



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 2nd March 2025

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 5) reports that the Albanese government has pledged to open another 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics around Australia if it is re-elected, placing four in five Australians within a twenty minute drive of one according to a Department of Health and Aged Care analysis. Minister for Health Mark Butler stressed that "Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are an Albanese government initiative, because we believe in Medicare and in free urgent care, fully bulk-billed." *Also reported by:* [Sun Herald](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#), [Sunday Times](#), [ABC Online](#), [7NEWS.com.au](#), [Sunday Canberra Times](#)
- The [Sun Herald](#) (page 6) reports that New South Wales's inaugural pill-testing service at the Yours and Owls Festival in Wollongong on Saturday has been hailed as a success, though advocates are still calling for the removal of police sniffer dogs. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Canberra Times](#), [ABC Online](#), [SBS Online](#), [Guardian Australia](#)
- The [Sun Herald](#) (page 6) reports that a worker at a Camden aged care facility has pleaded guilty to taking an 86-year-old resident's credit card on a five week, \$18,000 spending spree.
- The [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#) (page 7) reports that Matildas and Socceroos players have petitioned the Queensland government for a new football stadium at Perry Park as it considers the draft report of the Brisbane 2032 Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority.

- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 7) reports a coronial review of 35 suicides in Victoria's police force over the last 15 years found that most involved workplace and organizational factors including bullying and excessive workloads.
- The [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#) (page 31) reports that more than a third of Australian children have visited a mental healthcare professional, News Corp's Great Australian Parent Survey found. Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun](#), [Sunday Telegraph](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#)

MINISTER BUTLER

Labor vows \$644m for another 50 urgent care clinics

Sun Herald, General News, 02/03/2025, Paul Sakkal, Page 5

Dozens more urgent care clinics will be built by the Albanese government if it is re-elected, in a \$644 million expansion of a scheme Labor regards as a vote-winner. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said, "You can't trust [the Coalition] to keep them open", setting up another test for Dutton after the opposition backed Labor's \$8.5 billion free GP pledge last Sunday.

Also reported by: [Sunday Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#), [WA Today \(Online\)](#).

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Labor commits to more clinics

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 5

A re-elected Labor government will open 50 more Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, in round two of the signature health policy Anthony Albanese took to the last federal election. [...] According to analysis by the Department of Health and Aged Care, four in five Australians will live within a 20-minute drive of one of the clinics once they are all open. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler pressed on with Labor's mounting "Mediscare" campaign against the Coalition, saying "you can't trust the Liberals with Medicare".

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Right on cue, a pledge for extra Medicare clinics

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/03/2025, Angira Bharadwal, Page 10

A re-elected Labor government will open 50 more Medicare urgent care clinics in round 2 of the signature health policy Anthony Albanese took to the last federal election. [...] The announcement came as Health Minister Mark Butler pressed on with Labor's mounting "Mediscare" campaign against the Coalition, saying "You can't trust the Liberals with Medicare".

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

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Three new urgent clinics

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 02/03/2025, Cameron Micallef, Page 5

Labor has announced a \$644m bid to open 50 more urgent care clinics, building on Anthony Albanese's centrepiece \$8.5bn election promise to boost bulk-billing GP numbers. [...] The clinics are slated to open by July 1, 2026, and once delivered will ensure four out of five Australians live within a 20-minute drive from a clinic, according to Department of Health and Aged Care analysis. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said only a re-elected Labor government would ensure urgent care clinics remained open.

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Labor's \$644m health promise

Sunday Times, General News, 02/03/2025, Hannah Cross, Page 3

A re-elected Albanese Government will open another 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics across the country including six in WA in its bid to build a "stronger Medicare". Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Health Minister Mark Butler will on Sunday announce the \$644 million investment, which would see Federal Labor open the facilities in 2025-26 if the party wins a second term. [...] Department of Health and Aged Care modelling shows that once all of the clinics are up and running nationwide, four in five Australians will live within a 20-minute drive of an Urgent Care Clinic.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), and syndicated across Seven West Media websites

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Federal Labor commits nearly \$650m for new 50 new urgent care clinics

ABC Online, Other, 01/03/2025, Tom Lowrey

A further 50 new urgent care clinics would open around the country under a \$644 million election promise from federal Labor. The new network of urgent care clinics was central to Labor's last election campaign, and Labor is now promising to expand the existing 87-clinic network if re-elected. [...] A spokesperson for Health Minister Mark Butler said the health department constantly collected insights and evidence for the clinics.

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Medicare to receive a \$644 million boost for urgent care clinics if Anthony Albanese's Labor Government is re-elected

7news.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Josh Martin

The Prime Minister is promising that a re-elected Labor Government will build 50 new Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, costing taxpayers' \$644 million. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler ramping up the political attacks, saying 'Australia's doctors voted Peter Dutton the worst Health Minister in Medicare history for a reason'.

[Read More](#)

Australian cancer patients forced overseas as \$500m proton therapy centre sits empty in Adelaide

7news.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Jennifer Bechwati

Pressure is mounting on the federal government to fund a life-saving cancer treatment in Australia. Patients are currently having to fork out thousands of dollars to receive proton beam therapy, a specialised radiation treatment, in the United States. [...] The federal Health Minister says he is also working with the states to try to find a solution. "I really want to see this unit available in Australia as quickly as possible," he said on Wednesday.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), and syndicated across Seven West Media websites

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Channel 7, Seven News (Weekend), 01/03/2025, Michael Usher and Angie Asimus

Pressure is mounting on the federal government to fund a life-saving cancer treatment in Australia. Currently, families with severely ill children have to fork out thousands of dollars to travel overseas to receive the treatment. [clip: Minister Butler]

Continues: [Channel 7 \(Sydney\)](#).

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'Going to hurt': Kochie's grim warning as millions cop price hike

Sky News Australia, Other, 01/03/2025, Alexandra Feiam

Another private insurance price hike is "going to hurt" more than 14 million Australians, unless they pay attention to the finer details. [...] "All health insurers must submit their premium increase proposal to the Department of Health for assessment. [...] On Wednesday, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the private health insurance price increase after intervening to lower proposals offered by funds.

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MINISTER WELLS

Sky News Live, Saturday Edition, 01/03/2025, Tim Gilbert

Former world number one golfer Greg Norman is honoured to have been hand-picked to join the Olympics organising committee. He will fill a vacancy on the 24-person board made by the Member for Moreton Graham Perrett, who is retiring at the upcoming federal election. [...] Federal Sports Minister Anika Wells insists Greg Norman will add star power to the committee. [clip: Minister Wells]

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

3AW, 12:00 News (Weekend), 01/03/2025

Oral contraceptives are being made more affordable as the government turns its focus to women's health. Yaz and Yasmin have both been added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and can now be purchased for as little as \$30 a year. Australian Medical Association president Doctor Daniel McMullan says it's welcome news. – I think we're finally getting somewhere. Minister Ged Kearney has had a Women's Health Advisory Council for a couple of years now, and we've all been working really hard at all levels of government to push them to make some of these decisions, and we are seeing that turning tide.

Also reported by: [2CC \(Canberra\)](#)

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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DEPARTMENT

Labor commits to more clinics

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 5

A re-elected Labor government will open 50 more Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, in round two of the signature health policy Anthony Albanese took to the last federal election. [...] According to analysis by the Department of Health and Aged Care, four in five Australians will live within a 20-minute drive of one of the clinics once they are all open. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler pressed on with Labor's mounting "Mediscare" campaign against the Coalition, saying "you can't trust the Liberals with Medicare".

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Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 02/03/2025, Cameron Micallef, Page 5

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Labor's \$644m health promise

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Federal Labor commits nearly \$650m for new 50 new urgent care clinics

ABC Online, Other, 01/03/2025, Tom Lowrey

A further 50 new urgent care clinics would open around the country under a \$644 million election promise from federal Labor. The new network of urgent care clinics was central to Labor's last election campaign, and Labor is now promising to expand the existing 87-clinic network if re-elected. [...] A spokesperson for Health Minister Mark Butler said the health department constantly collected insights and evidence for the clinics.

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Medicare clinics vow: 20 minute drive or less from care

Canberra Times, Other, 02/03/2025, Rachael Ward

Most Australians could be living within 20 minutes of a bulk billing urgent care clinic, under a federal Labor pre-election promise. [...] Once the new clinics are added, about 80 per cent - or four in five - Australians "will live" within a 20 minute drive of one of 137 facilities, according to Department of Health and Aged Care analysis.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), and syndicated widely online

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'He threw me across the room': Rachael's abuse didn't stop when she became pregnant

SBS, Other, 01/03/2025, Emma Brancatisano

Rachael Natoli was in an abusive relationship for almost eight years. When she became pregnant, she 'couldn't see a way out'. [...] These recommendations are being revised and are expected to be released mid-year, a Department of Health spokesperson has confirmed.

[Read More](#)

Big money, big conflicts. Aged care assessment privatised by stealth.

Michael West Media, Other, 01/03/2025, Sarah Russell

The Labor government has done what the Coalition didn't, and the Aged Care Royal Commission

warned against, privatising aged care assessment and awarded \$1.5 billion worth of contracts to for-profit operators. [...] Nearly \$1.5 billion has been handed out to private operators under the Single Assessment System to conduct aged care assessments, according to contract details released last December by the Department of Health and Aged Care.

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'Going to hurt': Kochie's grim warning as millions cop price hike

Sky News Australia, Other, 01/03/2025, Alexandra Feiam

Another private insurance price hike is "going to hurt" more than 14 million Australians, unless they pay attention to the finer details. [...] "All health insurers must submit their premium increase proposal to the Department of Health for assessment. [...] On Wednesday, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the private health insurance price increase after intervening to lower proposals offered by funds.

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VACCINES

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Carer pleads guilty to spending spree on stolen credit card

Sun Herald, General News, 02/03/2025, Amber Schultz, Page 6

An aged care worker has pleaded guilty to stealing a resident's credit card and spending more than \$18,000 on handbags, groceries and cigarettes, taking herself bowling, on carnival rides and getting her ears pierced during a five-week spree in western Sydney.

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

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POPULATION HEALTH

Jess' mum drank a small amount of alcohol while pregnant – it shows

Sunday Age, General News, 02/03/2025, Wendy Tuohy, Page 4

Jessica Birch knows that you might not be able to detect the mark left by alcohol on her as a developing baby simply by looking at her face. You would need to be informed of the "sentinel" signs of the often-undetected condition fetal alcohol spectrum disorder to pick up the subtle changes caused by exposure in the womb to alcohol before her mother knew she was pregnant.

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

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For a model where vapes cut smoking, look east

Sun Herald, General News, 02/03/2025, Colin Mendelsohn, Page 31

A landmark study published in the journal Addiction has revealed that the smoking rate in New Zealand fell twice as fast as in Australia between 2016 and 2023. Over this seven-year period, NZ's adult daily smoking rate plummeted by an astonishing 10 per cent per year, from 14.5 per cent to 6.8 per cent.

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The COVID hangover keeping the region's influx of young people out of

Illawarra pubs

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 02/03/2025, Nadine Morton

O-Week at uni might once have been a place for excess drinking and partying, but these days many young people starting their studies are opting for sobriety – and it's part of a growing trend. [...] The percentage of young people who drink weekly also dropped, from 47 per cent to 30 per cent, data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Expert slams Marty Sheargold after shocking endometriosis claim

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Ria Pandey

A Brisbane-based doctor has taken aim at former radio host Marty Sheargold following an outrageous claim about women's health. Australian doctor Brad Robinson shared the story of a patient suffering from the "disease that doesn't exist," following a radio host's claim that endometriosis was a "made up" condition.

Similar coverage: [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#).

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PRIMARY CARE

Labor's Medicare clinics promise

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 02/03/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 11

A re-elected Labor government will open 50 more Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, in round two of the signature health policy Anthony Albanese took to the last federal election. In 2022, Labor promised to build 50 clinics but delivered 87 during its time in government.

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

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Labor to fund 50 urgent-care clinics

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 02/03/2025, Eleanor Campbell, Page 4

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will pledge \$644 million to open another 50 urgent-care clinics across the country, as Labor seeks to refocus attention towards access to healthcare and cost of living ahead of a likely early election. Sunday's announcement comes in addition to an \$8.5 billion package for GP bulk-billing incentives unveiled by the Prime Minister last week.

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

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Wipe-out for Albo

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, James Campbell, Page 1

Labor is facing a disaster in Victoria, with up to eight seats at risk of falling to the Coalition in the federal election. [...] But, in the wake of last Sunday's Medicare announcement, Labor got a 22-point bounce in its net-favourability health rating and is now only one point behind the Coalition.

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

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Australians need more concrete policies from the Coalition

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, James Campbell, Page 9

Having banged on for months that Anthony Albanese is ignoring cost of living, Peter Dutton can hardly complain if the Prime Minister gets a poll boost from spending \$8bn expanding Medicare bulk billing.

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Big ideas are fine but we're losing sleep over lack of beds

Sunday Times, General News, 02/03/2025, Michael Page, Page 15

Our health system faces many challenges. Private hospitals, which fill an essential role in our mix of services, are facing financial pressures.

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Wait times for 'urgent' emergency cases far worse in South Australia

Adelaide Now, Other, 01/03/2025, Brad Crouch

Wait times for patients seeking "urgent" help at public hospital emergency departments are blowing out despite the state government's heavily publicised Building a Bigger Health System plan. South Australia's EDs are performing at their worst levels in recent history according to the Australian Medical Association's Public Hospital Report Card, released on Friday.

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Mum's ONE demand after her baby daughter died in her arms following horrific birth at Latrobe Regional Hospital in Gippsland

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 02/03/2025, Stephen Gibbs

A grieving mother whose daughter died after a horrific birth is calling for an immediate independent inquiry into the hospital she says could have saved her baby's life. Natalie Lont's second child Lacey was one of three infants who died after treatment at Latrobe Regional Hospital in Victoria's Gippsland region in just six weeks.

[Read More](#)

Queensland biopsy mix-up causes two women to be given wrong cancer diagnoses

7news.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Molly Magennis

Two women have been caught up in a potentially life-changing medical mix-up after they were both given incorrect cancer diagnoses, sparking a major government investigation. The women, both BreastScreen Queensland patients, had their biopsies mixed up after receiving mammograms in Rockhampton in November last year, the Courier Mail reported.

Similar coverage: [9News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Fake boobs out body positivity in says Gold Coast plastic surgeon

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 01/03/2025, Robert White

In thirty years of working in cosmetic surgery Dr Dilip Gahankari has seen it all, but over that time he has noticed a distinct trend in the procedures he's performed. Specialist plastic surgeon at Advanced Aesthetics and adjunct professor at Griffith University Dr Dilip Gahankari says in his many years operating in the Gold Coast he's noticed a pronounced downturn in 'boob job' surgeries.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Vic Pol's suicide truths

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, Aneeka Simonis, Craig Dunlop, Page 7

A coronial probe into suicides in Victoria Police has uncovered tragic patterns of mental ill health, stress, exhaustion and workplace bullying with two police members taking their life each year on average. Deputy State Coroner Paresa Antoniadis Spanos ordered coronial investigators to canvass

the deaths of all 35 Victoria Police employees who died by suicide in the past 15 years as part of an investigation into the 2023 suicide of a highly experienced senior sergeant at Moorabbin Police Station.

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Age of clients is shrinking

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 02/03/2025, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 31

Exclusive new data shows Aussie kids are embracing the US therapy trend, with a staggering more than one in three seeking professional support from a counsellor or psychologist. News Corp Australia's newly-released Great Australian Parent Survey finds 36.9 per cent of young people have visited a mental-health professional.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sunday Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Sunday Mail Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Kinder way to protect our kids

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 02/03/2025, Sue Bailey, Page 7

The founder of a charity promoting empathy and kindness in children says it is "absolutely heartbreaking" that bullying and suicide involving young people is rising. Danny Mayson-Kinder, CEO and founder of the b kinder foundation, said suicide was now the leading cause of death among young people.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Not my arm': hard medicine brings doctors to the bush

Canberra Times, Other, 01/03/2025, Stephanie Gardiner

A man lies in a paddock under the blazing sun, groaning and covered in blood with his left arm caught in a tractor loader. Emergency services are on their way to free him with the jaws of life, but it will take them three hours to reach the remote property.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Channel 10, 10 News First (Weekend) , 01/03/2025, Chris Bath

Australian women now have more choice. For the first time in 30 years an oral contraceptive pill has been added to the PBS. The listing aims to improve affordability and help close a gap in reproductive healthcare across the nation.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

You owe us a stadium

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 02/03/2025, Hayden Johnson, Page 7

Matildas and Socceroos players are demanding a new football stadium at Perry Park "in return" for the inspiration the squads have delivered to millions of Australians. The Sunday Mail can reveal an open letter signed by 15 current and former Matildas, Socceroos and Brisbane Roar players has been sent to the state government as it considers the draft Olympic and Paralympic Games infrastructure review report.

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Young Colombian women learn about Aussie Rules, to help change the game at home

ABC Online, Other, 01/03/2025, Sally-Anne Young

Growing up in a small town in Colombia, Lina Montaña never dreamed of playing Australian Rules on the other side of the world, but that might one day be a possibility. "It's a sport that I had no idea existed when I was in Colombia, and now I cannot love it more," Montaña said.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Shaping a healthy future

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2025, Robyn Riley, Page 25

A project to track a generation of Victorians is set to help shape the future health of the nation. Generation Victoria (Gen V) was brought to life by 120,000 Victorians from nearly 50,000 families who gave samples such as saliva, breastmilk and blood, including DNA, to help researchers answer questions about our health, how we live and the impact of where we live.

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DNA, disease and dilemmas: testing genes of newborns

Sunday Examiner, General News, 02/03/2025, Rachael Ward, Page 8

Hours after giving birth, Tammie Rees made a decision that saved her daughter's life. [...] The Medical Research Future Fund has backed the research that will be used by federal, state and territory health ministers when they decide whether to expand the program in coming years.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Inside the pill testing tent where drugs are not illegal

Sun Herald, General News, 02/03/2025, Angus Thomson, Page 6

As the mercury hits 28 degrees, Jimmy Brown is starting to regret the wizard costume. Another festival goer, Phoebe Knight, uses a hot-pink fan to cool down.

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

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Long-overdue pill testing trial a welcome start

Sun Herald, Editorials, 02/03/2025, Page 30

More than five years after the drug deaths of six young revellers led the state's coroner to call for drug-checking at music festivals, NSW's long-awaited pill-testing trial opened yesterday. The tent at Wollongong's Yours and Owls festival is the first fruit of Labor's 2024 drug summit, after which the state government promised a year-long pill testing trial to start in time for summer music festivals.

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Sniffer dogs deployed as pill testing trial begins in NSW

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 02/03/2025, Rachael Ward, Page 12

Festival goers using NSW's first pill testing service won't be subjected to sniffer dog searches but that doesn't apply to people on their way to have their substances checked. Authorities warn taking drugs remains illegal and police have vowed to maintain a highly visible presence around the long-awaited trial site, insisting safety is the top priority.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Sunday Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), Similar coverage: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [The Guardian \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#).

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WA Health warns Ross River virus detected at Swan River in Crawley, Perth

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Ria Pandey

Health authorities have warned the community that a "debilitating" mosquito-borne virus has been detected in popular riverside suburb in Western Australia. Ross River virus (RRV) was found in mosquitoes collected in Crawley by the City of Perth as part of a WA Health co-ordinated mosquito surveillance program.

Similar coverage: [WA Today \(Online\)](#).

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

No relevant coverage

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Major new drug driving reform goes into effect in Victoria

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/03/2025, Cameron Micallef

Victorians will no longer automatically lose their license if they are busted with cannabis in their system, but there's a major catch. Starting from today Victorian medicinal cannabis users will no longer automatically lose their license with the courts now allowed to show discretion.

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FOOD STANDARDS

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