



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 6th December 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Age** (Page 1) reports that a leaked Health Department document outlines 41 initiatives aimed at reducing costs and addressing workforce shortages. A key proposal involves facilitating workforce sharing among large health services to meet minimum staffing requirements across the network.
- The **Courier Mail** (Page 1) reports that clinicians have warned that patients at Mater Hospitals are being put at risk due to a technology boost to Pathology that has doctors reporting that the long wait times for results are hindering the ability to make decisions.
- **The Australian** (Page 5) reports that disabled Australians are being asked to confirm their NDIS eligibility, which is troubling providers facing reassessment challenges. There are also calls for clearer information about health and education services for those with milder disabilities who do not qualify for the \$40 billion scheme.
- **Shepparton News** (Page 5) reports that basic Auslan and deaf-awareness training has been introduced by Ambulance Victoria for its staff and volunteers in partnership with Awesome Auslan to provide better care to deaf and hard-of-hearing patients.
- The **Newcastle Herald** (Page 5) reports that an independent review conducted by Jim Varghese has found there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution when it comes to the hundreds of

thousands of hectares of PFAS-contaminated land.

- **The Australian** (Page 6) reports that in early November staff at Albany Health Campus were informed that they would not have an orthopaedic surgeon on call between Monday and Friday until a new full-time surgeon begins in March.
- The **Courier Mail** (Page 10) reports that according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, public hospitals have admitted the highest number of patients on record in 2023-2024 for elective surgeries and that waiting times have shortened.
- The **Herald Sun** (page 11) reports that the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre team has found that a simple blood test will deliver faster and more personalised cancer treatments using their computer tool MisMatchFinder to accurately detect and analyse tumours in blood samples.

MINISTER BUTLER

'Distressing result' as grandmother jailed for drug smuggling

Border Mail, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 13

The jailing of an Australian grandmother in Japan is "really distressing" for her family, the federal government has acknowledged as it committed to doing all it could to help her. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler made the promise a day after Donna Nelson, 58, from Perth, was sentenced to six years for smuggling methamphetamine into Tokyo in January 2023.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Mark Butler to open new Bridgewater Medicare Urgent Care Clinic at Bridgewater

The Courier Mail, Other, 05/12/2024, Sue Bailey

The fifth Medicare Urgent Care Clinic will be officially opened on Thursday and already the clinics are helping thousands of Tasmanians. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler will officially open the clinic, which is equipped to treat a range of urgent, but not life threatening, conditions and injuries, on Thursday.

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

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Donna Nelson: Federal minister says guilty verdict a 'distressing result' for Perth grandmother and family

West Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, James Carmody & Bryce Luff

Donna Nelson's guilty verdict is a "really distressing result" for the Perth grandmother and her family, a senior Federal Government minister has said. Health Minister Mark Butler said the Federal Government would continue to provide consular assistance to

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'Huge kick in the guts' for grandmother jailed in Japan

The Telegraph (Seymour), Other, 05/12/2024

The jailing of an Australian grandmother in Japan is a "kick in the guts" with WA Premier Roger Cook expressing hope for the convicted drug smuggler's potential appeal. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Australian government would continue to provide support to the 58-year-old Indigenous woman and her family as they decided on their next steps.

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10-year National Dementia Action Plan announced

Aged Care Insite, Other, 05/12/2024, Stefanie Schultz

The Albanese government has released its National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034, aimed at creating a nation that's more "dementia inclusive." [...] Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler

said this is why the Labor government has committed to strengthening the country's dementia resources.

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New vaccine facility a shot in the arm for Australians

HealthTimes, Other, 05/12/2024

Australia will be at the top of the vaccine queue during future pandemics and first in line for the next generation of jabs targeting cancers, birth defects and other common illnesses. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new plant was a major step forward in ensuring Australia was prepared for future pandemics, and would also tie into broader health research.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 05/12/2024, Peter Mitchell

A new ad is encouraging men to protect themselves from the sun. Channel 7 will be partnering with the Federal Government to tackle skin cancer. Mark Butler, Health Minister, says Australia sadly is the world-leader in skin cancer.

[Play Now](#)

WIN Hobart, WIN News, 05/12/2024, Bruce Roberts

Tasmania's fifth urgent care clinic has opened its doors in Hobart's northern suburbs. Bridgewater residents rallied to keep their local GP operating. Now it's been transformed into a clinic offering bulk billed care without the need for an appointment. Mark Butler, Health Minister, says this is going to make an enormous difference to the people of this community north of Hobart.

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Triple M Hobart, 11:00 News, 05/12/2024

Health Minister Mark Butler is visiting Tasmania today and tomorrow on the agenda, as well as a meeting with the new State Health Minister. He's also expected to be attending the opening of Bridgewater's new urgent care clinic.

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Triple M Hobart, Breakfast, 05/12/2024, Kaz McMullen & Andy 'Tubes' Taylor

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Compere mentions that Butler is back in the region today to open the Bridgewater Clinic at Jordan River Health. Butler says they originally planned to open up the clinic this year and they've able to do that. He states that he's glad that Jordan River Health have stuck their hand up and have indicated the willingness to take their general practice to a new level and offer this terrific urgent care service in the region.

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ABC Radio Hobart, 09:00 News, 05/12/2024

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says he's confident urgent care clinics are a missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle in Australia's health system. Butler will later today be in Tasmania to officially open a Medicare urgent care clinic at Bridgewater, north of Hobart.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 05/12/2024, Leon Compton

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Butler discusses in the past when former PM Bob Hawke took down Medibank and created Medicare. He states that good oral care has had huge health impacts, but it has never been included in Medicare because it was largely made a decision by a Labor Government that experienced so many fronts and ambition regarding universal health.

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MINISTER WELLS

Govt announces \$37m funding boost for meal delivery services

Aged Care Insite, Other, 05/12/2024, Stefanie Schultz

In a bid to keep up with the rising cost of living, the Albanese government has announced a \$37 million boost for older Australians receiving home care services to be able to afford nutritious meals. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells announced the funding boost on Tuesday, bringing the government's total investment into CHSP meal services to \$131.64 million for 2024.

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Estimated 400 new aged care beds created in Aged Care Capital Assistance Program's Round 2

The Weekly Source, Other, 05/12/2024, Caroline Egan

The largest grant, worth more than \$27 million, has been allocated to Harbison's Burradoo aged care home in Bowral, just over 100km south of Sydney in the NSW Southern Highlands. [...] Anika Wells The \$250 million dollar commitment follows Round 1, when \$134.9 million was allocated to 76 infrastructure projects, mainly in small rural towns, and remote and very remote communities Round 1 was fiercely contested, with 297 applications for projects worth \$1 billion, but only \$135 million available.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 05/12/2024, Max Futcher & Sarah Greenhalgh

A Brisbane choir living with dementia is helping break down barriers. The Federal Government has launched a ten-year action plan with Anika Wells, Aged Care Minister, saying it taking on board all of the consultations that they did with the people living with dementia and try to reduce the stigma around it.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

ABC News, Mornings, 05/12/2024, Dan Bouchier

Press conference with Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride. McBride points out that what they saw from the previous Government's Better Access Review, was while individuals benefit from subsidised mental health visits or sessions, it locked thousands of people out of care. She states that with the recent return of the offerings, 10 sessions were already seen, and 44,000 more people have been assisted.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, 09:00 News, 05/12/2024

A new Federal Government centre for free mental health support is today opening in Logan. It's the fifth of 19 facilities being set up across Queensland. Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride says it will help make access easier.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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DEPARTMENT

Desperate need for volunteers to help most vulnerable locals

Western Weekender Penrith, General News, 05/12/2024, Ally Hall, Page 9

A crucial community service is in dire need of volunteers to continue bringing life-changing assistance to vulnerable locals. Nepean Food Services is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and has been delivering Meals on Wheels and social support to the Penrith LGA since 1992.

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Hospital welcomes garden opening

Rainbow Argus, General News, 05/12/2024, Page 1

A new three-level outdoor space honouring the late Leonie Clarke, in the grounds of the Bowhaven Hostel and Rainbow Hospital, is now officially open. The Leonie Clarke Garden was unveiled on November 22, offering residents and patients a tranquil space in which to enjoy the outdoors while honouring Ms Clarke.

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Fei Sim contemplates the year ahead

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 05/12/2024, Page 2

Scope of practice, digital health and greater collaboration with external stakeholders look set to feature in 2025, says Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President Fei Sim. [...] "Our profession as a whole has greater connection than ever before with the government, with the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Primary Health Networks and other external stakeholders.

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New Social Services secretary a career civilian

The Mandarin, Other, 05/12/2024, Julian Bajkowski

Michael Lye will move across from the Department of Health on December 10, where he has held the role of deputy secretary since 2019. Disability services veteran Michael Lye has been given the top job of the persistently challenging Department of Social Services, marking a return to civilian policy leadership after a sustained period of drawing from the ranks of the military and defence.

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Triple P encourages 'presence over presents' for stronger family bonds this Christmas

The Sector, Other, 05/12/2024, Freya Lucas

Positive Parenting Program are encouraging parents and carers across Australia to shift their focus from the pressure of buying presents to the invaluable gift of quality time with their children and being grateful for each other as the festive season approaches. [...] Delivery of the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program to parents and carers of children in Australia is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Parenting Education and Support Program.

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Aged Care Transition Taskforce members revealed

The Department of Health and Aged Care has revealed the members of the Federal Government's new Aged Care Transition Taskforce, which met for the first time last Thursday (28 November 2024). The Taskforce has been established to provide oversight and stewardship of the aged care reforms implemented through the Aged Care Act 2024 , and will focus on five key areas:

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DoHAC mum for now on tender outcomes as Single Assessment System begins next Monday

The Weekly Source, Other, 05/12/2024, Caroline Egan

Aged care assessments for both home care and residential aged care will begin through the Single Assessment System workforce next Monday, but the Department of Health and Aged Care has not yet made public details about which organisations have been awarded tenders to deliver the assessments.

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More cases of COVID-19 in residential aged care in 2023-24 than in the previous year

The Weekly Source, Other, 05/12/2024, Caroline Egan

In 2023-24, there were 119,652 resident cases and 53,282 staff cases of COVID-19, both higher than the previous year, according to the Department of Health and Aged Care's 144-page Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act. There were 2,134 resident deaths in 2023-24, a decline on the previous year, but still accounted for more than 40 deaths on average a week.

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Pressure mounts for an allied health rural generalist pathway

Croakey, Other, 05/12/2024, Melissa Sweet

Melissa Sweet Marie McNerney Introduction by Croakey: Australia is facing a critical policy window for health workforce policy in general – and the allied health workforce in particular, especially for rural and remote communities. [...] The Department of Health and Aged Care told Croakey that the Budget decision to defund The Allied Health Rural Generalist Education and Training Pathway (TAHRGET) followed "some successes and challenges with implementation of the program over time".

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2SM, 10:00 News, 05/12/2024

The Greens have revealed another piece of their election commitments. The party will create a new drug testing agency should they hold the balance of power after the next election, as part of plans for a federal expansion of pill testing. The agency would operate within the Department of Health and Aged Care and coordinate drug testing sites in capital cities and regional hubs, as well as free testing services at music festivals.

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VACCINES

Vaccine 'misinformation'

Hobart Mercury, General News, 06/12/2024, Rob Inglis, Page 9

Two Clarence councillors, including Deputy Mayor Allison Ritchie, have been accused of promoting misinformation after spearheading a motion that questioned the safety of Covid-19 vaccines and pushed for the council to support an investigation into concerns about alleged "synthetic DNA contamination".

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

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New vaccine facility a shot in the arm for Australians

HealthTimes, Other, 05/12/2024

Australia will be at the top of the vaccine queue during future pandemics and first in line for the next generation of jabs targeting cancers, birth defects and other common illnesses. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new plant was a major step forward in ensuring Australia was prepared for future pandemics, and would also tie into broader health research.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Boandik has focus on foods

Border Watch, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 7

Boandik Mount Gambier is one of just 120 aged care homes across the country to participate in the Maggie Beer Foundation Trainer Mentor Program. This transformative initiative promises to revolutionise the dining experience for aged care residents, focusing on improving nutrition, taste, and overall enjoyment of meals.

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Home care packages fall short on tech to help Aussies 'age with dignity'

Canberra Times, Other, 05/12/2024, Eileen Wood & Desiree Savage

Funding for tech devices needs to be increased for home care packages if the federal government wants older people to age at home "with dignity", according to experts. Healthy@Home is a consortium of industry, university and government partners and claims technology like a smartwatch, phone or ring could relieve pressure off hospitals and aged care facilities as they can trigger preventative and urgent alerts about falls and seizures.

Also reported by: [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#).

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Broome public library launches dementia-friendly memory cases to improve services for people with disability

West Australian, Other, 05/12/2024

The Broome public library has introduced dementia-friendly memory cases, now available for loan, to inspire recollections, foster social connections, and provide support for individuals living with dementia and their families. The launch coincided with the International Day of People with Disability on December 3, celebrated with a morning tea where speakers shared heartfelt stories and insights into the impact of dementia on families and communities.

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National Dementia Action Plan provides a clear vision for the future

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 05/12/2024

Dementia Australia welcomes the National Dementia Action Plan, a ten-year framework for government that provides the opportunity to make enduring positive changes to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia. Dementia Australia CEO Professor Tanya Buchanan said the plan is vital to ensure that the more than 421,000 Australians living with dementia, their families and carers have access to the best care and support available.

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Govt announces \$37m funding boost for meal delivery services

Aged Care Insite, Other, 05/12/2024, Stefanie Schultz

In a bid to keep up with the rising cost of living, the Albanese government has announced a \$37 million

boost for older Australians receiving home care services to be able to afford nutritious meals. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells announced the funding boost on Tuesday, bringing the government's total investment into CHSP meal services to \$131.64 million for 2024.

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Regis Aged Care and Estia Health complete acquisitions

The Weekly Source, Other, 05/12/2024, Caroline Egan

This week, two acquisitions by among Australia's largest aged care providers were completed. Australia's last pure aged care provider listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, Regis Aged Care, completed its \$35.5 million acquisition of Ti Tree Operations' Village Glen Mornington and Village Glen Capel Sound aged care homes on the Mornington Peninsula, about 70km south of Melbourne.

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What is in the Aged Care (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2024 passed by Parliament?

The Weekly Source, Other, 05/12/2024, Caroline Egan

The Albanese Government managed to push through its Aged Care (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2024 among more than 30 other pieces of legislation on the final day of sitting after striking a deal with the Greens and Senator David Pocock. The aim of the Bill is to make "transitional arrangements" to support the introduction of the Aged Care Bill 2024, to smooth the transition to the new system.

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POPULATION HEALTH

New record for surgeries

Courier Mail, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 10

Australian public hospitals admitted the highest number of patients on record for elective surgeries in the year 2023-2024, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. While private hospitals continue to perform most elective surgeries, the report found 771,600 elective surgery patients were admitted to public hospitals throughout the year, a 5 per cent increase on the previous year.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#).

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Data shows EDs feeling pressure

Newcastle Herald, General News, 06/12/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 5

Hospital presentations in the urgent and emergency triage categories hit record highs in Hunter New England last financial year. [...] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data showed Hunter New England recorded a high of 61,481 emergency cases [potentially life threatening] at its hospitals in 2023/24.

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A doctor explains what you can do to reduce the risk of a heart attack

The Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, Michael Gannon

Heart disease kills an Australian every 20 minutes. That is almost 80 people every day. While the reduction in deaths from heart disease in recent years is an Australian public health success, it still causes more than one in six deaths. Men are likelier to be hospitalised and likelier to die from heart disease.

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This little-known diet can reduce blood pressure and risk of heart disease

The Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, Jason Kovacic

About one in three Australians has high blood pressure, and we know that diet has a major role to play in addressing this common condition. However, there is a diet that has been scientifically proven to reduce blood pressure yet still remains somewhat unknown.

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FIVEAA, Afternoons, 05/12/2024, Stacey Lee

Compere points out that according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, they've done a survey of 1000 park visitors about their attitudes towards parks, as well as the cost of treating ten of the most major long-term chronic diseases.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

NDIS turmoil: eligibility proof demand surges

The Australian, General News, 06/12/2024, Sarah Ison, Page 5

A surge in disabled Australians being asked to prove they are still eligible for the NDIS has sparked alarm among providers unable to keep up with the demand for reassessments. It has also prompted calls for immediate clarity on the separate system of health and education services the government promised would be propped up for people with milder disabilities ineligible for the \$40bn-a-year disability scheme.

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

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

Boost in cancer battle

Herald Sun, General News, 06/12/2024, Robyn Riley, Page 11

A simple blood test developed by Victorian scientists is set to deliver faster, more personalised cancer treatments and be a substantial saver for health budgets globally. In a new study published on Thursday, the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre team confirmed that its computer tool, MisMatchFinder, accurately detects and analyses tumours in blood samples from cancer patients.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#).

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Exercise an ageing 'silver bullet'

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 06/12/2024, Emma Downey, Page 5

Maintaining your level of fitness is one of the best things you can do to prolong your life expectancy, says exercise physiologist Steve Reilly. Mr Reilly, who works with Rural Fit Tamworth, even goes so far as to call exercise "a medicine, like a silver bullet" to help combat the stages of aging.

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Daily bursts of exercise

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 37

An average of four minutes of incidental vigorous physical activity a day could almost halve the risk of major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks, for middle-aged women. Women who averaged 3.4 minutes of vigorous intermittent physical activity daily were 45 per cent less likely to experience a major cardiovascular event, The University of Sydney study shows.

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Anxiety and confusion surround Foundational Supports, survey reveals

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 05/12/2024

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) Community consultation on Foundational Supports ends today, yet a troubling new survey reveals most people still do not know what they are. Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) surveyed more than 250 disabled young people, parents, and caregivers across Australia in October.

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Huntington's clinic hits the road

Medical Forum, Other, 05/12/2024

GPs and other local healthcare providers are playing a vital role in delivering care for people with Huntington's disease the State's most northern region. The 2024 Medical Training Survey shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander junior doctors report experiencing or witness racism at a rate of 38%, compared to 17% of other trainees.

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PRIMARY CARE

Dearth of surgeons reaching flash point

The Australian, General News, 06/12/2024, Paul Garvey, Page 6

One of Western Australia's largest regional cities is facing four months without a full-time orthopaedic surgeon, in the latest sign of ongoing stresses in the state's health system. Internal correspondence leaked to The Australian shows that staff at Albany Health Campus, one of WA's largest hospitals outside Perth, were informed in early November that they would not have an orthopaedic surgeon on call between Monday and Friday until a new full-time surgeon begins in March.

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Bed sharing stirs up fury at 'backdoor' hospital fix

Age, General News, 06/12/2024, Henrietta Cook & Broede Carmody, Page 1

Victorian hospitals would share staff, beds and radiology services under a proposed overhaul of the state's health services being slammed as a backdoor form of hospital mergers. A leaked Health Department document canvasses 41 new initiatives mainly aimed at reducing costs and fixing workforce shortages including "establishing expectations that large health services share workforce to meet minimum staffing requirements across the network".

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Elective surgery record

Australian public hospitals have admitted the highest number of patients on record for elective surgeries. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the year 2023-2024 resulted in the most elective surgeries on record.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#),

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Risk of delays at hospital

Courier Mail, General News, 06/12/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

Patients at Mater Hospitals are being put at risk by a pathology service upgrade that is causing delays in test results, clinicians have warned. The technology boost to Mater Pathology, which serves more than 750,000 patients each year in South East Queensland, went live 10 days ago but doctors are reporting that the long wait for vital results is hampering decisions.

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New CDU health centre

Northern Territory News, General News, 06/12/2024, Darcy Fitzgerald, Page 4

The new \$25.8m CDU health centre will be a "game-changer" for Territory healthcare, Vice-Chancellor Dominic Upton said. Construction of the centre is set to be completed in July next year.

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Health service's shortfall

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 06/12/2024, Zoe De Koning, Page 1

A Geelong health service provider is operating in an "uncertain" financial environment and has called on the state government to stump up additional funding. Bellarine Community Health (BCH) chief executive Kathy Russell emphasised the need for further investment at the organisation's annual general meeting last week, saying demand for services was booming.

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

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Soil turned at last on new Surf Coast pool

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 06/12/2024, Zoe De Koning, Page 4

Construction of Surf Coast Shire's multimillion-dollar aquatic and health centre is under way following a sodturning ceremony on Wednesday. Surf Coast Shire Mayor Mike Bodsworth said the council was "thrilled" site preparations for the Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre had begun, following numerous cost blowouts in 2024.

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Urgent clinics milestone

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 4

The federal government's Medicare urgent care clinics will achieve a historic milestone this week, recording one million free visits across the country. Clinics are open for extended hours and at weekends, with no appointments needed.

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Auslan training for paramedics

Shepparton News, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 5

Paramedics can now provide better care to deaf and hard-of-hearing patients. Ambulance Victoria has introduced basic Auslan and deaf-awareness training for all its staff and volunteers as part of a partnership with Awesome Auslan.

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Care clinics' milestone

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 18

The federal government's Medicare Urgent Care Clinics will this week achieve a historic milestone with one million free visits. Clinics are open for extended hours and at weekends, with no appointment needed.

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Surgeon shortage pushes WA hospital to breaking point

The Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, Paul Garvey

One of Western Australia's largest regional cities is facing four months without a full-time orthopaedic surgeon, in the latest sign of ongoing stresses in the state's health system. Internal correspondence leaked to The Australian shows that staff at Albany Health Campus, one of WA's largest hospitals outside Perth, were informed in early November that they would not have an orthopaedic surgeon on call between Monday and Friday until a new full-time surgeon begins in March.

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New \$25.8 million CDU health centre will be a 'game changer'

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 05/12/2024, Darcy Fitzgerald

The new \$25.8 million CDU health centre will be a "game changer" for Territory healthcare, Vice-Chancellor Dominic Upton said. Construction of the centre is set to be completed in July next year, with Mr Upton predicting 40 medicine students enrolled by 2026.

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

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Mark Butler to open new Bridgewater Medicare Urgent Care Clinic at Bridgewater

The Courier Mail, Other, 05/12/2024, Sue Bailey

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

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New CDU health teaching and research facility marks construction milestone

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 05/12/2024

Charles Darwin University Charles Darwin University's (CDU) new \$25.8 million Centre for Better Health Futures has marked a significant construction milestone. The new health teaching and research facility celebrated its 'topping out' in Darwin today, with the installation of the Centre's roof allowing construction to continue throughout the Wet Season.

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Construction starts on new Mt Barker Hospital for growing Adelaide Hills community

Adelaide Now, Other, 05/12/2024, Natalie Vikhrov

Construction has started on the new \$320.8 million Mt Barker Hospital this week. The new health service will triple the inpatient capacity to cater for the growing Adelaide Hills community, with the number of beds growing from 34 to 102.

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Eye tests to car crashes: Wagga training to improve rural medicine practice

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 05/12/2024, Tahlia Sinclair

Wagga has welcomed doctors from across the state as they continue through world-first rural specialist training. The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine fellowship is the only program in

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Medicare crackdown on vitamin B12 tests disrespects doctors' judgement: AMA

Australian Doctor, Other, 05/12/2024, Antony Scholefield

The AMA has slammed a Federal Government plan to restrict vitamin B12 and urine examination tests under Medicare next year. Foreshadowed in the last budget, the government wants MBS item 66839 for quantification of B12 markers such as holotranscobalamin or methylmalonic acid (schedule fee \$42.95) limited to one claim per patient per year.

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The genetic risk of depression is a stronger predictor of heart problems in women than men: new research

Medicine Today, Other, 05/12/2024, Jiayue-Clara Jiang & Sonia Shah

Heart disease is the leading cause of death globally in both men and women. It accounts for one in three deaths for Australian women, yet women with heart disease remain under-studied, under-diagnosed and under-treated.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Libs' \$80m suicide prevention promise

West Australian, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 3

Libby Mettam has vowed to spend an extra \$80 million on mental health and suicide prevention if the Liberal Party wins the State election. Speaking at a debate on Thursday, Ms Mettam said suicides among Indigenous Australians in the Kimberley occurred as frequently as twice a month and she pledged \$40m over four years for suicide prevention with a focus on the State's far north.

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Generation stress

The Nightly, General News, 05/12/2024, Nicola Smith, Page 10

Are young Australians more stressed than previous generations in the workplace? Pioneering research from the University of Sydney and the Black Dog Institute says yes even as working conditions steadily improve and it could feed a brewing generational divide in the office.

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Hopes of better future for those who serve

Daily Advertiser, General News, 06/12/2024, Andrew Mangelsdorf, Page 5

Wagga leaders have voiced their optimism as the government announced it would back the vast majority of findings of a key report into Defence and veteran suicide. On Monday the federal government handed down its response into the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

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Women with a genetic risk of depression are more likely to develop heart disease, study finds

The Courier Mail, Other, 05/12/2024, Sarah Mitchell

Women already face a heavy health burden. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that more women suffer from issues like dementia and chronic illness than men, and according to new research, they now have to worry more about their heart health too.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#)

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Libby Mettam promises \$80m for mental health and suicide prevention at public health debate

West Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, Jake Dietsch

Liberal leader Libby Mettam has used a debate on public health to announce her party will spend an extra \$80 million for mental health and suicide prevention if it wins the next State election. The debate on Thursday, hosted by the WA Public Health Association of Australia ahead of the March 8 poll, saw Health and Mental Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson, Ms Mettam and Dr Brad Pettitt — the only Greens MP in the WA Parliament — make their pitch on preventative health measures.

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Spike in mental health insurance claims sees more Australians leaving the workforce for good

ABC Online, Other, 05/12/2024, Bronwyn Herbert

Over a 10-year period, mental health claims by Australian workers aged between 30 and 40 have increased by more than 730 per cent, new data has revealed. Jamie was once proud to introduce himself as a painter and decorator, a career he held for almost 20 years in the construction sector.

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ABC News, ABC National News, 05/12/2024, Joe O'Brien

New research has revealed a dramatic increase in mental health insurance claims by young Australians over the past decade. The number of employees aged in their 30s who've lodged a claim for a mental health injury at work, has risen by more than 700%.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Sunshine Coast University Hospital criticised over private health practices

Cairns Post, Other, 05/12/2024, Chloe Grimshaw

A major Queensland public hospital has come under fire over a leaked email that reminds staff it is not their job to fill the wait lists of private surgeons. The email to employees of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital reminds the public hospital staff it is "not your job" to fill the wait lists of private surgeons.

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

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

ABC News, ABC National News, 05/12/2024, Joe O'Brien

New weight-loss drugs are not only changing the way that people check their weight, but it's also starting to have an effect on the economy. Because weight loss medications are not listed on the

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme it's hard to determine how many Australians are using them, but country wide shortages point to fast growing demand.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Southern Downs councillor Joel Richters calls out LNP government, MP James Lister over pill testing backflip

Cairns Post, Other, 05/12/2024, Michael Hudson

A southern Queensland councillor has slammed the state government and the region's MP over a decision to axe a helpful drug harm-reduction program. The Southern Downs hosted the first Queensland trial of pill testing - a useful harm reduction scheme - at an electronic music festival located in the state's south.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#)

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Pill testing, injection rooms would save 'countless lives', drug summit told

9News, Other, 05/12/2024, Adam Vidler

major alliance of delegates to the NSW government's 2024 Drug Summit has urged the government to swiftly adopt big reforms like pill testing and more supervised injecting rooms, which it says will save lives across the state. The Health Services Union, MPs Alex Greenwich and Jeremy Buckingham?, the Uniting Church, not-for-profit Unharm, and other health unions were all among those who delivered the statement at the summit's culmination in Sydney today.

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SPORT

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Truckies take health brake

Courier Mail, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 22

It might seem out of place on the side of a highway, but purpose-built exercise equipment installed at

truck stops across Australia could be just the thing to encourage truck drivers to take a break and take control of their health and wellbeing. University of South Australia researchers have found that almost a third of Australia's truck drivers have three or more diagnosed medical conditions (four times the average person), more than half of truck drivers are obese, and one in five drivers under 35 report severe levels of psychological distress.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

High rates of hearing loss among Indigenous people

West Australian, Other, 05/12/2024, Keira Jenkins

Hearing loss is the main ear and hearing-related condition among Indigenous adults, while middle ear infections are still high among Indigenous children, a report says. More than 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Islander people aged over seven years old have hearing loss, according to a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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

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Racism and toxic culture at youth detention centre

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 05/12/2024, Aaron Bunch

The institutional racism and toxic culture at a troubled youth detention centre was so severe a consultant was afraid to raise it for fear of losing his job, an Indigenous teen's inquest has been told. Cleveland Dodd was found unresponsive inside a cell in Unit 18, a youth wing of the high-security adult facility Casuarina Prison, in the early hours of October 12, 2023.

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

[Read More](#)

Tim Marney tells coronial inquest into death of Indigenous teen in detention of 'institutional racism' at Banksia Hill

ABC Online, Other, 05/12/2024, Georgy Sides

The bureaucrat the WA government employed to reform WA's troubled youth justice system has claimed there was "institutional racism" inside the state's main juvenile detention centre.

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Indigenous doctors from across the globe point to the benefits of first languages in health

ABC Online, Other, 05/12/2024, Stephanie Boltje

Exploring potential health benefits by merging western medical science with ancient Indigenous healing knowledge and languages — this was the focus of an international doctor's conference in Adelaide on Kurna Country. "The doctor listens to me and I listen to the doctor and we both are on the same page to help this one person," Pantjiti Lewis said in Pitjantjatjara language, translated into English.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Spike in dengue fever has Cairns on alert

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 05/12/2024, Matthew Newton

A spike in imported cases of dengue fever from an international tourism mecca has health authorities in

the Far North on alert, with overseas travellers being urged to take precautions against mosquito bites. Tropical Public Health Services Cairns has confirmed five cases of dengue fever in the region within the past fortnight, all imported from people travelling from Bali.

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

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 05/12/2024, Kylie Baxter

The Public Health Service is urging Tasmanians to isolate if they develop any respiratory illness symptoms, as whooping cough continues to circulate around the state. Public health says cases have more than doubled since September to over 700 cases, with the highest numbers being seen with school students aged 5 to 17 years old.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Dr Boreham's Crucible: Will ditching its baggage help this pancreatic cancer-targeting outfit soar?

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 05/12/2024, Tim Boreham

The targeted radiation oncology outfit Oncosil Medical (ASX:OSL) has the common shortcoming of falling way behind its clinical and commercialisation targets. For instance, the company promised European Union approval in 2013 and finally won this assent in April 2020. "The company has been around for a long time, but it hasn't accomplished as much as it should have," says CEO Nigel Lange, a Berlin-based Canadian who has lived in Germany for 21 years.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Anger and revolt at drug summit

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 06/12/2024, Michael McGowan & Angus Thomson, Page 2

The NSW drug summit in Sydney had become increasingly tense and rancorous as the final day wrapped up yesterday. On stage, the usually measured architect of the Ice Inquiry, Professor Dan Howard, SC, received a standing ovation after he gave a speech urging Labor to "bite the bullet" and decriminalise drug possession.

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Decriminalisation challenge laid out at NSW drug summit

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 06/12/2024, Page 6

The head of the nation's biggest probe into methamphetamine has challenged the government in his home state to go to the next election with a plan to decriminalise illicit drugs. On the final day of a major NSW drug summit - the state's first in 25 years - former ice inquiry commissioner Dan Howard accused political leaders of dragging their feet on reform.

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

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FOOD STANDARDS

AICIS

National body to tackle PFAS response

Newcastle Herald, General News, 06/12/2024, Madeline Link, Page 5

An independent review designed to look at possible productive uses for hundreds of thousands of hectares of PFAS-contaminated land has found there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Jim Varghese, the Independent Reviewer tasked with identifying long-term options for contaminated Department of Defence land, said in the foreword that many community members had expressed "frustration, anger, disillusionment, hopelessness and cynicism".

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National body to head clean-up of 'forever chemicals'

Canberra Times, Other, 05/12/2024, Andrew Brown

Residents in communities affected by toxic "forever chemicals" have been promised a consistent approach to tackle the problem under a national co-ordinating body. The federal government has handed down its response to a review of contamination from per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) near three defence bases.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Chemicals in water response fails to wash with expert

Canberra Times, Other, 06/12/2024, Emily Verdouw

The handling of cancer-linked chemical contamination in waterways and drinking supplies by bureaucrats "defies logic", an expert says. Dubbed "forever chemicals" because of their long life, the PFAS group of chemicals accumulate in water, soil and living organisms and have been linked to cancer, immune suppression and developmental issues.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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Review finds no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to PFAS-contaminated land

Newcastle Herald, Other, 05/12/2024

An independent review designed to look at possible productive uses for hundreds of thousands of hectares of PFAS-contaminated land has found there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. Jim Varghese, the Independent Reviewer tasked with identifying long-term options for contaminated Department of Defence land, said in the foreword that many community members had expressed "frustration, anger, disillusionment, hopelessness and cynicism".

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Mysterious balls wash ashore on Silver Beach in Kurnell weeks after similar incidents on Sydney beaches

ABC Online, Other, 05/12/2024, Jesse Hyland

Mysterious balls and other debris have washed ashore on a beach in Sydney's south almost two months after a similar incident in the city's east. [...] However, researchers discovered that the balls were made up of lumps of human faeces, drugs and PFAS chemicals.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 05/12/2024, Dom Knight

The Federal Government has announced it will establish a national body to better support communities impacted by the cancelling of chemical PFAS. It's one of 19 recommendations to come from an

independent review into PFAS contamination.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 05/12/2024, Craig Reucassel

NSW Health says it doesn't recommend blood tests for PFAS in response to calls from Blue Mountains residents who've been drinking contaminated water. They told the ABC there's insufficient evidence for medical practitioners to tell whether people's blood levels of PFAS will make them sick now or later or link any current health problems to PFAS.

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