



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 23rd March 2025

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [**Sun Herald**](#) (page 1) reports Minister for Health Mark Butler has acknowledged complaints by health professionals and the Opposition that drugs are taking too long to be assessed for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme coverage, affirming that an advisory group is working through the recommendations of the Health Technology Assessment review that he commissioned in 2022. *Also reported by:* [**Sunday Age**](#)
- The [**Sunday Age**](#) (page 1) reports that many providers in the booming cosmetic injectables industry are failing to assess customers for body dysmorphic disorder before treatment, as required by Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency guidelines. *Also reported by:* [**Sun Herald**](#)
- The [**Sunday Age**](#) (page 1) reports that residents near Melbourne's Suburban Rail Loop tunnelling works are complaining of headaches, nausea and ear pain that they attribute to low-frequency vibrations.
- The [**Sunday Mail Brisbane**](#) (page 1) reports that plans announced by the previous state government for an Olympic stadium at the Queensland Sports and Athletics Centre were costed at \$2.25 billion, 40 per cent higher than claimed.

- The [Sunday Mail Brisbane](#) (page 2) reports that a man is suing Dr Reza Adib, partner of former Queensland premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, and Wesley Hospital for medical negligence causing the death of his mother.
- The [Sunday Territorian](#) (page 3) reports that the federal government is offering the Northern Territory's para athletes grants of up to \$4000 for training, competition and carer costs under the AIS Para Athlete Barrier Fund. Minister for Sport Anika Wells said the assistance "will provide immediate support where it's needed most as we look ahead to our home Games in Brisbane".
- The [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#) (page 6) reports that Shadow Health Minister Anne Ruston says many of the Medicare Mental Health Centres promised by the Albanese government are simply rebranded Head to Health centres launched under the Coalition.
- The [Sunday Age](#) (page 6) reports a study has identified areas of Melbourne where pregnant mothers are far more likely to experience obesity, diabetes and larger-than-expected babies due to suburban features beyond their control.
- The [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#) (page 7) reports that health services on the Yorke Peninsula are dangerously overstretched and an expansion of Wallaroo Hospital is urgently needed, a parliamentary inquiry has heard.
- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 8) reports that the Victorian government has unveiled four new high-speed air ambulances expected to cut flight times to remote regional sites by up to 15 minutes.
- The [Sunday Herald Sun](#) (page 9) reports that the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists is calling on the major parties to commit to addressing gaps in care for Australians suffering severe mental illnesses. *Also reported by: [Sunday Times](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#)*

MINISTER BUTLER

Slow medicine approvals put health, trade at risk

Sun Herald, General News, 23/03/2025, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 1

Health Minister Mark Butler concedes it's taking too long for Australians to get new medicines, as US pharmaceutical giants complain to the Trump administration about lengthy delays, risking retaliation. The federal government is slowly moving on a review of approvals and access.

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

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Labor accused of 'political' health centre rebrand

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 23/03/2025, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 6

The Albanese government forked out millions of taxpayer dollars for what is being dubbed a "political ploy" after several Head to Health mental health sites were renamed to add Medicare into the title. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler's office did not answer how many of the 61 sites were existing centres, but the Coalition had funded 40 Head to Health sites in its 2021-22 budget.

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Albo plays the perfect sensitive alpha male

Sunday Territorian, General News, 23/03/2025, James Morrow, Page 14

[...] For Anthony Albanese, though, whipping up a threat against the PBS by no less a figure than Donald Trump has been too much to resist. There he was Thursday on the Gold Coast, flanked by his health minister Mark Butler, all but threatening to shirt-front the US president.

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Labor and Coalition agree – hands off the PBS, Mr Trump!

PS News, Other, 22/03/2025, Chris Johnson

The Federal Government and Opposition are on the same page when it comes to Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and protecting it in the face of tariff threats from the United States. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said Mr Dutton's track record on cheap medicines was not a good one.

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When the facts don't support you, conspiracy theories are the best option

BioPharmaDispatch, Other, 22/03/2025

Has anyone noticed that the claimed US plan to 'dismantle' the PBS is rarely accompanied by any evidence or even specifics? The language is generally vague but accusatory. [...] The most recent example of frustration over comparator selection was Health Minister Mark Butler intervening to ensure the reimbursement of a 20-year-old oral contraceptive.

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'Breaking point': Peak psychiatry body warns Aussies will fall through 'growing cracks' in mental health system

NEWS.com.au, Other, 22/03/2025, Clareese Packer

Vulnerable Australians are at risk of falling through "growing cracks" in the mental health system as the country's peak psychiatry body calls on the major political parties to step up and commit to addressing gaps in care for those with the most severe mental illnesses. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler is hesitant to lift the number of subsidised mental health sessions from 10 to 20.

Also reported by: [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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MINISTER WELLS

Boost for Para athletes as Games loom

Sunday Territorian, General News, 23/03/2025, Taylor Mason, Page 3

Northern Territory Para athletes could soon receive a financial boost, with a new grant offering eligible competitors up to \$4000 each to help with training, competition, or carer costs. [...] Sport Minister Anika Wells said the funding would provide direct support as the Brisbane 2032 Paralympic Games loomed.

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

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What I learnt from aged care killer, Garry Davis

ABC Online, Other, 22/03/2025, Anne Connolly, Annika Blau

For the past four months, I've been starting my weekend with what many might consider a rather unnerving ritual. Every Saturday morning, I make coffee, sit down at my computer from my home in Sydney, and log on to a scheduled Zoom call for a half hour conversation with a convicted killer at Goulburn prison. [...] Since our podcast, The Invisible Killer, began, and after questions to the government, Aged Care Minister Anika Wells has announced consultation on establishing a register of aged care workers — something the royal commission recommended four years ago.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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DEPARTMENT

Mental health care failing

Sunday Times, General News, 23/03/2025, Clareese Packer, Page 15

Vulnerable Australians are at risk of falling through "growing cracks" in the mental health system as the country's peak psychiatry body calls on the major political parties to step up and commit to addressing gaps in care for those with the most severe mental illnesses. [...] The cost of a first appointment with a psychiatrist at their rooms – or for patients who haven't seen the specialist in the past 24 months – is about \$480, according to the Department of Health and Aged Care's medical costs finder.

Also reported by: [Sunday Tasmanian \(Hobart\)](#), [Sunday Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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VACCINES

'Saving Tasmanian lives': former premier Peter Gutwein recounts pandemic border shutdown call

The Mercury, Other, 22/03/2025, Duncan Abey

Former Tasmanian premier Peter Gutwein was just weeks into the top job in early 2020 when a looming global health emergency threatened the very future of the island state. Exactly five years after taking the unprecedented step of closing Tasmania's border as Covid-19 ran rampant across mainland Australia, Mr Gutwein looked back on an extraordinary chapter in Tasmanian history, and the single objective that drove his every move as leader throughout the pandemic.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

Rail works make residents sick

Sunday Age, General News, 23/03/2025, Tom Cowie, Page 1

Nausea, headaches and ear pain are some of the symptoms being experienced by people living next to a Suburban Rail Loop worksite, with low-frequency vibrations produced by construction machinery identified as the culprit. Residents in Heatherton who live close to the proposed location of stabling yards for SRL East, which will connect nearby Cheltenham to Box Hill by underground rail, say that early works on the site are making them feel unwell.

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Postcode lottery means some mums – and their babies – are more likely to be overweight or obese

Sunday Age, General News, 23/03/2025, Wendy Tuohy, Page 6

Maddison Dass grew up in Melbourne's north, across the road from a park with a large lake, in a suburb with a walking path to the city and a wide variety of fresh food outlets and options. "We used to take our dogs to the dog park all the time, but in the last two years we really haven't done it," says the new mother to days-old daughter, Juliette.

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It's a new dawn for having fun ... sober

Sunday Times, General News, 23/03/2025, Kellie Balaam, Page 20

It's 4am on a Friday and at Cottesloe Beach, several hundred people are gearing up for a dance party. As the sun begins to rise, 750 people and a DJ transform the coastal location into an outdoor nightclub missing one thing – alcohol.

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Raising our kids with resilience

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 23/03/2025, Elissa Doherty, Page 28

It's a question uniting parents around Australia and the world amid a mental health emergency in young people. How do we help our children become more resilient? [...] And mental disorders in 16-to 24-year-olds soared from 26 per cent to 39 per cent between 2007 and 2020-2022, an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report found.

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

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Young Aussie woman diagnosed with melanoma despite regular skin checks reveals how the mole was always missed - and how she finally realised something was wrong

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 22/03/2025, Shania O'Brien

A young Australian mum has admitted she was blindsided by a melanoma diagnosis at just 29 because she never thought it could happen to her. Annelise Mortimer, now 32, was juggling full-time work, postgraduate study, and raising her 18-month-old son when she received the news just days before Christmas in 2022.

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Olympic swimmer Duncan Armstrong reveals test every Aussie needs to know about to prevent heart attack

Sunshine Coast Daily, Other, 20/03/2025, Eddie Franklin

Nearly five years on from a shock heart attack that nearly ended with suicide, Olympic gold medallist Duncan Armstrong has revealed a little known test could have prevented it all. The Australian swimming legend has been candid about the heart attack he suffered he in 2020 and how he thought about taking his life during the darkest of times in the aftermath.

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Living with Parkinson's in her 30s

Sunday Canberra Times, Relax, 23/03/2025, Megan Doherty, Page 14

Jaymi Kingston was diagnosed with Young-Onset Parkinson's at the age of 32. Now 39, the Queanbeyan woman manages the disease while working fulltime, maintaining a social life and enjoying her home.

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

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PRIMARY CARE

Upgrade speeds up air ambos

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 23/03/2025, Matt Johnston, Page 8

Four new air ambulances capable of 574km/h have taken to the skies in Victoria. The hi-tech planes, two Beechcraft King Air 260C and two 360C aircraft, are part of a \$345m 12-year deal with Toll Aviation that will cut the time it takes to get to the furthest corners of the state by about 15 minutes, in a major boost for patient transfer times and care.

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Hospital surgery staff work up to 16 hours a day

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 23/03/2025, Erin Jones, Page 7

Patients waiting on a hospital floor, staff working 16 hours a day and a paramedic servicing a hospital due to a lack of doctors highlights the Yorke Peninsula health system under strain. A parliamentary inquiry into the region's health services has received numerous examples of inadequate care and calls for the urgent expansion of the 21-bed Wallaroo Hospital.

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

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Women's health tops young mum's list

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 23/03/2025, Bimini Plessner, Page 5

A Brisbane mum-of-two says she hopes to see investments made in women's health, childcare and mental health when government delivers the federal budget. Brittany Opetiaia-Halls said she had been thinking about what means the most to her, her husband, Rajan Opetiaia-Halls, and her children in the lead-up to the budget release on Tuesday.

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Three-page document behind LNP government's gender therapy crackdown

Brisbane Times, Other, 22/03/2025, Sean Parnell

New details have emerged about the allegations in Cairns that prompted Health Minister Tim Nicholls to "pause," on safety grounds, the provision of hormone therapy to new young patients with gender dysphoria. In January, Nicholls declared the Cairns Sexual Health Service had delivered "apparently unauthorised" services to 42 paediatric patients, 17 of whom were prescribed stage 1 or stage 2 hormone therapy, leaving unresolved questions about parental consent and regulatory requirements.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

How to break down barrier of isolation

Have you perhaps noticed that the young people in your life now seem to be rather more serious, less enthusiastic and more worried. Have you asked them what's going on – or perhaps told them these are supposed to be the best days of their lives?

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

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Youth still paying the price of Covid

Sunday Telegraph, Editorials, 23/03/2025, Page 79

Long after the Covid pandemic has subsided in the back of people's minds, a more silent and invisible epidemic remains. This is the mental health crisis that is crippling our youth.

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'Epidemic' of loneliness and isolation plaguing 1 in 4 young Australians

NEWS.com.au, Other, 22/03/2025, Natalie Brown

Thousands of young Australians are falling victim to a silent struggle – one that's hard to pinpoint and even harder to talk about, and the physical effects of which can literally make you sick. Contrary to common assumptions, research by News Corp's Growth Distillery with Medibank found it is Millennials and Gen Zers – not Baby Boomers – who are feeling the loneliest.

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Truth about Australian woman's 'concerning behaviour' at school

NEWS.com.au, Other, 22/03/2025, Bek Day

As a young teen, Yasmin didn't believe she'd make it to her 20s. "Everyone used to ask each other, 'where do you think you'll be in 10 years?' she told news.com.au. "I was always like: 'I'm not going to be here'."

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Urgent mental health help needed in agriculture

Shepparton News Online, Other, 22/03/2025

Norco Co-operative has joined 30 other rural and healthcare organisations to address the mental health crisis disproportionately affecting people in agriculture. Ahead of a federal budget and election, the coalition is calling on the Federal Government to make an immediate investment of \$50 million over five years to address the crisis.

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Porn addiction spike

Sunday Times, General News, 23/03/2025, Maeve Bannister, Page 25

More Australians are seeking support for sex and pornography addiction as private, paid content platforms rise in popularity. In 2023, the number of users and creators accessing OnlyFans, a subscription and pay-per-view platform, increased by nearly 30 per cent, showing the growing demand for private pornographic content.

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More than half of the most popular TikToks about ADHD contain misinformation. Steph refuses to be part of the problem

9News, Other, 22/03/2025, Maddison Leach

When Stephanie Miller was diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) last year, she knew she wanted to speak about it on social media. She also knew she had to be careful. The influencer and entrepreneur, better known online as @stephclairsmith, grew up believing the worst myths about ADHD and had seen those myths spread on social media as an adult, even by people with lived experience.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Midwifery Endorsement not just for privately practising midwives

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, General News, 01/05/2025, Naomi Riley, Page 13

Since 2010, women and people giving birth have been able to access Medicare rebates for midwifery services, and some Medicare-funded pathology and radiology services provided by eligible midwives. To be eligible to apply for a Medicare provider number, midwives must meet certain requirements as articulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Scholarship recipients ready to jump in

Sunday Examiner, General News, 23/03/2025, Saree Salter, Page 6

In 2024, Tasmanian students were waiting an average of 250 days to see a school psychologist for an initial assessment. Fortunately, 2025 is looking better for students in need of a school psychologist or a speech pathologist. To address the shortage, the state government announced 20 additional scholarships for students studying the occupations last year.

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Vast and significant health sector improvements

Australian Educator, General News, 01/04/2025, Annie Butler, Page 24

Our members have benefited from some very positive measures introduced by the Albanese government. We achieved a 15 per cent wage increase for nurses, registered nurses, enrolled nurses and personal care workers in aged care. Subsequently, the government committed to fund a further (and long overdue) wage increase of up to 28.5 per cent for care workers in aged care.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Lip service

Sunday Age, General News, 23/03/2025, Henrietta Cook, Clay Lucas, Page 1

Jas Rawlinson never worried about the symmetry of her face until she visited a cosmetic nurse. "She made me feel really bad about myself," Rawlinson recalls. "She said, 'You're a very pretty girl, but this asymmetry is quite strong'." [...] The Age this week revealed video consultations lasting less than 60

seconds, prompting the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to say it was difficult to see how a consultation of that length met its guidelines.

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

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Grieving son sues Dr Adib for \$520k

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 23/03/2025, Greg Stolz, Page 2

Ex-premier's partner allegedly 'breached duty of care' A man whose mother allegedly died in front of him just days after surgery carried out by former premier Annastacia Palaszczuk's partner is suing the doctor and Brisbane's Wesley Hospital for more than \$520,000. In a medical negligence lawsuit filed recently in the District Court, Robert Hicks alleges he was left traumatised after watching paramedics try unsuccessfully to revive his mother, Rosemarie Campbell, at her Gold Coast home following the operation by the Brisbane Obesity Clinic's Dr Reza Adib.

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

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The butt stops here

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 23/03/2025, Madeline Crittenden, Page 27

Seven cosmetic practitioners and clinics are under investigation following claims of botched fillers, butt injections and infections, with complaints about procedures-gone-wrong doubling over the past year. [...] The Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority launched a national cosmetic surgery investigation team and since September 2022 has received over 1500 calls to the surgery hotline.

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Surgeon reprimanded for sharing photo of comatose patient's swastika-tattooed penis

NEWS.com.au, Other, 22/03/2025, Nathan Schmidt

An orthopaedic surgeon has been reprimanded and fined \$10,000 after sharing a photo of a comatose patient's penis, which was tattooed with a swastika, on WhatsApp. The surgeon, whose name has been suppressed, was treating the man in a regional Queensland hospital in April 2019 after a homemade pipe-bomb exploded in his hands.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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SPORT

Real cost of QSAC

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 23/03/2025, Taylah Fellows, Page 1

An Olympic stadium at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre (QSAC) would have cost a staggering \$2.25bn, leaked documents have revealed. The eye-watering figure is \$650m more than former premier Steven Miles spruiked less than a year ago after Labor shelved plans to redevelop the Gabba as costs for the project blew out to \$2.7bn.

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New IOC prez will dive in

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 23/03/2025, Julian Linden, Page 2

Kirsty Coventry's historic ascent to the presidency of the International Olympic Committee is being

hailed as the game-changer that could help get Brisbane's dawdling preparations back on track. The former Zimbabwean swim champ will still be in charge when the Brisbane Games start on July 23, 2032.

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Swim legends throw support behind 'legacy' aquatic centre

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 23/03/2025, Jeremy Pierce, Greg Stolz, Page 12

Queensland swimming greats Kaylee McKeown and Susie O'Neill have backed stunning new plans for a national aquatic centre in Brisbane as part of a multibillion-dollar sporting mega-precinct tipped to be unveiled by the state government on Tuesday as the showpiece project for the 2032 Olympics.

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More than just footy

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 23/03/2025, James Bresnehan, Page 3

Tasmania's AFL boss Grant O'Brien has no doubt Macquarie Point Stadium will deliver in spades for his football club and that all Tasmanians will have a Devil of a time attending concerts, conferences and cultural events in Tassie's tailor-made field of dreams. With a timeline of 2029 to throw open its doors and welcome people to the Mac Point party, pressure is mounting for "Mac Arena" to rise from its waterside wasteland.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Call to end experiments on caged monkeys bred at Monash University facility

ABC Online, Other, 22/03/2025, Bec Symons and Mim Hook

In a small country town east of Melbourne, monkeys are bred in a university laboratory and used for experiments to improve health and medical outcomes for people around the world. Monash University's Animal Research Platform (MARP), at the Churchill campus in the Latrobe Valley, has for more than 15 years been the subject of whispers and secrecy.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Recommendations for nursing students caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, to work towards Closing the Gap targets in chronic disease

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, General News, 01/05/2025, Lynne Stuart and Ali Moloney, Page 53

Chronic disease management is the healthcare challenge of the century, as chronic disease is the principal cause of death and disability globally. In Australia, to address chronic diseases that are prevalent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, a government-led campaign 'Closing the Gap' has been in place for over a decade.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

AI-powered test to identify early signs of silicosis

Sydney researchers have made a breakthrough in the fight against silicosis, with the development of an AI-powered diagnostic tool. The non-invasive tool, which analyses a person's breath, can identify early signs of silicosis within minutes, which could be life-changing for at-risk workers.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Just take the pill or have a baby. These are the myths keeping us in pain.

Mamamia, Other, 22/03/2025, Erin Docherty

Holly Kane remembers the first signs that appeared during high school. [...] Earlier this year, a new medication was approved for the treatment of endometriosis symptoms — the first in 13 years. A once-daily tablet, the medication has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for the treatment of symptoms associated with endometriosis.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

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FOOD STANDARDS

Tasmanian salmon companies defend safety of products amid allegations of diseased fish processing

ABC Online, Other, 22/03/2025, Meg Whitfield

Tasmanian salmon companies are insisting their products are safe to eat while not directly answering questions about whether diseased fish are being sold for human consumption. In recent weeks, a bacterial outbreak has led to the mass deaths of farmed Atlantic salmon from pens in southern Tasmania.

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AICIS

Nick and his family were stalked by cancer. Then came a blood-test bombshell

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 22/03/2025, Carrie Fellner

It was a line-ball decision when Nick A'hern and Joanne Samuel relocated from Sydney to the Blue Mountains in the early 1980s. [...] Per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) chemicals – linked to cancer, high cholesterol and immune system suppression – have been discovered at elevated levels in the upper Blue Mountains' drinking water supply.

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