



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 13th December 2024

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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Canberra Times \(page 1\)](#)** reports that the defunct National Mental Health Commission came in last place in rankings of work culture in an APS staff survey for the second year in a row. The office has since been folded into the Department of Health.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 1\)](#)** reports Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has announced \$600 million in funding for a Papua New Guinea team to enter the NRL competition in 2028.
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 3\)](#)** reports that AMA Queensland and the Australian Dental Association Queensland are calling for water fluoridation to be mandated across the state as research shows an increasing number of Queenslanders do not have enough teeth to chew their food.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 5\)](#)** reports that staffing shortages in the obstetrics and gynaecology services of Gosford Hospital are forcing patients, including women entering labour, to travel for up to an hour to hospitals in Newcastle or Sydney.
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 5\)](#)** reports the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union has asked for more detail from the Queensland Government on how workforce shortages will be managed after it ended the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme.

- **The West Australian (page 7)** reports increased incidences of heatstroke amid a spike in temperatures has put further pressure on the state's ambulance service.
- **The Courier Mail (page 17)** reports medical professionals with a history of sexual misconduct dating back more than a decade will have to display them publicly under proposed Queensland state government laws.
- **The Herald Sun (page 20)** reports major Melbourne health providers The Alfred and Peninsula Health on Thursday announced they will merge, with the change to come into effect January 1, 2026.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### UK puberty blocker ban rejected here

The Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Penny Timms, Page 6

Australia is unlikely to follow the UK's lead in formalising a ban on the use of puberty blockers for young people with gender dysphoria. The UK government said the change was prompted by safety concerns around the use of the drugs in people aged under 18, but that's not the view of peak body the Australian Professional Association for Trans Health. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler did not respond by deadline.

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

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### United Kingdom's ban on puberty blockers for children is not a culture war but a safety matter

The Australian, Other, 12/12/2024, Bernard Lane

Yet again, Australia's health ministers and officials have been warned about puberty blockers, the drugs given to minors who reject their birth sex and want the "wrong puberty" to be chemically suppressed. [...] Australia's Health Minister, Mark Butler, should know all this. His officials have briefed him on the fact that the Cass-commissioned guideline evaluation judged Australia's de facto national treatment guideline to be of low quality, lacking in rigorous development, and not recommended for use.

Printed without Minister mention: [The Australian \(Australia\)](#).

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### Reform use of puberty blockers

The Australian, Editorials, 13/12/2024, Page 10

Britain has taken an important lead in protecting vulnerable minors The question facing Australia's health ministers is whether vulnerable young people distressed about their gender are entitled to care based on high-quality scientific evidence. This is an internationally urgent question and now we have a clear answer from the UK Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, who has announced an indefinite ban on puberty-blocker drugs, apart from a proposed clinical trial. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler should bring his state counterparts together to discuss an urgent review.

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

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### Community marks 'preventable' record

Cairns Post, General News, 13/12/2024, Arun Singh Mann, Page 1

A Far North Queensland community has broken its own tragic record for the most preventable deaths in any given year. Hope Vale shire, north of Cooktown, lost 23 people to preventable deaths in 2024, surpassing the record in 2020, according to council data. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler visited Cairns on Tuesday, and said he was hearing the calls from Indigenous leaders in his portfolio.

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### Advocates take diabetes concerns to Parliament

Federal Member for Robertson Dr Gordon Reid recently welcomed two Central Coast Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1DM) advocates to Parliament House. [...] "During the delegation's visit, the Health Minister Mark Butler announced that the Federal Labor Government would support the next phase of the search for a cure for Type 1 Diabetes through a \$50.1M investment in the Australian Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network.

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## **InterAction for Health and Human Rights welcome LGBTIQ+ health action plan**

OUTinPerth, Other, 12/12/2024, Leigh Andrew Hill

The Albanese Government revealed its ten-year plan for LGBTIQ+ health earlier this week, led by Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney. Intersex advocacy group InterAction for Health and Human Rights, formerly known as Intersex Human Rights Australia, has welcomed the launch of the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025-2035.

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## **La Trobe University awarded \$2 million for LGBTIQ+ surveys**

Q News, Other, 12/12/2024, Sarah Davison

La Trobe University has been awarded \$2 million in Federal Government funding to conduct Australia's largest surveys into the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people to inform policies, programs and services. Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler MP and Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney MP announced La Trobe's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) would conduct two surveys as part of the Commonwealth's National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People.

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## **How do community orgs feel about Australia's first LGBTIQ+ health action plan?**

Sydney Star Observer, Other, 12/12/2024, Chloe Sargeant

Yesterday, Australia's first-ever national LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing action plan was launched by Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney. [...] Woodhouse thanked Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney on behalf of ACON, saying, "We are deeply grateful for their support and efforts in fostering a collaborative approach to improving national LGBTIQ+ health outcomes," Woodhouse said.

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## **Concept designs released for Launceston hospice**

ArchitectureAU, Other, 12/12/2024

The Tasmanian government have unveiled designs for a hospice on Howick Street as part of their redevelopment of Launceston General Hospital. [...] Welcoming the release of the new designs, Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler observed, "Giving people the greatest possible dignity and comfort at the end of life is so important, not only for the individual but for their families as well."

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## **The first 100 days of an RACGP presidency**

The Medical Republic, Other, 12/12/2024, Holly Payne

The RACGP has a shiny new president in the form of Dr Michael Wright, who was elected by members earlier this year and has now officially stepped into the role. [...] It is his work outside of the practice – namely the medical indemnity and health economist space – that has already earned Dr Wright the respect of the federal health minister Mark Butler.

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## Doing the sums on lung cancer screening

Oncology Republic, Other, 12/12/2024, Amanda Sheppeard

A national lung cancer screening program makes economic sense as well as significantly reducing lung cancer deaths, especially for people at high risk, Australian and Netherlands researchers have found. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler approved the recommendation and announced the new screening program in May 2023.

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## Channel 7, Seven News, 12/12/2024, Max Futchter and Sarah Greenhalgh

A two month old baby's skull has been fractured in a frenzied home invasion in Alice Springs. The Northern Territory's leader has flown in for crisis talks as teen violence there spirals out of control. [clip: Minister Butler]

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 12/12/2024, Jennifer Keyte

Violence in Alice Springs has again hit boiling point. The latest victim is a two month old baby who was assaulted during a home invasion. She was rushed to hospital in Adelaide for urgent care. Locals are now calling for the army to be sent in. [clip: Minister Butler]

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## 2GB, 23:00 News, 12/12/2024

Two teenage boys have been arrested after a mother and child were injured in a home invasion in Alice Springs. The two month old baby has been flown to an Adelaide hospital due to the severity of her injuries. Federal Minister Mark Butler says it's a shocking crime. [clip: Minister Butler]

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## River FM, 17:00 News, 12/12/2024

A two month old baby has serious head injuries following a home invasion west of Alice Springs, allegedly committed by two teenagers aged 16 and 17, federal minister Mark Butler saying he hopes the baby will be okay. [clip: Minister Butler]

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## ABC News, Mornings, 12/12/2024, Chris Mitchell

A new report into Australia's mental health care systems revealed a significant lack of hospital beds, supported accommodation and trained specialists for adults experiencing chronic severe mental health conditions. [...] In a statement, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says state and federal health ministers have only received a comprehensive analysis of the unmet needs of Australians with severe mental health conditions in recent weeks, and will report back to him at a round table in February 2025.

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

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Afternoons, 12/12/2024, Joel Rheinberger

Obesity has overtaken tobacco as Australia's new leading risk factor contributing to the burden of disease. A new national health study has revealed Australians lost a collective 5.8 million years of healthy life in 2024 due to disease or premature death. Experts say more than one third of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia in 2024 could have been avoided. Kathleen O'Connor reports. [clip: Minister Butler]

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[Back to Top](#)

## 'Significant distractions': Queensland's surprising AIS push

Canberra Times, Sport, 13/12/2024, Caden Helmers, Page 67

It was surprising to read a renewed push to move the AIS to Queensland this week, despite the federal government ruling it out as an option because of the associated \$1 billion pricetag. [...] Government ministers, including Queensland's Anika Wells, agreed it was better to invest in Canberra, starting with \$250 million for an all-weather air dome, then a new athletes' village and then a high-performance training centre.

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## \$1 million for Carnarvon

Islander, General News, 12/12/2024, Stan Gorton, Page 2

Seven shared-ensuite rooms at the Carnarvon aged care facility will be turned into 14 single ensuite rooms, effectively doubling capacity of the space. This latest \$1 million allocation to Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network for the project came in Round 2 of Aged Care Capital Assistance Program, announced this week by the federal government and Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells.

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[Back to Top](#)

## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

### Support for new parents

Armadale Examiner, General News, 12/12/2024, Page 11

New and expecting parents in Perth can now access free mental health care and support through a federally-funded Perinatal Mental Health Centre now open at Stockland in Harrisdale. [...] "We know that up to one in five women and one in 10 men will experience anxiety and/or depression in the perinatal period up to 12 months after their child is born," Assistant Health Minister Emma McBride said.

Also reported by: [Canning Examiner \(Perth\)](#), [Examiner Newspapers \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### InterAction for Health and Human Rights welcome LGBTIQ+ health action plan

OUTinPerth, Other, 12/12/2024, Leigh Andrew Hill

The Albanese Government revealed its ten-year plan for LGBTIQ+ health earlier this week, led by Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney. Intersex advocacy group InterAction for Health and Human Rights, formerly known as Intersex Human Rights Australia, has welcomed the launch of the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025-2035.

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### Australia launches 10 year Action Plan for LGBTQIA+ Health

Q News, Other, 12/12/2024, Andrew M Potts

The Australian Government has today announced a \$15.5 million ten-year "National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People" following a consultation process that involved hundreds of community members and 26 roundtables around the country. The Action Plan was announced today in Melbourne by Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care the Hon Ged Kearney MP, who began her career as a nurse during the early years of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Australia.

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## La Trobe University awarded \$2 million for LGBTIQ+ surveys

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## How do community orgs feel about Australia's first LGBTIQ+ health action plan?

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Yesterday, Australia's first-ever national LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing action plan was launched by Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney. [...] Woodhouse thanked Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney on behalf of ACON, saying, "We are deeply grateful for their support and efforts in fostering a collaborative approach to improving national LGBTIQ+ health outcomes," Woodhouse said.

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[Back to Top](#)

## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## DEPARTMENT

### APS culture shock

Canberra Times, General News, 13/12/2024, Miriam Webber, Brittney Levinson and Connor Pearce, Page 1

A government agency that once sought to improve mental health outcomes for Australians had the worst culture in the federal bureaucracy in 2024, with under a third of staff recommending it as a good place to work. The Canberra Times' analysis of staff survey results for 105 agencies found staff rated the National Mental Health Commission as the worst place to work in the APS for a second year in a row. Only 28 per cent of public servants at the commission - which has since been abolished and folded into the Department of Health because of well-documented cultural issues - said they would recommend it as a good place to work.

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### Bumper year for RSL LifeCare

Coast Community Pelican Post, General News, 12/12/2024, Page 10

RSL LifeCare has announced a \$3.7M surplus for the 2024 financial year, with its annual report highlighting the opening of a Veteran and Family Hub on the Central Coast as one of its major achievements for the year. [...] and improving Star Ratings, evaluated using the Department of Health and Aged Care's Star Rating System, from 3.46 to 3.61, with 17 residential care sites rated 4 stars.

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### PHN review a waste of \$2m: they're not the problem

Health Services Daily, Other, 12/12/2024, Jeremy Knibbs

I once loved to rail at how eclectic and disorganised primary health networks are. Then I went to a PHN conference and became immediately suspicious that something was wrong. [...] If I'd done just a tiny bit of homework back then by identifying where PHNs sit in the Department of Health and Aged Care structure I conceivably would have been immediately most of the way to an answer.

## What are they doing at Medicare Mental Health Centres?

The Medical Republic, Other, 12/12/2024, Holly Payne

Medicare Mental Health Centres are touted as being a solution for Australians with "moderate to complex mental health needs", but not much about the new service is clear. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Aged Care confirmed with The Medical Republic that the centres are block funded outside of the MBS, and that staff are salaried.

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## Which aged care provider has been awarded a \$136M contract to conduct assessments under new Single Assessment System?

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

The Department of Health and Aged Care has released the details of contracts valued at close to \$1.5 billion awarded to operators to conduct aged care assessments under the new Single Assessment System. The largest contract, worth more than \$226 million, was awarded to Serendipity (WA) Pty Ltd T/A Advanced Personnel Management, one of the largest private sector providers of workplace rehabilitation, consultancy, employment and psychological services in Australia.

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## Late March release of Support at Home detail leaves 62 working days for implementation

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

The Department of Health and Aged Care has revealed that "advice on pricing will be provided before the end of the year ahead of more detailed advice by the end of March 2025" in a Support at Home webinar held last Thursday 5 December. The advice was offered in direct response to questions from attendees, not as part of the formal presentation.

[Read More](#)[Back to Top](#)

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## VACCINES

### Melbourne teens behind award-winning Covid tracking site pick up another accolade – their Atars

The Guardian, Other, 12/12/2024, Caitlin Cassidy

A world away from Melbourne, the three friends behind one of the most authoritative websites on Covid cases during the pandemic each awoke to news of another accolade: they have each finished high school with Atars above 90. Jack Graffeo, Wesley Mu and Darcy Hersbach sent the internet into a frenzy in 2021, when the Melbourne teenagers revealed they were behind CovidbaseAU – which had been regularly cited by mainstream media and praised by the then chief health officer.

[Read More](#)[Back to Top](#)

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Report shows aged care trends

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 12/12/2024, Jodie Wolf

A recent government report highlights the ongoing consolidation of residential aged care providers underway across residential and home care. The 2023-24 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act, which is produced each year in accordance with legislation, shows there were approximately 1.5 million recipients of aged care throughout the year.

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## Australia's residential aged care sector facing “crisis in care availability”: UARC

The Weekly Source, Other, 12/12/2024, Lauren Broomham

The sixth report from the UTS Ageing Research Collaborative (UARC) has reinforced the challenges facing the sector and Government in meeting the growing demand for new beds and tightening staffing requirements. The 134-page 'Australia's Aged Care Sector: Full-Year Report 2023-24' acknowledges that residential aged care saw a "modest improvement" in its financial performance in 2023-24, driven by increasing occupancy and additional Government funding for direct care and wage rises.

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## Is scale necessary for success in residential aged care? The latest data says yes

The Weekly Source, Other, 12/12/2024, Lauren Broomham

The new 'Australia's Aged Care Sector: Full-Year Report 2023-24' has confirmed what many in the sector already knew: big operators are getting bigger – and more efficient. The new 134-page report from the UTS Ageing Research Collaborative (UARC) has flagged the increasing consolidation of the residential aged care sector, with the 24 largest providers now operating 40.2% of all places and 37.5% of homes.

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## The new weekly visitor to an inner-city Melbourne aged care home

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

Abi, the humanoid companion robot developed by robotics start up Andromeda, will visit Victorian Not For Profit Benetas' Gladswood Lodge aged care home in Brunswick West for two or three hours a week over a 12-month period. Abi, which uses GPT4 artificial intelligence models to recognise faces and build relationships, and a member of the Andromeda team will facilitate group sessions and conduct one-on-ones with residents in their rooms.

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[Back to Top](#)

## POPULATION HEALTH

### Kick in teeth for health

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

The state's peak medical and dental groups have joined forces to call for a statewide mandate on water fluoridation. The call comes as research shows an increasing number of Queenslanders do not have enough teeth to chew their food and fluoridation coverage had fallen from 90 per cent of Queenslanders in 2012 to just 70 per cent – now the lowest in Australia.

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

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### Vital service is set to close

Shepparton News, General News, 13/12/2024, Kate Walters, Page 7

If it weren't for Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service, Mary doesn't believe she'd have her six-month-old daughter in her care today. Now, the Shepparton area is set to lose the service that helped Mary (not her real name), and multiple other women in recent years, keep a family together. [...] More than 180,000 children across Australia came into contact with the child protection system in 2022-23, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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### Highlighting vaping dangers

Shepparton News, General News, 13/12/2024, Taylah Baker, Page 23

Where there's smoke, there's fire crackling in the bellies of teenage activists. On Wednesday,



December 4, Year 10 students from Greater Shepparton Secondary College sounded the alarm on adolescent vaping rates during their Creative Poster Exhibit, a Greater Shepparton Vaping Strategy initiative. [...] Yet 28 per cent of teenagers aged 14 to 17 in Australia used a vape or e-cigarette last year, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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## Australia 'can't afford to be complacent' as major health issue leapfrogs alcohol and tobacco

NEWS.com.au, Other, 12/12/2024, Alex Blair

Australia's health crisis has just hit a grim new milestone. The latest Australian Burden of Disease Study 2024, released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, has revealed a big shift in what is causing diseases for Aussies. Obesity has now overtaken tobacco smoking as the leading risk factor contributing to disease burden, prompting immediate calls for the government to address the country's rising epidemic and reduce preventable hospital admissions.

*Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#). Similar coverage: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Pharmacy Daily \(Online\)](#).*

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 12/12/2024, Pippa Sheehan

As we draw closer to the end of the year it's always a good idea to check in on your health, which is exactly what our health authorities have done for us. But as Tallulah Thompson explains, Aussies aren't hitting the mark on a few key measurements.

New figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show we are on track to miss some crucial 2030 targets, all part of a National Preventive Health Strategy.

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 12/12/2024, Jo Spargo

This morning I was telling you about a new study that's being released today. It's called the Australian Burden of Disease Study, and it's from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. They're looking at a thing called the burden of disease. They're saying that Australians are losing 5.8 million years of healthy life due to things like, well, mostly being overweight. So our roving reporter, Andy Gall is going to help you out this morning.

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## New reports back need for brain health campaign

Australian Seniors News, Other, 12/12/2024

New reports released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) have reinforced the need to highlight dementia as a public health issue and say a focus on preventing or delaying dementia is needed urgently. The Australian Burden of Disease Study 2024 confirmed that dementia is the second leading cause of disease burden (4.5%) after coronary heart disease (5.5%).

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## WA elective surgery on the rise

Medical Forum, Other, 12/12/2024

The number of patients having elective surgery in Australian public hospitals is the highest on record, with more than 85,000 admissions in WA. Across the country there were 771,600 admissions from public hospital elective surgery waitlists in 2023-24, excluding the Northern Territory, marking a 5% increase on the previous year, according to new data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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[Back to Top](#)

# CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

## Australia No.1 for early bowel cancer

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 3

The number of under-50s being diagnosed with bowel cancer is increasing worldwide, and Australia has the highest rate of early-onset bowel cancer among the 50 countries measured by new US research. New Zealand has the highest annual increase in rates of bowel cancer in the under-50s, the American Cancer Society says.

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## An unwanted cancer record

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 26

Australia has the highest rate of bowel cancer among those aged under 50. The American Cancer Society studied 50 countries and found rates of bowel cancer in the under-50s was increasing worldwide with New Zealand recording the biggest jump.

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[Back to Top](#)

# PRIMARY CARE

## Alfred set to join merger

Herald Sun, General News, 13/12/2024, Sarah Booth, Page 20

Two of Melbourne's major health services will merge, with The Alfred and Peninsula Health revealing the surprise news on Thursday. The pair said they would form Bayside Health which would also include Kooweerup Regional Health Service in less than 13 months.

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## Heat on health system as ambulance ramping has summer spike

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Hannah Cross, Page 7

St John WA sent ambulances to more than 30 heatstroke victims in a 36-hour period this week as temperatures in parts of Perth passed 41C. Paramedics responded to 15 triple-0 calls on Wednesday – the most calls for heatstroke in five years – before that record was surpassed on Thursday with 16 call-outs.

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

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## Funds sought to boost dialysis options

Border Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 4

Seven months after an outcry over a lack of dialysis treatment on the Border, Albury Wodonga Health has lodged a business case for more machinery. The hospital authority has made an appeal to the Victorian government to increase its capacity to aid those who need assistance with their kidney function.

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

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## Health bosses are pushing back on Shepparton shadow

Border Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Anthony Bunn, Page 4

Albury Wodonga Health's chair has confirmed his service is urging the Victorian government not to fully place it under a Shepparton administration, saying, "we do view ourselves as natural leaders in our area". Jonathan Green's comment came at the institution's annual meeting when he was asked about the Victorian government's plan announced in August for five mega health networks with Albury-Wodonga to be in a Hume area stretching to Yea and Kyabram.

## Hospital snapped up

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 13/12/2024, Andrew Potts, Page 50

One of the Gold Coast's busiest day hospitals has sold for more than \$9.6m. Brisbane-based property fund manager Natgen has secured the whole-floor hospital in the Premion Place building on Southport's White Street.

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## Delays worsen at Wollongong Hospital

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 13/12/2024, Kate McIlwain, Page 3

The Health Minister says it's a lack of GPs, while the nurses say it's because there are more – and sicker – patients turning up to be seen with fewer staff. Either way, the number of patients being treated on time at Wollongong Hospital has tanked in the last quarter, with just over half the people who sought treatment at the ED starting it on time.

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

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## John Hunter apologises after unwanted record

Newcastle Herald, General News, 13/12/2024, Damon Cronshaw, Page 2

John Hunter Hospital's emergency department has recorded the worst result on record for the time to start treatment of patients with "imminently life-threatening conditions". NSW Health benchmarks require hospital staff to start treatment of patients in this emergency category within 10 minutes of arrival.

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## Anger over need to see GP to get long-term repeat prescriptions

The Courier Mail, Other, 12/12/2024, Jackie Sinnerton

A Queensland patient forced to see a doctor at full cost every three months for repeat prescriptions for medicines that he has been taking for decades feels ripped off and is calling for a probe into the practice. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners president Michael Wright has told The Courier-Mail that GPs are trained to have the professional autonomy and clinical independence to prescribe safely and in line with good medical practice.

[Read More](#)

## Man falsely claiming to be a paramedic treated a child involved in NSW collision

The Guardian, Other, 12/12/2024, Melissa Davey

A man who pretended to be a paramedic at motorcycle events and who treated a child involved in a collision has been ordered to serve a 24-month community corrections order. Lachlan Gardner marketed himself as a paramedic via his company, Event Health Services, and subsequently provided emergency first aid services at motorcycle events held throughout regional New South Wales in 2023.

[Read More](#)

## State government reveals GP payroll tax exemption

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

The Queensland Government has introduced draft laws to make GPs' 'wages' completely exempt from payroll tax. After a multi-year saga of state tax collectors trying to levy payroll tax on GPs, the newly elected Crisafulli government has chosen to give GP practices legislated protection from the menacing tax.

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[Back to Top](#)

## Cost-of-living stress exacerbates parental mental health crisis

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Michelle Dillon, Page 64

While the festive season is a time of great joy and excitement, it can also be an incredibly stressful time for parents and families. The extra pressure of paying for Christmas presents and food on already stretched budgets, plus the mental load of organising school, work and family functions, all come on top of the existing pressures of being a parent.

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[Back to Top](#)

## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Women in labour face 100km dash to hospital

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 13/12/2024, Kate Aubusson, Page 5

Women in labour expecting to give birth at Gosford could be loaded into ambulances and raced down the M1 motorway to Sydney from Monday if the Central Coast hospital cannot find a solution to a critical staffing shortage. In an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday night, Gosford Hospital's executive told the Staff Medical Council that its obstetrics and gynaecology services were at risk of going on bypass if they could not find a solution to a senior specialist shortage that made it impossible to supervise obstetrics trainees safely.

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### Union demands new nurse retention plan

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 5

Nurses are demanding to know how healthcare services will be retained and critical workforce shortages managed following the LNP government's axing of the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme (WAIS) that lured 800 nurses and midwives to the regions. The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union is calling on the government to make public details around what will replace the axed incentives to bring healthcare workers to regional Queensland hospitals.

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

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### Remote health bonus axed

Cairns Post, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 3

Cutting a scheme that offered incentives to healthcare workers to move to the regions to the tune of up to \$70,000 has been criticised by Cairns MP Michael Healy. The incentives, worth up to \$70,000 to lure Queensland Health workers to remote and vacant roles, were axed by the state government this week.

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### Doctors, nurses raise alarm as scheme for bush health workers on chopping block

Brisbane Times, Other, 12/12/2024, William Davis

A program encouraging healthcare professionals to work in rural and remote areas appears set to be axed by the Queensland state government. The Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme provides

additional funding to doctors, nurses and other Queensland Health employees who relocate to underserved locations outside major regional centres.

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[Back to Top](#)

## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### Endometriosis treatment now PBS-listed

Shepparton News Online, Other, 12/12/2024, Lua Ikenasio

Those living with endometriosis will have access to more affordable treatment with the drug dienogest now listed under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Sold under the brand name Visanne, dienogest is the first drug to specifically treat endometriosis to be subsidised by the Federal Government in more than 30 years.

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[Back to Top](#)

## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Stopping sex pest doctors

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Madura McCormack , Page 17

Health professionals will have any sexual misconduct history dating back more than a decade displayed publicly under major law changes designed to keep patients safe. Queensland will lead the charge in pushing through the national laws, sparked by a doubling of sexual misconduct allegations made against health practitioners over three years. [...] As it stands national boards have to publish active disciplinary sanctions on AHPRA's public register, but this is removed once the imposed punishment expires.

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

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### Parental leave means less rego

Medical Forum, Other, 12/12/2024

From 1 July 2025, a 30% rebate on annual Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registration fees will come into effect, alongside a wider review of pro rate fees. It is hoped the move will provide financial relief for practitioners who take parental leave and other forms of protected leave such as disability and carer's leave.

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[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### What you need to know about self-swabs and cervical cancer screening

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 12/12/2024, Mia Erickson

If you're a woman or person with a cervix aged 25 or over, you've probably already experienced a cervical cancer screening at your local GP. Here's why the new HPV self-collect test could save

countless lives across Australia.

Syndicated from: [Body+Soul \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

## SPORT

### Strategic move: China benched as PNG, Australia seal the deal for new NRL team

The Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Ben Packham, Page 4

A historic \$600m deal to give Papua New Guinea an NRL team has dashed China's hopes for a security pact with Australia's nearest neighbour under a provision allowing the agreement to be terminated if PNG undermines the nations' "strategic trust". Anthony Albanese and his PNG counterpart James Marape formally unveiled the taxpayerfunded deal on Thursday, in which a Port Moresby-based side will take to the field in 2028.

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

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

### PNG's \$600m NRL deal carries a catch

Australian Financial Review, General News, 13/12/2024, Andrew Tillett and Zoe Samios, Page 10

Papua New Guinea's NRL team will be shut down if Port Moresby signs a security agreement with China, as a condition of Australian taxpayers bankrolling its elite rugby league dream with \$600 million. In the latest bid by Australia to thwart Beijing's ...

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

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### Fans celebrate as \$600m seals PNG an NRL team

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 13/12/2024, Matthew Knott, Page 1

Australian Rugby League Commission chairman Peter V'landys says another NRL expansion franchise could be unveiled within weeks. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his PNG counterpart James Marape yesterday announced a \$600 million deal for a Papua New Guinea team to enter the NRL from 2028.

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

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

### China sent into touch

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Michael Carayannis, Page 1

The NRL's \$600m handout from the Australian government over the new Papua New Guinea expansion team comes with a "China-related" clause under which the federal government could blow up the deal at any time. It is understood the historic 10-year commitment, announced yesterday, can be immediately halted should PNG strike up a deal with China.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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

### Regional security a new ball game due to footy diplomacy

The Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Ben Packham, Page 4

Spending \$600m over a decade on a Papua New Guinean NRL team is a stunningly good investment in Australia's national security. Australian taxpayers shell out about that much on aid to PNG every year, but few could point to tangible benefits for a country in which 40 per cent of people continue to survive on less than \$5 a day.

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

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

## \$600m PNG deal in different league

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Dominic Giannini, Page 11

The Prime Minister has sought to tackle China's growing influence in the Pacific by taking a pricey punt on an NRL team in Port Moresby. The Federal Government is putting \$600 million over a decade towards an unnamed PNG rugby league team, which won't take the field until 2028.

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

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

## Soft power of sport has a decidedly hard edge

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 13/12/2024, Matthew Knott, Page 4

The setting of the press conference told the story. No footballs were thrown, no cheerleaders waved pom poms. The leaders, wearing suits and ties, stood beside each other at the formal, rather bland Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices in Sydney. Not at one of the city's top rugby league stadiums, as might have been expected.

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## As \$600m deal locks in PNG, NRL rolls on towards 20 teams

Age, Sport, 13/12/2024, Matthew Knott, Page 36

As soon as a \$600 million deal was announced for a Papua New Guinea team to enter the NRL from 2028, Australian Rugby League Commission chairman Peter V'landys signalled another expansion announcement could be imminent. V'landys said there could be another franchise unveiled within weeks, with a Perth-based team the strong favourite to secure the spot although the success of the bid will rely heavily on the investment of the West Australian government.

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## Fan vote to decide name of new club

Sydney Morning Herald, Sport, 13/12/2024, Jasper Bruce, Page 42

The nickname of the new Papua New Guinea NRL team will be put to a vote in the Pacific nation, say the men behind its bid for entry into the league. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and PNG counterpart James Marape met in Sydney yesterday to officially announce the team would join the NRL in 2028.

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

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## PNG, PVL and the Prime Minister

Sydney Morning Herald, Sport, 13/12/2024, Michael Chammas and Chris Barrett, Page 44

Papua New Guinea PM James Marape told Australian government leaders he didn't want a gift to celebrate his country's independence in 2025 he just wanted an NRL team. Yesterday he got his wish. This is the inside story of how the deal was done.

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

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## The NRL's newest recruit PNG is good for sport and Pacific politics

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 12/12/2024, Editorial

The \$600 million mega deal for a Port Moresby-based team to enter the NRL competition is a powerful reminder of how sports diplomacy can connect two countries. With half the code's players having Pacific Island heritage and NRL being the national sport of Papua New Guinea, the long-awaited joint announcement by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and PNG Prime Minister James Marape that the nation will play in the NRL competition from 2028 is recognition of our shared past, present and future.

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## PM 'bets his life' players will be safe

Canberra Times, Sport, 13/12/2024, Jasper Bruce and Scott Bailey, Page 68

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister is prepared to "bet his life" on NRL players remaining safe on

relocating to Port Moresby to join the league's forthcoming franchise. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his PNG counterpart James Marape met in Sydney on Thursday to shake hands over the deal to welcome a PNG team into the NRL in 2028.

*Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Tamworth\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).*

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## 'Premiership in 10 years': PM

The Australian, Sport, 13/12/2024, Dean Ritchie, Page 22

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape has boldly predicted his new NRL franchise can win a premiership within 10 years as it develops a hit list of rugby league's finest players and coaches, which includes the Clearys. While PNG will mainly target homegrown talent through its burgeoning pathways system, The Australian can reveal it would look at star players Nathan Cleary, Cam Munster and Bradman Best, all off contract in 2027, a year before PNG's entry.

*Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#).*

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## PNG to join NRL in 2028

Cairns Post, General News, 13/12/2024, Jessica Wang, Page 7

Australia props up bid with \$600m Papua New Guinea will officially join the NRL from 2028 with a Port Moresby-based team in a major agreement aimed at bolstering security relations and strategic trust between the two countries and dashing China's growing influence in South Pacific. Australia will pay \$600m to prop up the initial 10-year "rugby league for diplomacy" deal, which was confirmed in a joint press conference between Anthony Albanese and PNG Prime Minister James Marape on Thursday.

*Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#).*

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## Cook still confident WA will be a major player

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Jessica Page and Jake Dietsch, Page 11

Roger Cook remains hopeful Perth will join the NRL before Papua New Guinea in 2028 but is reluctant to commit to a price tag that could be hundreds of millions of dollars. The Federal Government announced on Thursday that it would pay \$600 million over 10 years to help establish a team in Port Moresby.

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## Has \$600m NRL deal tackled China's major Pacific ambitions?

The Nightly, General News, 12/12/2024, Nicola Smith and Ben McClellan, Page 9

Australia has used the footy code in a deft soft power gambit against Beijing There's few similarities between the rugby league field and the chessboard. But in its geopolitical chess game with China, Australia has deftly used the football code to play a soft power gambit.

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## Why PNG's new \$600m footy team is like a DFAT posting

Canberra Times, Sport, 13/12/2024, David Polkinghorne, Page 65

Tax-free income, free accommodation and an overseas posting in an exotic city. The NRL's new Papua New Guinea team sounds a lot like a plum gig with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. So it's probably not surprising DFAT are kicking in \$120 million of the federal government's \$600 million funding across 10 years for the Port Moresby-based team that will join the NRL in 2028.

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## Papua New Guinea team to enter NRL in 2028

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 24



A team from Papua New Guinea will enter the NRL from 2028 after officially being granted a licence by the league. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his PNG counterpart James Marape met in Sydney yesterday to shake hands over the deal, the culmination of two years of planning.

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## In a contest of influence in Papua New Guinea, Australia triumphed over China through our shared love of footy

ABC Online, Other, 12/12/2024, Marian Faa

On the eve of this year's State of Origin grand final, a Papua New Guinean colleague gifted me two bright "bilum hats" — woven beanies in the traditional style of his home in the highlands of PNG. Against a striking maroon background, they proudly exhibit the words "QLD" and "Maroons", a poignant manifestation of how deeply interwoven rugby league is with Papua New Guinean culture.

*Similar coverage:* [SBS \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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## Olympic projects 'may need to be privatised'

Australian Financial Review, Property, 13/12/2024, Michael Bleby, Page 25

Brisbane's labour shortage will drive a faster rise in construction costs than Sydney and Melbourne over the next four years, forcing the state government to allow private groups to fund and operate assets such as a new Olympic stadium, consultancy ...

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## Greats go in to bat for Vic Park

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Robert Craddock, Page 9

Two Queensland Test legends have backed Cricket Australia's plan to ditch Brisbane's iconic Gabba in favour of a new Olympic stadium, potentially at Victoria Park. As revealed in The Courier Mail on Thursday, Cricket Australia strongly supports the development of the new stadium for the Brisbane 2032 Games, which would become the new home of Queensland cricket and the Brisbane Lions AFL club.

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## Big price to play football

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 19

Expensive player registration and club membership prices are the main obstacles to participating in football. Forty-four per cent of respondents to the Ultra Football survey said football was one of the most expensive sports to pursue in Australia.

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## Scoring goals on Premier's \$10 million election pitch

West Australian, General News, 13/12/2024, Jessica Page, Page 7

Politicians and ball sports do not always mix well. Think John Howard's bowling or Scott Morrison's rugby tackle that felled a child in 2022.

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[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Copper key to kids' cancer

Courier Mail, General News, 13/12/2024, Page 19

The survival rate for children with a rare cancer could be improved by adding a drug used to manage excess copper to their treatment. TETA (triethylenetetramine), marketed as Cuprior, can be used to weaken tumours and strengthen the fighting capacity of immune cells, increasing the success rate of a

cancer treatment for high-risk neuroblastoma from 10 per cent to 50 per cent, new research in mice led by UNSW Sydney shows.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Record number of Indigenous doctors graduate from University of Newcastle

National Indigenous Times, Other, 12/12/2024, Giovanni Torre

The University of Newcastle is celebrating the biggest ever cohort of Indigenous doctors graduating from the Joint Medical Program (JMP), with 18 new doctors ready to bolster an empowered Indigenous health care network. More than 3,700 students, including doctors, teachers, psychologists and engineers are being celebrated over five huge days and 13 inspiring ceremonies as the University hosts its largest graduation ever this week.

Related coverage: [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

### Probe into case of measles

Sunshine Coast Daily, General News, 13/12/2024, Sam Turner, Page 9

A confirmed case of the measles on the Sunshine Coast is now being investigated to discover those who may be at risk of infection. In a statement on Saturday afternoon, Sunshine Coast Health said their public health unit were managing a confirmed case of the infectious disease.

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### Libby Mettam says Liberals will fund Meningococcal B vaccines

West Australian, Other, 12/12/2024, Jake Dietsch and Jessica Page

WA's Premier has insisted the Commonwealth should pay for Meningococcal B vaccinations, while Libby Mettam was among three party leaders promising to fund the jab. Ms Mettam, who is leader and health spokesperson for the WA Liberals, said the party would spend \$6 million per year to make the jabs against the serious bacterial infection free — if it wins the March 8 State election.

Ms Mettam: [West Australian \(Perth\)](#).

[Read More](#)

### WA kids miss out on vax

Medical Forum, Other, 12/12/2024

Vaccination rates among children in WA are lagging far behind the national benchmark, prompting public health concerns. Latest data show only 89.6% of WA children aged under two are up to date with their scheduled vaccines, well below the national benchmark of 95%.

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[Back to Top](#)

## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Can supplements lower blood sugar levels and improve diabetes?

## Here's what the science says

ABC Online, Other, 12/12/2024, Olivia Willis

It's hard to think of an ailment for which there isn't a supplement that promises relief — and Australia's fastest growing chronic condition is no exception. With one person estimated to develop diabetes every five minutes, it's no surprise there are a host of vitamins, minerals and herbs that claim to improve metabolism and lower blood sugar levels. [...] In Australia, most supplements fall into the category of low-risk complementary medicines, which means the Therapeutic Goods Administration only regulates them for safety and quality — not for whether they actually do what they claim to.

[Read More](#)

## Family Planning report reveals a third of NSW local government areas had no doctors providing medical abortions in 2022

ABC Online, Other, 12/12/2024, Lucy Barbour and Lucy Sweeney

When Charlotte (not her real name) asked a doctor in the New South Wales southern highlands for a medical abortion, he ignored her request, gave her a blood test referral and ushered her out of the room. The decision to terminate her third pregnancy was not one she had made lightly. [...] Last year, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) relaxed restrictions around MS-2 Step so that more health practitioners could prescribe it.

[Read More](#)

## Has the genie escaped? Health ministers uncap the bottle on nurses prescribing S4 drugs

Australian Doctor, Other, 12/12/2024, Paul Smith

Doctors will be expected to sign written agreements with nurses. There is no escaping that the gathering of the country's various health ministers last Friday carried a historical significance when it comes to health reform. [...] That will be determined by the amendments that the individual state and territories put through their respective parliaments to amend their drugs and poisons legislation — so the safety profile of the policy lies with the judgement of politicians rather than the body we thought responsible, the TGA.

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[Back to Top](#)

## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### Fears drug use worsening in the Kimberley after footage emerges of public injections

ABC Online, Other, 12/12/2024

Footage of a man injecting women with what appear to be drugs in a public space in far north Western Australia has sparked concern about a growing prevalence of substance use in the region. The ABC has chosen not to publish the CCTV footage, which shows two women waiting outside a Broome shop in the early hours of Friday morning.

[Read More](#)

### 'Deadly concoction': AFP seized more than 130kg of pink cocaine in 2024

Canberra Times, Other, 12/12/2024, Joel Ehsman

Breaking Bad made blue meth infamous but the Australian Federal Police has spent 2024 tackling a different coloured drug. The AFP seized 133kg of pink cocaine across eight different consignments between March and July 2024.

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[Back to Top](#)

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

### AICIS

#### **ABC Ombudsman dismisses complaints about Landline's paraquat coverage**

West Australian, Other, 12/12/2024, Olivia Ford

The ABC Ombudsman has dismissed complaints made by peak farming bodies about its coverage of the herbicide paraquat, concluding the reporting on the chemical was fair and accurate. The ABC Ombudsman received six content complaints, some of which were from Grain Producers Australia, CropLife Australia and the National Farmers' Federation, about the Landline segment "After The Harvest", as well as associated reporting on paraquat.

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[Back to Top](#)

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