



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 1st February 2025

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Weekend Australian](#)** (page 1) reports US research shows flossing your teeth at least once a week reduces the risk of stroke by a fifth, with the dental habit reducing the build-up of bacteria and plaque, which are linked to blood clots and heart disease. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports there were an estimated 40,700 strokes in Australia in 2021.
- **[The Saturday Age](#)** (page 1) reports the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is investigating an Australian compounding pharmacy for selling colic medicine containing the toxic ingredient belladonna and the Therapeutic Goods Administration is considering classifying belladonna as a schedule four drug, which would then require a doctor to prescribe it.
- **[The AFR Weekend](#)** (page 2) reports Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has asked the Queensland government to stop its inquiry into gender health practices after he directed the National Health and Medical Research Council to review the treatment of transgender children and develop national guidelines for puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormone treatments, *Also reported by: The Saturday Age, The Daily Telegraph, The Herald Sun, ABC Online, Sky News, The Medical Republic.*
- **[The AFR Weekend](#)** (page 26) reports hospital operator Healthscope and health insurer Bupa have struck a deal that will see private patients attending Healthcare hospitals avoid having to

pay out-of-pocket expenses, though Healthscope has yet to reach an agreement with non-profit insurers, the Australian Health Service Alliance.

- **The Herald Sun** (page 27) reports twice as many aged Australians have died from COVID-19 in the past two years than in the two-year pandemic peak, a fact experts attribute to low vaccination rates in aged care homes, with people over 75 recommended to have a booster shot every six months.
- **ABC Online** reports Australia recorded a record 175,786 cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in 2024, with 85,000 of those affecting children under the age of four, as the federal government prepares to roll-out vaccines for pregnant women and young children to immunise them against the highly contagious virus..
- **ABC Radio** reports federal laws restricting the sale of vapes to pharmacies has led to a significant drop in the number of Australians vaping, with South Australian research showing vaping rates among 15 to 29-year-olds have fallen by a third, a statistic Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says is supported by Cancer Council research.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Labor launches federal review of puberty blockers

AFR Weekend, General News, 01/02/2025, Michael Smith, Page 2

The Albanese government has launched a review into the treatment of transgender children and adolescents, which will develop new national guidelines for puberty blockers and hormone treatments that are currently controlled by the states.

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

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

### Butler shows the way in guideline review

Weekend Australian, General News, 01/02/2025, Bernard Lane, Page 6

It's getting hard to keep track of gender clinic news. The latest is that Australia's Health Minister, Mark Butler, has decided to seek a new national treatment guideline for the care of young people with gender distress.

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### Butler launches safety review into puberty blockers

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Julie Cross, Page 8

The safety and effectiveness of puberty blockers for treating children with gender dysphoria will be investigated as part of a landmark review, the federal government has announced. Health Minister Mark Butler said a medical inquiry would study the use of puberty blockers and report back with interim advice by the middle of next year.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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### Review of trans youth treatments

The Saturday Age, General News, 01/02/2025, Michael Bachelard and Mike Foley, Page 1

Australia's treatment of transgender children and adolescents will be put through the scrutiny of a thorough medical assessment after the federal government announced a landmark review yesterday. [...] But the Assistant Health Minister, Ged Kearney, took to Twitter yesterday to clarify, saying it had been announced at the request of practitioners who deliver gender medicine and would listen carefully to them.

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### Millions to help a hero's mission

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Cydnone Mardon, Page 26

A medical researcher who has dedicated his career to tackling the deadliest cancers affecting Australian children has received a crucial federal government grant to fund a groundbreaking project. Professor Matt Dun, who lost his four-year-old daughter Josie to diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) six years ago, has led innovative research aimed at developing desperately needed treatments for the disease, which currently has no cure and sees children live less than a year after diagnosis.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#)

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## Don't use her for your Botox

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Eliza Barr and Madeline Crittenden, Page 29

A non-registered practitioner accused of performing unauthorised cosmetic injections after three women contracted botulism is now subject to a public warning by health authorities. Norsafiza Binti Zakaria who also goes by Natasha Scha, Zakaria Scha, Natasha Ismail, Scha Zakaria, Sha Natasha and Scha Zakaria Beauty Spa has been issued an interim prohibition order by the Health Care Complaints Commission after it found she was not registered to perform medical procedures.

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## Pause on puberty blockers

Herald Sun, General News, 01/02/2025, Duncan Evans, Page 4

The federal government has announced a fresh and independent review into healthcare for trans and gender diverse Australians, just days after Queensland announced it would pause the delivery of puberty blockers to children pending a review into pediatric gender services. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the review would develop new national guidelines for the treatment of trans and gender diverse children and adolescents in Australia and be "driven by evidence" and informed by "public consultation and international work".

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## Federal government orders review of treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse children

ABC Online, Other, 31/01/2025, Janelle Miles

The Albanese government has ordered a review of the Australian standards of care and treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse children and adolescents. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has also asked the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to develop new Australian guidelines for the care of young people with gender dysphoria.

[Read More](#)

## One Nation Leader Pauline Hanson calls for 'complete' ban as Labor bows to pressure, announces review into gender treatment for minors

Sky News Australia, Other, 31/01/2025, Gemma Crotty

The Albanese government has announced a review into gender affirming care for minors amid growing calls for a widespread ban on the treatments, with One Nation's Pauline Hanson urging leaders to "stop it completely". Health Minister Mark Butler on Friday said he had consulted with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration on current gender affirming treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse minors.

[Read More](#)

## Butler orders NHMRC review of gender-affirming care for kids

The Medical Republic, Other, 31/01/2025, Cate Swannell

Federal health minister Mark Butler has conceded ground to the right by announcing a National Health and Medical Research Council review of the Australian standards of care and treatment guidelines for trans and gender-diverse children and adolescents.

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## ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 31/01/2025, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with Dr Anna Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner. Compere says Federal Health Minister

Mark Butler wants the Qld Government to dump their review of the standard of care so that there's just one national review. Cody believes this is more of a preferable approach because they have International human rights obligations which applies to all of Australia.

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## **Channel 10, 10 News First, 31/01/2025, Alan Murrell**

As students return to school for another year, fresh data shows a huge drop in vape use among young Australians as a result of the nation's world leading vaping laws. Additionally, Health Minister Mark Butler says the Therapeutic Goods Administration has already taken action in relation to nicotine pouches at a federal level.

*Also reported by: [ABC Radio Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [FIVEAA \(Adelaide\)](#).*

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## **Channel 7, Sunrise, 31/01/2025, Matt Shirvington and Natalie Barr**

South Australia has taken a massive step in its fight against illegal nicotine products. Nicotine pouches have been banned from coming into the state and can be seized by police or consumer and business services.

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## **Channel 9, Today , 31/01/2025, Karl Stefanovic and Sarah Abo**

Nicotine pouches are now banned in South Australia, making it the first state to scrap them in a swift crackdown. They fit between the gums and the lip with more potency than a single cigarette and are becoming increasingly popular with young people.

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## **4CA AM, John Mackenzie, 31/01/2025, John MacKenzie**

The Federal Government has agreed to meet with the private sector and the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association to help reduce the wait times for diagnostic mammograms in far North Queensland. Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler says women in regional Queensland face health challenges due to distance and remote location.

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## **ABC Radio Sydney, 23:00 News, 31/01/2025**

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says Australia is turning the corner in the effort to reduce vaping rates among young Australians. Last year, the federal government passed laws to ban the sale of vapes outside of pharmacies.

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## **ABC Radio Sydney, 21:00 News, 31/01/2025**

Plans to review the national treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse children and teens have been cautiously welcomed by equality advocates. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has announced a review into the current guidelines with a look to develop new rules.

*Similar content in: [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#).*

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## **MINISTER WELLS**

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### Review of trans youth treatments

The Saturday Age, General News, 01/02/2025, Michael Bachelard and Mike Foley, Page 1

Australia's treatment of transgender children and adolescents will be put through the scrutiny of a thorough medical assessment after the federal government announced a landmark review yesterday. [...] But the Assistant Health Minister, Ged Kearney, took to Twitter yesterday to clarify, saying it had been announced at the request of practitioners who deliver gender medicine and would listen carefully to them.

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### Endometriosis diagnosis costs trigger plea for better Medicare coverage

Herald Sun, Other, 31/01/2025, Isabella Pesch

Doctors and endometriosis sufferers want more subsidies for life-changing ultrasounds and specialist appointments, as patients are still left hundreds of dollars out of pocket seeking diagnoses and treatments. [...] Assistant Minister for Women's Health Ged Kearney said the government prioritised improving the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

[Read More](#)

### Changes to paracetamol scheduling will reduce risk of harm to children and adolescents

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Other, 31/01/2025

Paracetamol is one of the medicines most frequently responsible for hospital admissions due to poisoning, a new report from the peak body for Australian pharmacists has found, with approximately 16 per cent of pharmaceutical poisoning hospital admissions in children under five years of age being attributed to paracetamol. [...] PSA joined Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney at Westgarth Pharmacy in Melbourne to launch the report and discuss paracetamol changes.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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## DEPARTMENT

### Tragedy led to miracle

Courier Mail, General News, 01/02/2025, Molly Snaylam, Page 33

A Caboolture couple who lost a child to a genetic condition are calling for genetic counselling to be subsidised by Medicare after it saved their other children's lives. Carolyn and Steve Pearce welcomed Hannah in 2014, but she was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. [...] A Department of Health spokesman said that, after a review, a new body, Genomics Australia, was being established this year.

## Low care option for older Australians

The Weekly Source, Other, 31/01/2025, Lauren Broomham

With resident acuity increasing and few aged care beds available, retirement villages are quickly shifting from 'independent living' to the new 'low care' option for older Australians – the success of private aged care models like LDK Seniors' Living shows there is an alternative that works. [...] With the Department of Health and Aged Care now committing to a three-year trial of 'Shared Care' in community settings, village operators are rapidly running out of excuses not to follow LDK's example.

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## VACCINES

### Covid kills more since pandemic

Herald Sun, General News, 01/02/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 27

Twice as many elderly Australians have died from Covid in the past two years than in the peak of the pandemic with experts blaming "really really poor vaccination" rates in the country's aged care homes. At the height of the pandemic, Australia recorded 2415 Covid-related deaths in residential aged care between 18 February 2020 to 19 May 2022.

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### Pregnancy vax decline

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 31/01/2025

Pregnancy vaccination coverage in NSW has declined since the onset of the COVID pandemic, according to research by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS), and reflects similar decreases in other states. The research found a decline in pregnancy vaccination coverage for influenza from 59% in 2020 to 49% in 2022, and a smaller decrease in pertussis vaccination from 79% in 2020 to 77%.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### The very real danger of the 'cashed-up boomer' stereotype

Weekend Australian, General News, 01/02/2025, Ross Fitzgerald, Page 21

There has been a sickening rise in the number of ways the elderly are attacked for their money. My principal preoccupation this year is elder abuse.

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### No excuse for rise in aged care neglect

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Julie Cross, Page 69

What the hell is happening in our aged care homes? The number of notifications about neglect have increased by a quarter in the 12 months since September 2023, according to the latest report from the aged care watchdog.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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### Help improve dementia care

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 31/01/2025, Natasha Egan

Researchers are looking for aged care stakeholders to take part in a project focused on the connection

between organisational culture and psychotropic prescribing practices. A national project is seeking aged care sector input on a tool that assesses facility culture to help reduce psychotropic drug use among residents with dementia.

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## Home care is set to become a scale game in 2025

The Weekly Source, Other, 31/01/2025, Lauren Broomham

With its acquisition of Australia's largest home care provider myHomecare Group and an aggressive home health strategy in place, the mutual fund is now poised to dominate Australia's market for care at home. Home care is set to become a scale game in 2025 – and Australian Unity is perfectly positioned to capitalise on the need for efficiency and more clinically-focused services under the new Support at Home program starting from July 1.

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## Innovation Philosophy has been training AI to cut aged care red tape

The Weekly Source, Other, 31/01/2025, Lauren Broomham

With increased compliance demands and continued workforce shortfalls across residential aged care and home care, providers will increasingly be reliant on their systems to create efficiencies and fill care gaps – is AI specially designed for the sector the answer? Software company Innovation Philosophy has been training AI to cut the red tape and paperwork that plagues aged care providers.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Floss teeth to prevent a stroke

Weekend Australian, General News, 01/02/2025, Eleanor Hayward, Page 6

Flossing once a week cuts the risk of having a stroke by more than a fifth, research suggests. The dental habit stops the build-up of harmful bacteria and plaque, which are linked to inflammation, blood clots and heart disease. [...] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows there were an estimated 40,700 strokes in Australia in 2021, and it is a leading cause of death.

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### Butler launches safety review into puberty blockers

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The safety and effectiveness of puberty blockers for treating children with gender dysphoria will be investigated as part of a landmark review, the federal government has announced. Health Minister Mark Butler said a medical inquiry would study the use of puberty blockers and report back with interim advice by the middle of next year.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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### Sense must prevail to help prevent more horror

Northern Territory News, General News, 01/02/2025, Matt Cunningham, Page 17

When a child has to be removed from their parents due to abuse or neglect, the first priority of authorities should be the safety of that child. This should be an uncontroversial statement.

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### Healthcare top of the list

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 01/02/2025, Jonathan Hawes, Page 1

The Labor Party has endorsed Tamworth educator Laura Hughes as its candidate for New England in the approaching federal election. Before the official announcement, Ms Hughes had an exclusive interview with the Leader. [...] According to data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the

percentage of emergency patients at Tamworth hospital being seen on time [within 10 minutes] increased from 63 per cent in 2022-23 to 69pc in 2023-24.

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## **New paracetamol sales rules in Australia begin on February 1**

7news.com.au, Other, 31/01/2025, Ria Hopkins and Natasa Gisev

Changes are coming into effect from February 1 about how paracetamol is sold in Australia. This mainly affects pack sizes of paracetamol sold outside pharmacies and how paracetamol is accessed in pharmacies.

[Read More](#)

## **Changes to the way paracetamol is sold come into effect from February 1**

9News, Other, 31/01/2025, Mikala Theocharous

The sale of packs containing 20 tablets or more will be illegal if they are sold anywhere other than a pharmacy starting from tomorrow. The change was made after a decision by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration in 2023.

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## **New Australian self-testing kit for syphilis 'a game changer'**

Northern Territory News, Other, 31/01/2025, Zoe Smith

The Australian company behind a groundbreaking HIV self-testing kit hopes that a new DIY syphilis test will be a "game changer" in the fight against the sexually transmitted infection. [...] Research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has revealed syphilis cases in Australia are diagnosed mainly in men who have sex with men in urban areas, or young First Nations people in remote regions.

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## **34,000 children present to the emergency department each year due to medicine-related problems.**

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 31/01/2025

A new report released by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia PSA has found that an estimated 93 per cent of children present to Australia's emergency departments each day due to medicine-related problems. The Medicine Safety: Child and Adolescent Care report reveals the extent of medicine-related problems in children and adolescents.

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## **Are older women losing money by taking the family home in a divorce?**

The Senior, Other, 31/01/2025, Rowan Cowley

You're an older woman going through a divorce, and your soon-to-be ex-husband offers you the house in exchange for other assets. It's a good deal, right? [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 15,627 women aged 55 or older received support from homelessness support services in 2023-24.

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## **Low care option for older Australians**

The Weekly Source, Other, 31/01/2025, Lauren Broomham

With resident acuity increasing and few aged care beds available, retirement villages are quickly shifting from 'independent living' to the new 'low care' option for older Australians – the success of private aged care models like LDK Seniors' Living shows there is an alternative that works. [...] With the Department of Health and Aged Care now committing to a three-year trial of 'Shared Care' in community settings, village operators are rapidly running out of excuses not to follow LDK's example.

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**ABC Radio Sydney, 23:00 News, 31/01/2025**



Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says Australia is turning the corner in the effort to reduce vaping rates among young Australians. Last year, the federal government passed laws to ban the sale of vapes outside of pharmacies.

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## FIVEAA, Mornings, 31/01/2025, Graeme Goodings

Interview with SA Health Minister Chris Picton. Compere mentions that vaping rates are falling among young Australians. Picton points out that he really wants to give credit for these decreases in vaping numbers in young people to Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who he believes has tackled this issue head on.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### Millions to help a hero's mission

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Cydonee Mardon, Page 26

A medical researcher who has dedicated his career to tackling the deadliest cancers affecting Australian children has received a crucial federal government grant to fund a groundbreaking project. Professor Matt Dun, who lost his four-year-old daughter Josie to diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) six years ago, has led innovative research aimed at developing desperately needed treatments for the disease, which currently has no cure and sees children live less than a year after diagnosis.

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

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### Calls for prevention amid big jump in blood cancer cases

Canberra Times, General News, 01/02/2025, Page 24

Blood cancer has been dubbed Australia's silent killer after a shocking rise in cases prompted calls for more prevention and early detection research. The disease is on track to become the country's most common and deadly cancer in a decade, currently claiming the lives of 16 Australians every day.

Also reported by: [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#).

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### Surviving breast cancer was enough – Patsy didn't want to undergo early menopause as well

The Guardian, Other, 01/02/2025, Natasha May

When Patsy Mullen was diagnosed with breast cancer, she had no idea that chemotherapy treatment could lead to early onset menopause. It was Mullen's oncologist who mentioned the possibility and offered the then 47-year-old the drug Goserelin, which reduces the risk by up to 70% compared with women receiving chemotherapy alone.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Healthscope and Bupa avert funding crisis

AFR Weekend, Companies and Markets, 01/02/2025, Michael Smith, Page 26

Healthcare Australia's second-biggest hospital operator, Healthscope, and insurance giant Bupa have agreed an 11th-hour funding deal that will spare hundreds of thousands of patients from paying hospital fees.

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## Patients will die, docs warn

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 01/02/2025, Brad Crouch, Page 3

The public hospital doctors' union has bluntly rejected the state government's planned updated ambulance transport policy covering ramping with a grim warning from its members that "patients will die". There also are renewed claims management are ordering ambulance arrivals to be prioritised over sicker patients in crowded waiting rooms.

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## Health war nears end

Weekend Post, General News, 01/02/2025, Cameron England, Page 47

Millions of Bupa customers will avoid incurring gap fees for stays at Healthscope hospitals after the two companies ended their months-long war over payments. But more than two million people insured by the 26 small to medium-sized private funds that come under the Australian Health Services Alliance still remain on the outer, with an agreement announced on Friday only relating to Bupa.

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## 'We don't have enough capacity': WA hospital ramping reaches record high

6PR, Other, 31/01/2025

Ambulance ramping hours have reached a record-high, with 4790 hours spent outside of WA hospitals this month. AMA WA President, Dr. Michael Page told Simon Beaumont on 6PR's Perth Today, "What we want to hear from both the government and the alternative government is a clear plan to address this crisis of hospital capacity that we have here in Western Australia."

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## More than 85,000 infants and toddlers diagnosed with RSV in 2024 ahead of national vaccine rollout

ABC Online, Other, 31/01/2025, Brianna Morris-Grant

GPs say they're continuing to see respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in summer after Australia experienced a record 175,786 cases nationwide in 2024. A total 86,205 (49 per cent) of those diagnosed with the disease were young children under four years old, according to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System.

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## Palliative care patients going without pain relief as medicine shortages bite

The Senior, Other, 31/01/2025, Anthony Caggiano

Palliative care patients are missing out on pain relief as part of a greater medicine supply chain issue. Palliative Care Australia deputy chair Professor Meera Agar said opioid -based treatments were of most concern, as they were the choice of treatment for pain , particularly for people living with cancer, plus were important for symptom management.

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## ABC News, News Breakfast, 31/01/2025, James Glenday and Emma Rebellato

A decline in GP bulk billing is affecting some of the most vulnerable people in Australia, with the peak body for doctors warning it is having a dire impact in places like the NT. The Australian Medical Association says the lack of affordable options means people are avoiding regular check-ups, and that's leading to longer stays in hospital and pressure on overburdened emergency departments.

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## Channel 7, Seven News, 31/01/2025, Susannah Carr and Rick Ardon

Hospital operator Healthscope has resolved its conflict with health insurer Bupa, meaning 4 million Australians will once again be able to access 40 private hospitals.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Mental health facilities fall off priority list

Ballarat Courier, General News, 01/02/2025, Nieve Walton, Page 4

Mental health funding asks have fallen off Ballarat's priority list but leaders are sure more can be done despite tight budget constraints. At the end of January, Ballarat city leaders from the council, universities and business sectors unveiled plans for eight priority projects ahead of the 2025 federal election.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Call for top doc incentive scheme

Courier Mail, General News, 01/02/2025, Jackie Sinnerton and Jessica Grewal, Page 13

The state's peak medical body is calling for the state government to reinstate a health workforce attraction incentive scheme amid an investigation into the recruitment of medics at Mackay Base Hospital. The review was sparked by concerned senior doctors and will look into the credentialing process at the hospital over the last two years.

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### New doctors, nurses and health staff welcomed

Northern Territory News, General News, 01/02/2025, Thomas McLean, Page 5

More than 300 new junior doctors, nurses and midwives have been welcomed to Northern Territory hospitals in January. A total of 317, 55 graduate doctors and 184 Resident Medical Officers began working in hospitals in Darwin, Palmerston and Alice Springs with some of the cohort to complete rotations at hospitals in Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

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### John Hunter Hospital apologises after leaked email ridicules junior doctors

ABC Online, Other, 31/01/2025, Giselle Wakatama and Bridget Murphy

One of the largest public hospitals in Australia has apologised for the "hurt and frustration" caused to junior doctors whose attitudes were criticised in a leaked email sent by a human resources official. The ABC understands the email was sent by mistake on Wednesday afternoon to one junior doctor at Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital in response to a workplace issue.

[Read More](#)

### Queensland Health launches investigation into Mackay doctor recruitment

ABC Online, Other, 31/01/2025, Sarah-Simpkins

Queensland Health has launched an investigation into medical recruitment at Mackay Base Hospital after senior doctors raised concerns. The review will examine the credentialing process over the past

two years and whether senior medical officers are working within the scope of their role, education, training, experience and competence.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### Changes coming to MBS telehealth regulations

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 31/01/2025, Anastasia Tsirtsakis

Since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of Australians have had access to rebated GP telehealth services under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), as long as they have seen their GP in person in the last 12 months. But that rule is set to change. As of 1 November, patients will be able to access these services, even if they have not seen their GP face-to-face in the previous 12 months. But it has to be with the practice they are registered with under MyMedicare.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Colic meds probed after dozens of babies fall ill

The Saturday Age, General News, 01/02/2025, Henrietta Cook and Liam Mannix, Page 1

Authorities are cracking down on parents' access to colic medications that contain a toxic ingredient linked to almost 50 babies falling ill in the past two years. [...] The Age can also reveal that another watchdog, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), is examining practitioners at an interstate compounding pharmacy who have been selling colic mixture containing belladonna to parents across the country.

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### Don't use her for your Botox

Daily Telegraph, General News, 01/02/2025, Eliza Barr and Madeline Crittenden, Page 29

A non-registered practitioner accused of performing unauthorised cosmetic injections after three women contracted botulism is now subject to a public warning by health authorities. Norsafiza Binti Zakaria who also goes by Natasha Scha, Zakaria Scha, Natasha Ismail, Scha Zakaria, Sha Natasha and Scha Zakaria Beauty Spa has been issued an interim prohibition order by the Health Care Complaints Commission after it found she was not registered to perform medical procedures.

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### Sydney botulism outbreak prompts warning about Norsafiza Binti Zakaria

Adelaide Now, Other, 31/01/2025, Eliza Barr and Madeline Crittenden

A health warning has been issued about Norsafiza Binti Zakaria, who is accused of performing at-home cosmetic injections after three women were treated for suspected botulism. [...] Ms Zakaria – who is not a registered practitioner with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – has been forbidden from providing any health service, including cosmetic procedures or any involving skin penetration, to anyone.

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## **'Particularly aggravating': Man fined thousands over fake nursing registration after applying for jobs**

7news.com.au, Other, 31/01/2025, Hayley Taylor

A Victorian man has been fined \$5000 for pretending to be a registered nurse while applying for jobs, AHPRA said on Thursday. He had provided a potential employer with a fake registration document in April 2022, but a crosscheck of the register of practitioners drew a blank at his name, and he was reported to the regulator.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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## SPORT

### **Games boss denies conflict**

Weekend Australian, General News, 01/02/2025, Jamie Walker and Michael McKenna, Page 1

The chairman of Queensland's avowedly independent Olympics project authority helped develop and promote the plan for a key Games venue now being evaluated by his agency. Stephen Conry was chief executive of commercial real estate group Jones Lang LaSalle Australia when it announced a deal in 2019 to "advance" the original concept for Brisbane Arena, the \$2.5bn hall earmarked for the Olympic swimming in 2032.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

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## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

### **Festival pill testing trial expands**

Ballarat Courier, General News, 01/02/2025, Michelle Smith, Page 10

Mobile pill testing will be offered at four upcoming music festivals to help festivalgoers reduce overdoses and harm at events. The Hardmission Festival at Werribee Racecourse on February 8; Pitch Music and Arts Festival at Moyerisk, near the Grampians, from March 7 to 11; the Ultra Music Festival at Flemington on April 12; and the Port Melbourne's The Warehouse Project on April 25 have been confirmed as the next sites for the state government's pill testing trial.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### The way you buy paracetamol is about to change – here's how

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 31/01/2025, Sarah Mitchell

The tga has been weighing up the changes since 2022 From February 1, there will be new restrictions placed on the sale of paracetamol. Here's everything you need to know about the changes. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) commissioned an expert review into 'the risks and intentional self-poisoning with paracetamol' in 2022.

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### The way you buy painkillers is changing. Here's what to know

SBS, Other, 31/01/2025, Julia Abbondanza

Restrictions on how you're able to buy paracetamol come into effect this weekend, and are aimed at reducing related overdoses and deaths in Australia. From Saturday, new rules on how paracetamol is sold in Australia will come into effect. [...] An expert review commissioned by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) confirmed there were increasing rates of intentional self-poisoning with paracetamol in the last decade in Australia, with the greatest proportion of cases in adolescents and young adults.

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## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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## FOOD STANDARDS

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## AICIS

### ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 31/01/2025, Rick Hind

Interview with Professor Bogdan Dlugogorski, Charles Darwin University. Compere mentions that PFAS chemical contamination affecting the water in Katherine and Darwin near big airports run by the RAAF and Williamstown on the outskirts of Newcastle. Dlugogorski explains that PFAS chemicals are chemicals that contain organic molecules very similar to hydrocarbons that we have in our petrol.

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