The Sun Herald](#) (page 9) reports Montu has advertised discounted referral rates for its medicinal cannabis service on Instagram while a Federal Court case brought by the TGA over contravening medical advertising guidelines is still ongoing.

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### **Inside the booming black market behind those mysterious tobacco stores popping up across the country - and the black market cigarettes driving record profits**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 17/11/2024, Harrison Christian

Black market cigarettes now make up to 100 per cent of sales at the flourishing high street tobacco stores opening up across the country, a Daily Mail Australia probe has found. [...] A tobacco industry source said that the black market flourishes whenever Federal Health Minister Mark Butler announces a new crackdown.

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## MINISTER WELLS

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### Nurses, teachers and IT workers among highest-growth study fields in Western Sydney's future

Adelaide Now, Other, 16/11/2024, Eilidh Sproul-Mellis

Getting more schoolkids into higher education will be “critical” to resolving Western Sydney's skills shortage, the boss of the University of Sydney says, as new analysis reveals demand for degrees in health and education will soar amid a shortage of nurses and teachers. [...] There were almost 363,000 nurses registered across the country in 2022 but by 2035 Australia will need another 80,000 to meet demand, Department of Health and Aged Care modelling shows.

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

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### Calls for better financial support for people caring for loved ones at home

ABC Online, Other, 16/11/2024, Fiona Blackwood

Beth Jackson knows exactly how long she cared for her elderly mother. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Aged Care said the government would continue to be the major funder of aged care and the changes are designed to improve the sustainability of the sector.

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### The inconvenient patients Australia's COVID-19 response left behind

ABC Online, Other, 16/11/2024, Maddison Connaughton

Shill. Sheep. Cooker. Anti-vaxxer. Michelle Hunder's been called many names in the past few years. [...] The class action is targeting the Commonwealth and a handful of senior health figures – John Skerritt, former boss of the TGA; professors Brendan Murphy and Paul Kelly, former chief medical officers; and Greg Hunt, who was health minister during the pandemic.

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## VACCINES

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### A new epidemic is sweeping over 50s, but here's what can be done

Canberra Times, Other, 16/11/2024, Anthony Caggiano

Lyn Gillen highlights hope amidst an epidemic of loneliness which is fast overcoming Australians over the age of 50. Mrs Gillen has been active in seeking support and connection through community clubs , enjoying regular lunches, outings, listening to guest speakers, and making friends.

Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#).

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### ABC, ABC News (Saturday), 16/11/2024, Lydia Feng

There are calls for better support for carers as more older Australians are likely to spend longer in their own homes. This comes as the Federal Government's aged care reforms are set to be implemented in

2025.

Also reported by: [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC \(Regional NSW\)](#), [ABC News \(Adelaide\)](#), [ABC News \(Brisbane\)](#), [ABC News \(Canberra\)](#), [ABC News \(Hobart\)](#), [ABC News \(Melbourne\)](#), [ABC News \(Perth\)](#), [ABC News \(Regional NSW\)](#), [ABC News \(Regional Queensland\)](#), [ABC News \(Regional Victoria\)](#), [ABC News \(Regional West Australia\)](#)

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## Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend) , 16/11/2024, Chris Bath

A new drug is being hailed as the potential holy grail in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Australian researchers say trials of the once a day pill have shown it slows down progression of the disease and halts cognitive decline. Ralph Martins from Alzheimer's Research Australia comments on the research results.

Also reported by: [West Digital Television \(Albany\)](#)

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### From slim chance to mighty success

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 17/11/2024, Page 12

No one likes to think about dying especially when you are just 29 years old. But, for Ali Sulieman, a frank conversation with his GP sparked a change that has transformed his life. Back then he was a man mountain he tipped the scales at 335kg and was serious trouble.

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### Critical donor breast milk shortage to help premature babies prompts urgent warning from doctors and mums

7news.com.au, Other, 16/11/2024, Jennifer Bechwati

Australia is facing a critical shortage of donated breastmilk needed to help thousands of the most vulnerable babies during their early weeks of life. Last year, 55,000 bottles of breastmilk were sent to 35 hospitals across the country.

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

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### Town centre 'Man Van' prostate cancer checks boost diagnosis - research

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 16/11/2024

Taking a "Man Van" offering prostate cancer checks to shoppers and football fans could drive up detection of the disease, leading experts have found. A study found that giving men access to cancer screening at places they go – such as shops and football clubs – encourages them to pop in for tests.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Violent assaults on hospital workers soar to record high

Sunday Age, General News, 17/11/2024, Henrietta Cook, Page 1

Nurses, doctors and other hospital workers are being assaulted at record levels, with more than 20,000 violent incidents recorded in the state's public health services last financial year. In one recent case, a man brought an axe into a Melbourne hospital and smashed all the glass in the nurses' station, leaving terrified staff hiding beneath their desks.

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

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Five weeks that changed an insomniac's nightmare

Sunday Age, General News, 17/11/2024, Angus Thomson, Page 14

At the darkest points of his 20-year battle with insomnia, Allan Cahill would go to bed at 7.30pm, take half a sleeping pill and spend the next 10 hours hoping for the best. "It was consuming my life, and lying there just became more and more frustrating," he said.

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

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### Let's stop the bullies

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 17/11/2024, Cydonee Mardon & Josh Hanrahan, Page 1

A scourge of toxic modern bullying from the schoolyard to the bedroom is killing children and teens, with families left to the whim of a deadly lottery of policies to protect victims. In a two-month investigation, the Sunday Herald Sun has interviewed eight families who have lost children to suicide in the face of bullying and dozens of other people whose lives have been ripped apart by the devastating impact.

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

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### Inquest into suicide of 'kind-hearted' 17-year-old girl in Katherine hears child protection system 'needs to get fixed'

ABC Online, Other, 16/11/2024, James Elton

An inquest into the tragic suicide of a 17-year-old Aboriginal girl who was in the care of the Northern Territory government in Katherine two years ago has revealed serious issues within the territory's child protection system. NT Coroner Elisabeth Armitage held the inquiry into the death of the girl, referred to as Ddbala for cultural reasons, in the Katherine Local Court last week.

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### Australian men often feel 'isolated' and lack support in transition to fatherhood

ABC Online, Other, 16/11/2024, Dave Marchese

Becoming a father is supposed to be a joyous occasion, but research released this week has found men in Australia often feel isolated and unable to get support. The research, which was published in the peer-reviewed medical journal BMJ Open, analysed studies from all over the world and found Australian men felt ill-prepared for the pressures of fatherhood.

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### Climate change, and a lack of action to fight it, is harming young people's mental health

SBS, Other, 16/11/2024, Kay Wilhelm, Cybele Dey & Iain Perkes

As government representatives gather at the COP29 international climate summit in Azerbaijan, the impact of climate change on young people's mental health needs to be an urgent priority. As

psychiatrists working with children and adolescents, we're so concerned that we're sharing our research at the summit on the link between higher temperatures and suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Greens urge health work lift

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 17/11/2024, Rob Inglis, Page 15

Tasmania's Health Department should incentivise staff to increase their working hours, with more than half the workforce now employed part-time, the Greens say. The department's 2023-24 annual report shows that 54 per cent of employees are either permanent part-time or on part-time contracts.

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

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Calls to 'name and shame' dodgy doctors

Sunday Age, General News, 17/11/2024, Melissa Cunningham & Henrietta Cook, Page 5

Doctors who overbill patients should be named and shamed on a public register, according to the man regarded as the architect of Medicare, and a class action against a group of Mornington Peninsula doctors allegedly overcharging might be on the cards. Patients have also been urged to check their Medicare records to ensure they have not been wrongly charged by their doctors.

Also reported by: [The Age \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#).

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### What to do if you suspect you're a victim of medical billing fraud

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 16/11/2024, Henrietta Cook & Melissa Cunningham

Australians who have had surgery in private hospitals are being urged to scour through their medical invoices and specialist doctors' bills for "red flags" showing they have been charged hidden fees

outside their health funds or Medicare. The call comes after The Age revealed allegations against dozens of anaesthetists and surgeons on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, contained in a damning confidential whistleblower complaint seen by this masthead.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### How you can save a life

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 17/11/2024, Samantha Landy, Page 55

More Australians are selflessly donating their organs, with the latest figures released on DonateLife Thank You Day showing an 8 per cent jump in deceased donors annually. Among the 397 people to give the gift of life this year was a donor aged in their 80s.

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

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### His heart lives on

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 17/11/2024, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 1

Grant and Emma Stevens always knew their son Charlie had a heart of gold. And this week, on the eve of the 12-month anniversary of the 18-year-old's tragic death near Victor Harbor, they were reminded of that yet again.

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

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### Liz gives gift of life with love

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 17/11/2024, Molly Snaylam, Page 25

Emergency services banging on the door of Redcliffe retiree Steve Pardey's home was how he discovered his wife had just died. Mr Pardey's wife and mother of his children, Liz Pardey, 68, had suffered a brain aneurysm at home in May 2022 while conducting a Zoom meeting with counselling colleagues.

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## SPORT

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Heart risk in long relaxation

Sunday Times, General News, 17/11/2024, Page 27

Sitting down for too long during the day can harm your heart even if you do plenty of exercise, US-based experts have warned in a fresh study. Spending more than 10.5 hours sitting, reclining or lying down during daytime hours increases the risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke, their research suggests.

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### Are cancer survivors less likely to develop Alzheimer's?

With age comes disease. Cancer and Alzheimer's dementia are among the commonest and most feared health conditions – particularly in countries with ageing populations such as the UK. Several decades ago, researchers at a psychiatric centre in New York observed a curious relationship between these two diseases.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Indigenous mothers, babies to benefit from new program

Sunday Territorian, General News, 17/11/2024, Darcy Fitzgerald, Page 5

A pioneering preterm birth prevention program launched in Darwin will boost pregnancy outcomes for Indigenous women and their babies. The 'See, Stop, Scan' campaign aims to educate and empower Indigenous mothers by promoting better engagement between health care providers and pregnant Top End women, forming a true partnership.

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

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## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

### DHA ignored call on engineered stone

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 17/11/2024, Connor Pearce, Page 6

Defence Housing Australia continued to require engineered stone benchtops in 100 properties for six months after being advised to stop. Contracts obtained by The Canberra Times through a Freedom of Information request show Defence Housing Australia required the use of deadly engineered stone in 100 homes, including new builds and upgrades, after being directed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to cease including the material in new contracts.

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### Loop CEO Cameron Francis on why Schoolies pill testing is crucial

The Courier Mail, Other, 16/11/2024, Ann Wason Moore

Your son has pills in his pocket. He doesn't really want to take them but his mates are giving him a hard time, so he caves – even though he doesn't know where they came from, what's in them, or what effect they might have.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Cannabis firm Montu's telehealth hard-sell

Sun Herald, General News, 17/11/2024, Clay Lucas, Page 9

Australia's biggest medicinal cannabis company is offering bonuses to doctors to maximise the number of patients they treat, as recruitment ads show it expects medics to spend as little as seven minutes with new patients. [...] Montu's marketing has landed it in frequent trouble with the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which alleges in a Federal Court case that Montu has illegally flouted medical advertising guidelines.

*Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).*



## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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## AICIS

### Toxic pesticides in NSW's west

Sun Herald, General News, 17/11/2024, Ben Cubby, Page 1

A cocktail of dangerous chemicals, including a banned pesticide "extremely toxic to humans", has been found in air samples on public land in the state's Central West. Tests run by the NSW Environment Protection Authority detected a stew of toxic agricultural chemicals on public roads west of Narromine following dozens of complaints from farmers that pesticides were drifting across the landscape, killing trees and crops.

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