



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 26th November 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Australian Financial Review](#) (Page 3) reports that pay increases for aged care nurses of up to 25 per cent are being urged to be delayed by the federal government, arguing that it could exacerbate labour shortages and blow out the budget.
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (Page 3) reports that three air quality tests conducted during construction of Sydney's Metro City and Southwest have revealed that workers have been breathing in deadly levels of crystalline silica dust with alarming frequency.
- The [Toowoomba Chronicle](#) (Page 7) reports that in early 2025, drug testing sites in Bowen Hills in Brisbane and Burleigh Heads on the Gold Coast will be closed due to the state government confirming that it will no longer provide funding.
- The [Toowoomba Chronicle](#) (Page 7) reports that the Queensland peak medical body has warned that flu vaccinations should remain free as Health Minister Tim Nicholls revealed wanting to assess the program's efficiency before making a decision to continue the service.
- The [Canberra Times](#) reports that on Monday a bill was passed in parliament which will provide in-home help and improve conditions and protections for those living in aged care facilities from July. According to Aged Care Minister Anika Wells, the \$5.6 billion package will be one of the largest improvements to the sector in 30 years.

MINISTER BUTLER

Take it to the people, says Merriwa over 'treasured' Gumman Place Hostel

Newcastle Herald, Other, 25/11/2024, Gabriel Fowler

Upper Hunter residents are pushing back on council plans for an outside provider to lease, operate, or potentially buy community-based aged care facility, Gummun Place Hostel. [...] The details were contained in a letter from Mayor Maurice Collison to the Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler.

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MINISTER WELLS

Aged care overhaul approved

Launceston Examiner, General News, 26/11/2024, Page 12

Senior citizens will receive greater support to live out their autumn years with dignity as sweeping changes to aged care become law. [...] The \$5.6 billion package will be one of the largest improvements to the sector in 30 years, according to Aged Care Minister Anika Wells.

Also reported by: [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#).

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\$200K Blow for folks chasing top-tier care

The Nightly, General News, 25/11/2024, Nick Bruining, Page 23

A determination issued by Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells earlier this month increases the maximum refundable accommodation deposit from \$550,000 to \$750,000, effective January 1 next year. A facility can apply to have a higher RAD where the location or amenities are greater than those provided normally.

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Anthony Albanese secures Greens support for housing agenda

The Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Rosie Lewis & Geoff Chambers

Anthony Albanese has secured the passage of his housing agenda through the parliament in a significant pre-Christmas win, after staring down the Greens over demands that Labor budge on rent freezes and property tax concessions. [...] Marking the passage of the Aged Care Bill, Anika Wells assured elderly Australians whose contributions towards daily care will be increased under the laws through means testing that for every \$1 paid as a co-contribution for support at home, the taxpayer would kick in \$7.80.

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Aged care revamp to shake up Australians' golden years

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Kat Wong & Poppy Johnston

The federal government's aged care bill, which passed parliament on Monday, will provide in-home help and improve conditions and protections for those living in aged care facilities from July. [...] The \$5.6 billion package will be one of the largest improvements to the sector in 30 years, according to Aged Care Minister Anika Wells.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Advocate \(Burnie\) \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! Finance Australia \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#).

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Financial confusion clouding aged care transition

The Border Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Poppy Johnston

Most older Australians are in the dark about the financial implications of moving into aged care and do not have a firm grasp on the government assistance available to them. [...] Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said the number of Australians in home care had increased fourfold in the past 10 years.

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

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Labor ministers contradict each other on reasons why gambling ad ban has stalled

The Guardian, Other, 25/11/2024, Josh Butler

Anika Wells says not all stakeholders accepted the Albanese government proposal but Andrew Leigh blames failure to secure numbers in Senate Albanese government ministers have given contradictory reasons for not advancing the long-promised gambling advertising restrictions, with one saying consultations continued, while another claimed the policy was settled but blamed a lack of Senate support for not introducing it.

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Aged Care Bill finally passes Senate

Aged Care Insite, Other, 25/11/2024, Stefanie Schultz

Labor's Aged Care Bill 2024 has overcome yet another hurdle, with the Senate passing the landmark legislation on Thursday. [...] It has been a long journey since Aged Care Minister Anika Wells addressed the National Press Club last June, with her agenda to replace the existing Aged Care Act of 1997 and ensure the sector would remain financially sustainable, and even longer since Royal Commissioners published their final report on the quality and safety of Australian aged care on March 1, 2021.

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NBN Tamworth, NBN News, 25/11/2024, Gavin Morris & Natasha Beyersdorf

Self-funded retirees will have to pay more for their aged care under reforms that today became law. Labor securing support from the coalition for a list of changes designed to help more Australians spend their later years in their own home received a red letter day for the government.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

'Living in the Dark Ages': medical misogyny still haunts Australian women

The Border Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Annika Rhoades

While working as a young GP registrar, years before Dr Natasha Vavrek founded her own women's health clinic, a senior male doctor told her the best way to manage menopause was to "get [patients] out of the room as quickly as he could". [...] Ged Kearney, said women's health had been "ignored and overlooked" for too long.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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DEPARTMENT

Calls to expand scale of PFAS research

Newcastle Herald, General News, 26/11/2024, Abe Maddison, Page 11

Concentration of a specific "forever chemical" can double after time in the environment, a study has found, highlighting the urgent need for more research to identify the levels of thousands of related dangerous chemicals. Per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances – commonly known as PFAS – are a group of 14,000 human-made chemicals popular for their uses in resisting heat, water, grease and stains.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Campaspe News \(Online\)](#), [The Telegraph \(Seymour\) \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#).

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'Total madness': UK professor slams Australia's 'totalitarian, Orwellian' Covid response

Herald Sun, Other, 25/11/2024, Frank Chung

A leading UK oncologist has slammed Australia's "disgraceful" Covid response, describing lockdowns and mask mandates as "total madness" and claiming vaccines were largely ineffective at saving lives while causing "a lot" of adverse reactions. [...] The federal Health Department, which encourages Australians to "rely on reputable sources of information", says "have been thoroughly assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and found to be safe and effective".

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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New year pay rise announced for Australian home care staff

HelloCare, Other, 25/11/2024, Jakob Neeland

Home care workers in Australia's aged care sector will see a boost in their wages from 1 January 2025, following the Fair Work Commission's decision to implement further increases to award wages. This update builds on previous pay rises aimed at recognising the critical contributions of aged care staff. The Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) has confirmed that the new changes will increase the Home Care Package subsidy by 0.93% from the start of 2025.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 25/11/2024, Nadia Mitsopoulos

Interview with Fremantle mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge about the suspicion that smoke shops and convenience stores still sell vapes illegally. Fitzhardinge says in the streets of Fremantle, she can name seven or eight shops that have 'vape shop' written on the outside. She says the Department of Health is a regulator for this.

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VACCINES

Patently obvious

Courier Mail, Business News, 26/11/2024, Chris Herde, Page 27

Clinical-stage biotechnology company Vaxxas has expanded its global intellectual property portfolio to

42 patents as the non-needle vaccination pioneer proceeds with a \$100m capital raising for clinical trials. Emerging out of the University of Queensland about 11 years ago the IUP expansion will support its exclusive claim to manufacture and sell its proprietary vaccination technology, the high-density microarray patch in the US, Europe, Asia and Australia.

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Doctors sweat on flu decision

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 26/11/2024, Madura McCormack , Page 7

Flu vaccination should be kept free for all Queenslanders amid a cost-of-living crisis, the state's peak medical body has warned, as the new government wavers on a decision to keep the program alive. The state government has provided free flu shots for all Queenslanders for three years running, but newly minted Health Minister Tim Nicholls revealed he wanted to consider the program's efficiency before making a decision.

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

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Aged care overhaul approved

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Four out of five older Australians preferring to age at home and not go into aged care: survey

The Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Chris Herde

The AMP-commissioned survey found four out of five Australians 65 and over don't feel they are prepared for the transition into aged care, with half wanting to receive care at home, while seven in 10 worry about the cost of going into a facility. More than half of the older Australians surveyed were "concerned" or "very concerned" about making the transition.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Aged care revamp to shake up Australians' golden years

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Kat Wong & Poppy Johnston

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Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Advocate \(Burnie\) \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail](#)

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Catholic Health Australia welcomes passage of Aged Care Act

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 25/11/2024

Catholic Health Australia said the passage of the Aged Care Act through Parliament today lays the foundation for a better and more sustainable aged care system that acts on the key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care.

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Financial confusion clouding aged care transition

The Border Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Poppy Johnston

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

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Aged Care Insite, Other, 25/11/2024, Stefanie Schultz

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Aged Care Act welcomed

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/11/2024

The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomed the passage of the Aged Care Act through parliament last week. The new Aged Care Act 2024 aims to improve the way services are delivered to older people in their homes, community settings and residential aged care homes.

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New pharmacy standard to support patients through transitions of care

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 25/11/2024

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha)'s Standard of practice for pharmacy services specialising in transitions of care guides best practice pharmacy care in the higher risk spaces between care settings. Available now in the Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research (JPPR) this new Pharmacy Standard claims to protect patients from harms arising from transitions of care – one of three key priority areas identified by the World Health Organization's third Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/11/2024, Peter Overton

Self-funded retirees will have to pay more for their aged care under reforms that became law today. Labor has secured support from the Coalition for a list of changes designed to help more Australians spend their later years in their own home.

Also reported by: [NBN Central Coast \(Gosford\)](#)

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NBN Tamworth, NBN News, 25/11/2024, Gavin Morris & Natasha Beyersdorf

Self-funded retirees will have to pay more for their aged care under reforms that today became law. Labor securing support from the coalition for a list of changes designed to help more Australians spend their later years in their own home received a red letter day for the government.

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SBS, World News Australia, 25/11/2024

AMP says in a survey of 2000 Australians, of those over the age of 85, 80% don't feel ready for the transition to aged care, while 7 in 10 worry about the cost of care. A total of 75% expect aged care to diminish their wealth and children's inheritance, while half don't know what government assistance is available. The government's My Aged Care website has details.

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2CC, Breakfast, 25/11/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Palliative Care Australia CEO Camilla Rowland about the Aged Care Act passing Parliament. Rowland says the commission took on 12 of their recommendations, which means palliative care is now embedded in the act, in the standards, and in the funding instrument.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Plans for tobacco oil to fuel aviation industry

The Australian, Business News, 26/11/2024, Robyn Ironside, Page 15

Smoking might be banned onboard aircraft but it's a different story in the fuel tank where tobacco could one day help deliver emissions-free flying. Research by the CSIRO in partnership with agricultural company Nufarm has found modifying the genetic make-up of tobacco plants can increase oil production in the leaves and stems.

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Tunnel workers breathing in deadly dust

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 26/11/2024, Max Maddison, Page 3

Workers on Sydney's transport mega-projects have been breathing in deadly levels of crystalline silica dust with alarming frequency, as figures reveal one in three airquality tests during construction of the Metro City and Southwest exceeded legal limits. Air-quality tests between 2016 and 2020 during construction showed the highest unprotected exposure to the deadly dust was 208 times above the current workplace safety standard.

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High bill for dealing with blood pressure

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/11/2024, Page 9

Australia spends more than \$1.2bn per year on treating high blood pressure. Patients are paying 40 per cent from their own pockets and taxpayers cover 60 per cent, George Institute for Global Health

research shows.

Also reported by: [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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High blood pressure is a silent killer and it's costing the Australian economy \$1.2 billion every year

ABC Online, Other, 25/11/2024, Hannah Murphy

High blood pressure cost the Australian economy more than \$1 billion in the last year alone, according to researchers at the country's leading independent health institute. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare hypertension is a leading cause of death in Australia, contributing to around 25,000 deaths per year.

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Falls cause 43% of injury hospitalisations. Here's how to better predict and prevent them

Aged Care Insite, Other, 25/11/2024, Stefanie Schultz

Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalisation in Australia, costing the public health system billions of dollars each year. The Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports that there were 548,654 injury-related hospitalisations throughout the country in 2022-23, and falls made up over 43 per cent of them, with the next highest cause, 'contact with objects', responsible for just 14 per cent.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/11/2024, Brenton Ragless & Kate Collins

The police task force cracking down on the SA's illegal tobacco trade has raided 14 properties across Adelaide. Detectives say the blitz led to the discovery of two secret distribution warehouses at Cheltenham. In all, they seized nearly \$3m worth of illegal tobacco products and more than \$120,000 in cash.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 25/11/2024, Sarah MacDonald

Interview with What's that Rash? podcast's Dr Norman Swan about Healthscope terminating contracts with private health insurers. Swan says health insurers are trying to get the best deal for themselves, their customers, and their clients while private hospitals are trying to maintain their profitability and viability and the utilisation of private hospitals. He says Healthscope hospitals wanted to charge an out of pocket for going into hospital.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Cracking deadly mystery

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 26/11/2024, Emma Kirk, Page 5

Australian researchers are about to embark on a new study to uncover what triggers "dangerous" thunderstorm asthma events and how they can be prevented, after people died and thousands required medical attention. The Woolcock Institute of Medical Research has designed a study in Victoria in which people reported their asthma symptoms worsened when a thunderstorm approached.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 25/11/2024

Interview with What's that Rash? podcast's Dr Norman Swan about cancer. Swan says looking at what we spend our money on in terms of people's illnesses, cancer is number one, and it has shown spectacular growth over the last 10 years or so, partly due to the cost of drugs. He also says as we age, cancer becomes more likely.

PRIMARY CARE

Pill testing is axed by LNP

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 26/11/2024, Madura McCormack , Page 7

Drug testing sites across Queensland's southeast will be forced to shut in early 2025, with the state government confirming it will not provide more funding. [...] Australian Medical Association Queensland president Nick Yim said people were also using the sites to check the safety of weight loss and antidepressant medication bought off the online black market.

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Queensland government confirms it will stop funding pill testing facilities

The Australian, Other, 25/11/2024

The Queensland government has confirmed it will stop funding two pill testing facilities in the state's southeast. Doctors are reporting that people are now using the service to test legal medications that were purchased illegally. [...] The Australian Medical Association Queensland is advising the government to wait for an independent report to be published before cutting funding.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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Concerns doctors eligible for slice of \$31m in compensation unaware or afraid

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Lanie Tindale

Only half of doctors eligible for a piece of \$31 million in compensation for unrostered and unpaid hours have registered a claim, a lawyer says. Canberra Health Services and Calvary Health Care ACT settled an "unprecedented and landmark" class action suit brought by junior doctors for \$31 million in September.

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'Important work': The top consultancy spenders in 2023-24

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Miriam Webber

The Department of Health spent the most on consultants for a second year, as federal government agencies report varied progress on a mission to slash outsourced labour. Analysis of 2023-24 financial year annual reports shows Health handed out \$70.8 million worth of new consultancy contracts, spending \$13.9 million more than it had in the preceding year.

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Health authorities explore how meet 'extraordinary' demand surge with static staffing

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Lucy Bladen

Demand in Canberra's public health system is on track to increase by 20 per cent over two years as health authorities explore ways to meet the "extraordinary" surge while dealing with a workforce that has not gone up by the same amount. Activity in the system was up 12.

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New ADSSI CEO named

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 25/11/2024, Jodie Wolf

ADSSI Limited board member John Baillie has been appointed the next chief executive officer of the in-home and community care provider in regional New South Wales. Mr Baillie comes to the role with

many years of experience in the health, aged care and disability services sector, with skills in strategic leadership and a commitment to quality care.

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Dr Nicole Higgins: 'Scope of practice review kept me awake at night'

Australian Doctor, Other, 25/11/2024, Rachel Carter

Dr Nicole Higgins says that the first draft of the Scope of Practice Review, which hinted that nurses and pharmacists should get access to GP-level Medicare rebates, had left her awake at night. The outgoing RACGP president has just completed two years leading the college through politically turbulent times.

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AMA tells Healthscope to "sort it out"

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/11/2024

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has expressed "grave concern" over Healthscope's announcement that it will terminate contracts with Bupa and funds represented by AHSA (PD 22 Nov). AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said that unless all parties can come to an agreement before the contracts are terminated in Feb and Mar next year, some patients may face higher out-of-pocket costs for care in Healthscope hospitals.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 25/11/2024, Melissa Downes

Queensland's peak medical body has urged the state government to keep free flu vaccines, as the LNP considers the future of the program. The AMAQ says the free jabs improve access for struggling families and help relieve pressure on the healthcare system.

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2CC, Canberra Live, 25/11/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with Canberra Health Services CEO Dave Peffer about an ACT health restructure. Peffer says this year, they have introduced a new initiative and operations centre, and from that time they have been focused on ensuring they have the best design system to support great patient care. He says what matters to patients is the timeliness of the care they're receiving, shorter wait times, and reliability.

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2CC, Canberra Live, 25/11/2024, Leon Delaney

Interview with ACT AMA president Kerrie Aust about a restructure of Canberra's public hospital system. Aust says it is brave of Canberra Health Services CEO Dave Peffer to come out and talk about the fact that there has been a range of system issues that have affected patient care. She says she is looking forward to seeing what happens in the changes in structure and looking at the outcomes in improving the care of patients.

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ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 25/11/2024, Ross Solly

Interview with Canberra Health Services CEO Dave Peffer about an ACT health restructure. Peffer says the health service has divisions, for example, the Division of Cancer or the Division of Medicine, and when people engage with the health service, they experience a horizontal healthcare journey across many divisions, not just a single division, but what they have been doing is managing it in a way that focuses on the vertical divisions. He says they had some great people who were very much focused on their divisions, and they need to take a step back and look at the entire healthcare journey.

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In no mood for stress

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 26/11/2024, Hannah Wilcox, George Al-Akiki & Rebecca Borg, Page 11
Family, relationships, money and sleep quality are among the biggest influences on the mental health of young Aussies, a survey has revealed. Almost 600 young people around the country were asked what affected their mental health most in the Be Part of the Ripple survey conducted by mental health charity Prevention United.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/11/2024, Brenton Ragless & Kate Collins

ReachOut's Jackie Hallan says at the moment, close to 40% of young people are experiencing mental health challenges, the highest rate of any age group in Australia. Mental health is just one of the potential harms of children and adolescents being online, some of which include suicide, cyberbullying, depression, and anxiety.

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Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 25/11/2024, Laura Jayes

Youth mental health groups are warning of unintended harmful consequences if the federal government bans 13- to 16-year-olds from accessing social media. They claim social media often acts as a front door for young people to access mental health support.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Labor seeks to delay pay rise for nurses

Australian Financial Review, General News, 26/11/2024, David Marin-Guzman, Page 3

The Albanese government is urging the workplace umpire to delay pay rises of up to 25 per cent for aged care nurses until as late as 2027, arguing they could exacerbate labour shortages and blow out the budget if it has to pay them from the star...

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

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Councillors unite in stand to axe hospital revamp, push for greenfield site

The Border Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Ted Howes

Deputy mayor Michelle Cowan, a long-time advocate for a new greenfield hospital, moved a notice of motion on Monday that slammed the proposed redevelopment of Albury hospital, saying it fell "critically short of meeting community needs". Addressing the motion, Cr Cowan said the hospital advocacy move aligned Wodonga Council with the position of five adjoining councils in the Albury-Wodonga health catchment, including Albury Council.

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Doctor of Pharmacy addresses anomaly

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 25/11/2024

Education accreditation authority backs introduction of Doctor of Pharmacy Confirmation that

pharmacists who complete an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 9 Masters Degree (Extended) course in pharmacy will be entitled to use the title 'Doctor of Pharmacy', from 1 July 2025, is being welcomed by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC).

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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SPORT

Labor ministers contradict each other on reasons why gambling ad ban has stalled

The Guardian, Other, 25/11/2024, Josh Butler

Anika Wells says not all stakeholders accepted the Albanese government proposal but Andrew Leigh blames failure to secure numbers in Senate Albanese government ministers have given contradictory reasons for not advancing the long-promised gambling advertising restrictions, with one saying consultations continued, while another claimed the policy was settled but blamed a lack of Senate support for not introducing it.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 25/11/2024, David Bevan

Interview with Flinders University associate professor James McLoughlin about concussions in sport. McLoughlin says all concussions have to be treated seriously because they worry about the trajectory in terms of things like mental health. He says what's helped the Senate inquiry into concussions in sport, and the AIS guidelines that came out this year, is baseline screening because you can get a snapshot of people's brain health, both symptom wise and objectively, very quickly.

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Radio National, AM, 25/11/2024, Sabra Lane

Report by Aaron Kelly on concussions in sport. Former NRL player PJ Marsh has joined Concussion

Australia's calls to make annual concussion education mandatory, specifically for younger players and those in amateur contact sport.

Continuing report on: [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#)

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Vision screening vital: new research find vision decline predicts cognitive decline

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 25/11/2024

Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) Regular eye tests may help predict our risk of developing dementia, researchers from Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) have found. Dementia rates are rapidly increasing in Australia and globally, with vision problems contributing to an estimated 4.7% of the burden. NeuRA Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Cognitive Health, Dr Nikki-Anne Wilson, led the research that examined the effect of changes to eyesight in adults over a 12-year period.

[Read More](#)

Specific 'forever chemical' found at unexpected levels in firefighting foam

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 25/11/2024

A new study has revealed there may be a significant underestimation of a specific type of PFAS 'forever chemical' in the environment. Researchers from UNSW Sydney found that branched perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was more prevalent than expected in firefighting foam. PFOA is classified as a human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Disability ambassadors highlight the importance of representation

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Nicki Davey

On December 3 every year, International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) is observed and aims to raise public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability. As part of the day, ambassadors are announced to champion IDPWD and disability inclusion. In 2024, a total of eight Australians with a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences with disability have been chosen.

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GP peak body launches First Nations-centred framework for current doctors and doctors in training

National Indigenous Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Jarred Cross

Doctors will receive training embedding First Nations knowledge and values for culturally-safe care under framework introduced by the peak body who train the majority of Australian general practitioners. The Royal Australian College of GPs launched the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural and Health Training Framework last week.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Channel 9, Today , 25/11/2024, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Pill testing across Queensland's south east will be forced to shut down as the government confirms no more funding will be provided. Queensland's medical experts have warned against the move as there is an increase in people using the facilities to test medications. Music event Beyond the Valley will be the first of 10 festivals to take part in a two-year trial for pill testing in Victoria.

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ABC Radio Melbourne, Breakfast, 25/11/2024, Sammy J

Interview with CanTEST and Pill Testing Australia clinical lead David Caldicott about pill testing at Beyond the Valley Festival. Caldicott says there are many ways to provide service in drug checking or pill testing at festivals, including taking the pill away from somebody to a little lab environment and testing it. He says details of how it will be done at Beyond the Valley are yet to be released openly.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

What to do about your ageing breast implants

The Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Magdalena Simonis

Breast augmentation, also known as "the boob job", involves the surgical insertion of prosthetic implants to reshape or enlarge the breast. [...] Dr Simonis is a member of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Breast Implant Post Market Device Expert Advisory group and National Cosmetic Surgery Review This column is published for information purposes only.

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WA biotech Neurotech International wins vital ethics approval for cannabinoid drug therapy

West Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Cheyanne Enciso

WA biotech Neurotech International has won vital ethics approval for its cannabinoid drug therapy aimed at treating neurological disorders in children. [...] This included the US Food and Drug Administration as part of an investigational new drug approval, as well as Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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'Port Hedland vs the Premier': COVID vaccine controversy sparks 'great debate' event in Perth

West Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Cain Andrews

An event dubbed The Great Debate: Port Hedland vs the Premier will take place in Perth later this month, marking the latest chapter in the long-running Port Hedland COVID vaccine controversy. [...] Since then, the allegations have been amplified by anti-vaccine advocates prompting the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration to release a statement debunking the claims.

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One Nation's Ben Dawkins advocates for Trump style politics in WA, backs Hedland vaccine motion

West Australian, Other, 25/11/2024, Cain Andrews

One Nation MP Ben Dawkins claims Trump style politics are needed in WA as he backed in the new US President and the Port Hedland council's COVID vaccine motion. [...] While there is residual DNA in mRNA vaccines, they do not cause cancer or other negative effects and are safe for human consumption, according to the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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Victorian doctor admits breaching medical code of conduct by asking

patients to fund her teenage vape solutions clinic

The Guardian, Other, 26/11/2024, Melissa Davey & Natasha May

A doctor in Victoria has admitted she breached the medical board's code of conduct by asking her patients for \$150,000 so she could start a prescription vaping clinic for teenagers and write a book, among other things. [...] A spokesperson for the Therapeutic Goods Administration said it was not correct that Beaumont had been scrutinised by the TGA for "supporting vapers" to become "smoke-free and healthier".

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Neuropathic pain medicines can increase the risk of falls

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 25/11/2024, Chloe Hava

These oft-used medicines have become the analgesia of choice for many prescribers. But care should be taken before prescribing gabapentinoids to certain patients. [...] However, while approved by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration for refractory focal (partial) epilepsy and neuropathic pain, gabapentin and pregabalin are often prescribed off label – with limited evidence to support efficacy for off-label indications.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 25/11/2024, Craig Reucassel

Reucassel says the Therapeutic Goods Administration thinks we shouldn't give Phenergan to kids under the age of six to treat allergies and hay fever.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Neurotech to start new cannabis therapy trial

West Australian, Business News, 26/11/2024, Cheyanne Enciso, Page 18

WA biotech Neurotech International has won ethics approval for its cannabinoid drug therapy aimed at treating neurological disorders in children. The Nedlands-based company told the market on Monday it had received approval for its planned pharmacokinetic study which looks at what the body does to a drug of its lead drug candidate, NTI164.

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Beyond The Valley to trial pill testing

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 25/11/2024, Page 8

Tens of thousands of revellers at Victoria's Beyond The Valley music festival will be able to check illicit drugs for harmful and potentially deadly chemicals. The four-day event in Hesse, west of Geelong, will be the first of 10 festivals across Victoria to offer access to mobile pill testing as part of a controversial State Government-backed trial.

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'Driving high': One in ten NSW drivers failing roadside drug testing

Canberra Times, Other, 25/11/2024, Carla Mascarenhas

One in ten NSW drivers tested positive for illicit drugs in 2023 at the same time as drug driving deaths across the state spiked, a new report by the NRMA has found. The Driving High report found drug driving is now the second leading cause of fatalities in NSW, after speeding, surpassing fatigue, drink driving and non-seatbelt use.

Also reported by: [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Victorian government chooses Beyond the Valley as first festival with pill testing

The Courier Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Blair Jackson

A major New Year's music festival will be the first event in one state to offer pill testing, after 46 overdose deaths in 2022. New laws will clear the way for mobile pill testing to be conducted in Victoria.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#)

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'Extremely alarming': Shameful stat on Aussie state's roads as deaths jump 44 per cent

The Courier Mail, Other, 25/11/2024, Ryan Bourke

Driving under the influence of drugs like meth, cocaine and cannabis has become disturbingly common on these roads, a shocking new report has revealed. Every year over a thousand Australians die in preventable road deaths, with the number set to spike around the holiday season.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#)

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Beyond the Valley music festival set to host Victoria's first pill testing trial: 'It saves lives'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 25/11/2024, Marta Jary

Beyond the Valley is set to host Victoria's first pill testing trial. The music festival, which takes place annually at Barunah Plains Homestead in Hesse, Victoria, will take part in drug-checking trials after the State Government passed legislation last month allowing it.

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FOOD STANDARDS

Channel 7, Sunrise, 25/11/2024, Natalie Barr & Matt Shirvington

Interview with nutritionist Kristin Beck about fairy bread and the use of artificial colours inside the sprinkles, which are banned in the US. Beck, when asked whether Australia should ban them as well, says if there are safer alternatives, why not? She says the Food Standards Australia New Zealand can certainly have a look at it.

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6PR, Drive, 25/11/2024, Oliver Peterson

Interview with paediatric nutritionist Mandy Sacher about fairy bread. Sacher says she is not saying Aussie parents can't feed their kids fairy bread, but they need to choose ones that don't contain all the toxic food dyes and preservatives. She says Aldi removed the food dyes from their products years ago because they know about the health risks, and Coles carries one that is full of natural food dyes.

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AICIS

Asbestos lurking in Australian houses

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/11/2024, Page 9

Asbestos still lurks in an estimated one in every three Australian homes. Marking National Asbestos Awareness Week, Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute chair Peter Tighe said asbestos had been banned in Australia for more than 20 years, yet its threat remained very real.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#)

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Residents demanding action to fix 'foul, smelly' water woes

Newcastle Herald, General News, 26/11/2024, Gabriel Fowler, Page 1

High radiation levels found in drinking water is the last straw, Upper Hunter residents say, making terrible quality water even worse. It is not only smelly, discoloured, foul-tasting and full of minerals which ruin appliances, many residents now fear that it is also unsafe.

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