



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 20th March 2025

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Age reports US pharmaceutical companies are pushing the Trump administration to impose punitive reciprocal tariffs on Australia over its subsidies for medicines, which the industry argues amounts to "egregious and discriminatory" action.

The Australian Financial Review leads coverage reporting the Albanese government will cut the cost of medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to \$25 a script in a move designed to target Opposition leader Peter Dutton ahead of the upcoming federal election. Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, says: "When Peter Dutton was health minister, he tried to make medicines cost more, not less".

ABC News reports the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says 16,000 people aged 65 and over are hospitalised each year with preventable dental issues, a figure the Australian Dental Association says will rise by 42 per cent in the next three years, renewing calls for dental treatment to be covered under Medicare.

The Australian Financial Review reports there is evidence viruses may trigger dementia, with studies showing people vaccinated against shingles were less likely to develop the condition than those who had not had a jab, posing a possible pathway to reducing the incidence of conditions such as Alzheimer's.

The Daily Telegraph reports social media and academic pressure is damaging the mental health of Gen Z and most of those impacted don't know how to access help. The survey of 2500 people found most a third of respondents feel anxious as a result of "doom scrolling".

Albanese pledges cheaper medicine with \$25 scripts

Australian Financial Review, General News, 20/03/2025, Michael Smith, Page 4

The price of medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will fall by a quarter to \$25 per prescription under a pledge to be announced by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese today, which puts healthcare back at the centre of the election campaign.

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Cheap meds and a very sick budget

The Australian, General News, 20/03/2025, Geoff Chambers, Page 1

Anthony Albanese will lower the cost of medicines to no more than \$25 in an election-eve play for millions of votes, as the government lifts its cheaper medicines funding to almost \$10bn since 2022 on top of tens of billions of dollars spent on hospitals, pharmacists and Medicare. [...] After making the largest cut to the cost of PBS medicines by reducing the general patient copayment in January 2023, Health Minister Mark Butler in January froze indexation increases on medicines at \$31.60.

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Labor expands the healthcare battleground with promise of cheaper medicines

Age, General News, 20/03/2025, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 4

Millions of Australians would pay \$6.60 less each time they pick up a medicine script under Labor's latest pledge to woo voters and wedge Coalition leader Peter Dutton with cheaper healthcare policies ahead of the federal election. [...] Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Health Minister Mark Butler will also use the commitment to remind voters of Labor's health agenda more than \$11 billion in new spending on GP bulk-billing, urgent care clinics, hospitals and women's health while continuing their "Mediscare" campaign against Dutton's record as health minister under the Abbott government.

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Medicare to cover therapy sessions

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/03/2025, Samantha Maiden, Page 17

Free access to mental health counselling will be offered online and over the phone under Medicare from next January. [...] "For too long, Australians haven't felt comfortable talking about their mental health," federal Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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Plea to Trump to punish Australia for low medicine costs

Age, General News, 20/03/2025, David Crowe, Page 5

American medical giants have slammed Australia's \$18 billion pharmaceutical benefits scheme in a plea to President Donald Trump to impose punitive tariffs on this country because it subsidises medicines for millions of patients. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler and Coalition health spokeswoman Anne Ruston have vowed to keep the PBS off the table in any trade discussions with the Trump administration before the president's decisions next month on another round of US tariffs on other countries.

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Labor to cap PBS medicine at \$25

Herald Sun, General News, 20/03/2025, Clare Armstrong, Page 3

The Albanese government's federal budget next week will include a 20 per cent cut to the maximum cost of PBS medicines, to take effect from January 1 next year. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said medicines had not been \$25 since 2004, calling the huge reduction "good for the hip pocket and good for your health".

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

Labor to spend \$7m on health website upgrade

Broome Advertiser, General News, 20/03/2025, Emily Moulton, Page 6

The Albanese Government has promised if re-elected it will spend \$7 million upgrading a national health website that was supposed to enable Australians to shop around for affordable healthcare. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said fees could vary across specialists for the same procedure.

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Medicare the winner in funding pledges

Champion Post, General News, 20/03/2025, Tess Ikonomidou, Page 8

Billions of dollars will be poured into Medicare no matter who wins government, with the coalition promising to match Labor's landmark spending pledge on health care. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the modelling done on the policy showed there would be 20 million additional free visits to the doctor.

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Is there a remedy to fix the PBS?

The Australian, Other, 19/03/2025, Penny Timms

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is a pillar of Australian healthcare, helping to make selected medications cheaper for patients, but it remains a complicated system in need of repair. [...] At the time, Health Minister Mark Butler said he was "deeply concerned" by the PBAC's decision, saying submissions "should be dealt with in the timely way that sponsors and patients expect".

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Anthony Albanese makes big announcement on prescription medicine as fears grow Donald Trump could target Australia's PBS

The Mercury, Other, 19/03/2025, Samantha Maiden

In a huge move designed to make the federal election all about Medicare, the Prime Minister unveiled the big change, promising it will come into force on January 1. [...] Cheaper medicines are good for the hip pocket and good for your health," Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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Anthony Albanese promises to cap prescription medications at \$25

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/03/2025, Jessica Wang

Prescription medicines will be capped at \$25 per script under a major cost-of-living election promise set to be unveiled by Anthony Albanese on Thursday. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the policy would bring PBS-listed medicines to 2004 prices, when prices were capped at \$25.

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Anthony Albanese promises even cheaper medicines in second term through pharmaceutical benefits scheme

West Australian, Other, 19/03/2025, Katina Curtis

People will save hundreds of dollars more under a Federal Government promise to cut the price of prescriptions for medicines on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme to a maximum of \$25. On Thursday, the Prime Minister will vow to reduce the costs to levels not seen in two decades as he locks in health and cost-of-living relief as the centrepiece of his election campaign and next week's Budget. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler and his shadow counterpart Anne Ruston have sworn nothing the US does in its trade war will move Australia to undermine or unwind the PBS, which has existed since the 1940s.

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Australia defends Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as US companies urge Trump to impose reciprocal tariffs

ABC Online, Other, 19/03/2025, Stephanie Dalzell, Stephen Dziedzic and Tom Crowley

American medical giants have labelled the federal government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) "egregious and discriminatory" and have pressed US President Donald Trump to target Australia when he imposes sweeping "reciprocal tariffs" on trading partners next month. [...] "There's no way we're going to change the PBS because of advocacy of any other country," Health Minister Mark Butler said on Sunday.

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More affordable contraceptive, endometriosis and IVF treatment welcomed

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 19/03/2025, Natalie Dragon

New PBS listings have been welcomed as a major step forward in providing much-needed financial relief for women living with endometriosis, as well as those undergoing fertility treatments and using contraceptive methods. [...] "For some women one of their greatest dreams is becoming a mother, and to face the double burden of fertility issues and financial barriers to IVF can be heartbreaking," said Federal Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney.

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ABC News, ABC News Day, 19/03/2025, Ros Childs

Interview with Melbourne Dental School Dr Andrew Gikas about the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reporting that 16,000 people over the age of 65 are hospitalised each year for preventable dental treatment. [...] He states Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has made it clear that their focus is on improving Medicare and primary care, having made no announcements on dentistry over the last year.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, 08:00 News, 19/03/2025

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows about 16,000 older Australians are ending up in hospital for preventable dental treatment annually. Health Minister Mark Butler says there are no immediate plans to include dental under Medicare.

Also reported by: [ABC Radio Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#), [ABC Radio Melbourne \(Melbourne\)](#), [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#), [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC Radio Canberra \(Canberra\)](#).

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MINISTER WELLS

Anthony Albanese pledges \$2.5bn for Brisbane Arena but it could be withdrawn

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/03/2025, Chris Burns, Hayden Johnson

Anthony Albanese says \$2.5bn of Commonwealth cash is slated for Brisbane Arena, but there could be a catch. Anthony Albanese says \$2.5bn of Commonwealth cash is slated for Brisbane Arena, but is refusing to say whether it will be withdrawn if the project is axed. [...] Sports Minister Anika Wells said the Dolphins Olympic swim team should compete in a drop-in pool at Brisbane Arena.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Staff, funding key for care

Port Augusta Transcontinental, General News, 20/03/2025, Jack O'Halloran, Page 13

Federal Minister for Aged Care and Sport, Anika Wells recently announced an additional \$2.6 billion to deliver a pay rise for aged care nurses across the country, which is expected to help with the attraction and retention of nurses in Whyalla. The funding will result in a wage increase of 12 per cent, which equates to some nurses receiving an additional \$22,000 per year.

Channel 9, Today , 19/03/2025, Karl Stefanovic and Sarah Abo

Interview with Minister for Sport Anika Wells, about the Brisbane 2032 sports program delays. Wells says the IOC elections are in May, so whoever will become the new IOC President, the intention is for that person to be the president through to Brisbane 2032.

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FIVEAA, 11:00 News, 19/03/2025

One of two former New South Wales nurses charged over a viral video plans to plead not guilty. The lawyer for Ahmad, Rashad, Nadir, says his client plans to fight the charges, including a threatening violence to a group and using a carriage service to threaten to kill. [...] But senior government minister Anika Wells says it's just another thought bubble.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

More affordable contraceptive, endometriosis and IVF treatment welcomed

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 19/03/2025, Natalie Dragon

New PBS listings have been welcomed as a major step forward in providing much-needed financial relief for women living with endometriosis, as well as those undergoing fertility treatments and using contraceptive methods. [...] "For some women one of their greatest dreams is becoming a mother, and to face the double burden of fertility issues and financial barriers to IVF can be heartbreaking," said Federal Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

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DEPARTMENT

Dissecting the new design changes coming to aged care Star Ratings

HelloCare, Other, 19/03/2025, Jakob Neeland

In the quiet corridors of Australia's aged care homes, where the frail and elderly entrust their final years, a battle for trust and transparency has been simmering. [...] Earlier this week, the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care unveiled the Design Changes for Star Ratings for Residential Aged Care – Consultation Findings Summary Report, a document born from weeks of stakeholder soul-searching.

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New web apps finally make GP, patient, specialist and hospital interactions easier

The Medical Republic, Other, 19/03/2025, Jeremy Knibbs

New disruptive web technology is quickly enabling hospitals, GPs and their patients to talk a lot more effectively in real time for better overall outcomes. [...] The Department of Health and Aged Care digital divisions has now decreed that to all the major software platform vendors that "the web shall be the way" in the not-too-distant future.

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VACCINES

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Do viruses trigger Alzheimer's?

Australian Financial Review, General News, 20/03/2025, Page 36

A growing group of scientists are asking whether antivirals could treat the disease. In mid-2024 several groups of scientists published a curious finding: people vaccinated against shingles were less likely to develop dementia.

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Calls for more dental funding in Budget

ABC Online, Other, 19/03/2025, Elise Worthington

As more Australians face increased cost of living pressures, one thing that's dropped off the priority list for many is a dental check-up. While the federal government has committed billions of dollars to expand Medicare bulk-billing - there's been silence on anything that may help people to afford dentistry.

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New dementia care training framework

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/03/2025

Dementia Training Australia (DTA) has introduced Australia's first free National Dementia Education and Training Standards Framework for health professionals and other carers, aimed at improving outcomes for people living with dementia. Developed in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the framework ensures that aged care services, healthcare workers and first responders have access to high quality, consistent training, no matter their location, economic position or stage of career.

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Call for increased dental support for seniors

SBS, Other, 19/03/2025, Hannah Kwon

The Australian Dental Association is calling on the government to introduce a Seniors Dental Benefits Scheme. It comes amid an increase in the number of people over 65 being hospitalised due to dental issues.

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Australia's healthcare system leaves me feeling helpless. I've now decided to age elsewhere

SBS, Other, 19/03/2025

The stress of navigating Australia's healthcare system on behalf of her ageing parents has left Yasmin* feeling frustrated and upset. In her later life, she'd like to move overseas so she can age "with dignity".

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Age pension eligibility expands as new thresholds take effect

Your Life Choices, Other, 19/03/2025, Abigail Abrugar

The Age Pension system in Australia is being adjusted, allowing more seniors to qualify for this important financial support. Starting March 20, the Australian Government will implement an increase in both the Age Pension rates and the cut-off thresholds for the income and asset tests required to qualify for the pension.

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POPULATION HEALTH

New principles will govern the use of territory levy funds

Canberra Times, General News, 20/03/2025, Sue Kaufmann, Page 13

New principles will govern the way money collected from ratepayers for family and domestic violence programs is spent after an audit found governance defects. The ACT government has adopted the Auditor-General's recommendations to improve the management and administration of the safer families levy.

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Medibank to invest extra \$50m into mental health, including MDMA trial

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/03/2025, Tamara McDonald

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. 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.

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

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Breakthrough research into eczema could be key to preventative treatment for common skin condition

9News, Other, 19/03/2025

A groundbreaking Australian study into has discovered the natural fats in a baby's skin can help predict if they will develop the common condition. This breakthrough could lead to screening tests for eczema and help develop preventative treatment for a condition that impacts one in three children.

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Groundbreaking form of AI 'could speed up drug development by around six years'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/03/2025

A groundbreaking type of artificial intelligence (AI) could speed up new drug development by around six years, researchers say. Cancer patients could get access to new medicines in half the current time, while drugs for other diseases will also be speeded up.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 19/03/2025, Sandra Sully

Sydney researchers are working to improve the outcomes for 440,000 stroke survivors through a games arcade that trains balance and challenges cognitive reaction times. NeuRA Lead of Cognition

and Mobility Studies Associate Professor Jasmine Menant says they've already conducted trials involving people with multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

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2GB, Drive, 19/03/2025, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Australian Dental Association Federal Vice President Dr Angie Nilsson about 16,000 older people last year going to the hospital due to dental problems that could have been treated earlier. Nilsson suggests the creation of a senior dental benefits scheme to make treatments more routine and affordable. She states that the scheme could cost approximately \$1.1b annually and increased by 0.1% each year, in contrast to the Greens' \$5b to \$12b Denticare policy.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Evenings, 19/03/2025, Spence Denny

There are calls for further investment in early intervention dental services amid a sharp rise in hospitalisations for older Australians. New data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows nearly 16,000 people aged over 65 were hospitalised with urgent dental issues in 20 2223, with that figure expected to rise by more than 40% by 2028.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Research discovers alarming cancer statistic about NQ region

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 20/03/2025, Page 3

A North Queensland community has been identified as a hotspot for head and neck cancer deaths. A new James Cook University-led study has found an alarming number of cancer hotspots, prompting researchers to push for better education of warning signs.

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Charles Darwin University lend hand in developing new AI model to detect endometrial cancer with 99.26 per cent accuracy

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/03/2025, Thomas McLean

A new artificial intelligence model could soon be used to help detect one of Australia's most common gynaecological cancers, according to Charles Darwin University. [...] Endometrial cancer is the most common gynaecological cancer in Australia, and one of the most diagnosed cancers in Australian women, according to the Cancer Council.

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PRIMARY CARE

Fury mounts over closure of short-stay hospital flats

Age, General News, 20/03/2025, Sophie Aubrey, Page 1

Parents of sick newborns and women needing cancer treatment or abortion care have been moved out of the Royal Women's Hospital's free family accommodation, as the Victorian government sells the site to build new apartments. Hospital staff were angered by an internal memo, seen by The Age, that announced in October that the 27-year-old accommodation service on Grattan Street, Carlton, was being closed with just six days' notice, without an alternative in place.

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Townsville City Council unanimously rejects petition calling for no

fluoridation of city's water

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/03/2025, Nikita Mcguire

A controversial e-petition with more than 200 signatures calling for Townsville City Council to review it's fluoride in drinking water policy has been rejected with one councillor saying he didn't want to waste any more staff time on the issue. A controversial e-petition with more than 200 signatures calling for Townsville City Council to review it's fluoride in drinking water policy has been rejected with one councillor saying he didn't want to waste any more staff time on the issue.

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

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ABC, ABC News, 19/03/2025, Tamara Oudyn

American drug manufacturers have urged President Donald Trump to consider Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as unfair and take action. The PBS subsidises the cost of prescription medicines, but according to the US pharmaceutical industry it is damaging pricing policies that are hurting American exporters.

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ABC News, ABC National News, 19/03/2025, Joe O'Brien

The Federal Government has committed billions of dollars to expanding Medicare bulk billing but the Australian Dental Association's Dr Chris Sanzaro is calling for a seniors dental benefit scheme. The Aged Care Royal Commission had recommended the scheme but due to the cost of living crisis, there's still been no commitment.

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

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ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 19/03/2025, Patricia Karvelas

Panel discussion with Labor MP Susan Templeman and Independent MP for Cutin Kate Chaney about the US pharmaceutical industry has named Australia's PBS as one of the egregious and discriminatory programs to be targeted in the Trump Administration's tariffs. Templeman says the PBS is a fundamental part of creating equity in Australia's health system. Chaney states they have an interest in protecting national interest and Australia's free trade principles.

Continuing interview on: [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 19/03/2025, Sandra Sully

The latest quarterly snapshot shows the NSW health system is still under historic pressure as the Herald Sun reports that elective surgery wait lists in the state are now the worst on record with a 220% increase. Health Minister Ryan Park says major trauma hospitals like Saint George are seeing 25% less ramping than what they did previously while Liverpool and Campbelltown Hospitals seeing a 10% improvement. The Federal Government partly blames the increase on a November strike by nurses over pay.

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

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/03/2025, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

The Australian Dental Association's Dr Chris Sanzaro is calling for a seniors dental benefit scheme after new data shows 16,000 people over the age of 65 are hospitalised each year for preventable dental treatment. The scheme will be similar to the Child Dental Benefits schedule and provide \$1100 of free dental care to eligible seniors every two years. This would cost the federal budget \$1.2b a year, a cost Federal Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth is not willing to commit to.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/03/2025, Angela Cox and Mark Ferguson

Almost 16,000 complaints were made to NSW Health in the last year with the biggest issues being care, communication, and wait times. Ambulance services have brought almost 200,000 people to hospitals, which Ambulance Commissioner Dominic Morgan says is almost the population of Canberra. Hospital elective surgery wait times are now reaching near-COVID levels.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/03/2025, Peter Mitchell

Nearly a third of Melbourne's ambulance fleet was out of action over the weekend because dozens of staff called in sick, which has been an ongoing issue for Ambulance Victoria.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 19/03/2025, Melissa Downes

The Pharmacy Guild is calling for the cost of medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme co-payment from \$31.60 to \$19 due to rising cost of living pressures. Terry White ChemMart Chief Brenton Hart says an average Australian living with type one diabetes will be on a myriad of other medications which can cost hundreds of dollars each month.

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SBS, World News Australia, 19/03/2025, Richelle Harrison Plesse

The Australian Dental Association says 16,000 Australians over the age of 65 are being hospitalised for preventative dental issues and is renewing calls for the Federal Government to fund basic dental care for seniors ahead of next week's budget. ADA's Angie Nilsson says there is emerging evidence showing a bidirectional link between oral health and general health. A senior dental benefits scheme was recommended by the 2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Report continues on: [SBS \(Sydney\)](#).

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3AW, Drive, 19/03/2025, Jacqui Felgate

Panel discussion on Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Federal Shadow Finance Minister Jane Hume about the US pharmaceutical industry calling on US President Donald Trump to impose punitive tariffs to the PBS as it subsidises medicines for millions of patients. Marles says there will be no changes to the PBS as it is fundamental to Australia's world class health system but they will continue their advocacy to the US in relation to the tariff issue.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 19/03/2025, Kylie Baxter

Interview with Tasmanian dentist Dr Gavin Quek about studies finding that overall dental hygiene can be linked to overall health. Quek explains that gum disease can lead to risks of mental health, Alzheimer's disease, and cognitive decline among other conditions. He urges people to clean their teeth twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste as well as reduce sugar as much as possible.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Afternoons, 19/03/2025, Joel Rheinberger

Interview with Royal Hobart Hospital staff specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology Dr Sajid Patel about Endometriosis Awareness Month. Patel notes that there are lots of available medications for people to acquire in managing the pain of endometriosis, some of which is available on the PBS as added by Medicare Australia.

Continuing interview on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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Doomed to scroll: how Gen Z can start looking up

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/03/2025, Kate Jones, Page 16

Social media and academic pressure are damaging the mental wellbeing of Gen Z and the majority don't know how to find support, new research has found. Experts say there are simple ways young Australians can seek help if they know where to start, like text and chat-based support services and programs specifically designed for 12 to 25-year-olds.

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

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6PR, Drive, 19/03/2025, Oliver Peterson

Interview with mental health expert Professor Patrick McGorry about Australia's leading youth mental health organisations like headspace, the Black Dog Institute, Mission Australia, and Youth Focus calling on the Federal Government to do more to tackle the rising rates of youth mental health issues. McGorry says there's been a 50% jump in mental illness in young people since 2007.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Frontline workers threaten widespread strikes over 'low ball' pay offer

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/03/2025, Taylah Fellows

There are just two weeks left before the pay deal between public sector nurses and the government expires, with Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union (QNMU) members already voting to use "all actions available" to secure a better agreement. The QNMU said it received written confirmation from Premier David Crisafulli prior to the state election stating he would maintain "nation-leading" wages and conditions for Queensland staff.

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

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

PM's health pledge to drop price on scripts

Sydney Morning Herald, Wrap, 20/03/2025, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 1

Millions of Australians would pay \$6.60 less each time they pick up a medicine script under Labor's latest pledge to woo voters and wedge Coalition leader Peter Dutton with cheaper healthcare policies ahead of the federal election. The Albanese government plans to bring the patient copayment for subsidised medicines down to \$25 from \$31.60, cutting up to a fifth of out-of-pocket costs for the 20 million Australians who can't access concession prices when they buy scripts under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

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Labor to cap PBS medicine at \$25

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/03/2025, Clare Armstrong, Page 8

Labor will slash the price of prescriptions so Australians pay no more than \$25 for any medicine listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, saving households \$200 million a year in health costs. The Albanese Government's federal budget next week will include a 20 per cent cut to the maximum cost of PBS medicines, which will take effect from January 1 next year and bring prices down to where they were Anthony two decades Albanese ago.

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Pharma Trump plea to punish Australia

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 20/03/2025, David Crowe, Page 3

American medical giants have slammed the \$18 billion pharmaceutical benefits scheme in a plea to US President Donald Trump to impose punitive tariffs on Australia because it subsidises medicines for millions of patients. The US industry has named Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as one of the "egregious and discriminatory" programs to be targeted in Trump's imminent decision on reciprocal tariffs, blaming the Australian policy for cutting prices and blocking American exporters.

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The most you'll pay for medicines is \$25: Albo

West Australian, General News, 20/03/2025, Katina Curtis, Page 1

People will save big under a Federal Government vow to cut the price of prescriptions for medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to a maximum of \$25. On Thursday, the Prime Minister will announce a plan to reduce the costs to levels not seen in two decades as he locks in health and cost-of-living relief as the centrepiece of his election campaign and next week's Budget.

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Hundreds of medicines to cost less in \$689m plan

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/03/2025

Australians buying prescription medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will pay no more than \$25 for each script from January 1, if Labor is re-elected. The federal government reduced the maximum cost of a PBS prescription from \$42.50 to \$30 in January 2023 and this will cut the amount by a further \$5.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

NSW nurses who allegedly threatened Israeli patients appear in court

ABC Online, Other, 19/03/2025, Jamie McKinnell

Two nurses charged over a video which allegedly included threats to Israeli patients have appeared in a Sydney court. Ahmad Rashad Nadir, 27 and Sarah Abu Lebdeh, 26, were charged late last month and early this month over the video, which was a recorded online conversation from cam chat app Chatruletka. [...] The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency confirmed Mr Nadir and Ms Abu Lebdeh's registrations were suspended.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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SPORT

Tate: cut the crepe and pay up Schinnerer

Courier Mail, General News, 20/03/2025, Hayden Johnson and Jeremy Pierce, Page 4

Brisbane City Council's refusal to invest in Olympic venues has frustrated Games organisers and prompted Gold Coast mayor Tom Tate to launch a thinly veiled attack on "freeloader" Lord Mayor Adrian Schinnerer. Cash-strapped organisers of Brisbane's Olympic and Paralympic Games have grown increasingly frustrated at the lack of investment offered by Brisbane City Council to build venues for the event.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

How CT scans can help to prevent heart disease

Hobart Mercury, General News, 20/03/2025, bridget clarke, Page 4

Researchers behind a new Menzies Institute study hope its findings lead to much-needed improvements in the prevention of heart disease the main cause of death and disability in Australia. The study assessed the efficacy of using CT scans to manage people with family histories of heart disease.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 19/03/2025, Chris Bath

Interview with University of Sydney's Dr Chandrima Sengupta about the development of treatment to treat liver cancer tumours. Sengupta says using AI enhanced techniques and standard radiotherapy equipment in radiation therapy clinics, they will be able to precisely pinpoint where the tumour is.

Continuing interview on: [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC Radio Sydney \(Sydney\)](#).

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Radio National, Breakfast, 19/03/2025, Sally Sara

NSW Health officials are warning that Australia is facing an increased risk of measles outbreaks due to the growing number of overseas countries and the potential for it to be imported. The warning comes after a person who flew into Sydney from Vietnam was confirmed as having contracted measles.

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