



# TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 30th 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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| [Assistant Minister Kearney](#) | [Assistant Minister Thwaites](#) | [Department](#)  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Herald Sun** (page 1) reports experts are warning a new fashion trend involving showing off sunburnt tan lines on social media could lead to an increase in melanomas for young people, with unsafe sun safety practices being promoted by influencers online. *Also reported by:* [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Daily Telegraph](#), [Hobart Mercury](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin](#)
- **The Newcastle Herald** (page 1) reports a redacted report released by NSW Health shows that urgency categories for surgical patients at John Hunter Hospital were routinely downgraded to avoid breaches of recommended waiting times, with senior clinicians and surgeons claiming NSW Health pressured them to do so in order to gain more favourable breach rates.
- **ABC Online** reports the NSW Cancer Institute is urging women to undergo their two-yearly breast screening as it was revealed 48.4 of women in NSW are overdue for a check.
- **The Sydney Morning Herald** (page 7) reports claims that 60-day prescribing would cause over 600 pharmacies to close have been proven wrong, with only 22 closing and 87 new pharmacies

approved since the changes came in. “The Albanese government has had a laser-like focus on delivering cheaper medicines. Our hard-fought reforms are delivering cheaper medicines to millions of Australians, already saving them more than \$1 billion in out-of-pocket costs.”, Health Minister Mark Butler said.

- **The Sydney Morning Herald** (page 9) reports an attendee at the Beyond the Valley festival has been hospitalised for a suspected drug overdose, with festival organisers saying the anonymous nature of pill-testing means they are unable to tell if the testing facilities being trialled at the site were utilised by the man. *Also reported by: The Age, Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph, Geelong Advertiser*

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### **Despite fears, a change of script gilds pharmacy lily**

Age, General News, 30/12/2024, James Massola, Page 5

It was the policy change that one of the country's most powerful lobby groups warned would lead to hundreds of pharmacies closing and put thousands of people out of work, and reduced its president, Trent Twomey, to tears. [...] New figures from the Department of Health and Ageing reveal that between September 1, 2023, when 60-day scripts began, and November 30, 2024, the department received a total of 165 applications to open new pharmacies.

*Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online), WA Today (Online), Brisbane Times (Online), The Age (Online), Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney).*

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## MINISTER WELLS

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### **Amid turbulent political times, the value of walking on Country and collective action for climate-resilient healthcare**

Croakey, Other, 29/12/2024, Alison Barrett

Croakey is closed for summer holidays and will resume publishing in the week of 13 January 2025. In the meantime, we are re-publishing some of our top articles from 2024. [...] The CAHA forum's opening session will also hear from Ged Kearney, Assistant Minister for Health, Aged Care and Indigenous Health, who is being urged to ensure the National Health and Climate Strategy is fully resourced.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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## DEPARTMENT

### Despite fears, a change of script gilds pharmacy lily

Age, General News, 30/12/2024, James Massola, Page 5

It was the policy change that one of the country's most powerful lobby groups warned would lead to hundreds of pharmacies closing and put thousands of people out of work, and reduced its president, Trent Twomey, to tears. [...] New figures from the Department of Health and Ageing reveal that between September 1, 2023, when 60-day scripts began, and November 30, 2024, the department received a total of 165 applications to open new pharmacies.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [WA Today \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#), [The Age \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Sydney\)](#).

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## VACCINES

### New COVID strain sweeps Queensland with 'sharp increase' in cases

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 29/12/2024, Catherine Strohfeldt

A new COVID-19 Omicron sub-variant has led to a "sharp increase" in cases across the holiday period in Queensland, with health experts urging Queenslanders to take care while visiting older relatives. Queensland Health said the XEC strain, which arrived in Australia around October, comprised about 49 per cent of COVID-19 samples taken during the past two weeks.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Liquor sales fall as young ring in 2025 alcohol-free

Sydney Morning Herald, Business News, 30/12/2024, Hannah Kennelly, Page 26

On a scorching Boxing Day in Melbourne's inner-city, Andrew Crompton is busy inside his store Act of Wine, meticulously placing bottles of prosecco and Yarra Valley pinot noir on display shelves. [...] " According to data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), young people are drinking less and also driving a long-term increase in abstaining from alcohol.

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### Parents' give rise to boozy children

Courier Mail, General News, 30/12/2024, Agnes Gichuhi, Page 2

Well-meaning parents who give their children sips of beer and wine could be fuelling dangerous drinking habits, alarming research shows. A report shows Australian parents are contributing to the problem of underage drinking, by not teaching responsible consumption.

Also reported by: [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### How a stroll down memory lane can add purpose to your future

Age, General News, 30/12/2024, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 18

One of the hardest questions to answer is a deceptively simple one: who are you? But this is precisely the question that "reminiscence" or "life review" therapies, which draw on autobiographical memory, look to answer.

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### Tanned teens risk their lives for likes

Adelaide Advertiser, Editorials, 30/12/2024, Page 20

The memorable slogan of "slip, slop, slap" helped teach generations of Australian schoolkids the importance of sun safety. But now, thanks to the malign influence of social media, it seems the younger generation needs a refresher course on the deadly danger of melanoma.

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### Sunburn fashion statement

Herald Sun, General News, 30/12/2024, Grace Baldwin, Page 1

Young people are sunburning tan lines into their chests as part of a trend that has experts concerned that Gen Z missed the memo about sun safety. [...] Cancer Council Victoria head of prevention Craig Sinclair said there was never a safe way to tan, and recommended the free SunSmart Global UV app.

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

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### Spot the changes and save a life

Herald Sun, General News, 30/12/2024, Peter Mansell, Page 23

A parent's worst nightmare is to bury their child. It is against the natural order of things, and only those who have stared into a coffin at their lifeless child would truly be able to understand the heartbreak.

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### Almost half of NSW women overdue on breast screens, cancer survivor urges people to get regular mammograms

ABC Online, Other, 29/12/2024, Isabella Ross

Peta Wilson has learned firsthand what a lifesaver regular breast checks can be. In 2017, a then 41-year-old Ms Wilson was busy with her career and being a mother of two kids under the age of six.

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### 2GB, Healthy Living, 29/12/2024, Dr Ross Walker & Ned Green

Interview with University of Melbourne's Prof Catherine Granger about early detection of lung cancer. Granger says their trial involved people who had early stage lung cancer and going through surgery for it. She says they tested a home-based exercise program for people after their surgery. She says the program is focused on recovery for the patient.

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### 2GB, Healthy Living, 29/12/2024, Dr Ross Walker & Ned Green

Interview with Westmead Institute for Medical Research and the University of Sydney ovarian cancer

researcher Prof Anna deFazio about ovarian cancer treatment options. DeFazio says the new options are a type of targeted treatment called PARP inhibitor, which are especially effective in women with alterations in genes called BRCA1 and BRCA2 and others in that pathway. She says alterations in these genes make the cancer cells a bit weak and susceptible to PARP inhibitors, and these new treatments are given in addition to usual care.

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## 2GB, Healthy Living, 29/12/2024, Dr Ross Walker & Ned Green

Interview with University of Sydney Dr Nicholas Chartres about exposure to microplastics being linked to lung and bowel cancer. Chartres says the largest exposure that most people are exposed to come from secondary microplastics, which are degradation products. He says there have been studies on the effects of microplastics in the cardiovascular system, and there have been studies showing they potentially harm human fertility.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Surgery waitlists 'fudged'

Newcastle Herald, General News, 30/12/2024, Gabriel Fowler, Page 1

An official report kept under wraps supports John Hunter Hospital surgeons' claims they were being pressured internally to re-categorise the urgency of surgeries to meet NSW Health targets. The report said that "resourcing constraints" resulted in the downgrading of clinical urgency categories, and there were "internal perceived pressures" to avoid "breaches".

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### A year of challenges, fresh ideas and new beginnings

Shepparton News, General News, 30/12/2024, Georgia Tacey, Page 6

A new partnership between GV Health and Euroa Health is helping residents in Euroa access more free health care. On March 15, it was announced that Euroa Health and GV Health were partnering together, backed by the Victorian Government with a \$5.5 million investment to deliver more care and upgrade Euroa Health.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Left to die alone in prison

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 30/12/2024, Natalie Croxon, Page 1

A coroner's report has found "gross systemic failure" of the prison system after a 41-year-old Illawarra man was left to die in a Silverwater Correctional Centre cell. In September 2021, staff discovered mentally unwell Simon Cartwright dead, later established as septic shock stemming from chronic peptic ulcer disease.

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### Shellharbour Hospital cleared of wrongdoing

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 30/12/2024, Natalie Croxon, Page 4

The decision to discharge a mentally ill woman from Shellharbour Hospital shortly before she died was appropriate, a coroner has found. Olivia Gilfillan went missing on February 1, 2018, the day after she was discharged from the hospital's mental health inpatient unit with a plan for her ongoing treatment.

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## Set for demolition

Launceston Examiner, General News, 30/12/2024, Joe Colbrook, Page 1

A 19th century building looks set to be demolished as the state government moves forwards with plans to build a new mental health precinct in Launceston. Plans for the demolition of 52 Frankland Street are being exhibited after a development application was lodged with the City of Launceston council.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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## SPORT

### 'Absolute trash': Nine caned over 'live' sport

West Australian, General News, 30/12/2024, Craig O'Donoghue, Page 1

Perth sports figures are up in arms over the quality of Nine's sports coverage after the broadcaster failed to show a local club's win live into WA, despite doing so in the rest of the country. Perth Lynx will ask the incoming Women's National Basketball League boss to address what it has described as "consistent issues" with Nine's broadcasts.

## What a cheek

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 30/12/2024, Christine Schindler, Page 1

The Gold Coast Turf Club is making an audacious pitch to beat Toowoomba to the hosting rights for equestrian events at the 2032 Olympics. Club bosses are developing a Games masterplan which would see its Bundall complex become the host for showjumping and dressage events.

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## 'Frustrated' Djokovic calls for doping transparency

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 30/12/2024, Marco Monteverde, Page 31

Tennis great Novak Djokovic says a lack of transparency in the sport when it comes to doping matters has left him feeling "really frustrated". Italian star Jannik Sinner twice tested positive in March for the banned steroid clostebol, but he wasn't suspended after successfully arguing to the International Tennis Integrity Agency that the steroid entered his system through contamination from his physiotherapist.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Experts' work to slow a deadly ill

West Australian, General News, 30/12/2024, Jessica Evensen, Page 12

A groundbreaking immunotherapy treatment has been proven to "significantly" delay the progression of a deadly blood cancer, a new Perth research study has found. In 2017, the Perth Blood Institute launched an international clinical trial in a bid to delay the advancement of smoldering multiple myeloma; an asymptomatic plasma cell disorder which often develops into multiple myeloma.

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### Weight loss via exercise

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 30/12/2024, Page 7

People who are aiming to lose weight through exercise need to spend at least 150 minutes per week engaged in aerobic training, research suggests. The conclusion arose from a review of 116 clinical trials involving nearly 7000 overweight or obese adults with a Body Mass Index of more than 25.

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### 2GB, Healthy Living, 29/12/2024, Dr Ross Walker & Ned Green

Interview with Monash Victorian Heart Institute and Victorian Heart Hospital director Prof Steven Nicholls about two clinical trials, the Kraken Trial and the Brooklyn Trial. Nicholls says the Kraken trial looks at trying to reduce levels of lipoprotein (a), and the Brooklyn trial looks at people who have the genetic form of high levels of LDL cholesterol and familial hypercholesterolaemia.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

## Overdose on day one of pill tests

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 30/12/2024, Rachael Dexter & Marta Pascual Juanola, Page 9

A young festival-goer has been hospitalised with a suspected drug overdose at a festival where pilltesting is being trialled for the first time in Victoria. Paramedics were called to Beyond the Valley festival in Hesse, 45 kilometres west of Geelong, on Saturday about 4.40pm to attend to a man in his 20s.

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

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## Drug overdose on first day of pill testing

Daily Telegraph, General News, 30/12/2024, Angus McIntyre, Page 9

A music festival attendee was taken to hospital after a suspected drug overdose on the first day of a pill testing trial in Victoria. The man, aged in his 20s, became ill on the first day of the Beyond The Valley music festival.

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

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### Planting a seed for rethinking drug policies

Hobart Mercury, General News, 30/12/2024, Greg Barns, Page 16

Fortunately we are moving into a world where the absurd, judgmental division of drugs into the licit and illicit category is dying. A decade ago LSD was seen as dangerous. Now its health benefits are known.

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