



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 21st February 2025

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The **[Courier Mail](#)** (Page 1) reports that on Thursday night Australian cardiovascular and stroke researchers were honoured at the annual Australian Cardiovascular Alliance Excellence in Cardiovascular Research Awards as their technology that revolutionised heart transplants is being used globally.
- **[The Australian](#)** (Page 3) reports that the removal of a “gag clause” that prevents doctors from discussing voluntary assisted dying laws will be moved by the Victorian government following the release of a five-year review into the operation of the scheme after Victoria became the first state to legislate voluntary assisted dying.
- The **[Courier Mail](#)** (Page 4) reports that on Friday a cohort of health workers are set to march on 1 William St after rejecting the initial pay rise offer of 8.2 per cent over three years as not good enough and will demand that Premier David Crisafulli and Health Minister Tim Nicholls honour their commitment for nation-leading wages and conditions for the sector.
- **[The Australian](#)** (Page 7) reports that on April 17 Healthscope will close its maternity unit in Darwin as a result of a decline in private births. Maternity services in Hobart will additionally be closed by Healthscope on August 20 due to staff shortages.

- The [Courier Mail](#) (Page 9) reports that Queensland-based federal sports minister Anika Wells is set to announce funding for a national support program for Australians living with a debilitating form of dementia as part of a \$12.5 million funding boost from the federal government.

MINISTER BUTLER

Healthscope to close two maternity units

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/02/2025, Michael Smith, Page 11

Healthscope, the country's secondlargest hospital operator, will close maternity units in Darwin and Hobart due to workforce shortages and falling birth rates, in the latest blow to the \$22 billion private hospital industry which is warning of more.

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Ramsay's global CFO search for hospital pass job

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/02/2025, Myriam Robin & Mark Di Stefano, Page 35

Of all the industries which shine on the international stage, our private hospital market is hardly one of them. Soaring costs and fewer patients, to infighting between providers making it a political plaything for Labor in the upcoming election.

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

Hospital to ditch birthing services

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2025, Duncan Abey, Page 4

Healthscope announcement it will close maternity ward at Hobart Private sparks criticism from AMA Private hospital operators, governments and health insurers have been urged to stop playing the "blame game" over medical funding, after national provider Healthscope announced it would close the maternity ward at Hobart Private Hospital by late August. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged Healthscope's decision would be difficult for many people in southern Tasmania, and said pressures within the private health system could only be managed "by hospitals and insurers sitting down together and sorting it out".

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Shed work builds support network

SE Voice, General News, 20/02/2025, Page 8

Men's Shed grants an investment in mateship and mental health The Tatiara Men's Shed in Bordertown will receive \$2750 funding from the Federal Government to continue to support the health and wellbeing of men in our community. [...] Minister for Health Mark Butler said the Tatiara Men's Shed provides an important space for men and boys to find mateship and social support to help them stay mentally and physically healthy.

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ABC, ABC News, 20/02/2025, Jano Gibson

Hobart Private Hospital's maternity service will close in six months. Healthscope cites viability issues and is also set to shut down its Darwin service after previously closing St Helen's Private Hospital in 2023. Obstetrician Emily Price says many women with births booked for late August and September are now left in limbo. Tasmanian Health Minister Jacquie Petrusma says private hospitals are a federal responsibility, while Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says hospitals and insurers must resolve the challenges facing the private system.

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WIN Hobart, WIN News, 20/02/2025, Bruce Roberts

Healthscope will end maternity services at Hobart Private Hospital due to financial pressures and a midwife shortage. It says relying on agency staff flown in from the mainland is no longer sustainable,

while the AMA's Dr Michael Lumsden-Steel criticises the blame game between politicians, hospitals, and insurers over rising healthcare costs. Health Minister Jacquie Petrusma is calling for federal support to expand public hospital capacity, and Minister Mark Butler has pledged to work with the state.

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ABC Radio Darwin , Territory-wide Drive, 20/02/2025, Liz Trevaskis

Interview with Member for Solomon Luke Gosling on concerns over Healthscope's decision to close the maternity ward at Darwin Private Hospital. Gosling criticises the lack of communication from Healthscope, saying it shows the broader issues in the private health system. He says the federal government is increasing funding for public hospitals in the Northern Territory but acknowledges that gaps remain. He says he supports Health Minister Mark Butler's private health CEO forum, which aims to bring hospitals and insurers together to find solutions.

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LA FM, 17:00 News, 20/02/2025

Tasmanian Health Minister Jacquie Petrusma will speak with federal Health Minister Mark Butler about the closure of maternity services at Hobart Private Hospital from August 20. She argues the Commonwealth is responsible for funding private hospitals and must help address the gap. Petrusma reassures families in southern Tasmania that the state government, Calvary Hospital, and stakeholders are prepared to support affected mothers.

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ABC Radio Melbourne, Conversation Hour, 20/02/2025, Richelle Hunt

Interview with Professor Ian Hickie, co-director, Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney, on the use of puberty blockers and gender-affirming care for minors. Hunt reports on Queensland's pause on hormone therapy for transgender youth. Hickie argues puberty blockers have been politicised in gender dysphoria cases, saying that gender-affirming care requires thorough assessments and parental input. He says he supports Health Minister Mark Butler's NHMRC review, saying it will ensure evidence-based guidelines.

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MINISTER WELLS

\$12m for research into CTE

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 9

A national support program for Australians living with a debilitating form of dementia will be trialled as part of a \$12.5m funding boost from the federal government. Queensland-based federal sports minister Anika Wells will announce the funding boost alongside rugby league immortal Wally Lewis, who was diagnosed with suspected CTE in 2023 and has pleaded for more funding for research.

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Paralympics grant boost

Gympie Today, Other, 21/02/2025

The state Government has announced a \$2 million grant for The Queensland Academy of Sport, to launch a new Para-Sport Unit which it says will more than double the pipeline for Paralympians on the road to Brisbane 2032. [...] Federal Sport Minister Anika Wells, said the lead-up to our home Games in Brisbane 2032 provided "a generational opportunity to create a legacy in sport and reshape how all Australians look at disability in this country.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

More choice and better health care for women

Coast Community Pelican Post, General News, 20/02/2025, Page 29

A move by the Federal Government to strengthen Medicare with \$573.3M to deliver more choice, lower costs and better health care for women has been welcomed by Central Coast Federal MPs. Member for Dobell and Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride and Member for Robertson Dr Gordon Reid say the significant investment will deliver better healthcare for women across the Central Coast.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

No relevant coverage

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

No relevant coverage

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DEPARTMENT

The silent struggle: How hearing loss affects Australians

Canberra Times, Other, 20/02/2025

For decades, hearing loss has been treated as an inevitable part of aging, a minor inconvenience rather than a serious health concern. [...] According to the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, about 3.6 million Australians currently experience hearing loss, and this number is expected to double by 2060.

[Read More](#)

AMA submission to the Department of Health and Aged Care on the private health reform options consultation paper

Australian Medical Association, Other, 20/02/2025

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is pleased to provide a submission to this consultation, as a follow-up to our confidential submission to the Private Hospital Financial Health Check submitted to the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) in 2024. As we stated in that submission, comprehensive reform to Australia's private health system is essential to ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the entire system, not just private hospitals.

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Uniting's AI tool proves popular

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/02/2025, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The aged care provider's use of an AI digital assistant named Sarah has stolen the show during the department's first tech-talk for the sector in 2025. Aged care stakeholders were fascinated with Uniting NSW.ACT's use of artificial intelligence during this week's Digital Transformation Tech talk webinar. Wednesday saw the Department of Health and Aged Care's first tech-talk of 2025 for the aged care sector and IT professionals, and in addition to introducing AI, covered Support at Home integrations from Services Australia, and the department's planned digital roadmap for the 1 July changes.

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Australian healthcare projects recognised in international awards

ArchitectureAU, Other, 20/02/2025

In celebration of 10 years of the European Healthcare Design (EHD) Congress, two Australian projects have claimed victories in the EHD Champions Awards as stand-out projects in international healthcare design. [...] Elders, communities and Australian Regional and Remote Community Services Ltd and the project team with funding and incredible support from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

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Submission on Private Hospital Data Collection Framework – Consultation Paper

Business Council of Australia, Other, 20/02/2025

The BCA advocates for the efficient and effective delivery of services in the health and care economy and for achieving improved outcomes for Australians accessing these services, whilst ensuring funding is sustainable. [...] The BCA notes that as part of the Health Check, the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) undertook an extensive data collection exercise.

[Read More](#)

Department releases guidance reports ahead of transition

Community Care Review, Other, 20/02/2025, Katarina Lloyd Jones

An updated draft on the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards has been released by the Department of Health and Aged Care, alongside Stage 3 of the new Aged Care Rules and the Support at Home Program Claims and Payments Business Rules Guidance report.

[Read More](#)

NOFASD CEO Sophie Harrington's statement to the Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Other, 20/02/2025, Sophie Harrington

For more than 25 years, NOFASD has been the national voice for living and lived experience, at the forefront of advocacy, education and support for individuals and families impacted by FASD. [...] The Australian Department of Health and Aged Care should be applauded for their commitment to the implementation of the National FASD Strategic Action Plan.

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Home care still seen as viable business despite labour costs rising

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

Home care operator margins declined in Q1 2024-25 to 7.1%, down from 7.7% the previous quarter and 7.8% in Q1 2023-24, according to the Department of Health and Aged Care's Quarterly Financial Snapshot released on Tuesday. However, 20 home care operators left the aged care sector in the 12 months to 30 September 2024, and 32 entered.

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New minimum liquidity ratios for aged care revealed

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

The Department of Health and Aged Care has released new details of Financial and Prudential Standards, which are still open for consultation but due to take effect from 1 July 2025. A webinar hosted by the new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Liz Hefren-Webb providing details of the three new Financial and Prudential standards, who they apply to, and how they will work, had 6,000 registered attendees.

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Ageing Australia's Pre-Budget submission wants new workforce strategy

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

Australia's peak body for aged care providers is calling on the Government to fund a National Aged Care Workforce Strategy in its Pre-Budget Submission 25-26 to help address workforce shortages, which are particularly impacting regional areas. [...] There is currently a shortage of 1,492 nurses in residential aged care, according to the Department of Health and Aged Care, significantly lower than the 2022 gap of 12,840.

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Aged Care Act's final rules now won't be released until April, posing “a real challenge” for providers

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

The Department of Health and Aged Care has released an updated schedule for the release of the Aged Care Rules, the documentation supporting implementation of the new Aged Care Act, which compounds the already intense pressure on providers to implement changes within a short timeframe.

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With just 10 days to go, Govt says it will fully fund aged care nurses' pay rise

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

60,000 nurses working in aged care are set to benefit from the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) latest wage rise, taking their pay higher than nurses working outside the sector – but providers will be expected to fund part of the associated leave liabilities out of their own pocket. [...] A Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) webinar heard on Tuesday (18 February) the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) will update its pricing advice to Government on Friday (21 February) to reflect higher wages for nurses.

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Dept extends \$14M HealthConsult contract for aged care Resident Experience Surveys

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

The Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) has awarded boutique management consultants HealthConsult an almost \$500,000 extension on its \$14 million contract to deliver Resident Experience Surveys in residential aged care in 2024 and 2025. With approximately 200,000 aged care residents, and 10% surveyed over two years, our back-of-envelope calculations put the cost of each survey at about \$350.

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WIN Ballarat , WIN News, 20/02/2025, Bruce Roberts

The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria conference in Bendigo is tackling rural healthcare staffing shortages and retention. RWAV CEO Lauren Cordwell says ensuring access to doctors, nurses, and psychologists is vital for quality healthcare in Victoria. Jenny May, National Rural Health Commissioner, says there is a need for education reforms to help rural communities attract and retain healthcare professionals.

Also reported by: [WIN Bendigo \(Bendigo\)](#), [WIN Shepparton \(Shepparton\)](#).

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ABC Radio Canberra, Afternoons, 20/02/2025, Alice Matthews

Interview with Associate Professor Nathan D'Cunha and postdoctoral fellow Georgina Chelberg, Centre for Ageing Research and Translation, University of Canberra, on the Living with Dementia survey. D'Cunha says the survey, conducted by the University of Canberra and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Aged Care. He says it aims to capture the experiences of 1,500 people with dementia and their care partners to inform the implementation of the National Dementia Action Plan.

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Pregnancy status for vax register

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/02/2025

From 01 Mar 2025, it will be mandatory for all vaccination providers to report information about whether an individual was pregnant at the time of vaccine administration to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Under the Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015, it is mandatory for all vaccination providers to report the administration of COVID, influenza, National Immunisation Program and Japanese encephalitis virus vaccines to the AIR.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Aged-care residents left high and dry

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2025, Darren Chaitman, Page 25

A bitter water supply row has plunged a \$25m aged-care upgrade into disarray, leaving vulnerable seniors at risk of being forced to find a new home. Wheatfields Residential Care in Freeling said plans to move residents into a new building with 32 beds in April had fallen apart after SA Water said that it could not connect the fire sprinklers to mains water.

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Home care just not there

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/02/2025, Gabriel Fowler, Page 1

Thousands of older people living in the Hunter and Central Coast regions are waiting on federally funded home care packages to support them to stay in their own homes. More than 1500 Hunter residents and 1100 people living on the Central Coast were among the 20,000 on waitlists for packages throughout NSW.

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The \$4B problem: Govt's proposed liquidity requirements a nail in the coffin for aged care

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Lauren Broomham

The Federal Government is seeking to set minimum liquidity requirements for residential aged care providers for the first time – dangerous territory for a sector that has finally reached a level of financial and regulatory certainty. Previously, operators only had to submit a liquidity plan to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) for approval.

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More than 1,000 younger Australians still call residential aged care home

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/02/2025, Caroline Egan

The third and final target set by the Federal Government aimed at getting younger Australians out of residential aged care appears unlikely to be met. In late 2019, the Government introduced three targets in response to a recommendation from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety:

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FIVEAA, Afternoons, 20/02/2025, Stacey Lee

Interview with Dr Marie Alford, head, Dementia Support Australia, on its free information sessions across regional SA. Alford says the sessions are part of a broader national effort to provide guidance and support for families, carers, and health professionals who assist individuals living with dementia.

She cites findings from the Royal Commission into Aged Care that found the need for proper oversight to ensure medications are used and reviewed regularly.

Interview continues on: [FIVEAA \(Adelaide\)](#).

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POPULATION HEALTH

'You feel much happier when not drinking'

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 20

Drinking alcohol can worsen sleep, mood, stress and energy levels. Yet a recent survey of Tasmanians found that one in three don't know there's a link between alcohol and mental health. The survey, commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), also found that one in four Tasmanians want to cut back on their drinking, with the number rising to one in three among people aged 25-44.

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Alert on asthma mould safety

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 12

As flood disasters become all the more common, Asthma Australia is urging people to use safe removal of mould to minimise health risks. Asthma Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Kate Miranda, said breathing in mould can trigger an allergic response or cause irritation.

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They generate 80pc of export income, so why can't regional Australians get better health care?

The Australian, Other, 20/02/2025, Steve Robson

Almost one-third of all Australians live outside of our big cities, and their physical and mental health languishes way behind that of city dwellers. After decades of inaction, there still is no national plan to address this critical inequity. Now, ahead of the looming federal election, regional Australians are demanding action that is long overdue.

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Homelessness Australia calls for boost to support services ahead of 2025 federal election

The Australian, Other, 21/02/2025, Aisling Brennan

Voters are looking for increased support for homelessness services, as more than 120,000 Australians facing homelessness reveal they're not getting the support they need. [...] The analysis, which cross-referenced data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Productivity Commission and Impact Economics, revealed these unmet needs could be fulfilled with an overall funding boost of \$671m.

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

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ABC Radio Canberra, Afternoons, 20/02/2025, Alice Matthews

Interview with Associate Professor Nathan D'Cunha and postdoctoral fellow Georgina Chelberg, Centre for Ageing Research and Translation, University of Canberra, on the Living with Dementia survey. D'Cunha says the survey, conducted by the University of Canberra and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Aged Care. He says it aims to capture the experiences of 1,500 people with dementia and their care partners to inform the implementation of the National Dementia Action Plan.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Heart team saving more lives

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Rachel Riley, Page 1

A Queensland medical team revolutionising heart transplants around the world is now using its technology expand the pool of donors by repairing organs. Australian cardiovascular and stroke researchers were honoured at the annual Australian Cardiovascular Alliance Excellence in Cardiovascular Research Awards in Brisbane on Thursday night.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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\$12m for research into CTE

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 9

A national support program for Australians living with a debilitating form of dementia will be trialled as part of a \$12.5m funding boost from the federal government. Queensland-based federal sports minister Anika Wells will announce the funding boost alongside rugby league immortal Wally Lewis, who was diagnosed with suspected CTE in 2023 and has pleaded for more funding for research.

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Caring for 20 years

Courier Mail, Business News, 21/02/2025, Glen Norris, Page 27

Brisbane community group Youngcare will mark 20 years of supporting young people living with complex and permanent physical disabilities with a gala on March 29. Founded in 2005 by Simon Lockyer, David Conry, Nick Bonifant and Matt Lawson a group of mates who saw an urgent need for action Youngcare was established to ensure people with high-care needs were no longer left behind in unsuitable accommodation such as aged care facilities and hospitals.

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Genetic clues to common cancers

Sunshine Coast Daily, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 33

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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Time to listen up about hearing health

Canberra Times, Other, 20/02/2025

Hearing is commonly one of the biggest missed health issues. What is typically thought to be a condition that affects the elderly, loss of hearing and related illnesses are becoming more commonplace in younger generations with 50 per cent of younger people at risk of hearing loss.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/02/2025, Jennifer Keyte

Monash University researchers have discovered a molecule called PSKH1 that could lead to more targeted and less invasive prostate cancer treatments. Current therapies often cause severe side effects like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and bone loss. The three-year study found proteins that can switch the molecule on and off, controlling cancer cell growth.

Also reported by: [Channel 10 \(Sydney\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/02/2025, Tiffany Warne

A world-first mobile CT scanner for cancer diagnosis was unveiled in Adelaide. SA Health Minister

Chris Picton says the battery-powered, truck-mounted units will expand lung cancer screening in remote areas. Requiring no pre-built infrastructure, the Heart of Australia clinics can operate immediately and are set to reach 70 remote communities annually. Mark Brooke, Lung Foundation Australia, says the initiative could save 12,000 lives over the next decade.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 20/02/2025, Brenton Ragless and Kate Collins

Lung cancer kills more Australians annually than any other cancer, but new mobile health technology aims to improve early detection in remote and rural areas. A \$267 million screening program will deploy high-tech trucks nationwide, each equipped with a world-first battery-powered CT scanner, imaging suite, and cardiac testing lab. Mark Brooke, Lung Foundation CEO, says the initiative could save 12,000 lives over the next decade by diagnosing cases earlier.

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ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 20/02/2025, Rick Hind

Interview with Tanya Hall, CEO, Hearts4heart, about heart valve disease and Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week. Hall states around 250,000 people are unaware that they are living with the condition. She notes many people think of heart disease as heart attack or stroke but warns conditions like heart valve disease also pose risks.

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2GB, Mornings, 20/02/2025, Mark Levy

Interview with John Scott, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, on a breakthrough in prostate cancer treatment. Scott explains that current treatments can cause serious side effects, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, bone loss, and loss of libido, which can be especially debilitating for younger men. He says researchers are targeting the PSKH1 molecule, a known driver of prostate cancer, to treat the disease while reducing the side effects.

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PRIMARY CARE

State to remove 'gag clause' from voluntary assisted dying laws

The Australian, General News, 21/02/2025, Lily Mccaffrey, Page 3

The Victorian government will move to bring its voluntary assisted dying laws in line with other states by scrapping a "gag clause" that prevents doctors from initiating conversations about the option with their patients. This follows the release of a five-year review into the operation of the scheme, which commenced in 2019, two years after Victoria became the first state to legislate voluntary assisted dying.

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

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Last private maternity service in NT closes

The Australian, General News, 21/02/2025, Penny Timms, Page 7

Expectant mothers in the Northern Territory will soon not be able to give birth using the private health system, after the territory's only private hospital announced plans to end its maternity services. Healthscope will close its maternity unit in Darwin on April 17, due to a decline in private births, marking an end to private birthing care in the territory.

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Healthscope to close two maternity units

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/02/2025, Michael Smith, Page 11

Healthscope, the country's secondlargest hospital operator, will close maternity units in Darwin and

Hobart due to workforce shortages and falling birth rates, in the latest blow to the \$22 billion private hospital industry which is warning of more.

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State to widen access to assisted dying

Age, General News, 21/02/2025, Broede Carmody, Page 17

Victorian doctors will be allowed to initiate conversations about voluntary assisted dying (VAD) with patients, and timeframes for a terminal prognosis altered, as part of a suite of changes to be brought before parliament. The reforms, designed to bring Victoria's assisted dying framework in line with other states, come after years of advocacy from doctors, family members and coroners reviewing cases where patients have taken their own lives sometimes violently after being blocked from accessing the scheme.

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

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Review flags changes to voluntary assisted dying

Herald Sun, General News, 21/02/2025, Mitch Clarke, Page 9

Victorian doctors would be given a green light to discuss the prospect of voluntary assisted dying with terminally ill patients as part of a major overhaul to make it easier for people to access the end-of-life treatment. A review of voluntary assisted dying in Victoria, tabled in parliament on Thursday, found that while the scheme was working adequately, some of the safeguards currently "impede access, undermining patient-centred care, and would benefit from improvement".

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#)

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Weight-time for patients

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

Queensland's biggest hospital is so overloaded that it has repurposed a gym to look after its patients. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital concedes some patients classed as "outliers" are occasionally being temporarily relocated to "suitable alternative" locations.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#)

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Coalition vow to boost health

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/02/2025, Rob Inglis, Page 12

The Coalition has pledged to open a new Medicare Urgent Care Clinic at Sorell if it wins the federal election, with Lyons Liberal candidate Susie Bower saying the facility will provide access to affordable health care and "put downward pressure on local medical costs". It comes a day after Labor candidate Rebecca White launched a campaign to secure a new urgent care clinic for the town, including a petition that has attracted more than 1300 signatures.

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Delivering for Tassie mums

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 21/02/2025, Page 18

Expectant mothers would have been expecting the worst after the Sunday Tasmanian's report that Hobart Private Hospital's maternity unit faced imminent closure. Those fears were realised yesterday when private operator Healthscope announced its obstetrics services would cease operation from August 20 "due to ongoing workforce challenges".

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State moves to bin assisted dying 'gag' on Victorian doctors

Burnie Advocate, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 9

Doctors will no longer be muzzled from initiating voluntary assisted dying conversations with terminally ill patients under long-called-for law changes. A "gag clause" that banned Victorian practitioners from

initiating a discussion on voluntary assisted dying (VAD) with patients would be lifted under government-led legislation.

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

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More choice and better health care for women

Coast Community Pelican Post, General News, 20/02/2025, Page 29

A move by the Federal Government to strengthen Medicare with \$573.3M to deliver more choice, lower costs and better health care for women has been welcomed by Central Coast Federal MPs. Member for Dobell and Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride and Member for Robertson Dr Gordon Reid say the significant investment will deliver better healthcare for women across the Central Coast.

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\$45 million hospital project begins amid call for clean-up

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/02/2025, Damon Cronshaw, Page 8

Construction has begun on a \$45 million upgrade of Muswellbrook Hospital, but there are calls to improve the site's general appearance. The NSW government said the work was for stage three of the hospital project.

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Healthy milestone: Tackling congestion key in \$384m project

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 21/02/2025, Katrina Lovell, Page 3

Warrnambool hospital's multi-storey car park will get another level this year and an extra shuttle bus added for staff in a bid to ease congestion during the \$384 million redevelopment. Early works are now under way on the major construction project which the state government said was on track to be completed by 2027.

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Private maternity services to close in Darwin and Hobart

The Australian, Other, 20/02/2025, Penny Timms

The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists said it held "deep concern" over the expected closures, though it is not yet understood when the closures will come into effect. "The closure of these maternity services underscores the fragile state of private obstetric care and foreshadows a dangerous shift towards insurer-controlled managed care," NASOG president Associate Professor Gino Pecoraro said.

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Productivity Commission data reveals Tasmania has worst ambulance response times in nation

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/02/2025, Rob Inglis

Tasmania's ambulance wait times continue to be the worst in the nation and just half the patients in the state's emergency departments are able to leave within the clinically recommended four-hour time frame, new figures from the Productivity Commission have revealed. The Report on Government Services data showed that patients across the state waited an average of 14.9 minutes for an ambulance in 2023-24, which was an increase of 1.9 minutes compared to 2019-20.

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Health Minister Jacquie Petrusma decries 'politicking' over Medicare clinics

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/02/2025, David Killick

Calls from Labor candidates for Medicare clinics in Sorell and Burnie were "shameless politicking" to set the scene for election campaign announcements, the Tasmanian Health Minister says. Rebecca White in Lyons and Anne Urquhart in Braddon are campaigning for new Medicare Local clinics to be opened in Sorell and Burnie.

Gold Coast Private Hospital maternity ward closure fears after Healthscope shuts wards in Hobart, Darwin

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/02/2025, Jackie Sinnerton

Fears are rising over the long-term future of the Gold Coast Private Hospital maternity unit as Healthscope closes wards in Hobart and Darwin. The Gold Coast Private is the only Healthscope hospital in Queensland and the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) fear more cuts, putting extra pressure on already overworked public maternity services.

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Kimberley tops nation for GP shortage as AMA says Liberal plan won't close regional gap

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2025, Cain Andrews

The president of WA's peak medical group said the Liberals' new \$140 million health package will do little to address the regional GP shortage as the Kimberley overtakes the Northern Territory for the worst access in the country. It comes as Broome Doctor's Practice, one of just three clinics in the town, shut its doors for good on February 19.

[Read More](#)

WA election 2025: Libby Mettam accuses Cook Government of delaying clinical incident report

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2025, Hannah Cross

WA Liberal leader Libby Mettam has accused the State Government of attempting to bury an unfavourable report ahead of the State election. The Your Safety in Our Hands in Hospital report offers an annual insight into the performance of WA's hospitals and health services.

[Read More](#)

WA AMA pushes back after Liberal candidate questions Sobering-Up Centre effectiveness

West Australian, Other, 20/02/2025, Cain Andrews

Claims that Broome's new Sobering Up Centre won't be effective unless people are forced to stay for rehabilitation have been rejected by WA's leading medical association. Liberal Kimberley candidate Darren Spackman made the claims as he backed business opposition to the proposed Napier Terrace location for the centre.

[Read More](#)

'Blow for women' as hospitals shut maternity wards

Canberra Times, Other, 20/02/2025, Ethan James & Maeve Bannister

Maternity wards at two private hospitals are set to close in a move labelled a "disappointing blow" to women seeking maternity care. Healthscope announced it would cease maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital and Hobart Private Hospital from April 17 and August 20, respectively.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Healthscope shock: Darwin Private Hospital to end birthing services in April

Adelaide Now, Other, 21/02/2025

Declining birthrates and "operational issues" were behind Thursday's shock announcement Healthscope had ordered the shutdown of birthing and maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital from April 17. Healthscope NT manager Tim Daniel said the number of births at DPH had fallen from about 700 in 2013 to fewer than 300 over the past year.

[Read More](#)

Drivers urged to prioritise ambulances

Shepparton News Online, Other, 20/02/2025, Ryan Bellingham

Ambulance Victoria is urging road users to be cautious of ambulances responding to emergencies to help paramedics quickly reach those in need. Executive director of quality and clinical innovation Dr Tegwyn McManamny said drivers must know what to do when they encountered ambulance lights and sirens on the road.

[Read More](#)

Patients in limbo as key Broome GP clinic closes doors on cusp of tourist season

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2025, Vanessa Mills

The sudden closure of a longstanding GP clinic is putting added pressure on the health system in WA's far north, as patients scramble to get limited available appointments. Broome Doctors Practice closed its doors effective immediately on Tuesday, with patients informed via call or text message.

[Read More](#)

SA regional hospitals hit with increase in violent code black incidents

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2025, Eugene Boisvert, Elyse Armanini & Amelia Walters

New figures from SA Health show the number of code black incidents of violence or threats of aggression has almost doubled over the past year in regional hospitals. There were 668 code black incidents in South Australian hospitals outside of Adelaide in 2024, compared with 385 in 2023.

[Read More](#)

State euthanasia changes to hinge on conscience vote

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/02/2025

Laws to remove a gag on doctors initiating voluntary euthanasia conversations are likely to be put to a conscience vote by the major parties. A ban on Victorian health practitioners raising voluntary assisted dying (VAD) with terminally ill patients would be lifted under legislation set to be introduced to state parliament in 2025.

[Read More](#)

Australian women will soon be eligible for a menopause health check. Here's what to expect

Medicine Today, Other, 20/02/2025

The federal government has recently pledged to create a new Medicare rebate for menopause health assessments. It's due to be available from July 1. The announcement featured in the government's response to the Senate inquiry into menopause, released on 12 February, though was first flagged earlier this month as part of the government's pre-election funding package for women's health.

[Read More](#)

Shock patient overflow into gym and corridors at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

The Mercury, Other, 20/02/2025, Jackie Sinnerton

The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital concedes some patients – classed as "outliers" – are occasionally being temporarily relocated to "suitable alternative" locations. The confirmation comes as a whistleblower made shock claims patients had been treated in the hospital's gym while exercise sessions were being held during tier three capacity escalations.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, The Project, 20/02/2025, Georgie Tunny, Waleed Aly, Kate Langbroek, & Nick Cody

Interview with Elouise and Danny Massa, parents of two-year-old Joe Massa who died at Northern Beaches Hospital due to severe dehydration and misdiagnosis. Despite a dangerously high heart rate, his parents' pleas for IV fluids and pain relief were ignored. NSW Health Minister Ryan Park says the

system failed Joe's family. Elouise Massa says they are calling for accountability, an independent review, and better awareness of the REACH protocol to prevent future tragedies.

Interview continues on: [Channel 10 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 10 \(Sydney\)](#).

[Play Now](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 20/02/2025, Peter Mitchell

Victoria's voluntary assisted dying laws will be amended to allow doctors to suggest the option to patients. The changes will also remove some of the original guardrails, including how many doctors need to be involved. Vic Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas says the change brings Victoria in line with some other states.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 20/02/2025, Susannah Carr & Rick Ardon

Steve Walker, a voluntary assisted dying advocate in WA, is running as an independent candidate to push for reform. Walker argues the current legislation is outdated and needs to include dementia patients, aligning with other states offering easier access.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, A Current Affair, 20/02/2025, Allison Langdon

Interview with Elouise and Danny Massa on calls for changes to the healthcare system after their two-year-old son, Joe, died of severe dehydration in a NSW hospital. Elouise Massa says they are calling for an awareness campaign on REACH protocols after her pleas for IV fluids for her son were ignored. She calls for a review of the public-private partnership with Healthscope, criticising their profit-driven priorities.

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Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 20/02/2025, Tom Connell

Interview with Dr Gino Pecoraro, obstetrician and gynaecologist, on concerns over private obstetric services in Australia following the closures of Darwin and Hobart private hospital maternity units. Pecoraro says Darwin patients will now rely on the already strained Royal Darwin Hospital, similar to issues seen in Gladstone. He says it is due to workforce shortages and urges federal intervention to reform the system and retain healthcare professionals.

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2GB, Drive, 20/02/2025, Clinton Maynard

Interview with NSW Shadow Health Minister Kellie Sloane, on the death of two-year-old Joe Massa at Northern Beaches Hospital. Maynard reports Joe's parents claim he was misdiagnosed with gastroenteritis despite showing signs of severe dehydration and was denied an IV drip. He says Premier Chris Minns has pledged action, with Health Minister Ryan Park meeting the family. Sloane criticises the multiple system failures involved and calls for further investigation, including examining IV fluid shortages at the time.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 20/02/2025, Kylie Baxter

Interview with Emily Shepherd, secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmania, on the closure of maternity services at Hobart Private Hospital. Shepherd highlights concerns about the added strain on the Royal Hobart and Calvary hospitals, which will need to accommodate around 600 additional births annually. She calls for a long-term strategy for maternity services and warns against relying on private providers for critical healthcare services, as they can withdraw support at short notice.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 20/02/2025, Kylie Baxter

Interview with Lindsay Edwards, Tasmanian chair, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, on the closure of obstetrics services at Hobart Private Hospital in August due to workforce challenges. Edwards warns that the public system and Calvary may struggle with 600 additional births. She highlights concerns over limited reproductive services, as Calvary follows Catholic guidelines restricting certain procedures. She notes calls for direct-entry programs to address staff shortages.

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

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 20/02/2025, Chris Bath

Interview with Danny and Elouise Massa, parents of Joe Massa, who died in September last year at Northern Beaches Hospital due to dehydration. Elouise Massa recalls her son's death from dehydration after repeated pleas for an IV drip were ignored. She says the report's recommendations are insufficient and calls for a coronial inquiry, an independent review, and better REACH protocol awareness. Bath notes NSW Health Minister Ryan Park and Premier Chris Minns have reached out, with a meeting scheduled to discuss further action.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health plan to protect both doctors and patients

Shepparton News Online, Other, 21/02/2025

Long hours, complex operations, competition to succeed at the highest level and looking after the lives of patients exact a heavy mental toll on Australian doctors. So the profession is set to examine itself with a new medical initiative to remedy the mental health of Australia's healthcare professionals.

[Read More](#)

Common drug taken by millions could banish ADHD symptoms - without side effects of current meds, study suggests

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 21/02/2025, Emily Stearn

A common blood pressure pill taken by millions of Britons could dramatically reduce one of the most debilitating symptoms of ADHD, promising research today suggested. Currently available medication for the disorder comes with significant side effects including headaches, sleep disturbance and loss of appetite, with roughly a quarter of patients not responding well to any ADHD drugs.

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2CC, Canberra Live, 20/02/2025, Leon Delaney

An additional \$69 million will be put towards suicide prevention initiatives, including community support programmes and mental health research, as part of a ten-year strategy to reduce suicide rates.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Private maternity services to shut down at Healthscope hospitals in Hobart and Darwin

ABC Online, Other, 20/02/2025, Annabel Bowles & Adam Holmes

Maternity services at Healthscope private hospitals in Hobart and Darwin will be closed. [...] The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is reaching out to staff at the Hobart site today.

[Read More](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Muslim nurses are real victims'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/02/2025, Derrick Krusche, Page 5

The Australian Islamic Medical Association has issued a bizarre statement, expressing concern over what it claims is "unfair and unwarranted media targeting of Muslim healthcare workers in Australia" following the video where two Sydney nurses threatened to kill Israeli patients. The association's complaint drew condemnation by Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-chief executive Alex Ryvchin, who told The Daily Telegraph on Thursday that the nurses' incident "wasn't about religion and nobody made it about religion the issue was about the sanctity of patient care".

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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Nurses scoff at pay rise offer

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Taylah Fellows, Page 4

A cohort of health workers are set to march on 1 William St on Friday demanding Premier David Crisafulli and Health Minister Tim Nicholls honour their commitment for nationleading wages and conditions for the sector. It comes after public sector unions in Queensland got an initial pay rise offer of 8.2 per cent over three years in their first round of negotiations with the state government. The unions had initially sought a pay increase closer to 15 per cent.

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Hospital hope

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 21/02/2025, Jonathon Magrath, Page 1

More nurses and midwives could soon be on shift at Bendigo Hospital, as the state government looks to improve nurse-to-patient ratios. The intensive care unit, emergency department, and postnatal and antenatal wards could all have more nurses, and an in-charge nurse would be rostered on the night shift and high dependency units and coronary care units.

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'Fantastic' nursing deal, so we are told

Border Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Anthony Bunn, Page 3

Albury Wodonga Health has been unable to say exactly how new nurse-patient ratios will work at its Twin City hospitals. The Victorian government announced this week changes to the Safe Patient Care Act which sets out ratios for nurses to patients in the state's hospitals.

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Nurses and midwives welcomed

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/02/2025, Em Jensen, Page 8

Twenty new nursing and midwifery graduates have been welcomed to the team at the Far West Local Health District, and the hope is they'll provide a boost to health services locally. Of the 20 graduates, three are local nurses with the remaining 17 from throughout New South Wales and interstate.

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LifeFlight Toowoomba and Roma welcomes new doctors

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/02/2025

LifeFlight doctors face unique challenges, which is why their preparation involves white-knuckling training, like being submerged underwater in a helicopter. LifeFlight has welcomed its latest intake of doctors with three new personnel stationed at the Toowoomba and Roma bases.

[Read More](#)

Victoria to sack up to 3,000 public servants

The Mandarin, Other, 20/02/2025, Dan Holmes

Victoria is to review its public service wage bill, targeting inefficiencies and potential workforce reductions. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan has announced a review of the Victorian Public Service (VPS) wage bill.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Halve the PBS co-payment for biosimilars: GBMA

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/02/2025

Reducing out-of-pocket costs and strengthening biosimilar uptake will deliver savings for people struggling with cost of living, says leading association The Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) has proposed three policy reforms it says will improve health outcomes and provide cost-of-living relief for the three million Australians currently being prescribed biologics or biosimilars.

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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

Paralympics grant boost

Gympie Today, Other, 21/02/2025

The state Government has announced a \$2 million grant for The Queensland Academy of Sport, to launch a new Para-Sport Unit which it says will more than double the pipeline for Paralympians on the road to Brisbane 2032. [...] Federal Sport Minister Anika Wells, said the lead-up to our home Games in Brisbane 2032 provided "a generational opportunity to create a legacy in sport and reshape how all Australians look at disability in this country.

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Dying earlier in the bush

Courier Mail, General News, 21/02/2025, Page 9

Regional, rural and remote Australians are dying at higher rates than their urban counterparts, with avoidable deaths in the regions almost four times higher. National Rural Health Alliance research paints a grim picture of health inequities.

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

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HMRI partnership

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/02/2025

Novartis has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Hunter Medical Research Institute to work more closely together on healthcare research projects. The collaboration is being supported by the University of Newcastle, with the three parties organisations set to explore opportunities to advance medical science and improve patient care.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Groundbreaking study co-designed by Aboriginal women achieves Type 2 Diabetes remission

SBS, Other, 20/02/2025

The results have been transformative, with several cases of women completely reversing their diabetes for at least 12 months. A pioneering research project has made significant strides in reversing type 2 diabetes in First Nations women.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Three factors raise dangers of bird flu pandemic

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/02/2025, Angus Dalton, Page 14

Experts fear the risk of a bird flu pandemic is at an all-time high due to a severe form of the virus that has infected 69 people, killed one patient, ripped through 972 cattle herds and forced the culling of 162 million poultry birds in the US. The problem H5N1 clade, or subgroup, is still a bird-adapted virus and the risk to the public remains low.

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North Queensland residents cleaning up after floods warned of melioidosis, dengue fever

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/02/2025, Joanne Williamson

An elderly person has died from the serious infectious disease, melioidosis, that can be contracted from contaminated water, prompting a warning to residents in flood-affected North Queensland. The Townsville Public Health Unit said the elderly person died from melioidosis in the past week, while there have been three new cases of dengue virus.

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Death toll rises from disease with heavy rain link

Canberra Times, Other, 21/02/2025, Laine Clark

Queensland Health confirmed an elderly person had died of melioidosis in Townsville while three new cases of dengue virus had also been discovered in the community. It came after it was revealed melioidosis had claimed four lives further north in Cairns, with the region recording a total number of 41 cases since January 1.

[Read More](#)

Northern Rivers: Second measles alert issued

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 20/02/2025, Catherine Piltz

Northern NSW health authorities have issued a second measles alert within nine days for residents who visited a popular shopping centre in the Northern Rivers. Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) is advising people to be alert for signs and symptoms of the illness following reports a second person with measles was infectious while visiting Lismore Square Shopping Centre last week.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Sour sweeteners alert

Herald Sun, General News, 21/02/2025, Tracy Swartz, Page 4

A new study reports that one of the most popular sugar substitutes found in diet drinks, chewing gum and low-sugar yoghurt raises insulin levels in animals, potentially increasing their risk of heart attacks and stroke over time. "One of my students was sipping on this sugar-free drink, and I said, 'Why don't you look into that?'" recalled senior study author Professor Yihai Cao, who studies chronic diseases related to blood vessel disorders.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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Warning over cult diet drink revealed

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/02/2025, Claudia Poposki

A warning has been issued over a cult diet soft drink was linked to cardiovascular disease and disease of blood cells in the brain. Karolinska Institutet, and colleagues from China at Shandong University, conducted a study on how artificial sweeteners such as aspartame impact mice and monkeys.

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AICIS

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