



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 19th February 2025

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Australian** (Page 2) reports that the federal government has pushed through \$135 million in digital health grants that will give patients more choices for free mental health services. The grant will go towards organisations previously funded by the Commonwealth.
- The **Courier Mail** (Page 6) reports that the federal government will extend a program with \$5.4 million in funding that enables migrant and refugee women the ability to discuss health issues in their native language.
- The **Geelong Advertiser** (Page 9) reports a study by the University of Sydney has revealed that on average Australians wait 12 years before seeking treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.
- The **West Australian** (Page 10) reports that scientists have developed a potential "super test" for prostate cancer that could achieve up to 99 per cent accuracy by detecting over 100 indicators of the disease.
- The **Herald Sun** (Page 11) that researchers at Barwon Health have developed a new synthetic antibiotic gel that has shown promise in treating serious bacterial infections, particularly in immune-compromised patients. The small clinical trial indicated the gel was well tolerated, paving the way for larger trials in Australia and Indonesia.

- The [West Australian](#) reports that after a delay, every intensive care patient in Victoria will now have a dedicated nurse on standby 24/7 as part of nurse-to-patient ratio reforms, Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas has confirmed.
- [Pharmacy Daily](#) reports that Wegovy 2.4mg (semaglutide) has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to be used as a complementary therapy for reducing major adverse cardiovascular events, such as cardiovascular death, non-fatal myocardial infarction (heart attack), or non-fatal stroke.

MINISTER BUTLER

Free online mental health care a lifesaver

The Australian, General News, 19/02/2025, James Dowling, Page 2

Patients will have more choice than ever for free mental health services, as the Albanese government pushes through \$135m in digital health grants on its way to the looming federal election. The grants go towards organisations previously funded by the commonwealth, namely headspace, the Butterfly Foundation and LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, along with four newly bankrolled initiatives. It was budgeted for in the last MYEFO.

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

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Doctor's warning on hate ignored

The Australian, General News, 19/02/2025, Liam Mendes & Alexi Demetriadi, Page 6

A doctor who blew the whistle on rising anti-Semitism in Australia's healthcare sector and sent a dossier to the Health Minister two years ago to prove it has broken her silence, slamming the government's lack of will to combat workplace racism. In October 2023, just weeks after Hamas' massacre of Israelis, Melbourne psychiatrist Jacqueline Rakov sent the dossier compiled by some of the 235 other health professionals who signed an attached letter to Health Minister Mark Butler, detailing pro-Hamas sentiment in social media posts by fellow professionals.

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

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General bulk-billing falls

Lilydale Star Mail, General News, 18/02/2025, Callum Ludwig, Page 2

Health directory Cleanbill released the third annual Blue Report in 2025, scoping out the availability of bulk billing for an adult without concessions in communities across the country. [...] Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler was asked for comment on the report in January and said a ring around of general practices by this private company is no substitute for core Medicare data though Medicare data shows that there aren't as many bulk billed visits as they would like.

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System wrong for clinic to close Ley

Free Press Corowa, General News, 19/02/2025, Robert Muir, Page 4

"Noting your personal commitments to Medicare reform and improved bulk-billing rates, I hope you can help the community understand why this clinic successfully servicing a high proportion of older patients for nine years suddenly found the practice 'unsustainable'." The above was included in a letter to Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler from Federal Member for Farrer Sussan Ley, who spoke on the matter in parliament on Monday, February 10.

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'No place for activism in hospitals': Georgie Crozier discusses antisemitic social media posts

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/02/2025

Victorian Shadow Health Minister Georgie Crozier discusses a Victorian doctor who was stood down

for antisemitic social media posts. "We just can't have this sort of activity and this activism in our hospitals – they are meant to be safe places for people when they're most vulnerable," Ms Crozier told Sky News host Sharri Markson. "I think it is appalling, and I think there has been a lack of leadership right from Mark Butler, the Prime Minister, down to the Premier and the Health Minister here in Victoria."

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

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'Health services under growing strain': Community's need for urgent care clinic

Port Stephens Examiner, Other, 18/02/2025, Laura Rumbel

A petition launched earlier this month by Member for Paterson Meryl Swanson to establish a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in her electorate has been supported by Port Stephens Council. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler was asked about a Paterson urgent care clinic during a visit to Raymond Terrace in October 2024, but said the government didn't have the funding for additional clinics.

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The Zap: comprehensive updates on health and aged care, plus check these consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 18/02/2025, Melissa Sweet

Health sector priorities at the Western Australian election, reactions to the Federal Government's new women's health package, a boost for Rural Generalism, and concerns about killer heatwaves are among the topics covered in this week's column. [...] On Sunday, 9 February Health Minister Mark Butler announced a broad package of women's health measures.

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Will bulk billing increase in Murwillumbah after Labor action?

Echo NetDaily, Other, 18/02/2025

How much financial support your local doctor and local GP clinic gets from the government has a direct impact on how much you pay for your doctor's visits and whether doctors are able to bulk bill pensioners etc. [...] Following the election of a Labor government Dr Camilleri has spent years actively pursuing the reclassification of the town repeatedly contacting Councillor Reece Byrnes, Mrs Elliot, and Health Minister Mark Butler and providing evidence over 15 months ago of the ongoing negative consequences of the metropolitan classification.

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MINISTER WELLS

\$36m building at Illoura Village opens soon

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 18/02/2025

Chinchilla receives a state-of-the-art aged care accommodation facility, providing long-needed aged care resources to the southern Queensland region. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells highlighted the government's commitment to improving aged care in regional Australia, emphasising the importance of keeping older Australians connected to their communities while enhancing care standards and living environments.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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DEPARTMENT

Australian Prescriber marks 50 years

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 18/02/2025, Page 3

Australian Prescriber is celebrating its 50 year anniversary this year, thanking its 100,000 plus healthcare subscribers for their continued support over the years. [...] First published by the Department of Health and then NPS MedicineWise, Australian Prescriber has been published by Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd since 2023, and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

Also reported by: [Pharmacy Daily \(Online\)](#).

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Aged care nurses to receive wage increases from 1 March 2025

HelloCare, Other, 18/02/2025, Jakob Neeland

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Enrolled Nurses (ENs) working in aged care will see their wages rise from 1 March 2025 as part of the Australian Government's commitment to fair pay and workforce retention in the sector. [...] For further details, visit the Department of Health and Aged Care website.

[Read More](#)

Are you prepared? Aged care nurse wages to rise on March 1

Hellolenders.com.au, Other, 18/02/2025, Alex Jacobs

Aged care providers have less than a fortnight to prepare for increases to minimum award wages for registered and enrolled nurses as the Fair Work Commission's final determination in the Aged Care Work Value Case comes into effect. [...] Meanwhile, the Department of Health and Aged Care said a valued workforce with the right skills and knowledge is critical to reform the aged care system.

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Shortages of pain relief medications unresolved – still!

Medianet, Other, 18/02/2025

Growing shortages of essential palliative care medicines in Australia are having a devastating impact on patients, especially those nearing the end of life, and the clinicians who care for them. [...] Despite sector representations to the Minister for Health, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Department of Health and Aged Care, there has been little progress toward ensuring a stable supply of these life-changing drugs.

[Read More](#)

Need to continue building consumer trust, Summit told

Pulse+IT, Other, 18/02/2025, Heather Fletcher

Australians need to trust the digital health systems they use are underpinned by standards to secure

their information, Department of Health and Aged Care assistant secretary Simon Cleverley said today at the Connect.Care.Confidence C3.0 Summit 2025. Standards along with good cybersecurity provisions would give consumers confidence, he said, flagging further consultation at the national level later this year.

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VACCINES

ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, 18/02/2025, Saskia Mabin

ACT Health urged Canberrans to protect themselves against mosquito-borne virus after an NSW man acquired Japanese encephalitis while camping in the Murrumbidgee this week.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 18/02/2025, Sally Sara

Biosecurity Queensland issued an alert after two piggeries tested positive for Japanese encephalitis virus—the first since July 2022. It follows recent detections in NSW and Victoria. People who work or live near pigs are urged to get vaccinated against the virus.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

HMC chases Healthscope as expansion begins

The Australian, Business News, 19/02/2025, Ben Wilmot, Page 13

David Di Pilla's HMC Capital is riding high as the year begins with investors backing its play for troubled hospital operator Healthscope and other moves in data centres, energy transition and real estate. Mr Di Pilla confirmed that the company's private equity unit was in the "early stages" of establishing an HMC-sponsored consortium to acquire and recapitalise Healthscope.

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

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Meet Abi the bingo-playing robot helping care for the elderly in aged care

Canberra Times, Other, 18/02/2025, Desiree Savage

Inspired by those larger-than-life Pixar characters on the big screen, Abi the humanoid robot is as real as it gets, and is settling into 22 aged care homes. Almost a nod to "Rosey" the robot from 1960s cartoon The Jetsons, Abi won't be cooking or cleaning but she will be a listening ear to her new friends and chat with empathy while understanding emotion.

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Axe CRA and reform Age Pension asset test threshold: RLC Pre-Budget

Submission

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/02/2025, Ian Horswill

The RLC, which secured \$5.2 million over three years to fund its Shared Care concept in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2024-25, wants "significant reforms" to the Age Pension asset test threshold and the abolition of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), levelling the playing field with land lease operators. A retirement village resident is deemed to be a homeowner (even if they do not have freehold or strata title of their unit) when their ingoing contribution is more than the

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 18/02/2025, Ryk Goddard

Interview with Council on the Ageing Tasmania CEO Brigid Wilkinson, discussing the ongoing shortage of beds in both residential and home-based aged care services in Tasmania, especially in regional and rural areas. She attributes the crisis to insufficient investment in community health and workforce shortages. Wilkinson calls for better collaboration between local, state, and federal governments, streamlined planning approvals, and alternative investment models, including private sector involvement.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 18/02/2025, Ryk Goddard

Interview with Ageing Australia CEO Tom Symondson, discussing the chronic shortage of aged care beds, particularly in Tasmania and rural areas. Symondson identified high construction costs, difficulty securing investment, and workforce shortages, particularly among nurses, as some of the key barriers in expanding aged care. He called on all levels of government and private investors such as banks and superannuation funds to invest in the aged care sector.

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

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POPULATION HEALTH

\$5.4m health program

Courier Mail, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 6

A program enabling migrant and refugee women to discuss health issues in their own language will be extended in a \$5.4m spend by the federal government. The funding will allow the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to deliver the Health in My Language (HiML) program in all states and territories in 2025-2026.

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Focus on women's health

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/02/2025, Geraldine Masson, Page 16

Access to specialist healthcare services for women has been challenging for many women and especially in rural and regional communities. These are health issues that affect many women at different stages of life, yet they have often been underrecognised and under-treated leading to a gap in wellbeing for women.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Gel trial provides comfort

Herald Sun, General News, 19/02/2025, Spud Harrap, Page 11

Early trials of a new synthetic antibiotic gel developed in Australia show the once-a-day treatment may help treat serious infections in immunocompromised patients. Researchers at Barwon Health in Geelong say the gel gave some much-needed relief of symptoms to patients in its small clinical trial.

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

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Genetic clues to common cancers

Herald Sun, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 13

A new insight into how genes influence our risk of cancer has bolstered the idea that inflammation helps drive several common forms of the disease. A gene is often made up of more than 10,000 building blocks known as "nucleotides" the "letters" that allow DNA to carry information.

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Super test a game changer

West Australian, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 10

A "super test" for prostate cancer that searches for more than 100 signs of the disease may be up to 99 per cent accurate, scientists believe. The game-changing AI test will show whether a man has the disease and if it is slow-growing or aggressive.

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Team spirit in the hunt for a cure

Newcastle Herald, General News, 19/02/2025, Damon Cronshaw, Page 8

The Mark Hughes Foundation's search for a brain cancer cure is a team effort inspired by the Newcastle Knights two premiership victories. This effort is set to be sharpened with a meeting of the "world's best minds" on brain cancer in Newcastle on Thursday.

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'I feel like a walking miracle': Groundbreaking clinical trial gives hope to melanoma patients

9News, Other, 18/02/2025, Emily Bennett

Melanoma patients who were told to get their affairs in order have been cured of the disease. A groundbreaking clinical trial involving patients whose cancer had spread to the brain in Wollstonecraft, Sydney, found combining two immunotherapy drugs instead of one offered a higher chance of survival.

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Shortages leave palliative patients in pain

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 18/02/2025

"Patients are suffering unnecessarily", because the medications that typically control their symptoms are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive, Palliative Care Australia says Palliative Care Australia is calling on the government to commit to taking steps to tackle persistent shortages of critical end-of-life medications.

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A closer look at voluntary assisted dying in WA

Medical Forum, Other, 18/02/2025

Voluntary Assisted Dying has been legal in WA since 2021. But in light of reviews of the practice, how successful has it been – and is there room for improvement?

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Di Pilla devises plan to save ailing Healthscope

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 19/02/2025, Anthony Macdonald, Page 28

Healthscope is on a one-way ticket to financial restructuring. The private hospitals operator has too much debt, too few hard assets, too high costs and is too important a company to everyday Australians to be in a state of financial disrepair.

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Warning on outcome amid detailed audits into IT project

Canberra Times, General News, 19/02/2025, Jasper Lindell, Page 6

A public health system IT project is the subject of another five detailed audits, with a warning the project, already thought to be \$160 million over budget, is set to mirror a failed ACT government IT project that cost \$78 million. The Auditor-General has warned the findings into a complex probe into the digital health record system were on track to be as significant as those made against a failed human resources system upgrade.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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General bulk-billing falls

Lilydale Star Mail, General News, 18/02/2025, Callum Ludwig, Page 2

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Nurse-to-patient ratios changes arrive after long delay

West Australian, Other, 18/02/2025, Callum Godde

Every intensive care patient in Victorian hospitals will have a dedicated nurse on stand-by 24 hours a day under long-awaited changes. The new ratios were promised by Labor in the lead up to the 2022 election, with the Victorian government finally moving to legislate the reforms on Tuesday.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Katanning, Kondinin and Gnowangerup get \$633k for critical upgrades from Regional Airports Development Scheme

West Australian, Other, 18/02/2025, Hannah Whitehead

Three airports in the Wheatbelt and Great Southern regions have been granted a share of \$3.6 million to fund safety upgrades that are crucial for emergency medical care. The shires of Katanning, Kondinin and Gnowangerup received \$633,400 from the State Government's Regional Airports Development Scheme on February 4 to support critical airport projects.

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Rockhampton Hospital ED upgrade plans almost complete after three months

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 18/02/2025, Frazer Pearce

Plans for upgrading Rockhampton Hospital's "war zone" Emergency Department are nearing completion three months after Premier. A spokesman for health Minister Tim Nicholls said on Tuesday, February 18 the much-anticipated ED upgrade was included in a master plan for the Rockhampton Hospital which was in its final stages.

[Read More](#)

Community speaks out against State Government puberty blocker pause

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 18/02/2025, Dylan Nicholson

Young trans people and parents of trans children have shared their moments of joy, heartbreak, fear and freedom as the Far North's trans community and supporters turned out en masse protesting against the state's pause on gender affirming care. Rallies have been held across the country calling on the Queensland Government to reinstate care for trans youth and make gender-affirming care accessible and affordable for everyone who needs it.

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Paramedic response times under pressure

Shepparton News Online, Other, 18/02/2025, Ryan Bellingham

Ambulance Victoria recorded its fourth-busiest quarter on record from October to December last year. Paramedics responded to around 100,000 critical code one emergencies over three months, with 698 recorded in Campaspe and 145 in Gannawarra.

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'Health services under growing strain': Community's need for urgent care clinic

Port Stephens Examiner, Other, 18/02/2025, Laura Rumbel

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Anthony Albanese defends edited 'Mediscare' campaign after the ABC accused Labor of disinformation

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/02/2025, Max Aitchison

Anthony Albanese has rejected assertions the Labor party has been spreading disinformation after its 'Mediscare' campaign was found to have been edited. The Prime Minister was quizzed on Tuesday morning over an advert featured on Labor's social media pages, including those belonging to cabinet minister Ed Husic.

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The Zap: comprehensive updates on health and aged care, plus check these consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 18/02/2025, Melissa Sweet

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pursuing the reclassification of the town repeatedly contacting Councillor Reece Byrnes, Mrs Elliot, and Health Minister Mark Butler and providing evidence over 15 months ago of the ongoing negative consequences of the metropolitan classification.

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Mobile GP Education Program expands healthcare impact in rural and remote Australia

Medianet, Other, 18/02/2025

Heart of Australia (HoA), an innovative mobile health service, has teamed up with leading biopharmaceutical company, Pfizer Australia, to expand its GP Education Program with the aim of improving healthcare delivery in rural and remote parts of Australia. Small rural towns have almost 60% fewer health professionals than major cities. However, rural GPs are needed in greater numbers and require a broader skill set to serve communities with higher burdens of disease where populations are dispersed over vast distances.

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Hospitals will get \$1.7 billion more federal funding. Will this reduce waiting times?

Nursing Review, Other, 18/02/2025, Henry Cutler

This week, the federal government announced it will pay states and territories an extra, one-off, A\$1.7 billion for public hospitals. This has been billed as a way to fix some ailing hospitals, and shorten waits for care in emergency departments and for elective surgery. But will it really make a difference?

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Free online mental health care a lifesaver

The Australian, General News, 19/02/2025, James Dowling, Page 2

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

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Help on hold

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 9

Australians are waiting an average of 12 years to seek treatment for mental health and substance use disorders. The length of delay in seeking help varied depending on the type of mental health problem and other factors such as sex and age, the University of Sydney study shows.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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Concern at use of chatbots by children

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 6

Children are using AI-driven chatbots for hours daily, giving them interactive access to themes from sex to drug-taking, self-harm, suicide and illnesses like eating disorders. eSafety's new online safety advisory series warns that chatbots are exposing children to unmoderated conversations which may encourage or reinforce harmful thoughts and behaviours.

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Youth mental health 'game-changer'

Ballarat Courier, General News, 19/02/2025, Michelle Smith, Page 2

Young people experiencing mental health challenges will have more treatment options in Ballarat as construction gets under way on the new Youth Prevention and Recovery Care Centre. Grampians teens aged 16 to 18 needing inpatient mental healthcare currently need to be admitted to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

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Puberty blockers: Qld could be at centre of hundreds of court cases

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/02/2025, Jackie Sinnerton

Queensland could find itself at the centre of hundreds of court cases over the State Government's decision to pause gender-affirming hormones for children. The state government's decision to pause cross-sex hormones for children could result in a tsunami of court cases, a group of high-profile mental health experts, scientists, churches and lawyers warn.

[Read More](#)

Australia faces rising ADHD rates: Experts call for GP specialisation to ease psychiatrist shortage

4BC, Other, 18/02/2025, Sofie Formica

In Australia, ADHD is the most common neurodevelopmental disorder in children and adolescents, impacting between 6% and 10% of young people, and up to 6% of adults. There is increasing demand for GPs to specialise in ADHD to support the diagnosis and management of the condition, helping to alleviate the shortage of psychiatrists.

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4BC, Afternoons, 18/02/2025, Sofie Formica

In Australia, ADHD is the most common neurodevelopmental disorder in children and adolescents, impacting 6 to 10% of young people. But it's also seen an increase in the diagnosis for adults in recent years. Increased awareness of the disorder has led to spikes in not only the diagnosis but also then the prescriptions.

[Play Now](#)

Radio National, Life Matters, 18/02/2025, Hilary Harper & Beverley Wang

Interview with Melbourne-based GP Dr Vyom Sharma, discussing the prevalence of suicide among men and the challenges men face in accessing mental healthcare. He says traditional medical services may not be well-adapted to male-specific needs, which adds to the stigma and stoicism that discourages men from seeking help. Dr Sharma states the need to reorient mental healthcare to better accommodate men and encourages open conversations.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

New paramedics get ready to hit the road

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/02/2025, Rob Inglis, Page 2

The next generation of Tasmanian paramedics is preparing to hit the road after completing an intensive training regimen, with two of the new recruits speaking of their excitement and nerves ahead of the big

moment. Fifteen graduate paramedics will soon be deployed across the state amid Tasmania's largest recruitment blitz for the ambulance workforce.

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Review leads to work hour cutbacks, music program downsized

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 19/02/2025, Katrina Lovell, Page 3

Cuts to hours of some staff at Warrnambool's Lyndoch aged care facility have been labelled "disappointing", but the organisation says it is focused on increasing resources for resident care. The Standard has been contacted by a number of community members concerned about the reduction in staff work hours as well as news the music therapy program was also on the chopping block.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 18/02/2025, Sally Sara

Interview with Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists private practice committee member Dr Heather Waterfall, explaining how inadequate funding is adversely impacting private maternity care. She argues that government and private health insurers must address gender bias in healthcare funding, pointing out disparities in reimbursement rates for procedures affecting women compared to those primarily involving men. Dr Waterfall says the closure of maternity services due to high costs and a decline in private health insurance coverage adds further strain on the already overburdened public healthcare system.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Call for greater medicine affordability

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/02/2025

As patients struggle to pay for their medicine, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has urged the Government to act to make medicines more affordable. The call comes as mounting evidence shows the link between cost-of-living pressures and medicine affordability, with Productivity Commission Chair Danielle Wood commenting that more people are delaying filling prescriptions due to cost.

[Read More](#)

How federal government's \$573 million women's health package will benefit the community: Expert weighs in

SBS, Other, 18/02/2025, Bhavya Pandey

The federal government has unveiled a \$573 million initiative aimed at enhancing women's health outcomes. The package includes more affordable medications, expanded bulk billing, and additional training for healthcare providers.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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SPORT

AFL Players' Association baulk at hair testing push

West Australian, Sport, 19/02/2025, Craig O'Donoghue, Page 52

AFL Players' Association CEO Paul Marsh has declared he will not accept an AFL push to change the Illicit Drugs Policy to include hair testing that results in fines for players upon their first offence. The league is reviewing the Illicit Drugs Policy and is keen to make changes which Marsh believes will change it from a medical model which supports players to one that automatically punishes them.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Channel 10, 10 News First, 18/02/2025, Tiffany Warne

A newly-released 2018 study found that the combination of two immunotherapy drugs in treating skin cancer boosted response rates by 46% compared to 20% for those treated with only one drug. A seven-year follow-up study showed more encouraging results, showing that the 48% survivability for patients on combination immunotherapy increased to 51%. Melanoma Institute Australia co-medical director Prof Georgina Long AO says it's an honour to be able to look patients in the eye and give them hope. Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre researcher Dr Grant McArthur says using two drugs have an overwhelming advantage.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 18/02/2025, Angela Cox & Mark Ferguson

A newly-released seven-year study found that the combination of two immunotherapy drugs in treating melanoma boosted overall survivability to 51%. Australia has the world's highest melanoma rates, with one person diagnosed every 30 minutes.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 18/02/2025, Alicia Loxley & Tom Steinfort

A newly-released study by the Melanoma Institute of Australia found that the combination of two immunotherapy drugs in treating skin cancer boosted a patient's chance of survival. The Institute's CEO, Dr Georgina Long, says a cure is finally within reach.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Evenings, 18/02/2025, Spence Denny

Interview with Palliative Care Australia chair Prof Peter Allcroft, discussing the challenges regional and rural areas face in accessing palliative care. He deems telehealth and outreach programs insufficient, but he praised the dedication of palliative care nurses in rural areas. Prof Allcroft states the need for stronger community support, particularly in cities where social connections can be weaker.

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Future of healing centre uncertain

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 19/02/2025, Allan Murphy, Page 2

The future of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program that aimed to prepare Aboriginal men to re-enter the community in a "healthy and proactive way" is unknown following its sudden closure last year. The Wiimpatja Healing Centre had been lauded by magistrates and the legal fraternity for its wraparound service through Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) in the fields of health, alcohol and other drugs counselling, well-being, living skills, short courses and farm activities.

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Alarm raised about levels of Indigenous incarceration in the NT

National Indigenous Times, Other, 18/02/2025, Dechlan Brennan

Australia's largest Indigenous legal service has again raised the alarm at the number of Aboriginal people in custody in the Northern Territory. It comes as the crackdown on crime by the new CLP government has seen more than one per cent of the state's population incarcerated, with new laws targeting bail youth crime and public drinking all implemented.

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Mobile education for rural HPs

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/02/2025

Pfizer Australia has announced a partnership with Heart of Australia (HoA) mobile health service, to expand its GP Education Program with the aim of improving healthcare delivery in rural and remote parts of Australia. The HoA GP Education Program provides educational sessions for rural and remote healthcare professionals, including GPs, nurses and pharmacists, offering them the opportunity to learn from specialists and network face-to-face with colleagues.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Wegovy gets TGA approval for CVD

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/02/2025

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved Wegovy 2.4mg (semaglutide) to be used as a complementary therapy for reducing major adverse cardiovascular events, such as cardiovascular death, non-fatal myocardial infarction (heart attack), or non-fatal stroke. The approval follows findings from an international study involving more than 17,000 participants across 41 countries, including Australia, which showed that Wegovy reduced cardiovascular events by 20% in people with pre-existing heart disease who were overweight or obese but did not have diabetes.

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‘Groundbreaking’: TGA approves weight loss drug for CVD

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 18/02/2025

For the first time in Australia, a weight loss drug has been approved for treating cardiovascular disease (CVD) in overweight and obese patients. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has granted approval for semaglutide 2.4mg (Wegovy) as an adjunct therapy to reduce major adverse CVD events, including cardiovascular death, non-fatal heart attacks, and non-fatal strokes.

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

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FOOD STANDARDS

Fingerprints of food

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 7

The CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, has launched a new national resource of isotopic data food's unique fingerprint that can be used to help protect and further grow Australia's reputation for high-quality, safe and sustainably produced food. Isotopes.au consolidates a treasure trove of isotopic data from Australia's leading research agencies into a single, open-access and trusted resource.

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Fingerprints of food allow verification

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 19/02/2025, Page 6

CSIRO has launched a national resource of isotopic data food's unique fingerprint that can be used to help protect and further grow Australia's reputation for high-quality, safe, and sustainably produced food. Isotopes.au consolidates a treasure trove of isotopic data from Australia's leading research agencies into a single, open-access and trusted resource that can be used by regulators and industry to verify a food's provenance and sustainability claims and ensure compliance with trade regulations.

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AICIS

Channel 9, Today , 18/02/2025, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Interview with Stop PFAS Action Group founder Jon Dee, discussing the long-term contamination of drinking water in the Blue Mountains due to firefighting foam. Although firefighting foam has been banned since 2017, Dee says it has affected residents in the past 30 years. He criticises the health NSW health minister for refusing to implement widespread blood testing and insists on urgent medical assessments and government action.

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