



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 19th January 2025

[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](#)
| [Office of Drug Control](#) | [Food Standards](#) | [AICIS](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sunday Age](#)** (page 1) reports Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney has responded to a survey on gender bias within the healthcare system, with women in their 20s and 30s being denied even a discussion on permanent contraception options with their doctor. "Many [women] felt dismissed, disbelieved, and stereotyped as 'hysterical' or 'dramatic'. Too often, their pain was minimised or misattributed to factors like menstruation, lifestyle choices, or even outright fabrication", Ms Kearney said. *Also reported by:* [Sun Herald](#)
- **[The Sunday Tasmanian](#)** (page 1) reports patients with private healthcare are being forced onto public waitlists already struggling with delays due to a lack of adequate Medicare rebates for private practitioners, according to AMA Tasmania president Dr Michael Lumsden-Steel.
- **[The Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)** (page 3) reports the former head of the ABF has criticised Queensland Health over what he says is a lack of "willpower" to enforce court penalties for illicit tobacco and vape traders, despite the legislation emphasising that legal action is only to be used as a "last resort".
- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 6) reports the Central Coast Local Health District did not inform staff before the closure of a maternity unit at Wyong Hospital to install offices and health worker accommodation, according to the nurses and midwives' union, who say additional maternity services are needed amidst a growing population in the region.

- **The Sunday Age** (page 7) reports the RACGP has deemed a menopause conference featuring controversial British GP Louise Newson as a speaker is no longer eligible to be credited as professional development for college members after receiving complaints regarding statements made by some of the speakers regarding menopausal hormone therapy.
- **The Sunday Herald Sun** (page 9) reports Health Minister Mark Butler has said a \$174.5 million investment to provide free RSV vaccines for Australian babies and their mothers is a “world-leading approach”, potentially saving 10,000 infants a year from hospitalisation. “In partnership with each state and territory (this) will ensure that every single infant is protected ahead of the winter RSV season”, Mr Butler said. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#), [Sunday Telegraph](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#)
- **The Sunday Times** (page 7) reports the Health Services Union of WA has accused WA Premier Roger Cook of only listening to the concerns of health workers “when it’s politically convenient” as they launch the Your Voice in Health Employee Engagement survey in response to Mr Cook refusing to commit to any future workplace surveys.

MINISTER BUTLER

10,000 babies out of hospital

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 19/01/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 9

Australian mothers and babies will get free access to the RSV vaccine from next month as the Albanese government moves to tackle the virus that sees 10,000 infants hospitalised every year. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the \$174.5m investment was a “worldleading approach”.

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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

[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER WELLS

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

'I need to meet your mum': Doctors deny sterilisations

Sunday Age, General News, 19/01/2025, Aisha Dow, Page 1

Australian women are being blocked from accessing permanent contraception, as some doctors refuse to even discuss the option of sterilisation with female patients in their 20s and 30s, according to the findings of a landmark survey into gender bias in healthcare. [...] Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney said the survey results painted a shocking picture.

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

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

[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

VACCINES

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

How the pensioner asset test is policed

Sunday Herald Sun, Business News, 19/01/2025, Brenton Miegel, Page 65

We are a full pension couple. The asset test cut-off is \$470,000. How does the government police this? Is it up to the pensioners to check their asset values daily? Surely not. The thresholds are reviewed every March, July and September, so is this when their computer system enables them to check every pensioner and reduce their pension accordingly?

Also reported by: [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide \(Adelaide\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Liberals to beef up courts' drug power

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Joe Spagnolo, Page 1

Courts would have the power to forcibly send adult and juvenile drug offenders into rehabilitation under a bold State election proposal from the WA Liberals. Repeat offenders would face three months in rehabilitation under leader Libby Mettam's plans.

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'No guts to prosecute'

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 19/01/2025, Taylah Fellows & Samantha Scott, Page 3

Court penalties are being used as a last resort to rein in dodgy tobacconists prompting a former cop to call out Queensland Health for "not having the stomach" to enforce strict cigarette and vape laws. Changes to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 introduced in September were touted as the toughest in the nation by raising maximum court fines to between \$322,600 and \$1.6m, and providing for two-year jail terms.

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

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Cool relief for struggle street

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Caitlyn Rintoul, Page 24

WA needs to rethink how it handles heatwaves and establish "cooling centres" to help people beat the heat in scorching temperatures, a leading expert says. Increasingly commonplace in the US and Europe, cooling centres are like evacuation centres, offering refuge from the heat for people who need airconditioning if their home is without, or the power is down.

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Time to get tough on illegal tobacco

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 19/01/2025, Page 66

Most Queenslanders would be surprised to learn legal action over illegal tobacco and vape shops is only to be used as a "last resort" under the so-called strongest laws in Australia the state introduced last year. Two weeks ago, The Sunday Mail revealed health officers could only issue on-the-spot fines of \$3226 in most cases and Health Minister Tim Nicholls wants to increase it.

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'Divisive': Thousands with obesity in the Hunter, but BMI on chopping block

Newcastle Herald, Other, 18/01/2025, Damon Cronshaw

More than 12,000 people a year are hospitalised in Hunter New England due to being overweight or living with obesity. These numbers rose by about 30 per cent over a decade, as the obesity epidemic worsened. About 65 per cent of adults in the Hunter district are overweight or living with obesity, which is 5 per cent above the NSW rate.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Push for free cancer care

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Claire Sadler, Page 16

A groundbreaking prostate cancer treatment has returned to WA after a lack of expertise in the State meant men had to travel to access the life-saving therapy but those without private care are still missing out. For six years men had to travel east for low dose rate brachytherapy a minimally invasive option to treat prostate cancer because of a lack of trained healthcare professionals.

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Still a way to go in making dementia a fading memory

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Page 29

A disturbing new study has predicted that new cases of dementia in the US will double by 2060. It estimates that a million adults will develop the memory-destroying brain disease that ultimately renders people unable to handle the routine tasks of daily life, such as eating, dressing, driving and paying bills.

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Experts hail 'milestone' in study of the deadly Huntington's disease

ABC Online, Other, 18/01/2025, Judd Boaz

For many people, the symptoms of Huntington's disease will not begin to show for decades. The genetic disorder is incurable but it is not uncommon for sufferers to reach middle-age before the physical symptoms — loss of motor skills and bodily functions, mental decline, emotional changes and depression — begin to manifest.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

GPs college drops support of 'celebrity' menopause forum

Sunday Age, General News, 19/01/2025, Wendy Tuohy, Page 7

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has pulled its support for a menopause conference for doctors that features global women's health influencers, some of whose claims about hormone therapies have come under fire. The college said the So Hot Right Now conference, whose headline speaker is high-profile British GP Louise Newson, was no longer deemed eligible to be credited as professional development for GPs who are college members.

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

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No patients for centre

Sunday Territorian, General News, 19/01/2025, Alex Treacy, Page 1

Red Lily Health - the Aboriginal community controlled health organisation that took over operations of the new \$20m Jabiru Health Centre in September - says it will be a long road before their renal facilities can be fully used, due to a funding shortfall. The old clinic was given a spruce up as part of the \$400m-plus Jabiru Masterplan put forward by Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, representing the Mirarr traditional owners, in 2018 as part of the township's transition from mining dependency to a tourism-based economy.

Also reported by: [Sunday Territorian \(Darwin\)](#).

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Private concerns

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 19/01/2025, Sue Bailey, Page 1

Privately insured patients are being forced on to Tasmania's already overloaded public waiting lists because there is a shortage of medical specialists working in the private sector. It means patients are waiting longer to see specialists including neurologists as well as renal and respiratory physicians.

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Access to affordable healthcare essential

Sunday Territorian, General News, 19/01/2025, Luke Gosling, Page 20

In the Territory, the importance of accessible healthcare cannot be overstated. The Albanese Labor Government's significant investments in Medicare have already begun to transform healthcare access, with the NT witnessing an amazing 7.3pc increase in bulk billing rates, up to 76.7pc.

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Lift your care factor

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Claire Sadler, Page 3

Parents have been issued a fresh warning about the risks of injuries to kids in summer after new data revealed nearly 14,000 WA children were sent to public hospital emergency departments last summer. Between December 2023 and January 2024, children were most commonly at emergency for open head wounds making up 1570 cases of 13,875 children, while there were another 832 other unspecified head injuries and 680 superficial head injuries, the Department of Health confirmed.

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Big promises made and delayed in WA's Kimberley as Labor seeks new term

ABC Online, Other, 18/01/2025, By Vanessa Mills , Esse Deves & Mya Kordic

Western Australia's premier has defended his government's litany of unfulfilled promises to the state's Kimberley, as his government pitches a fresh "vision" for the region. Roger Cook used a pre-election visit to Broome this week to deliver an initial pre-election pitch to voters.

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‘Devastating’: Australians lift lid on life-threatening national medical crisis Secret struggle of one million Aussies exposed

Adelaide Now, Other, 18/01/2025, Zoe Simmons

When i was 13, I got my first. I still remember the extreme pain – feeling like my insides were being torn apart by white-hot burning blades, covered in acid that seeped through my abdomen. But, like most people with a uterus who experience pain, I was dismissed. I was told it was normal.

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

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Rural Victoria's concerns in face of state government health revamp

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/01/2025, Madeleine Stuchbery

A plan to unify regional Victoria's hospitals and healthcare services into distinct local networks has raised concerns rural Victorians will be forced to travel further for hospital care. It follows multiple calls throughout 2024 for remote and rural hospital services to be fully funded, with some facilities directed to make major budgetary cuts.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health in crisis condition

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Page 12

Interstate psychiatrists are baulking at \$3050 a day to stand in solidarity with quitting NSW colleagues as the state resorts to telehealth to deal with an unfolding mental health crisis. As NSW Health scrambles to lessen the impact of two in three public psychiatrists resigning on Monday and Tuesday, AAP can reveal public patients in mental health distress will be assessed virtually by psychiatrists.

Also reported by: [Sunday Examiner \(Launceston\)](#).

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How will a national first work?

Sunday Examiner, General News, 19/01/2025, Matt Maloney, Page 5

An autism advocate has raised concerns about rolling out the national autism strategy in the absence of a peak body in Tasmania. Autism Tasmania was placed into administration last year after 33 years of operation.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

After 5000 babies, top doctor makes 'emotional' farewell

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Lanie Tindale & Dana Daniel, Page 3

A top doctor who has delivered thousands of Canberra babies has closed his private practice of 25 years. Specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist Steve Robson has been appointed chief medical officer at Avant Mutual, a medical indemnity insurer.

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No staff, so this birthing unit is now offices

Sun Herald, General News, 19/01/2025, Angus Thomson, Page 6

A birthing unit on the NSW Central Coast has been gutted and replaced with offices and sleeping quarters for doctors on-call, blindsiding mothers and midwives and leaving a population of more than 350,000 with only one maternity unit. No babies have been delivered at Wyong Hospital since its maternity unit closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and management failed to find sufficient staff to reopen the service.

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

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Health workers demand a voice

Sunday Times, General News, 19/01/2025, Hannah Cross, Page 7

The Health Services Union of WA has accused the State Government of only being interested in listening to workers "when it's politically convenient" after the Health Minister refused to commit to conducting any future workforce surveys. HSUWA took matters into its own hands this week, rolling out the Your Voice in Health Employee Engagement survey to take the temperature of WA's ailing public health system.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#)

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Weary nurses on their last nerve

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Edition Changes, 19/01/2025, Madura McCormack & Taylah Fellows, Page 12

Burnt-out and exhausted nurses and midwives are being stretched to breaking point and fear patients are being put at risk with every shift a "war zone" amid skyrocketing demand for care and a long-running staff shortage. The extent of Queensland's healthcare crisis has been laid bare by frontline staff in hundreds of submissions to the state's peak nurses and midwives union ahead of negotiations for a new pay deal.

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NPAQ in call for union status

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 19/01/2025, Taylah Fellows, Page 12

The Nurses Professional Association of Queensland has called on the government to amend laws that block their bid to register as a union and participate in crucial enterprise bargaining negotiations. In a letter to Deputy Premier and Industrial Relations Minister Jarrod Bleijie and Health Minister Tim Nicholls, NPAQ announced plans to form a sub-organisation, Queensland Nurses for Choice and Health, to advocate for their members at the bargaining table.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#)

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No parity in value and pay

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 19/01/2025, Page 66

They are exhausted burned out by the incessant demands of their job, ignoring their meal breaks as they traipse through our hospital corridors and increasingly fearful a patient will die because no one was there to answer the call for help. They are Queensland nurses the front line of our much vaunted "world-class" health system, and the work pressures they now face have become, to many, intolerable.

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UWA students Faith Hart and Tashuana Munn complete their Pingelly Somerset Alliance internship

Two University of Western Australia students have completed their internship in Pingelly where they have supported local health and aged care projects while learning about rural life. Faith Hart and Tashuana Munn completed their summer internships with Pingelly Somerset Alliance where they spent three days a week facilitated by the McCusker Centre for Citizenship at UWA from November 12 to December 12.

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Aussies 'held to ransom' over union strikes, pay deals as Sydney train network chaos exposes crippling population issue

NEWS.com.au, Other, 18/01/2025, Blake Antrobus

Millions of Aussies are effectively being "held to ransom" as some of the country's biggest unions pressure state governments over better pay and conditions. Commuters were hung out to dry last week when Sydney's train network was – stalled by frosty negotiations between critical rail workers and the government over a pay deal.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

SPORT

Cricket beer bans don't pass fair dinkum test

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 19/01/2025, James O'Doherty & Peter Jenkins, Page 21

The Minns government is being urged to end an "unAustralian" double standard forcing the general public to drink mid-strength beer during Tests and One Day International matches, while leaving the well-heeled elite free to imbibe full-strength beverages. Cricket-loving politicians, fans, and former stars of the game have united in a call to end blatant booze discrimination almost 20 years after punters were banned from buying full-strength beers during full-day events at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Swapping meat to help mind

Sunday Territorian, General News, 19/01/2025, Page 5

Swapping bacon with nuts or lentils could cut your risk of dementia as much as 16 per cent, new US research suggests. Scientists from three Massachusetts institutions Mass General Brigham, Harvard and MIT found that eating greater quantities of red meat increased the risk for dementia and cardiovascular disease.

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Breakthrough in mystery of smoke-related illness may open door for treatment

The Australian, Other, 18/01/2025, James Dowling

Australian biochemists trying to find out how smoke causes lung disease have targeted the role of a protein that is crucial to the body's immune system. A Monash University study isolated chemicals that weakened the immune system, providing a clearer map of how serious respiratory illnesses develop.

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Dalhousie study examines how pharmacists can help improve access to gender-affirming care

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 18/01/2025

A new peer-reviewed study from Dalhousie University has found that pharmacists' scope of practice can be used to provide gender-affirming care — health care that supports a person's gender identity. Despite the documented benefits of receiving this care, many gender-diverse people are unable to access it, said the study, which was published on Jan.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Scientists scan Antarctica for deadly bird flu

Sunday Age, General News, 19/01/2025, Mike Foley, Page 6

Australian researchers are scanning the frozen wilderness of Antarctica for signs of deadly disease because the arrival of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu is considered a matter of when, not if. They are nervous because, even thousands of kilometres from the Australian mainland, the world's most remote continent is considered a potential infection pathway for the disease, due to the distances seabirds can travel.

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Clearing the air

Safe To Work, General News, 01/02/2025, Page 56

While silicosis is currently at the forefront of people's minds when it comes to diseases of which miners

need to be aware, there are common health risks to which no industry is immune. Legionnaires' disease is known for resurfacing in the news every so often, but it can be more serious than an occasional nuisance.

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Warning about popular pain medication

The Courier Mail, Other, 18/01/2025, Isabel Shaw

The possible side effects of a popular pain relief medication has been revealed. A recent study, published in Arthritis Care and Research, examined the effects of paracetamol in adults aged 65 and over and revealed some concerning links between regular use and serious health issues.

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

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'It's living I find hardest': How a new drug could be life-changing for Australians like Deb

SBS, Other, 18/01/2025

Deb Fryers fondly remembers the life she lived as a film producer in Melbourne. [...] In December, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved the use of a new drug already being used in the United States and Europe.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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