



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 29th December 2024

*Today's News* will not be sent on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, or New Year's Day. Prominent media items captured during this period will be reported in the following day's summary. Access to Isentia's Mediportal will be available during this period and any recurring reports set up in the platform will be delivered as normal.

Please contact [writing.support@health.gov.au](mailto:writing.support@health.gov.au) if you have any questions.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sunday Telegraph](#)** (page 1) reports the Retirement Living Council has warned of impending aged care accommodation and healthcare shortages in NSW as the average age of residents has risen above 40 for the first time. A spokesperson for Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said a recently passed \$4.3 billion investment into aged care will add 300,000 home care packages in the next decade.
- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports residents in Sydney's north-west say a new hospital at Rouse Hill to be completed by 2029 should have a birthing suite, while NSW health authorities say birthing services won't be required until the late 2030s, with the cost of adding them when required already considered in modelling.
- **[The Sunday Times](#)** (page 1) reports the general manager at Road Trauma Support WA is calling for more funding as he says a lack of mental health practitioners trained to deal with children under 13 is forcing them to refer children to other services.

- [The Sunday Age](#) (page 1) reports more safety precautions for sailors in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race need to be implemented, according to the owner of the winning boat, who says the deaths of two sailors on Friday should foster a conversation about safety reforms.
- [The Sunday Tasmanian](#) (page 5) reports parents who believe they are teaching their children responsible drinking by supplying them with alcohol when they are underage are contributing to risky drinking, according to a study by Flinders University.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Andrew Wilkie concerned Pfizer is only Covid vaccination choice for constituent

Adelaide Now, Other, 28/12/2024, Sue Bailey

The federal member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie, has written to the health minister saying it is "disturbing" that Pfizer is now the only Covid vaccine available in Australia under the national immunisation program. [...] A spokesman for the Department of Health and Aged Care said supply of Moderna and Novavax's original Covid vaccines "have been exhausted and are no longer manufactured".

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

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### The year in review: September 2024

OUTinPerth, Other, 29/12/2024, Meta Time

September saw the continuation of debates of gender boards, questions in the census, and conversion therapy. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the federal government would consider allowing LGBTIQ+ people more access to IVF.

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## MINISTER WELLS

### Midlife crisis

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 29/12/2024, Lachlan Leeming, Page 1

The average age of NSW residents has risen past 40 for the first time ever, triggering concerns that housing and healthcare in the country's most populous state aren't ready for an impending "silver tsunami". [...] "The Albanese Government is investing \$4.3bn in a new system of home care," a spokesman for Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said, adding that 300,000 new home care packages would be introduced over the next decade.

Also reported by: [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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### Pricey Paris for Patrick

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 29/12/2024, Madeleine Bower, Page 17

It's a well-known fact that government Ministers often love to fly business class on their overseas sojourns, but it is unusual for junior ministers to spend tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars on international travel. [...] Mr Gorman's trip was almost as expensive as Sport Minister Anika Wells's trip to the Olympics one week later.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## DEPARTMENT

### Andrew Wilkie concerned Pfizer is only Covid vaccination choice for constituent

Adelaide Now, Other, 28/12/2024, Sue Bailey

The federal member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie, has written to the health minister saying it is "disturbing" that Pfizer is now the only Covid vaccine available in Australia under the national immunisation program. [...] A spokesman for the Department of Health and Aged Care said supply of Moderna and Novavax's original Covid vaccines "have been exhausted and are no longer manufactured".

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## VACCINES

### The pandemic's untold fertility story

ABC Online, Other, 29/12/2024, Hayley Gleeson

When Melanie Broadley and her husband started going out in 2019, like many couples their age they decided to put "starting a family" on the shelf for a few years so they could focus on their careers. A postdoctoral researcher who studies diabetes and psychology, Broadley was 28 and in good health — she had plenty of time, she reasoned.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

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## POPULATION HEALTH

## Researchers use AI to solve mystery of booze-liver disease link

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 29/12/2024, Toby Crockford, Page 17

Queensland researchers are turning to AI to help people better manage alcohol and stop them developing liver disease. QIMR Berghofer clinical director and hepatologist Professor Elizabeth Powell said that at this time of year it was common for people to think about the long-term impacts of their drinking habits.

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## Parents factor in teen drinking

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 29/12/2024, Agnes Gichuhi, Page 5

New Australian research shows parents to be the cause of, not the solution to, underage drinking. The new study, led by Flinders University, surveyed more than 1197 parents across the country with kids aged 12 to 17, to understand their "motives, beliefs and attitudes" towards supplying alcohol to their underage children.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### AI tool can detect asymptomatic heart patients

Canberra Times, Other, 29/12/2024

A new artificial intelligence tool is finding people with a heart condition before they even have symptoms. [...] But leading heart charity the British Heart Foundation (BHF) said there are likely many thousands of undiagnosed people in the UK who are unaware they're living with the condition.

Also reported by: [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#)

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## PRIMARY CARE

### North-west booms but there's still no hospital

Sun Herald, General News, 29/12/2024, Angus Thomson, Page 1

It's 9am on a Thursday and Windsor Road has slowed to a crawl. Semi-trailers carry building materials, SUVs head to the shopping centre after the school run, and tradies dip into the drivethrough after a trip to Bunnings.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### 'We can't help the kids who need us'

Sunday Times, General News, 29/12/2024, Caleb Runciman, Page 1

Traumatised children affected by the carnage on our roads are being turned away from counselling because of a lack of specialist mental health practitioners at the agency set up to help them. The revelation has prompted calls for more funding for a service that got just \$1 million of \$126m available in 2023-24.

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## Gen Z keeps it real

Sunday Mail Adelaide, Editorials, 29/12/2024, Page 65

The results of a recent national survey that show 57 per cent of the nation's youngest adults Generation Z or Zoomers wish social media didn't exist are startling. It's not a statistic you expect. After all, for this tech-savvy younger generation, born between 1995 and 2009, social media has always existed and been a regular part of life.

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## SPORT

### Yacht race winner had 'scary' night

Sunday Age, General News, 29/12/2024, Anthony Segaert & Carrie Fellner, Page 1

The owner of the winning boat in this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race says more needs to be done to protect sailors, after he experienced the worst conditions he had seen on the water the night two sailors died. Christian Beck's LawConnect took out line honours when the supermaxi crossed the line on the River Derwent at 2.35am yesterday.

**Kyrgios backhand for 'cheat' sinner**

Sunday Age, General News, 29/12/2024, Marc McGowan, Page 1

Nick Kyrgios has doubled down on his criticism of Jannik Sinner and his anti-doping case on the eve of the Australian's much-anticipated return in Brisbane, accusing the world No.1 of trying to "cheat". Sinner avoided a ban after a five-month investigation, but was stripped of \$325,000 prizemoney and his ranking points for reaching the Indian Wells semi-finals after twice testing positive in March to banned substance clostebol.

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**Schrinner's Games pitch**

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 29/12/2024, Taylah Fellows, Page 1

Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner has penned a wishlist to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games review boss requesting part of the \$7.1bn kitty be used to fund council transport projects, including expansions to the Brisbane Metro and a new bridge. Mr Schrinner requested \$447.5m in funding for 18 projects, saying the current network could only service half of the trips needed to get athletes and spectators to and from venues.

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**Don't panic**

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 29/12/2024, James Bresnehan, Page 1

The time is 3.14am and a rogue wave washes Hobart sailor Luke Watkins overboard, forcing him more than 4km from his boat. "It's a big ocean and it was dark and it was rough and it was windy," he recalls.

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**HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH**

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**FIRST NATIONS HEALTH**

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**INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC**

**How the Beyond The Valley music festival pill testing trial will work**

ABC Online, Other, 28/12/2024

About 35,000 festival-goers attending the popular New Year's festival Beyond the Valley will have access to pill testing technology for the first time in Victoria. Also known as drug checking, it's a process that tests the contents of most drugs for potentially life-threatening substances like synthetic opioids.

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**THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION**

## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### In a state of drug disasters

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 29/12/2024, Page 64

Authorities must act urgently, with the support of state and federal governments, to get on top of Queensland's emerging drug crisis. According to the latest findings of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring program, cocaine use in Brisbane and regional Queensland has spiked to its highest level in seven years.

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### Miracle of medicinal cannabis is all smoke ... and mirrors, says top doctor

The Australian, Other, 28/12/2024, Steve Robson

Cannabis is pitched as a natural treatment that offers a cornucopia of health benefits with few side-effects. Enthusiasts say it has potent anti-inflammatory properties and cures chronic pain while strengthening the immune system and improving your cardiovascular system.

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### It's time to rethink medicinal cannabis in Australia

The Australian, Other, 28/12/2024, Michael Gannon

The role of medicinal cannabis remains a controversial matter. The drug is not a new one. There is archaeological evidence of cannabis being smoked in prehistorical times in central Asia.

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## FOOD STANDARDS

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## AICIS

### Worries over tiny plastics in teabags

Sunday Times, General News, 29/12/2024, Page 14

For millions of Australians, the day doesn't really start until they have had their first cup of tea. But a new study may make you think twice before reaching for the kettle.

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