



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 19th March 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 3) reports the number of overdue elective surgeries in New South Wales tripled last year to almost 6500 people, while more than 100,000 people are on a surgical waitlist, figures which the Australian Medical Association attributes to a lack of staff and budget cuts.
- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 3) reports Ambulance Victoria management is holding crisis talks to try and resolve resourcing issues that are keeping ambulances off the road, with ongoing staffing issues peaking recently when 300 staff called in sick in one 24-hour period, leading to up to a third of the fleet being grounded.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 9) reports the decline in tobacco excise as a result of black-market cigarettes and vapes has cost the budget around \$31 billion and the ever-declining revenue loss threatens the assumptions of both major political parties to fund their election promises.
- **[The Daily Mail Australia](#)** (Online) reports immigration continues to be an election issue for the Albanese government, as more than 432,000 net arrivals were recorded in the year to January. Health Minister, Mark Butler, says that the government is focusing on improving exit numbers, with many people overstaying after coming here for study or short-term skilled employment.

- **The Newcastle Herald** (page 3) reports medical technology company Cardinal Health will base Australia's first medical equipment remanufacturing facility in Newcastle, where single-use medical devices such as tourniquet cuffs and sequential compression sleeves will be reprocessed.
- **The RACGP** (Online) reports Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Tony Lawler, has written to GPs urging them to encourage influenza vaccinations, particularly for children under five, First Nations people and pregnant women, amid a decline in flu vaccinations across all age groups.
- **The Nursing Review** (Online) reports nine nursing and midwifery organisations have issued a joint statement calling on the federal government to better expand the scope of practice for nurses, in line with a review from the Department of Health and Aged Care that proposed a new national skills and capability framework to ensure the most efficient and accessible care possible.

MINISTER BUTLER

Melanoma may be a healthcare disaster waiting to happen

Cobram Courier, General News, 19/03/2025, Owen Sinclair, Page 7

Jody Brown was 27 years old when doctors found a melanoma on her hip. The suspicious dot was removed surgically. [...] In a statement, Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler said while screening is an important early detection mechanism, skin cancer is the most preventable of all common cancers.

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NDIS system is failing my son Dan in his hour of need

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 19/03/2025, Ros Collins, Page 23

The NDIS is very mindful about birthdays. Your 65th is very special, it's the date on which you officially become "aged". [...] I have appealed to my local federal member, my local state member, the Victorian health minister, the NDIS, the NDIA, former minister Bill Shorten, new minister Amanda Rishworth, her deputy Dr Anne Aly, Health Minister Mark Butler, the prime minister, and bureaucrats from many departments.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#).

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Dutton's referendum avoids the real question

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, James Morrow, Page 13

If space aliens landed in Canberra tomorrow, they would immediately report back to their home planet that the occasional ritual earthlings call "an election" is at heart a game where two teams compete to spend other peoples' money in the most ludicrous fashion possible. And at first glance, Labor would seem to be well ahead in this contest. [...] Labor's Health Minister Mark Butler gave an answer that could politely be summed up as waffle, so Cox was allowed a follow-up.

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

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Grim immigration figure Anthony Albanese doesn't want you to see despite record departures

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/03/2025, Stephen Johnson

Immigration remains at elevated levels under Anthony Albanese even though permanent and long-term departures have hit a record monthly high. In the year to January, 432,400 foreign migrants arrived in Australia on a net basis, based on arrivals minus departures, despite a record number of people leaving the country. [...] Just last week, Health Minister Mark Butler suggested net immigration levels would moderate if more people left Australia for good, after a Q+A audience member told the ABC panel he couldn't afford the rent.

Bill relief: Government proposes solution to surprise medical charges

Your Life Choices, Other, 18/03/2025, Floralyn Teodoro

A major shift in the country's healthcare system is set to protect patients from staggering medical bills. For years, Australians have been unknowingly hit with surprise charges—sometimes as high as \$950—after receiving medical treatment. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has criticised the service for being 'left gathering dust' and failing to assist patients in understanding their potential out-of-pocket costs.

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ABC South East SA, 06:30 News, 18/03/2025

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says the government will make specialist fees public to improve transparency for patients. Specialists are currently encouraged to upload their average fees to the Medical Costs Finder website, which was established by the former Coalition Government to enable patients to shop around. Butler says the Government will start uploading the data itself.

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6PR, Perth Today, 18/03/2025, Simon Beaumont

Interview with Mark Butler, federal Health Minister, who says WA will receive 11 per cent more funding for hospitals next year and the Albanese government has committed to opening another six urgent care clinics in the state if re-elected.

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MINISTER WELLS

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DEPARTMENT

New Hunter hub to slash health waste

Newcastle Herald, General News, 19/03/2025, Jessica Belzycki, Page 3

Newcastle will become the first Australian site to host a global manufacturer working to make old medical products seem like new. [...] In the 2023 National Health and Climate Strategy, the Department of Health and Aged Care found that Australia's health system contributed 5.3 per cent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions via direct and indirect sources.

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Reducing risks of harm in polypharmacy

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 18/03/2025, Page 2

The Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) has published the Handbook of tools to support medicine management in multimorbidity and polypharmacy, which was developed by the Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre at the University of South Australia. In the context of an ageing population and increasing rates of chronic illness, the handbook aims to support health professionals manage concurrent use of medicines and reduce the risk of harm.

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Peak bodies unite to deliver reform action plan – APNA chief Ken Griffin tells us why

Nursing Review, Other, 18/03/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Nine nursing and midwifery organisations are coming together to advocate for better utilisation of the nursing workforce ahead of the upcoming federal election. [...] The Department of Health and Aged Care's Scope of Practice Review, released in October, proposed a new national skills and capability framework aimed at removing the red tape preventing health professionals from delivering the most accessible and efficient care possible.

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VACCINES

Be prepared for flu season 2025

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 18/03/2025, Karen Burge

With declining flu vaccination rates sounding alarm bells, the Chief Medical Officer is calling on GPs to help lift the numbers. Peak influenza season runs from June to September in most parts of Australia.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Most in hospital

Central Western Daily, General News, 19/03/2025, Anthony Caggiano, Page 1

Tasmania is leading the way in keeping older Australians out of its hospitals despite having the highest concentration of people aged 65 and over in the country. It comes as Australian hospitals struggle with clogged emergency departments and people who are waiting for a bed in aged care, with Queensland among the states and territories grappling the most.

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Public backs aged care star ratings overhaul

Health Services Daily, Other, 18/03/2025, Cate Swannell

Older Australians and their representatives have told the Department of Health and Aged Care in no uncertain terms that they want changes to the aged care Star Ratings system – including capping ratings for homes that fail to meet care minute targets. Star ratings for aged care homes were introduced following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which recommended

the development and publishing of measurable indicators allowing older people to make meaningful comparisons of the quality and safety performance of providers.

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Inform training for aged care onsite pharmacists

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 18/03/2025, Natasha Egan

Residential aged care stakeholders are wanted to join focus groups and workshops to help develop an effective workplace training program for pharmacists. Researchers from the University of South Australia and University of Western Australia developing a workplace-based training program for aged care onsite pharmacists are seeking aged care staff, residents and family members to inform the co-design project.

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Reduce liquidity ratios to aged care providers: Ageing Australia's submission to Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/03/2025, Caroline Egan

The proposed new liquidity ratios, released as part of new Financial and Prudential Standards, should be reduced to 25% for quarterly cash expenses and 5% for quarterly RAD liabilities, and should be removed altogether on refundable amounts for ILUs and retirement villages, Ageing Australia has recommended in a submission.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Vaping, black market burn \$31b hole in revenue

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 19/03/2025, Shane Wright, Page 9

A collapse in tobacco excise has blown a \$31 billion hole in the budget bottom line as new documents reveal the federal Treasury was unprepared for the financial fallout from vaping and a surge in black market cigarettes. Tobacco tax collections, used by both sides of politics to paper over the nation's finances, are falling at such a rate that they threaten the government and opposition assumptions on funding their election campaign promises.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Troubling surge in the 'working homeless'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, Madeleine Bower, Page 3

The number of full-time workers who are experiencing homelessness across the state has skyrocketed in two years, according to new data, as more employed people struggle to find affordable housing. The amount of working people sleeping rough has risen by 66 per cent over two years, with young people between 18 and 34 hit the hardest, according to a Homelessness NSW analysis of new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures.

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Premmie program boost

Courier Mail, General News, 19/03/2025, Page 4

A successful program that is preventing preterm births has been boosted with a multimillion-dollar cash injection from the Albanese government. Preterm birth is the single greatest cause of death in young children worldwide.

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Bottle-fed health risk

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 19/03/2025, Page 4

Giving a toddler a bottle to help get them to sleep is linked to higher weight and dental cavities. A team including researchers from The University of Sydney used data from a study that followed more than 700 children from birth to age 3-4, looking at their feeding habits, weight and dental health.

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Women's health boost

Cairns Post, General News, 19/03/2025, Arun Singh Mann, Page 8

New federal government subsidies for care towards women's health will be rolled out from July 1, but not all services in Far North Queensland suffering financially are guaranteed a boost. Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek and Labor senator Nita Green spoke of the government's pledge to include care for perimenopause and menopause on the list of services to attract Medicare subsidies as part of a \$500m investment in women's health.

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Most in hospital

Daily Liberal, General News, 19/03/2025, Anthony Caggiano, Page 1

Tasmania is leading the way in keeping older Australians out of its hospitals despite having the highest concentration of people aged 65 and over in the country. [...] The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare said as of June 2020, Tasmania had the highest proportion of its population aged 65 and over at 20 per cent, followed by South Australia (19) and New South Wales (17).

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Program: Calls for childcare Royal Commission

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2025, Rachel Hayter

The Prime Minister is rejecting calls for a Royal Commission into the childcare industry after revelations of the sexual abuse and mistreatment of children. Last night's Four Corners program on the ABC reported the rapid privatisation of the sector and regulation failures are fostering a culture in which children are regularly neglected and abused.

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Australians are no longer accepting this behaviour Chrissy Teigen quits vaping, shares journey

Adelaide Now, Other, 18/03/2025, Claudia Poposki

She shared a screen shot of a digital notification and wrote, "I know, I know it's always something with me. [...] Last year, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare revealed that less than 10 per cent of Australians are smoking daily.

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The alleged disturbing discovery in a cruise ship passenger's cabin that could put him in jail for life

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/03/2025, Max Aldred

A Brazilian cruise ship passenger has been charged with smuggling \$3million worth of cocaine into Australia after the huge haul was allegedly found in his cabin. [...] Between 2022 and 2023 there were 985 cocaine-related hospitalisations nationally, more than two each day on average, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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Is measles making a comeback in Australia?

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 18/03/2025, Jolyon Attwooll

Measles is at its most prevalent in Australia since the onset of COVID-19, with experts warning this is bringing significant implications for GPs in outbreak areas and further afield. There have already been several measles outbreaks in Australia this year.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Be fit to beat callous killer

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/03/2025, Page 11

Increasing muscle strength and fitness could reduce mortality rates for cancer patients by between 31 per cent to 46 per cent, Edith Cowan University research has found. PhD student Francesco Bettariga noted that in healthy adults, physical fitness and muscle strength were associated with a 21 per cent reduction in all-cause mortality, a 15 per cent reduction for cardiovascular disease mortality and a 27 per cent reduction for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease mortality.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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Why blokes need a nurse too

Northern Territory News, General News, 19/03/2025, Gera Kazakov, Page 8

Mateship, support, information: This and more are what two cancer survivors are hopeful a dedicated prostate cancer nurse can provide for their town, and they're taking the fight national to make it happen. Alice Springs locals Craig Pankhurst and Adrian Couchman are supporting the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's call for 21 prostate cancer nurses in regional towns across Australia.

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Arthritis awareness

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/03/2025, Page 5

Early diagnosis of juvenile arthritis could save children from lifelong disability due to joint deformities and loss of vision, say experts campaigning for better recognition of the common disease. In Australia, an estimated 30,000 children and young adults under 24, are living with juvenile arthritis (JA).

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

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Why CALD women in Australia have lower participation in cancer screening

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2025, Angelica Silva

Neha Kumar "doesn't feel comfortable" getting her cervical cancer test done, even after losing her mother to cancer. The 37-year-old former scientist and owner of Artful Yoga Gallery in St Kilda said all of the evidence for early cancer prevention was "right in front of her", yet she rarely went to the doctor. [...] Karen Canfell, chair of Cancer Council's Cancer Screening and Immunisation Committee, said ways to bring down these barriers were constantly being investigated.

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Setting the standard on pain management

Medical Forum, Other, 18/03/2025

It costs the Australian economy billions of dollars every year, but what is the true cost of chronic pain for the millions of people living with it and are health practitioners equipped to manage it? [...]

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), chronic pain is a condition characterised by persistent pain experienced on most days of the week and affects one in five Australians aged 45 and over.

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Channel 9, A Current Affair, 18/03/2025, Allison Langdon

Australian Lung Foundation CEO Mark Brooke says there's no safe level of exposure as any particulate in your lungs for a prolonged period of time can lead to respiratory ill health. Last year, serious health risks for people working with manufactured stone benchtops containing silica prompted nationwide bans.

PRIMARY CARE

Ambos on casualty list

Herald Sun, General News, 19/03/2025, Shannon Deery, Page 3

Ambulances are sitting empty because of chronic staff shortages sparking urgent crisis talks within the embattled emergency service agency. Ambulance Victoria executives will on Wednesday hold an emergency meeting about how to manage ongoing resourcing issues that are keeping ambulances off the road.

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Cuts lead to soaring rates in patients waiting for surgery

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 19/03/2025, Angus Thomson, Page 3

The number of patients overdue for elective surgery in NSW public hospitals has tripled as doctors warn staff shortages and budget cuts are leading to waiting lists longer than at any point since the pandemic. There were 6842 people overdue for elective surgery at the end of last year, quarterly public hospital data released today reveals.

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The worst on record

Newcastle Herald, General News, 19/03/2025, Damon Cronshaw, Page 1

The elective surgery waitlist in Hunter New England has blown out to 13,180 people, the worst result on record. This Bureau of Health Information data, for the October to December quarter last year, represented a 54 per cent rise in a decade.

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Record number of ED patients arriving by ambulance as authorities fight to curb 'ramping'

NEWS.com.au, Other, 19/03/2025, Nathan Schmidt

Ambulance activity in NSW has reached its highest point since reporting began almost 15 years ago, with more patients than ever being rushed by paramedics to hospital emergency departments. EDs admitted 802,697 patients between October and December 2024, according to the latest quarterly report by the Bureau of Health Information.

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

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Bulk billing and Medicare will come up constantly in the election campaign. What are the facts?

The Guardian, Other, 19/03/2025, Nick Evershed

Labor has announced a huge boost to Medicare funding aimed at increasing the rate of bulk billing by GPs. In 2023 the government tripled the bulk-billing incentive for doctors who bulk billed pensioners, concession card holders and children. Labor has now said it will expand that incentive to all Medicare cardholders from November and that the incentive will be increased in regional and remote areas.

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Albo and Dutton's bulk billing election promises slammed as unrealistic amid Australia's GP shortage

7news.com.au, Other, 19/03/2025, Demi Huang

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's \$8.5 billion pledge for GP funding has been dismissed as

unrealistic by local GPs, as has Opposition Leader Peter Dutton's matching \$9 billion proposal. Australia's Medicare system is so far behind that even a substantial figure like \$8.5 billion is "nowhere near enough" to enable GPs to continue bulk billing, said a rural health practitioner.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health risks for uni staff

The Australian, Higher Education, 19/03/2025, Natasha Bitu, Page 21

University staff suffer mental health hazards at twice the rate of other workers, a Senate inquiry has been told, amid complaints of bullying, burnout and ongoing wage theft. Escalating rates of depression and anxiety among university staff have been detailed in a study funded by the Australian Research Council, through the Psychosocial Safety Climate Global Observatory at the University of South Australia.

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Major insurer commits \$50m to mental health programs as CEO admits system is failing all Australians

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, Tamara McDonald, Page 18

Medibank will pump an extra \$50m into mental health over the next five years, with the funding to support a raft of initiatives, including an innovative trial involving psychedelics. Chief executive David Koczkhar has declared the current mental health system is "not fit for purpose" and called on the government to invest in prevention.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Time for more talk and action

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, Page 19

Can We Talk? is a national awareness campaign encouraging Australian families to have a conversation at home about their mental health. Led by News Corp Australia's biggest mastheads in partnership with health insurer Medibank, it will push for greater support from all levels of government.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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A nation's pleas for help reach panic point

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, Tamara McDonald, Page 18

A record number of pleas for mental health support have been made by struggling Aussies, as more than a third of Australians suffer burnout and stress. New figures obtained by News Corp Australia reveal that Australia's largest suicide prevention service provider Lifeline has just had its busiest 12 months on record, with more than 1.1 million calls and almost 295,000 texts and chats for help.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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The talks we need to have

Herald Sun, Editorials, 19/03/2025, Page 24

There were about 1.4 million instances of Australians reaching out for help from suicide prevention service Lifeline in the past year. That record level of contacts more than 1.1 million calls and almost 295,000 texts and online chats is a stark illustration of just how widespread mental health challenges have become across the nation.

Time to get serious about mental health

Courier Mail, Editorials, 19/03/2025, Page 22

Five years ago Australia effectively shut down as the fightback against the Covid-19 pandemic began. Schools and businesses closed. Schools and businesses closed. Trains and buses stopped running.

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Over-diagnoses could negatively affect young children: expert

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/03/2025, Madeleine Bower

A rush to diagnose very young children with neurological disorders could be one of the key issues exacerbating worsening mental health outcomes in young people, according to some of the country's top mental health experts. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare the number of suicides increased for all ages under 24 from 2009 to 2023.

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

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SBS, World News Australia, 18/03/2025, Janice Petersen

Researchers from Sydney University and QIMR Berghofer hope that DNA profiling will lead to better diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders—the most common mental health condition among Australians. Because genetics account for 40% of a person's susceptibility to an anxiety disorder, researchers say around 1 in 5 on medication experience adverse side effects, but up to 65% have no response at all due to their DNA profile.

Similar coverage: [Channel 10 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Melbourne\)](#).

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

ABC, 7:30, 18/03/2025, Sarah Ferguson

The ABC's Adam Harvey reports about a nursing home in rural Wagga Wagga that uses robots and artificial intelligence to help fill the gap in staffing numbers. Robots help in manual labour while AI helps nurses treat patients with communication difficulties.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 18/03/2025, Stephanie Dalzell

Interview with United States Studies Centre senior fellow Bruce Wolpe, discussing key US political, economic, and defence issues. On the possible impact of Donald Trump's trade war on Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Wolpe believes it could be a target of tariffs due to its strong price regulations on medicines.

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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SPORT

Chalmers reluctant to up Games cash splash

The Australian, General News, 19/03/2025, Sarah Elks, Page 4

Jim Chalmers says it's not his "intention" or "preference" to tip any more federal taxpayers' money into the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, despite increasing concerns about a blowout in the cost of building Games infrastructure. The federal government has promised to spend \$3.5bn on infrastructure for the Brisbane Olympics, including \$2.5bn for the Brisbane Arena swimming venue and \$1bn for smaller sites.

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NRL's \$3bn bonanza deal

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2025, Peter Badel, Page 3

ARL Commission boss Peter V'landys has revealed the NRL is set to broker the richest TV rights deal in rugby league's 117-year history as the code eyes a \$3 billion bonanza. We can reveal V'landys will kick off TV rights negotiations in the next fortnight armed with data that shows the NRL has usurped the AFL as the most watched sporting code.

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

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SBS, World News Australia, 18/03/2025, Janice Petersen

New research from Royal Life Saving Australia show half of Year 6 students can't swim 50 metres. The report also shows those who can't swim are also unable to tread water for two minutes. RLSA attributes the decline in children's swimming skills to the COVID pandemic because many missed out swimming lessons between the critical ages of five and seven.

Similar coverage: [Channel 10 \(Perth\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Melbourne\)](#).

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Some Melbourne medical research institutes could face financial collapse in the next two years

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/03/2025, Sarah Booth

Most of Victoria's medical research institutes are on "life support" and risk going broke, threatening crucial breakthroughs and patient access to lifesaving trials. The Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes Victorian branch has revealed the sector is in crisis in an extraordinary statement, and most of its 14 member organisations are projected to be financially unviable by 2028-29.

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

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 18/03/2025, Jennifer Keyte

New modelling shows nine out of 14 leading medical research institutes in Victoria could go broke within four years if the state government doesn't provide funding boosts to cover the rest of research expenses. Brendan Institute CEO Prof Brendan Crabb says institutions lose more money as the expense gaps wide. Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes Victoria chair Prof Ricky Johnstone warns of job losses and limited research capacity once institutes close down.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Ozempic black market warning

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/03/2025, Sarah Keoghan, Page 9

Dwindling supplies of Ozempic are fuelling an "exploding" black market for the drug across Australia, as the medical industry is forced to assess which patients need the popular medication the most. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has told practitioners that while the manufacturers Novo Nordisk are increasing manufacturing capacity, supply will not ramp up until December this year at the earliest.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Cannabis use risk to heart

People who use cannabis are at a much higher risk of having a heart attack, even among younger and otherwise healthy adults, Boston University research has found. The study of more than 4.6 million people aged under 50 showed that over three years, cannabis users had more than a sixfold increased risk of heart attack, fourfold for ischaemic stroke, twofold for heart failure and threefold for cardiovascular death or stroke.

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

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