



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 31st 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](#)

## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 1) reports the federal government will intervene to address the shortage of medical imaging facilities in Cairns after reports women faced a four-month wait for mammogram screenings, with Health Minister Mark Butler saying he has asked his department to meet with Queensland Health to find a resolution.
- **[The Australian Financial Review](#)** (page 5) reports tobacco excise has fallen to a nine-year low of \$9.7 billion as economists say the twice-yearly increase in the excise \_ which accounts for around \$34 of a \$50 pack of 25 cigarettes \_ is pushing smokers towards black-market products.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 13) reports severely ill patients are waiting up to three and a half days in emergency departments for mental health hospital beds, as hospital staff warn of risks to other patients because people in the grips of psychosis have nowhere to go.
- **[The Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 7) reports elderly and vulnerable Australians are opting not to take the RSV vaccine because they can't afford the \$350 cost of the one-off jab, despite the federal government recommending they receive the vaccine for the potentially fatal virus.
- **[The Canberra Times](#)** (page 12) reports ACT Health Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith says the territory may block NSW residents from seeking treatment, citing the increased cost of treating patients in the ACT due to economies of scale.

- [The Australian Journal of Pharmacy](#) (online) reports the Department of Health says patients should ask pharmacists about the price of their prescription before committing to have it filled, noting customers can save money if they shop around.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Cancer call gets action

Courier Mail, General News, 31/01/2025, Ian Jeffries and Emma Cam, Page 1

The federal government will address a dire shortage of medical imaging facilities in Carins after shocking four-month wait times for mammograms were exposed. Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said his department would meet with Queensland Health as well as representatives from the private sector and the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) after The Courier-Mail last week launched the Critical Condition campaign, calling on state and federal governments to help reinstate diagnostic breast screening services.

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### Protecting our babies from RSV

Coast Community Pelican Post, General News, 30/01/2025, Page 28

From February 3, Australian mums and their newborn babies will have free access to the best and most comprehensive protection against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said it was a world-leading approach to reduce the impact of RSV on babies.

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

### New four-year trial to give regional Queenslanders better access to GPs, doctors

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 31/01/2025, Jackie Sinnerton

Regional Queenslanders will be able to see a doctor closer to home under a new initiative to attract and retain 60 new GPs and rural generalists. The Albanese and Queensland governments are working together to deliver a new four-year Single Employer Model (SEM) trial to support the trainees across the state.

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### Senators back real-time pathology data sharing bill

InnovationAus, Other, 30/01/2025, Brandon How

Government legislation that ensures medical imaging data is shared by default with the My Health Record system is set to float through the Senate, despite concerns of an uneven cost on providers. [...] In a speech last October, Health minister Mark Butler said that since sharing-by-default was announced in 2023 the number of diagnostic imaging reports uploaded to My Health Record has increased from one in five to one in three.

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### 2SM, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Chris Smith

Interview with Rachael Wong, CEO of Women's Forum Australia, who discusses the letter calling for a national independent inquiry into youth gender medicine and a moratorium on gender-affirming interventions for children, highlighting growing concerns about child harm, inadequate care, and a lack of leadership on the issue. Wong claims that Health Minister Mark Butler and his advisers have dismissed concerns about youth gender medicine in Australia, despite the fact that local guidelines are based on now-discredited international standards that have been linked to doctor malpractice.

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## ABC News, Drive, 30/01/2025

Interview with Dr Chris Sanzaro, president of the Australian Dental Association (ADA), about their 'Time to Act' campaign, which urges political leaders to prioritise oral health for seniors. [...] However, Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler has said they are not considering taking any action on this issue.

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## FIVEAA, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Graeme Goodings

Interview with Dr Andrew Gikas, federal executive councillor, Australian Dental Association (ADA) about the latest figures that show, on average, older Australians over 65 are losing 14 teeth. Gikas says the push to prioritise oral health, particularly for seniors with gum disease, is gaining traction, with 75% of Australians supporting the need for action, particularly in the run-up to the election. He urges Health Minister Mark Butler to take these concerns into account.

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[Back to Top](#)

## MINISTER WELLS

### \$18.4 million to support nursing students with clinical placements in aged care

Inside Ageing, Other, 30/01/2025, Amy Clarke

The Government is investing \$18.4 million in the Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placements Program to support up to 8,000 nursing students in developing practical skills for aged care. [...] In a release, Minister for Aged Care and Sport, Anika Wells, highlighted the program's role in attracting skilled nurses to aged care, reducing medical emergencies through early intervention.

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### Anthony Albanese gets his man as Greg Norman agrees to help shape 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games

Northern Territory News, Other, 30/01/2025, Ben Talintyre

Greg Norman has been hand-picked by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to join the board planning both Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. [...] While Sports Minister Anika Wells, who backed Norman for the role, said his experience and profile are a huge plus for the Games.

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[Back to Top](#)

## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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## DEPARTMENT

### Pharmacy's year ahead

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 30/01/2025, Page 4

On the wish list for pharmacy in 2025 are national harmonisation of pharmacist services, more collaboration with non-pharmacy stakeholders and a greater emphasis on multidisciplinary care. [...] Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Associate Professor Fei Sim, said that 2024 was a year where the pharmacy profession as a whole had greater connection than ever before with the Department of Health and Aged Care, the primary healthcare networks, and other external stakeholders as well.

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### Department advises patients to 'shop around' for scripts

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 30/01/2025, Bart Pharm

Patients can secure savings on their prescription medicines if they "shop around" an official from the Department of Health and Aged Care says.

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### 583 overseas workers granted visas under Aged Care Industry Labour Agreements when Govt predicted over 4,000 a year

The Weekly Source, Other, 30/01/2025, Caroline Egan

There have been 2,649 visas issued under the Albanese Government's Aged Care Industry Labour Agreements (ACILAs), which were introduced in 2023 to help aged care providers recruit more qualified migrant workers into Australia's aged care sector badly in need of staff. [...] 2023 Department of Health and Aged Care estimates put the workforce gap at more than 17,000.

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### ABC News, News Breakfast, 30/01/2025, James Glenday and Bridget Brennan

Interview with Prof Tony Lawler, chief medical officer, about the rising cases of a highly infectious gastro-illness, spread mainly through water sources like swimming pools, have led to public health warnings nationwide. Lawler explains that cryptosporidium, a parasitic infection primarily spread through water and sometimes dairy products, is a notifiable disease, with rising cases prompting health alerts for swimmers in several states.

*Interview continues on: [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#).*

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[Back to Top](#)

## VACCINES

### Vax cost a health concern

Hobart Mercury, General News, 31/01/2025, Robyn Riley, Page 7

Vulnerable and elderly Australians are missing out on protection against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) because many can't afford to pay \$350 for a one-off vaccine. [...] A Department of Health and Aged Care spokesman said the greatest risk for serious disease with RSV was with children under five years, but it was reviewing the PBAC outcome and actively working with the vaccine sponsor on the next steps.

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### Pregnant pause on vaccine coverage

Pregnancy vaccination coverage in NSW has declined since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, a new study led by the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance has confirmed. The research found a decrease of nearly 10 percentage points in pregnancy vaccination coverage for influenza (from 58.8 per cent in 2020 to 49.1 per cent in 2022) and 1.4 percentage points for whooping cough (pertussis), from 79.0 per cent in 2020 to 77.6 per cent in 2022.

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[Back to Top](#)

## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Predicting risk of bone stress

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 31/01/2025, Louisa Ragas, Page 12

Preventing the risk of bone fractures in Australia's ageing population is a serious challenge, but researchers from Deakin University think they may have found a link to hip shape and structure that can help predict a person's risk of fractures. As we age our bones can become more fragile, making fractures even from minor incidents more likely. These are known as fragility fractures and with Australia's ageing population they're becoming increasingly common.

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### Aussie breakthroughs on healthy brain ageing

ABC Online, Other, 31/01/2025

As we get older, we start to notice our bodies don't quite work like they used to. Achy knees, sore back, our eyesight gets worse. According to Dementia Australia more than 421,000 people are living with dementia in Australia last year.

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### Aged care peak completes rebrand

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 30/01/2025, Natasha Egan

The nation's industry association for providers of aged and community care services, retirement living, seniors housing and related services has begun the day with a new identity – Ageing Australia. Taking effect on 30 January, the rebrand from Aged & Community Care Providers Association – ACCPA – aims to be a clearer reflection of who the peak is, said chief executive officer Tom Symondson in a video posted on the peak's website.

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### Fed Govt to cover part of increased leave entitlements in aged care worker pay rises

The Weekly Source, Other, 30/01/2025, Caroline Egan

The federal government has opened a grant opportunity for aged care providers to cover higher long service leave, annual leave, and personal leave entitlements reflecting Stage 3 of the Fair Work Commission's aged care work value wage rise, which came into effect on 1 January 2025.

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### NSW Coroner makes no recommendations against Anglicare Sydney after inquest into Newmarch House COVID-19 resident deaths

The Weekly Source, Other, 30/01/2025, Ian Horswill

Anglicare CEO Simon Miller again expressed his apologies to the families and friends of the 19 residents who died at the aged care home in Kingswood, Penrith, 52km west of Sydney's CBD, in what was then the largest COVID-19 outbreaks in Australia. "Anglicare acknowledges that the circumstances in which family members of Newmarch lost their mothers, fathers, grandparents, partners or friends made the loss much greater," Simon said in a statement .

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## ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 30/01/2025, Rick Hind

Interview with Dr Isabelle Meyer, executive director of Dementia Training Australia, about their new training program designed for healthcare professionals who engage with people living with dementia. Meyer explains that their 'Changed Behaviour Hub' aims to support carers, healthcare professionals, and the community in managing the behavioral challenges faced by the growing number of Australians living with dementia.

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## ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Saskia Mabin

Interview with Kelly Burns, lead learning designer, Dementia Australia, who discusses a recent study in which 6000 Australians aged 55 to 77 demonstrated significant cognitive improvements after participating in the lifestyle intervention program 'Maintain Your Brain'. Burns says that since its launch in October 2022, Dementia Australia's app has been downloaded nearly 130,000 times, with users sharing valuable demographic data and generating 72,000 reports, showing growing interest in brain health and proactive risk management.

*Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#), [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#).*

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[Back to Top](#)

## POPULATION HEALTH

### Tobacco taxes drop as smokers go black market

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/01/2025, Michael Read, Page 5

Tobacco excise revenue has shrunk to a nine-year low as smokers turn to the black market for cheaper cigarettes, prompting calls for the federal government to boost enforcement to plug the growing shortfall.

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### Harsh truth of psychiatrists crisis

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 31/01/2025, Kate Aubusson and Angus Thomson, Page 13

Severely ill and distressed patients are waiting three-and-a-half days in a major Sydney emergency department for mental health beds that do not exist, confidential hospital records reveal, in a shocking escalation of the state's psychiatrist workforce crisis. [...] One in 10 mental health patients wait more than 23 hours in emergency departments for a bed, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows.

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### Home-test kit breakthrough

Herald Sun, General News, 31/01/2025, Zoe Smith, Page 18

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. Following the success of their HIV kit, Sydney firm Atomo Diagnostics are developing a home syphilis test after receiving federal government funding.

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### Vaping health issues on the rise:AMA

Burnie Advocate, General News, 31/01/2025, Matt Maloney, Page 6

Young Tasmanians are increasingly presenting to general practitioners for issues related to vaping, Australian Medical Association state spokesman John Saul says. From July 1 to September 30 last year, e-cigarettes could only be supplied to people aged over 18 with a prescription around Australia after vape sales were banned from all other retailers.

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## Minister defends idea to turn back NSW patients

Canberra Times, General News, 31/01/2025, Lanie Tindale, Page 12

Sydney hospitals have returned Canberra patients to the ACT, the health minister says defending a suggestion to stop NSW residents from accessing health services in the territory. An escalation in projected health costs means the government must consider restricting health services to some NSW residents, Health Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith said on Thursday.

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## South Australian government makes world first ban on nicotine product

7news.com.au, Other, 30/01/2025, Lauren Thomson

South Australia has banned the sale of nicotine pouches, the first such ban of its kind in Australia which will remove the highly addictive product from tobacco stores statewide. From January 30, nicotine pouches — which were rising in popularity across South Australia — will fall under the same controls as illegal tobacco and e-cigarettes.

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## Should we sequence the DNA of every baby born in Australia? Soon, you could have your say

Medicine Today, Other, 30/01/2025, Sarah Norris, Ainsley Newson, Lisa Dive and Stacy Carter

Within a few days of being born, more than 300,000 Australian babies a year have a spot of their blood analysed to screen for a range of serious but treatable health conditions. The aim of this newborn bloodspot screening is to detect babies at risk of health conditions and to intervene early.

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## Queensland's puberty blockers ban has potential to cause harm, sex discrimination commissioner says

The Guardian, Other, 30/01/2025, Andrew Messenger

The Queensland government's ban on puberty blockers for new patients seeking treatment for gender issues is "discriminatory", according to the state's only dedicated LGBTQI youth service, as the national sex discrimination commissioner warns the decision may harm young people. Sex discrimination commissioner, Anna Cody, said the decision "has the potential to harm the physical and mental wellbeing of children in Queensland who are currently awaiting care".

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## 6PR, Drive, 30/01/2025, Oliver Peterson

Interview with Michele John, associate professor at the University of Melbourne, about a new survey that found that 70% of Australians aged 16 to 39 are at risk of using nicotine pouches. John says as e-cigarettes become more expensive and harder to access due to new vaping reforms, the nicotine industry has shifted to promoting nicotine pouches to keep young people addicted and maintain profits.

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## Radio National, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Sally Sara

Interview with Rohan Pike, a former Australian Federal Police officer who helped establish the Australian Border Forces Tobacco Strike Force. Pike explains that illicit cigarette brands, like Manchester from Dubai, are flooding into Australia, with illegal packets costing around \$10–\$15, significantly cheaper than legal packets priced at \$40–\$50, making them attractive to smokers.

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[Back to Top](#)

## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

## Researchers caution against activists' anti-meat agenda

The Australian, General News, 31/01/2025, Charlie Peel, Page 9

Policymakers and health professionals should be wary of using weak scientific evidence proffered by anti-meat advocates when forming policy and dietary guidelines, researchers have warned. In a report published in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition*, they stressed that increasing efforts to demonise consumption of red meat, often centred on concerns for the environment, animal welfare and disease, should be balanced by the nutritional and health implications of eating less meat.

Also reported by: [\*The Australian\* \(Online\)](#).

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## Suntan shockers

Herald Sun, General News, 31/01/2025, Sarah Booth, Page 1

A spike in Victorian melanoma cases has prompted a stark warning about the resurgence of tanning culture among young people this summer. The rise comes as tanning explodes in popularity online, with social media influencers and users sharing photos of their tan lines. [...] The spike has prompted Cancer Council Victoria to call on the public to protect themselves from an almost entirely preventable disease, with SunSmart head Emma Glassenbury warning a tan was a "sign of damage".

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## Cancer call gets action

Courier Mail, General News, 31/01/2025, Ian Jeffries and Emma Cam, Page 1

The federal government will address a dire shortage of medical imaging facilities in Carins after shocking four-month wait times for mammograms were exposed. Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler said his department would meet with Queensland Health as well as representatives from the private sector and the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) after The Courier-Mail last week launched the Critical Condition campaign, calling on state and federal governments to help reinstate diagnostic breast screening services.

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## Blood cancer crisis looms next decade

Hobart Mercury, General News, 31/01/2025, Page 3

Blood cancer is set to become Australia's most common and deadly cancer within a decade, the Leukaemia Foundation says. Fuelling the issue is that while incidence of blood cancer has increased by 79 per cent in the past 20 years, only 12 per cent of its research funding has gone into prevention and early detection well behind other leading cancers in Australia.

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## Women left to wait on health

Cairns Post, General News, 31/01/2025, Emma Cam, Page 7

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. Delays blew out to four months after the critical service was impacted last year when one of just two providers servicing Cairns to The Cape stopped offering mammographic services.

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## Breakthrough research by QIMR with Kazia Therapeutics to develop breast cancer drug

Adelaide Now, Other, 30/01/2025

When Terri Parkes was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer, she feared the worst outcome. However, after combination therapy, Ms Parkes has continued to thrive years on after her diagnosis.

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## Cancer Council WA calls for restrictions on junk food supermarket promotions and placement

West Australian, Other, 30/01/2025, Bethany Hiatt

Supermarkets are promoting junk food and sugary drinks almost twice as much as healthy options,



with back-to-school catalogues showing the biggest price drops for unhealthy snacks, a Cancer Council WA report reveals. The charity called for tougher regulations to bar supermarkets from displaying junk food at checkouts or other sales-boosting locations such as at the end of aisles, in line with restrictions imposed in Britain.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Craig Reucassel

Queensland medical researchers are conducting a clinical trial targeting triple-negative breast cancer, the most aggressive form, commonly diagnosed in women under 40. The trial focuses on a new approach that targets dormant cancer cells, aiming to extend patient survival.

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[Back to Top](#)

## PRIMARY CARE

### Leaked documents show 88-hour waits for mental health patients at Sydney hospital

9News, Other, 30/01/2025, Mikala Theocharous

Documents obtained by 9News have revealed the 88-hour wait for psychiatric patients at a Sydney emergency department, as well as the "beyond unsafe" conditions facing its staff. Leaked Westmead Hospital documents revealed that a patient with chronic schizophrenia waited 88 hours in its emergency room on Tuesday.

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### 'Hell of a mess': Man attacked by kangaroo at home in Qld's Central Highlands region

The Australian, Other, 30/01/2025, Clareese Packer

A Queensland Ambulance spokeswoman said a man in his 50s suffered a hip injury and "some serious lacerations to his arms and chest following an altercation with a kangaroo". [...] The man was taken to Emerald Hospital by road before he was flown to Rockhampton Hospital by the Royal Flying Doctors service.

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

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### GPs in training pay discrepancies laid bare

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 30/01/2025, Michelle Wisbey

New data shows 55% of GPs in training earn less money than in their last year in a pre-vocational hospital position – a trend one GP expert labelled a 'huge concern'. Just 23% of the 1274 respondents say they earn more than their last year working in a pre-vocational hospital position.

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### Ambulances spent more than 4790 hours outside WA hospitals this month marking worst January on record

West Australian, Other, 30/01/2025, Hannah Cross

Ambulances racked up more than 4790 hours outside of WA hospitals this month marking the worst January on record for ramping. And the number of hours is expected to tip over the 5000 mark in the next two days.

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### 2CC, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with ACT Opposition Leader Leanne Castley. Castley discusses concerns about the ACT Government's healthcare funding cuts and staffing shortages, with potential service reductions and the

transfer of NSW patients possibly affecting financial arrangements between the two governments.

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### **ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan**

Interview with Chloe Nguyen, General Manager Communications Marketing and Engagement, The Common Good. Nguyen says that the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane leads heart research with 145 ongoing projects, and they encourage continued funding to support their programs, which help save lives and prevent heart transplants.

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### **ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Saskia Mabin**

Interview with Linda Hansen, CEO of the Palliative Care Act. Hansen stresses the mandate of the Palliative Care Act, which is to ensure quality care for those nearing the end of their life by focusing on relieving pain and suffering. She notes that she is aware of the discussion about NSW patients being referred back to their home state for care and hopes to discussing it further in the future.

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### **ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Saskia Mabin**

Interview with A/Prof Andrew Miller, a dermatologist in Canberra, about the announcement of \$227m for Canberra's public health funding. Miller says that the dermatology department in Canberra is struggling with a limited budget and needs to recruit more young dermatologists while expanding its presence in the hospital system. He adds that despite its crucial role in expediting patient care and accelerating hospital discharges, dermatology is often overlooked, highlighting the need for increased resources and recognition.

*Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#).*

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### **ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Ross Solly**

Interview with Terry Slevin, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia, on ACT Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith's \$230m health budget boost, which may lead to service cuts, including reduced medical visits and potential cuts to services for elderly patients deemed unnecessary. Slevin says the challenge in healthcare is balancing low-value care by directing interventions to the right people at the right time.

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[Back to Top](#)

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## **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION**

### **Radio National, Life Matters, 30/01/2025, Hilary Harper and Beverley Wang**

Panel discussion with Dr Matthew Large, psychiatrist at UNSW, and Dr Peter Allely, Director of Emergency Care at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, on the crisis in NSW's mental health system following mass psychiatrist resignations. Allely highlights that emergency departments are unsuitable for long-term mental health care due to their high-stress environments and long wait times, while Large notes the growing strain on emergency departments with insufficient mental health staff and psychiatric beds, making the environment ineffective for patients.

*Interview continues on: [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#), [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#).*

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### **Radio National, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Sally Sara**

Interview with Michael 'Wippa' Wipfli, co-founder of 36 Months, discussing the federal government's

ban on major social media platforms for children under the age of 16 due to concerns about bullying and mental health. Wipfli expresses concerns over the rising rates of self-harm and suicide among young girls. He adds that he was motivated to act on the impact of social media after seeing changes in the US and fearing inaction.

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[Back to Top](#)

## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### CPD made easy – The experts' guide to continuing professional development

Nursing Review, Other, 30/01/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Nursing is one Australia's most in-demand professions, despite nurses and midwives already representing over half of the nation's health workforce. With the roles of nurses and midwives continuing to evolve, long gone are the days when on-the-job training was the benchmark for learning.

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[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Concern psychiatry crisis set to expand

The Australian, General News, 31/01/2025, Penelope Timms, Page 9

The dispute between public sector psychiatrists and the NSW government is at risk of expanding, with salaried doctors in other specialities being asked to consider "what actions they are willing to take" if their pay negotiations with the state fail. The union representing doctors, ASMOF NSW, told members in an update that "considering the psychiatrists' resignations, members must consider what they are willing to do to ensure that our demands are met.

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### 317 new junior doctors, nurses and midwives have been welcomed to NT hospitals in 2025

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 30/01/2025, Thomas McLean

Hundreds of new junior doctors, nurses and midwives have been welcomed to Northern Territory hospitals this year as part of a variety of training programs. Read the details. Of 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.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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### New four-year trial to give regional Queenslanders better access to GPs, doctors

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 31/01/2025, Jackie Sinnerton

Regional Queenslanders will be able to see a doctor closer to home under a new initiative to attract and retain 60 new GPs and rural generalists. The Albanese and Queensland governments are working together to deliver a new four-year Single Employer Model (SEM) trial to support the trainees across the state.

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### Investigation launched into Mackay Hospital and Health Service by Queensland Health

An investigation has been launched following fears Mackay's public hospital had senior medical officers performing roles they were not credentialed for. Queensland Health director general Dr David Rosengren has commissioned an investigation into the Mackay Hospital and Health Service, covering January 2023 to December 2024.

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## More than half of Sydney health district's staff psychiatrists have resigned, leaked documents show

The Guardian, Other, 30/01/2025, Natasha May

More than half of the staff psychiatrists in the Sydney Local Health District – which includes two major psychiatry centres at Royal Prince Alfred and Concord hospitals – have resigned, leaked documents show. Guardian Australia has seen the district's work health safety "risk assessment tool" dated 17 January, which states in a "background/context" section that the "resignation of more than 50% of psychiatry staff specialists employed in SLHD may impact the district's ability to provide safe, high quality, timely, appropriate, consistent and comprehensive health services for mental health consumers".

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 30/01/2025, Kylie Baxter

Interview with Sally Doyle, mayor of the Huon Valley Council, about the Tasmanian medical practices closing or scaling back their services due to a lack of doctors in southern Tasmania. Doyles says the Jamestown Medical Center will offer appointments two days a week, with efforts to add another doctor and increase availability, while Dover Medical Centre will be open five days a week with four part-time doctors, and additional work is being done to secure more staff to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Craig Reucassel

Interview with Dr Zena Burgess, CEO of the Australian Psychological Society, about hospitals closing mental health wards, which is causing concern among remaining employees who are afraid of taking on additional responsibilities that could jeopardize patient safety. Burgess explains that with mental health services overwhelmed, the idea of non-specialists like social workers, psychologists, and GPs taking on psychiatric duties is deemed unfeasible, as they lack the necessary training.

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[Back to Top](#)

## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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[Back to Top](#)

## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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[Back to Top](#)

## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Chinese herbalist guilty after diabetic patient dies

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 30/01/2025, Miklos Bolza

A Chinese herbalist described as hostile and self-serving has been found guilty of professional misconduct after a diabetic patient he told to stop taking western medicine died. Yun Sen Luo, 59, had been practising Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture at Dao Chuan Zhong Yi, a clinic in Burwood in Sydney's inner west.

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[Back to Top](#)

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### **ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 30/01/2025, Saskia Mabin**

Interview with Dr Kerrie Aust, president of AMA ACT, about the announcement today that there will be nearly \$227m spent by the ACT Government on Canberra's public health system. Aust says that engaging clinicians early in conversations about health system changes can lead to better outcomes by identifying unintended consequences.

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### **FIVEAA, Afternoons, 30/01/2025, Stacey Lee**

Interview with Marina Bowshall, CEO of Preventive Health SA. Bowshall says under new legislation passed last year, the government can quickly prohibit new products by issuing a prohibited product notice in the Gazette, without requiring individual legislation for each item. She adds that this allows for faster action against emerging illicit products like e-cigarettes and other banned substances.

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[Back to Top](#)

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## SPORT

### **Sports bet ad cuts shelved until poll**

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 31/01/2025, Paul Sakkal, Page 17

A contentious proposal to cut the volume of sports betting advertisements in Australia has been put on ice until after the election, putting in jeopardy the prospect of any regulation on sports betting. The clampdown on wagering promotions has hit a wall of opposition from media firms, betting companies and the nation's wealthiest sporting codes, the NRL and AFL, prompting the Albanese government to take the reform off the table before an election due by May.

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### **ABC News, News Breakfast, 30/01/2025, James Glenday and Bridget Brennan**

Melbourne will host the Rugby World Cup in 2027 following a last-minute deal between the Victorian Government and World Rugby, despite initial concerns that Victoria would be excluded after the Melbourne Rebels were cut from the Super Rugby competition. Talks resumed a few weeks ago after World Rugby acknowledged the Victorian government's concerns about how the local rugby community had been treated following the Super Rugby cull.

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### **Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 30/01/2025, Laura Jayes**

Jayes is joined by ABC's Kaiser Shields to discuss how Australian golfing great Greg Norman will help shape the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. Shields reports that the former world number one golfer will join the likes of Jess Fox and Nat Cook on the board of the organising committee for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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[Back to Top](#)

## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### World-first Aussie trial helps immune system detect dormant cancer cells

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 30/01/2025

A world-first clinical trial is hoping a successful brain cancer drug can help people fighting one of the deadliest forms of breast cancer.

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### ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, 30/01/2025, Craig Reucassel

Queensland medical researchers are conducting a clinical trial targeting triple-negative breast cancer, the most aggressive form, commonly diagnosed in women under 40. The trial focuses on a new approach that targets dormant cancer cells, aiming to extend patient survival.

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[Back to Top](#)

## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Australia's first Indigenous medical imaging service installs groundbreaking CT in remote WA

National Indigenous Times, Other, 30/01/2025, Jarred Cross

The installation of a cutting-edge CT scanner in Western Australia's Goldfields promises to make a crucial difference and fill a gap needed in the remote community. Australia's first Indigenous medical imaging service (radiology and nuclear medicine) Spartan First Imaging hope it's the latest step in a long journey ahead for the area, and health across the state.

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[Back to Top](#)

## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

### Victorian government confirms four popular music festivals will have pill testing available after death, overdoses last year

The Australian, Other, 30/01/2025, Blair Jackson

Pill testing will be available at four more festivals in Victoria – including two where multiple overdoses occurred. The Victorian state government on Thursday announced the next four festivals which will run the pill testing trials include Hardmission Festival, Pitch Music and Arts Festival, Ultra Music Festival and The Warehouse Project.

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

[Read More](#)

### Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 30/01/2025, Laura Jayes

Jayes is joined by ABC's Simon Love to discuss the pill testing set to take place at a Victorian music festival, following nine festivalgoers falling critically ill after consuming MDMA. Love reports that Victoria will see both single-day and multi-day festivals in the coming months, following a successful pill testing trial at the Beyond the Valley Festival.

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[Back to Top](#)

## South Australia becomes first state to ban nicotine pouches

9News, Other, 30/01/2025, keziah sullivan

"We have no idea what's in these products, they contain huge amounts of nicotine and they are directed at kids," South Australian Health Minister Chris Picton said. The state government has now introduced an immediate ban on the sale of the products.

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[Back to Top](#)

## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

## FOOD STANDARDS

### Cape Herb and Spice grinders recalled amid fears of plastic contamination

The Australian, Other, 30/01/2025, Alexandra Feiam

A recall has been issued for popular herb and spice grinders amid fears the product may contain plastic. Rex Imports Australia Pty Ltd issued a recall of various Cape Herb and Spice Grinders, which have been available for purchase at independent retailers such as IGA in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. [...] According to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the recall is due to the possibility of the products containing plastic.

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

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### Cape Herb & Spice grinders recalled over fears the products may contain plastic

7news.com.au, Other, 30/01/2025, Molly Magennis

Consumers have been warned not to eat the product. Several herb and spice grinders have been recalled over fears the products could contain foreign matter. [...] According to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) the products may contain plastic.

[Read More](#)

### Urgent product recall for salt and pepper grinders sold at IGA

9News, Other, 30/01/2025

An urgent product recall has been issued for salt, pepper and spice grinders sold at IGA supermarkets in multiple states. Rex Imports Australia has recalled some Cape Herb & Spice products as they may contain plastic, which could cause injury if swallowed. [...] Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) warned "consumers should not eat this product".

[Read More](#)

### 'Presence of foreign matter': Major recall issued for common kitchen seasoning over fears of plastic contamination

Sky News Australia, Other, 30/01/2025, Patrick Hannaford

Consumers are being warned not to consume a series of common seasoning products from Cape Herb and Spice Grinders over a potential food safety hazard. The Australian and New Zealand food standards authority issued an alert on Wednesday advising that Rex Imports Australia was recalling six seasoning products over the potential presence of plastic.

## AICIS

### 2GB, Drive, 30/01/2025, Clinton Maynard

Central Coast Council says PFAS chemicals have been detected in untreated water of the Ourimbah Creek Catchment but says that drinking water is not affected.

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