



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 22nd January 2025

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 1) reports a new treatment for the most common form of breast cancer has boosted cure rates by up to 20 per cent, with the Peter Mac-led trial adding the immunotherapy drug nivolumab before surgery to target any residual cancer cells. *Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (online), Adelaide Now (online), The Courier Mail (online), Northern Territory News (online).*
- **[The Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 3) reports the Minns government is planning to reduce its long-term reliance on psychiatrists by enlisting nurses, doctors and social workers to provide greater assistance in the state's mental health system, freeing up psychiatrists to focus on their core roles.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 3) reports Sydney hospitals are closing wards and cutting bed numbers as they prepare to deal with fewer psychiatrists, as the Minns government warns it will take at least two months to resolve the crisis.
- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 13) reports Victorian babies are now being screened for 32 conditions via the "heel prick" blood test, after galactosaemia was added to the list of rare genetic disorders to be tested.

- **The Nursing Review** (online) reports the NSW mental health system is suffering a breakdown as psychiatrists prepare for mass resignations amid a pay dispute with the Minns government. Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, says he has huge respect for the public sector psychiatrists but urged all parties to resolve the dispute in the interests of the patients.
- **The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** (online) reports a campaign to promote alcohol-free pregnancies and safe breastfeeding practices has saved \$236 million in reduced alcohol harm, with a report finding every \$1 invested in the Every Moment Matters generated a \$9 social return, with Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney noting she was proud of the fact the government initiative was making such a significant change,
- **The Nursing Review** (online) reports the federal government is investing \$174.5 million to provide free vaccinations to pregnant women to protect their babies from respiratory syncytial virus, with Health Minister Mark Butler noting it was a world-leading approach to minimise the impact of the virus on newborns.

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### Looming mental health crisis – 200 psychiatrists due to walk off the job in NSW

Nursing Review, Other, 21/01/2025, Stefanie Schultz

The New South Wales mental health system is teetering on the verge of collapse as hundreds of psychiatrists are due to leave their job today amid ongoing pay disputes. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler also took the opportunity to address the impending crisis at a press conference on the weekend.

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### Government rolls out free vaccine program for pregnant Australians

Nursing Review, Other, 21/01/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Expectant mothers will have access to free vaccines against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) from next month under a major expansion of the National Immunisation Program (NIP). [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said on Sunday the \$174.5m move was "world-leading".

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### Why the Coalition's health record makes 'Mediscare' a genuine concern

The New Daily, Other, 21/01/2025, Charles Maskell-Knight

If the Coalition wants to head off a Mediscare campaign, Peter Dutton needs to acknowledge the Coalition's past attacks on the health system. [...] In recent days, Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler has been reminding people of Dutton's record as health minister.

[Read More](#)

### ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Spence Denny

Interview with South Australian Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Chris Picton, who says the state is working with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler on extra clinicians who are going to help aged care providers to be able to take on some of these people in the aged care system, rather than them being stuck in hospitals.

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## MINISTER WELLS

## Govt announces additional funding

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 21/01/2025, Jodie Wolf

Older Australians deserve to stay in their homes for as long as possible, says Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney.[...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells said there will be new providers in every state and territory to support older people to access a range of services, including domestic assistance, allied health and therapy, community transport and home maintenance.

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## Underhanded tactics shut Indigenous people out of politics

Pilbara News, Other, 21/01/2025, Emma Garlett

With the promotion of Queensland MP Anika Wells to the senior ministry to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Bill Shorten, Australia now has the highest concentration ever of women in Federal Cabinet. It is great that we are taking leaps and bounds for women.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

### ABC North Coast NSW, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Bridie Tanner

Interview with Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Youth Suicide Emma McBride about Headspace in Ballina not having psychiatrists in its new facility. McBride says they have a national mental health workforce strategy and recognise there are shortages of some specialist mental health professionals, including psychiatrists and psychologists.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

### Govt announces additional funding

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 21/01/2025, Jodie Wolf

Older Australians deserve to stay in their homes for as long as possible, says Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney.[...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells said there will be new providers in every state and territory to support older people to access a range of services, including domestic assistance, allied health and therapy, community transport and home maintenance.

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### National campaign about alcohol, pregnancy, and breastfeeding delivers \$236m benefit to Australians

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Other, 21/01/2025, Lucy Smith

A groundbreaking campaign to support alcohol-free pregnancies and safe breastfeeding practices has reduced the cost of alcohol harms in Australia by \$236 million, according to a new report [...] Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Ged Kearney MP, said: "It warms my heart to think of all the prospective mums supported and babies saved because of the FASD campaign.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

No relevant coverage

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## DEPARTMENT

### Named and shamed: Aged care watchdog cracks down on providers

Newcastle Herald, Other, 21/01/2025, Eileen Wood

Older persons' advocates have welcomed a crackdown on aged care providers failing to meet their care minute targets, saying transparency was key to restoring older people's faith in the aged care system. [...] Providers are required to report their care minutes data to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care on a quarterly basis.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Batemans Bay Post \(Online\)](#), [St George & Sutherland Shire Leader \(Online\)](#).

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### No more 'ad hoc' drug shortage working groups

The Medical Republic, Other, 21/01/2025, Laura Woodrow

The Australian Medical Association is calling for the formation of a medical shortages forum and the implementation of a "traffic light" system to improve the navigation of drug shortages. [...] The response to substantial shortages currently involves the formation of ad hoc medicine shortages working or action groups, as and when needed, coordinated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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### MyMedicare: Strengthening patient-GP relationships

cesphn.org.au, Other, 21/01/2025, Amy Donato

MyMedicare is a voluntary patient registration model introduced by the Department of Health and Aged Care. It formalises the relationship between patients, their general practice, GP, and primary care teams.

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### How a mobile application could improve access to oral healthcare

Croakey, Other, 21/01/2025, Alison Barrett

As we wait to see if the federal election campaign will bring meaningful gains for long awaited oral healthcare reform, a researcher has proposed a technological solution to help improve affordable access to care. Shariq Ali Khan, a PhD candidate in oral health literacy and oral health seeking behaviour at Federation University Australia, says a comprehensive mobile app may offer oral health promotion and overcome some barriers to access.

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### ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 21/01/2025, Emma Bickley

Interview with AMA ACT president Kerrie Aust about the shingles vaccination. Aust says each year the Department of Health does spend a lot of time looking at where the health dollar needs to go, and they put a lot of work into saying this is the space where it's a priority. When it comes to GPs, she says they are continuing to lag in their capacity to recruit new trainees and keep the ones they have.

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## VACCINES

### Government rolls out free vaccine program for pregnant Australians

Nursing Review, Other, 21/01/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Expectant mothers will have access to free vaccines against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) from next month under a major expansion of the National Immunisation Program (NIP).[...] Health Minister Mark Butler said on Sunday the \$174.5m move was "world-leading".

## Free RSV vaccine for pregnant women to protect newborns

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 21/01/2025

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of a free RSV vaccine for pregnant women, designed to protect newborns. Backed by a \$174.5 million investment, the vaccine will be offered through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) starting February 3.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Let them work: One Nation policy lets seniors earn and keep all the pension

Canberra Times, Other, 21/01/2025, Eileen Wood

A proposed One Nation policy to allow age pension and veterans' pension recipients to work without losing any of their benefits has not been met with enthusiasm from all retirees. Fair Go For Pensioners Victorian president Joe Montero said the policy might help some people get a better quality of life in retirement but would not help the many retirees who were unable to work because they couldn't get a job or were too old or infirm.

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

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### IRT's new plans for Towradgi retirement village

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 21/01/2025, Glen Humphries

More than two years after IRT withdrew the original plans a proposed redevelopment of its Towradgi retirement home is back on the table. The plans for the \$112 million 87-unit redevelopment of Elements at IRT Towradgi Beach have been lodged with Wollongong City Council after previously releasing them in late 2022

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### Seeking a pragmatic health solution

Shepparton News Online, Other, 21/01/2025, Robert Muir

A strategic health investment proposal is set to spark further debate as Federation Council seeks community input on Corowa hospital's aged care closure. A draft Health Position Statement, advocating for strategic investment in local and regional health will be exhibited by Federation Council for 28 days.

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### One in four home care services failed to comply with Quality Standards: ACQSC

The Weekly Source, Other, 21/01/2025, Caroline Egan

Compliance rates for home care services improved 8 percentage points in Q1 2024-25, yet 27% failed to comply with all 8 of the Aged Care Quality Standards. The previous quarter, more than one-third of providers failed to comply.

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### AN-ACC minutes still need work

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 21/01/2025, Mark Sheldon-Stemm

The new funding and minutes under AN-ACC demonstrate a movement towards a fairer system, but they remain significantly unaligned to paying for care. When the new pricing came out in October 2024

my first analysis involved taking the total funding per class and dividing it by the minutes required under each class to see what price was being paid per class.

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## 2CC, Canberra Live, 21/01/2025, Leon Delaney

Interview with National Seniors Australia CEO Chris Grice about their calls for an increase in the base rate of the aged pension to help alleviate pensioner poverty. Grice says they are flagging this at the moment because of the ongoing cost-of-living issues that older Australians experience, whether they are pensioners, part-pensioners or self-funded retirees.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Bloodspot test turns disease on its heel

Herald Sun, General News, 22/01/2025, Robyn Riley, Page 13

The "heel-prick test" routinely offered to newborns in Victoria is being expanded to include screening for another rare genetic disorder. About one in 50,000 babies are born with the condition called galactosaemia, which stops them processing a particular sugar found in milk and other dairy products.

Also reported by: [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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### Stick to the perimeter of the supermarket, and six other ways to improve heart health

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 21/01/2025, Nina Agrawal

If you're among the millions of Australians who made a New Year's resolution to lose weight, exercise or eat better, here's one more reason to stick with it: doing so can protect your heart. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia. And habits like smoking, poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle can lay the groundwork for disease long before symptoms appear.

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### Myopia, short-sightedness, on the rise for children, according to new research by Specsavers

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 21/01/2025, Thomas McLean

Short-sightedness is on the rise for Australian children, overtaking other childhood health concerns including obesity and allergies, according to new research. The research by Specsavers found 73 per cent of Australian children were not following the World Health Organisation's recommended two hours per day outdoors, placing them at high risk of developing myopia, also known as short-sightedness.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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### Multiple investigations at Adelaide Hills aged care home Bene St Pauls at Hahndorf over vanishing opioid drugs

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 21/01/2025, Andrew Hough

A leading Adelaide Hills aged care home is at the centre of multiple investigations after opioid drugs mysteriously vanished. Bosses at Bene St Pauls residential facility, at Hahndorf, were last month forced to call in state and federal authorities after 100ml OxyNorm liquid medication disappeared.

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### Once-in-a-generation call for sexual assault justice

Canberra Times, Other, 22/01/2025, Rachael Ward

Sexual assault victims would have their own legal representation under a justice system shake-up amid concerns the status quo is too costly and not fit for purpose. [...] Some 2.8 million Australians have experienced sexual violence since turning 15, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows.

*Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).*

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## The Link Between heart health and ageing well

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 21/01/2025

This February is REDFEB, Heart Research Australia's heart awareness month, dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease and encouraging Australians to wear red and donate to fund vital research. Millions of Australians are at risk of heart disease, but fewer realise that keeping their heart healthy can also help protect their brain, memory, and cognitive function, reducing the risk of conditions like dementia as they age.

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## When it comes to fluoride, let's do what's best for children

The Australian, Other, 21/01/2025, Matt Hopcraft and Tim Keys

The debate over whether to fluoridate or not fluoridate local water supply in our towns and centres has become an issue once again, with anti-fluoride votes by a number of Queensland councils, and a political debate emerging in the United States [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, up to half of children in some Queensland regions have untreated decay before starting school.

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# CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

## Breast cancer cure win

Herald Sun, General News, 22/01/2025, Robyn Riley, Page 1

A new treatment for the most common form of breast cancer has boosted cure rates in a major international trial. The Peter Mac-led clinical trial showed that adding an immunotherapy drug to the chemotherapy patients receive ahead of surgery "dramatically" improves cure rates by as much as 20 per cent.

*Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).*

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## This unlikely drink could reduce your bowel cancer risk

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 21/01/2025, Mia Erickson

Here's how one simple dietary switch could reduce your risk of developing the fourth most common type of newly diagnosed cancer and the second deadliest in Australia. [...] One of the largest studies of its kind, the study has hailed a humble glass of dairy milk for its cancer-reducing potential.

*Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).*

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## Potential cancer breakthrough as terminal patients see tumors shrink or stop growing after being treated with a virus

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 21/01/2025, Luke Andrews

Some of the most common cancers in the US could soon be treated using a common virus, a new breakthrough study suggests. Scientists in China have developed a modified virus found in birds that causes cancer cells to produce sugars the immune system can easily recognize and attack.

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 21/01/2025, David Reilly

Interview with Hearing Australia senior audiologist Clare Combey about hearing health. Combey says audiologists can provide hearing aids, test your hearing, and look at your communication ability, among others.

Continuing interview on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#), [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Arbitration won't stop psychiatrists quitting: union

Australian Financial Review, General News, 22/01/2025, David Marin-Guzman and Paul Karp, Page 4

The workplace umpire's urgent intervention into the Minns government's dispute with psychiatrists has failed to stop the threat of mass resignations that could deplete NSW hospitals' workforce by a third.

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### Mental health patients languish in ED

The Australian, General News, 22/01/2025, Natasha Robinson, Page 6

One of Sydney's busiest hospitals has laid out orders that psychiatrists are not to be called to assess patients overnight except in limited circumstances as emergency departments brace for "major impacts" from mass resignations of specialist clinicians. A directive from the boss of the Sydney Local Health District has informed the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's mental health executive and ED department heads that the hospital's designated executive on-call should be called in the first instance when mental health patients present overnight and that the psychiatry registrar on-call in emergency should be consulted only after the hospital's executive manager has determined that "other options are exhausted".

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### Psychiatry crisis puts pressure on wards

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 22/01/2025, Angus Thomson and Kate Aubusson, Page 3

Hospital wards across Sydney are closing or having the number of beds slashed as the NSW government warned it would not find a resolution to the mass resignation of psychiatrists for at least two months. As the resignation of more than 200 psychiatrists began taking effect yesterday, the NSW government and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation NSW, the union representing doctors, agreed to an "expedited arbitration" in front of the Industrial Relations Commission.

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### Satellite hospital scan plan

Courier Mail, General News, 22/01/2025, Chris Burns, Taylah Fellows and Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

The state government will consider expanding the state's much maligned satellite hospitals including adding MRI and CT scanning facilities. But Premier David Crisafulli has doubled down on his commitment to rename the health centres to prevent confusion.

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### AMA call for new hospital

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 22/01/2025, Page 22

A strong, sustainable healthcare system is the cornerstone of a healthy and productive society. As highlighted by Dr Michael Lumsden-Steel, state president of the Australian Medical Association, in his group's state budget submission, the urgent need for a capable, futureproof health infrastructure demands immediate and united action from both state and federal governments.

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## Hospitals in NSW have issued directives that some mental health patients not be assessed overnight

The Australian, Other, 21/01/2025, Natasha Robinson

One of Sydney's busiest hospitals has laid out orders that psychiatrists are not to be called to assess patients overnight except in limited circumstances as emergency departments brace for "major impacts" from mass resignations of specialist clinicians. A directive from the boss of the Sydney Local Health District has informed the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's mental health executive and ED department heads that the hospital's designated executive on-call should be called in the first instance when mental health patients present overnight and that the psychiatry registrar on-call in emergency should be consulted only after the hospital's executive manager has determined that "other options are exhausted".

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## Labor claims 'sham' review will see cuts to Tugun Satellite Hospital despite patient boost

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 21/01/2025, Paul Weston

The Gold Coast's new satellite hospital is diverting more than 20,000 patients away from busy emergency departments but a political storm is brewing about its future, with Labor claiming the state government is laying the groundwork for major cuts. On a visit to the southern Gold Coast on Tuesday state Opposition leader Steven Miles is to call on the Crisafulli Government to give an iron-clad backing to the smaller hospitals as a review kicks off.

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## 'Embarrassing clanger': Premier rubbishes Labor's hospital jobs cut claims

The Courier Mail, Other, 21/01/2025, Chris Burns, Taylah Fellows and Jackie Sinnerton

Fears that a Queensland Health review into satellite hospitals would justify job cuts has been denied by Premier David Crisafulli, who believes services may need to increase. The state government will consider expanding the state's much maligned satellite hospitals – including adding MRI and CT scanning facilities.

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## AMA says it's time to plan and fund a new Hobart hospital

Northern Territory News, Other, 21/01/2025, David Killick

Planning and funding for a new hospital in southern Tasmania should be a top priority in the next state budget, the Australian Medical Association says. AMA state president Michael Lumsden-Steel has released details of the group's budget submission — which focused on the need to raise government revenue to cover increasing health costs.

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## LifeFlight Townsville: Air ambulance service climbs to new heights

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 21/01/2025

Soaring demand in North Queensland contributed to LifeFlight air ambulance jet crews in Townsville airlifting a record number of patients in 2024. Soaring demand in North Queensland contributed to LifeFlight air ambulance jet crews in Townsville airlifting a record number of patients in 2024.

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## Emergency wait times blow out as hospitals struggle to discharge patients

Your Life Choices, Other, 21/01/2025

The number of Australians experiencing lengthy waits in hospital emergency departments for admission to a ward is about three times the target set by emergency medicine specialists, according to a new report. The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) said patient safety was at risk and emergency departments were filling up with vulnerable people who might not need medical attention, but had nowhere else to go.

### **ABC Radio Darwin , Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Lyrella Couzens**

Interview with AMA NT head Robert Parker about a psychiatrist exodus because of pay. Parker says the NSW government has devalued the work of psychiatrists and the mental health system for a long time, and it is symbolic of their regard for people affected by severe mental illness, which they don't care about that much.

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### **6PR, Drive, 21/01/2025, Russell Collett**

Interview with AMA president Dr Danielle McMullen about a medicine shortage. McMullen says medicines shortages have always existed, with a huge peak in COVID-19. She says the TGA is doing a fair job most of the time, but they could do better in terms of predicting shortages and acting earlier to minimise the impacts.

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### **ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 21/01/2025, Rory McClaren**

Panel discussion with Private Healthcare Australia's Ben Harris and Healthscope senior manager of corporate affairs Jim Cooper about expensive private hospital fees. Cooper says it's been well documented that private hospitals around Australia and in SA have been doing it very tough in the years since COVID-19, being faced with rising costs, workforce shortages, and rising wages.

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### **ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Craig Reucassel**

In rural NSW, just two GP training spots were able to be filled in 2025, highlighting a severe shortage of health care professionals in the state's regions. With training numbers in the state up by only 8%, far behind the national growth of nearly 20%, the Royal Australian College of GPs is calling for urgent action, asking for an additional 1,500 training spots over the next five years.

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### **FIVEAA, Mornings, 21/01/2025**

Interview with AMA president Dr Danielle McMullen about the medicine shortage. McMullen says it is not a new problem, but it does feel like over the past few years, they have had more medicines in more shortages and for longer. She says as a country, they should be able to be more proactive and get better sharing of information so people understand what's in and out of supply.

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### **Radio National, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Sally Sara**

Interview with Family Planning Australia CEO Sue Shilbury about regional access to abortion services. Shilbury says it is much more difficult for women in rural and particularly remote rural locations to access abortion services, be it a medical abortion or a surgical abortion.

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### **Radio National, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Sally Sara**

Interview with New South Wales Association of Psychiatry trainees president Lauren Amor on psychiatrists resigning over pay disputes. Amor says she is concerned about workplace safety on the ground as they have less than 200 psychiatrists on the floor, the impact that a lack of supervisors is going to have on trainees, and how this massive crisis on the mental health system is going to look to trainees who are just about to qualify as staff specialists.

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### **Almost 1 million Australians are LGBTQIA+ – and for the first time, there's a new national health plan for them**

Nursing Review, Other, 21/01/2025

New data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) this week shows one in 20 (4.5 per cent) Australians over 16 are LGBTQIA+. [...] Yet in health and wellbeing outcomes – particularly mental health – this population drags far behind the rest of the country.

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### **NBN Lismore, NBN News, 21/01/2025, Tyson Cottrill**

Young people in Ballina will benefit from greater access to mental health services thanks to the launch of a new Headspace branch. The organisation today opens its fourth centre in the region to meet the growing demand for support.

Also reported by: [NBN Gold Coast \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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### **2GB, Drive, 21/01/2025, Clinton Maynard**

Interview with NSW senator Hollie Hughes about mental health. Hughes says a lot of mental health issues, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, were never supposed to be on the NDIS and they got included.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### **State's health system is at 'breaking point'**

Newcastle Herald, General News, 22/01/2025, Damon Cronshaw, Page 1

A Hunter mental health nurse says the mass resignation of psychiatrists could lead to an exodus of other medical staff in the NSW public health system. Laurel Kibble, branch delegate of Maitland mental health unit for the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, backed the psychiatrists' stance.

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### **Nurses, doctors in mental health call-up**

Daily Telegraph, General News, 22/01/2025, Elizabeth Pike, Page 3

Nurses, doctors and social workers would assume greater roles in the public mental health system under long-term plans from the Minns government to reduce an overreliance on psychiatrists, and to prevent specialists holding the system to "ransom". The potential reforms can be revealed as about 100 psychiatrists \_ roughly a quarter of the workforce \_ intend to resign in the next two weeks amid a pay dispute with the government.

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### **Progress slow on ambos' culture**

Herald Sun, General News, 22/01/2025, Page 3

Ambulance Victoria has fully implemented just five of 25 priority recommendations to improve its workplace culture, a report by the state's human rights watchdog reveals. The report, released on Wednesday by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights Commission, details progress

made by Ambulance Victoria to clean up its culture, but also highlights "the need for ongoing efforts ... to ensure it becomes a safe, fair and inclusive workplace".

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## Call to get GPs training in ACT

Canberra Times, General News, 22/01/2025, Yasmin Bouzas, Page 3

Fewer than half of the ACT's general practitioner training spots have been filled as the territory struggles with a GP shortage. Canberra has fewer general practitioners per person than any other capital city.

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## New interns just what the doctor ordered

Ballarat Courier, General News, 22/01/2025, Michelle Smith, Page 1

Dozens of fresh-faced new doctors have started their medical careers at Grampians Health in Ballarat. The new faces include several Ballarat locals, many who have studied here at the University of Melbourne, Deakin and Notre Dame rural clinical schools, and newcomers to the city from across Victoria and interstate.

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## New interns recruited

Border Watch, General News, 22/01/2025, Page 7

A record number of medical interns started work in the state's public hospitals this month, including seven positions recruited in the Limestone Coast. 313 of these new doctors were allocated jobs across local health networks, making the number of recruits 28 more than the 285 recruited last year, and includes 33 interstate and 20 overseas medical graduates.

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## NSW public hospital psychiatrists demand urgent reform amid mass exodus from today

ABC Online, Other, 21/01/2025, Sam Nichols

With roughly two-thirds of psychiatrists in NSW's public hospital system set to resign on Tuesday over ongoing frustrations with pay and working conditions, one worker who has already left the system emphasised the need for urgent reform in the sector. Last November, Lauren Taylor, a consultant psychiatrist with almost 20 years' experience working across the NSW public health sector, relocated to Adelaide.

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## Labor claims 'sham' review will see cuts to Tugun Satellite Hospital despite patient boost

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 21/01/2025, Paul Weston

The Gold Coast's new satellite hospital is diverting more than 20,000 patients away from busy emergency departments but a political storm is brewing about its future, with Labor claiming the state government is laying the groundwork for major cuts. On a visit to the southern Gold Coast on Tuesday state Opposition leader Steven Miles is to call on the Crisafulli Government to give an iron-clad backing to the smaller hospitals as a review kicks off.

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## Incentives prove successful in attracting new GPs

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 21/01/2025

Michelle Wisbey 21/01/2025 6:00:00 AM New data shows the difference incentive payments make to enticing new GPs to the profession, as the RACGP calls for 1500 more places to be funded over five years. The number of GPs training in Melbourne jumped by 42% between 2024–25.

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## Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson urge public hospital psychiatrists

## to remain at work amid walkout threat

The Australian, Other, 22/01/2025, Jessica Wang

Nsw Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson has urged the state's public hospital psychiatrists to not quit the system en masse, with the NSW government expediting a hearing with independent workplace umpire set to take place in eight weeks. As it stands, 181 psychiatrists of the state's 443 total headcount are still intending to resign unless the government agrees to a pay rise of 25 per cent, rejecting the current offer of 10.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

## Fears for new mums after mass psychiatrist resignation

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 21/01/2025, Maeve Bannister

New mothers experiencing mental distress may have to be treated in general psychiatric units separated from their babies as a mass resignation of public sector psychiatrists impacts the entire system. About 200 public hospital psychiatrists are poised to resign from NSW Health, while there are already 140 long-term vacancies in the state system.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 21/01/2025, Chris Bath

Interview with Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson about psychiatrists resigning en-masse over pay. Jackson says they have been in negotiation with them for some time. She says there's a lot they agree on but also some fundamental areas of disagreement.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Craig Reucassel

In rural NSW, just two GP training spots were able to be filled in 2025, highlighting a severe shortage of health care professionals in the state's regions. With training numbers in the state up by only 8%, far behind the national growth of nearly 20%, the Royal Australian College of GPs is calling for urgent action, asking for an additional 1,500 training spots over the next five years.

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## Radio National, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Sally Sara

Interview with New South Wales Association of Psychiatry trainees president Lauren Amor on psychiatrists resigning over pay disputes. Amor says she is concerned about workplace safety on the ground as they have less than 200 psychiatrists on the floor, the impact that a lack of supervisors is going to have on trainees, and how this massive crisis on the mental health system is going to look to trainees who are just about to qualify as staff specialists.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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### South Australian nurses banned or restricted from practice and two fake nurses caught in 2024

Northern Territory News, Other, 21/01/2025, Isabel McMillan

Forging prescriptions, lying on resumes and impersonating a RAH nurse, these medical professionals had their registrations canned or restricted. Some of them weren't even qualified. [...] These are nurses who had the registrations cancelled or restricted – and the fake ones busted – in 2024 according to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### Kids, 7, expelled for vaping

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 22/01/2025, Rose Innes, Page 2

Children as young as seven were among the 187 Queensland primary school students suspended or expelled for vaping last year. Those children were among the 1901 primary and high state school students punished for using the illicit products the equivalent of almost 10 kids a day.

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### Channel 7, Sunrise, 21/01/2025, Matt Shirvington and Natalie Barr

A new report has revealed children as young as seven are suspended or expelled from Queensland schools for vaping. A total of 187 primary school students were suspended or expelled for using vapes in Queensland in 2024. Those children are among more than 1,900 primary and high school students punished for using them, which amounts to 10 students every day.

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## SPORT

### Paris Olympic medals lose their shine

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 22/01/2025, Tom Decent, Page 3

An Olympic medal should last forever. But since the Paris Olympics finished in August, more than 100 athletes, including six Australians, have complained to the International Olympic Committee that the bling they received in Paris is disintegrating.

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### Village damned costly

Herald Sun, General News, 22/01/2025, Page 10

The Queensland government faces a \$3.5bn funding black hole to build four Olympic Games athletes villages the equivalent of the price of an entire new stadium. Queensland Treasury said the cost of villages at Brisbane, Kooralbyn, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast to house more than 16,000 athletes at the 2032 Games would be \$3.5bn.

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### \$3.5bn Games black hole

Courier Mail, General News, 22/01/2025, Hayden Johnson, Page 1

A \$3.5bn black hole has emerged in plans for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics the athletes villages are unfunded. The cost of housing more than 16,000 athletes competing at the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games today can be revealed as the equivalent of a new stadium.

## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### Researchers find oyster blood helps antibiotics kill respiratory bacteria

ABC Online, Other, 21/01/2025, Claire Simmonds

They are a seafood delicacy that can create pearls and are rumoured to have aphrodisiac properties, but oysters might have a more serious role to play in the field of human health. In findings published today by the peer-reviewed scientific journal PLOS One, researchers from the Southern Cross University found oysters helped kill antibiotic-resistant bacteria of common respiratory infections.

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### Experts pinpoint five common medications that could raise dementia risk by up to 125%

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 21/01/2025

A major new analysis has revealed that five types of commonly taken medications could raise the risk of dementia. Antipsychotics, some medications for high blood pressure, diabetes medications, vitamins and supplements and antidepressants were linked to an increased chance of developing the disease.

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### Examining the pros and cons of semaglutide

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 21/01/2025, Morgan Liotta

A new study finds lowered risk of 42 health outcomes and increased risk of 19 for people using GLP-1RAs, highlighting the 'far-reaching potential' of the drugs. The link between GLP-1RA use and 175 health outcomes was analysed in a large group of people with diabetes, finding potential health benefits beyond those currently recognised.

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### Popular weight-loss drugs linked to new health risks and benefits

The New Daily, Other, 21/01/2025, Imma Perfetto

A large analysis of weight-loss drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy has surprised health researchers, who found links to multiple new benefits – and some new side effects. The research has found that weight-loss drugs – known as glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs) – may be associated with increased risks for pancreatitis and kidney conditions.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Toxic waters a 'dirty secret' in South Coast tourist mecca

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 22/01/2025, Carrie Fellner, Page 16

Federal authorities have been accused of profiting off the hundreds of thousands of visitors to NSW's picturesque Jervis Bay region each year without sufficiently warning them about cancer-causing toxins in the area. Speaking at senate inquiry into so-called "forever chemicals", members of a local Aboriginal village blamed per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAS) for devastating levels of sickness and death.

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### NSW Wreck Bay Aboriginal community slams Commonwealth for evading PFAS responsibility

ABC Online, Other, 21/01/2025, Xanthe Gregory



A doctor has told a federal inquiry that the members of a New South Wales Aboriginal community are the victims of a "cancer cluster" because of PFAS contamination caused by the Department of Defence. Dozens of people from Wreck Bay Village, about 40 minutes south of Nowra on the state's South Coast, gave evidence at the second hearing into the extent, regulation and management of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) – or "forever chemicals" – in Australia.

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**Toxic foam used in celebrations before contamination**

Ballarat Courier, Other, 21/01/2025, Stephanie Gardiner

Defence staff unwittingly sprayed toxic firefighting foam to entertain children before a coastal village was contaminated with "forever chemicals", an inquiry has been told. The Commonwealth agreed to pay \$22 million to people living in Wreck Bay, on the NSW south coast, after the toxic foam used at nearby defence sites leaked into sacred waterways.

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**Federal government to fund 'wellness centres' to teach men relationship skills in remote NT and WA**

ABC Online, Other, 21/01/2025, Melissa Mackay

New programs to teach young men and boys about healthy relationships will be set up in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, under a new commonwealth commitment. Federal social services minister Amanda Rishworth on Tuesday announced details of the \$12.2 million package in Katherine, which has seen shocking rates of domestic violence in recent months.

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**Federal government pledges \$12.2m for three NT Men's Wellness Centres**

The Mercury, Other, 21/01/2025, Fia Walsh

The federal government will fund three new community-led Men's Wellness Centres in the Top End to provide support for Indigenous men and boys to recognise signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth was in the Northern Territory on Tuesday to make the \$12.2m announcement, establishing programs in two communities southeast of Katherine, six communities on the NT-Western Australia border, and Wadeye.

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**First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence urge NT government to work with key services on Child Protection reform**

National Indigenous Times, Other, 21/01/2025, Giovanni Torre

The Northern Territory government must ensure proposed amendments to the Care and Protection of Children Act uphold the rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal children by working closely with Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services (FVPLS) who work at the frontline with families affected by domestic violence, says the national peak body that represents the sector.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

## System ‘doesn’t address the root cause of shortages:’ Twomey

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 21/01/2025, Megan Haggan

Pharmacists have agreed with doctors that Australia needs to address its "reactive" approach to medicines shortages. The Australian Medical Association has made a submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's proposed changes to reporting requirements for medicine shortages and discontinuations.

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## No more ‘ad hoc’ drug shortage working groups

The Medical Republic, Other, 21/01/2025, Laura Woodrow

The Australian Medical Association is calling for the formation of a medical shortages forum and the implementation of a "traffic light" system to improve the navigation of drug shortages. [...] The response to substantial shortages currently involves the formation of ad hoc medicine shortages working or action groups, as and when needed, coordinated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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## 2GB, Breakfast, 21/01/2025, Ben Fordham

Fordham says there are fears Australia could run out of some medicine. He says the Therapeutic Goods Administration is responsible for managing medicine supply and its medicine shortage database lists 417 ongoing shortages.

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## 6PR, Drive, 21/01/2025, Russell Collett

Collett says the Therapeutic Goods Administration is responsible for managing medicines supply and its medicine shortage database currently lists 417 ongoing shortages, 38 of which are critical, and 68 more shortages are on the horizon. He says the AMA has warned that Australia is falling behind comparable countries in the post-COVID market.

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## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### Radio National, Life Matters, 21/01/2025

Panel discussion with advocate for harm reduction Jennie Ross-King, whose 19-year-old daughter died after taking an unknown dose of MDMA at a music festival in 2019, Australian National University associate professor Dr Anna Olsen, and The Loop CEO Cameron Francis talk about the Victorian pill-testing trials. Francis says the Victorian government has issued a contract for drug checking to happen at 10 festivals, five this summer and five next summer, and will implement a fixed-site location to open in the middle of the year and run for about 12 months as a pilot.

Continuing interview on: [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#).

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## FOOD STANDARDS

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## AICIS

## Rivers, school and a park high priority in PFAS probe

Canberra Times, Other, 22/01/2025, Stephanie Gardiner

Rivers, lakes, a park and a school are among 51 sites across NSW likely to have had significant exposure to toxic "forever chemicals", as authorities expand water testing to regional areas. The state government's actions to monitor, detect and deal with PFAS chemical contamination are set to be examined by a federal inquiry in Penrith, in western Sydney, on Wednesday.

*Also reported by:* [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#)

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