



Australian Government  
Department of Health  
and Aged Care

# TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 3rd May 2025

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The **[Saturday Paper](#)** (page 6) reports the number of NDIS funding application contested by the agency doubled last year to 1.1 per cent, treatment that has left independent reviewers of the appeals process "appalled".
- The **[Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 23) reports researchers at Victoria's Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases have found a combination meningococcal vaccine covering all five strains to be "highly effective", opening the door for it to be introduced in Australia, though the MenABCWY vaccine is already approved in the US for those aged 10-25.
- The **[Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 34) reports Australians are being urged to check their blood pressure during May as part of the Stroke Foundation's campaign to help save lives. Check can be performed at pharmacies or your GP.
- The **[Illawarra Mercury](#)** (page 5) reports the percentage of 18-24-year-olds in Wollongong being prescribed drugs for ADHD more than doubled in two years, according to data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, as an increased awareness of the condition leads to more people seeking diagnoses.
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association says Illawarra aged care provider IRT is the only one withholding pay increases approved by the Fair Work Commission

in March. IRT chief executive officer Patrick Reid says the company introduced pay rises in January to ensure it met the rates it expected to come into effect in March, with all increases from the FWC decision already passed on.

- **The Mandarin** reports neither side of politics wants to discuss the role of bureaucrats in health, despite a 2023 review of the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care's capability finding officials needed to develop system reform capabilities. The outlet noted: "Labor's Mark Butler also took some encouragement to go into bat for non-frontline health roles, despite the DHAC capability review being commissioned on his watch".

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Lost in transition

Weekend Australian, General News, 03/05/2025, Bernard Lane, Page 24

Trans, by its nature, is a world where appearances differ from reality. After years of the activist slogan that "trans women are women", Britain's highest court ruled in April that, under equality law, a woman is a biological female. [...] Officials advising federal Health Minister Mark Butler have a track record of uncritically accepting claims from the RCH guideline and failing to convey the full extent and import of the international shift away from gender-affirming medicine for minors led by Britain, Sweden and Finland.

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

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### Fresh faces

The Saturday Paper, General News, 03/05/2025, Karen Barlow, Page 3

Both major parties have run election campaigns focused on the leaders to the exclusion of rising stars and talented rivals, even as shifting demographics highlight the need for generational change. [...] While Albanese kept his Labor Left factional ally Mark Butler close throughout the campaign unsurprisingly, given the central role of his health portfolio, Albanese's closer rival on the Left, Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek, has been spending more time in her electorate of Sydney and assisting marginal campaigns.

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### Veteran makes plea for federal funding to aid the fight against motor neurone disease

Herald Sun, Other, 17/04/2025, Isabella Pesch

An Air Force veteran who first noticed he had trouble cocking his gun while deployed in Afghanistan now needs his wife's help to lift his arms to hug his son. [...] A spokesperson for federal Health Minister Mark Butler said there was always more to do and Labor would continue to support Australians and their families living with MND.

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

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### Peter Dutton is accused of plotting to transform Australia into America

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 02/05/2025, Nick Wilson

Treasurer Jim Chalmers has accused Peter Dutton of plotting to transform Australia's healthcare system into a US-style scheme despite the rival parties having near-identical healthcare policy commitments. [...] ' Health Minister Mark Butler said a final review would be released in 2026, adding there was 'no doubt' they were returning value.

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### Capability review says politicians gloss over talented bureaucrats

The Mandarin, Other, 02/05/2025, Melissa Coade

Political masters are so busy championing frontline health workers that they have forgotten why the

bureaucratic backbone of the Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) is worth fighting for. [...]  
Labor's Mark Butler also took some encouragement to go into bat for non-frontline health roles, despite the DHAC capability review being commissioned on his watch.

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## **Australians struggling to afford oral healthcare, dentists say, backing calls to expand Medicare**

ABC Online, Other, 02/05/2025, Olivia Willis

Expanding Medicare to cover more dental services has the support of about two thirds of Australian dental practitioners recently surveyed. Among the nearly 450 professionals who participated, including dentists, oral health therapists, and dental hygienists, support was strongest for a means-tested and capped dental scheme. [...] Health minister Mark Butler said in a National Press Club debate last week that Labor had an "ambition to bring dental into Medicare", but that it didn't have capacity to do so in the immediate future.

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## **Why DoHAC public servants are worth saving**

Health Services Daily, Other, 02/05/2025, Cate Swannell

We made it to election day. Let's hope voters understand the importance of "non-frontline" workers in the healthcare system. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler told The Mandarin "I want to see a vibrant Department of Health staffed by people whom I know, when I visit them, have a deep commitment to defending one of the best healthcare systems in the world and making sure that it's there for coming years and decades as well.

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## **Ticking timebomb: Government ignores warnings of Support at Home's fatal flaws**

HelloCare, Other, 02/05/2025, Jakob Neeland

On 1 July 2025, Australia's aged care system will lurch into a new era with the Support at Home program, a scheme trumpeted as a lifeline for older Australians to live independently at home. Yet, this so-called reform, riddled with flaws, threatens to betray the very people it claims to serve. [...] The government's claim of a "no-worse-off" principle, as Minister Mark Butler previously stumbled to defend on ABC Adelaide, is laughable.

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## **1800MEDICARE – and other election health promises**

Medical Forum, Other, 02/05/2025

Healthcare has continued to be a focus in the final week leading up to the Federal election, with Labor announcing an expansion and rebranding of Healthdirect, and the Liberals agreeing to match it. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler claimed the service would help around 250,000 Australians avoid an unnecessary trip to a hospital emergency department.

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## **Koori Radio, Blackchat, 02/05/2025, Lola Forester**

Compere says that according to the government, many of its broader health commitments will be beneficial for Indigenous people. She adds that as part of a promise to invest \$1b into mental health services, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed that two new Headspace services would be launched in remote communities in the NT.

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## Labor minister Anika Wells fuels speculation The Voice is still alive in party's ranks

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 02/05/2025, Max Aitchison

Labor frontbencher Anika Wells has appeared to suggest a third position on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament in as many days, reigniting political tensions over the defeated proposal. Foreign Minister Penny Wong sparked a firestorm when she suggested the Voice, like the struggle for marriage equality, was inevitable in a podcast interview with the Betoota Talks podcast.

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## Election 2025: Seat of Brisbane is Labor's best chance of Sunshine

The Australian, Other, 02/05/2025, Michael McKenna and Sarah Elks

A tight three-cornered contest is predicted in Brisbane, one of a trio of seats won by the minor party in the 2022 federal election's surprise "Greenslide" result in the Queensland capital. [...] Aged Care Minister Anika Wells could have her margin of 10.54 per cent reduced in Lilley this time around, given the LNP's 2022 candidate was referred to the Australian Federal Police during the campaign for providing false information to the Electoral Commission.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER THWAITES

### Courtney Act MCs crucial LGBTQIA+ voters forum

Star Observer, General News, 01/05/2025, Lydia Jupp, Page 12

LGBTQIA+ issues were platformed at a forum hosted by Equality Australia, with politicians discussing priority areas that mattered most to the queer community ahead of the federal election. Greens MP Stephen Bates, Liberal Senator Andrew Bragg, Independent MP Allegra Spender, and Labor's Kate Thwaites spoke to a sold out room, with 1000+ people also tuning in online.

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## DEPARTMENT

### Nurses' union says pay rises withheld

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 03/05/2025, Natalie Croxon, Page 10

The nurses' union and a major Illawarra aged care provider are at loggerheads over whether the company has given its staff pay rises intended to remedy the historical undervaluation of female-dominated work. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) says IRT is the only provider in the country it knows of that is not passing on pay increases introduced from March as a result of a Fair Work Commission (FWC) decision on nurses working in aged care.

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## Guild backs domestic manufacturing

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/05/2025, Page 11

Medicines shortages are causing "significant distress" for patients, and steps need to be taken to buffer against global supply issues, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia warns. [...] The government has invested \$20 million to support the production of IV fluid in Australia, however, officials from the Department of Health and Aged Care told a Senate committee hearing that "there is not a one-size-fits-all approach" to dealing with shortages as supply chains associated with medicines tend to differ markedly from each other.

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## IRT CEO resignation marred by shock pay rise allegations

Helloleaders.com.au, Other, 02/05/2025, Alex Jacobs

Aged care provider IRT is at the centre of serious allegations that it has failed to pass on government funded pay rises to its nurses — with the accusations coinciding with Chief Executive Officer Patrick Reid's resignation. [...] IRT said the most recent increase accounted for adjustments according to new role classifications and that it satisfied the requirements of the Department of Health and Aged Care's Guidance regarding funding delivery.

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## Coalition to cut prac payments for students in nursing and teaching, costings reveal

Women's Agenda, Other, 02/05/2025, Madeline Hislop

The Coalition would cut \$556 million from the Albanese government's 'prac payment' program for tertiary students in nursing, midwifery, social work and teaching. [...] In nursing, nearly 90 per cent of the workforce in Australia are women, according to statistics from the Department of Health and Aged Care, and more than three quarters (76 per cent) of Australian teachers are women. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Federal Secretary Annie Butler said she was concerned about the Coalition's plan to axe the program.

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## VACCINES

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Realigning diabetes regimens

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/05/2025, Debbie Rigby, Page 82

Australian guidelines for the management of type 2 diabetes state that overtreatment of diabetes is common in older adults and should be avoided. Deintensification or simplification of complex regimens is recommended to reduce the risk of hypoglycaemia in older adults, if achievable within the individualised HbA1c target.

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### Supplement will cause financial disadvantage

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 02/05/2025, Steven Hughes

From April 2026, the base care tariff (BCS) will be split into two parts: the existing BCT as well as a new care minute supplement (CMS). The value of the CMS will be determined by care minute performance. The CMS, discussed in a government webinar on 1 May, is the latest attempt by the Department of Health and Aged Care to cajole providers to adhere to their care minute regime.

## Aged care homes could face funding cuts over new PCW definition

HelloCare, Other, 02/05/2025, Jakob Neeland

A recent update to the definition of Personal Care Workers (PCWs) by the Department of Health and Aged Care has raised serious concerns among residential aged care providers in Australia. The revised definition, effective from 1 January 2025, could significantly disrupt care minute calculations, potentially leaving homes at risk of failing to meet mandatory care targets.

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## The Pets and People Program: Combating aged care loneliness with the love of animals

HelloCare, Other, 02/05/2025, Jakob Neeland

Dr Em Bould, a Senior Research Fellow at Monash University's Occupational Therapy Department and Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre, has spent years exploring how everyday experiences can spark meaningful connections. Their innovative Pets and People program, a pilot funded by the National Centre for Healthy Ageing (NCHA), harnesses a shared love for animals to combat loneliness and social isolation among older adults in residential aged care and international university students.

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## New definition of PCWs could put homes at risk of missing mandatory targets

Helloleaders.com.au, Other, 02/05/2025, Alex Jacobs

Residential care providers have been handed a hammer blow to care minute calculations after a Department of Health and Aged Care webinar crystallised the definition of Personal Care Workers (PCWs) that could severely impact how staff responsibilities are managed.

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## Court approves payout after COVID-19 aged care deaths

The Border Mail, Other, 02/05/2025, Miklos Bolza

Families of those who passed away in a deadly COVID-19 outbreak are set to be compensated months after an aged care operator's failings were exposed. As the virus ripped through Sydney's Newmarch House over 65 days from April to June 2020, 19 people died and many more became sick.

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## 2CC, Breakfast, 02/05/2025, Stephen Cenatiempo

The ACT Government is weighing up the future of the Burrangiri Aged Care Respite facility, which is expected to be closed down next month.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### How ADHD treatment can change lives

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 03/05/2025, Joshua Hutchinson, Page 5

Wollongong roommates Sinead Kaegi-Norris and Jaclynn Culham have both been diagnosed with ADHD in the past few months. [...] And compared to 2017-18, the percentage of young people in the city being medicated in 2022-23 has increased fourfold, the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows.

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## Dirty needle used on 71-year-old skin cancer patient during minor

## procedure at Noarlunga Hospital

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 02/05/2025, Brad Crouch

A patient who underwent a minor procedure at Noarlunga Hospital this week is living in fear after it was discovered clinicians used a dirty needle to anaesthetise him, he says. The man, 71, went to the hospital to have a skin cancer burnt off his right hand on Thursday morning.

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

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## 'Masculine' habit linked to health issues has nearly doubled among teens

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 02/05/2025, Tracy Swartz

A worried mum is warning other parents about a "masculine" new habit on the rise with teenagers – as rates among those under 18 almost double. [...] The TGA states: "There is no strong evidence to support the use of nicotine pouches for smoking or vaping cessation. Evidence shows nicotine can be harmful and may have adverse impacts on adolescent brain development."

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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## Family violence is never far from the headlines. What are the major parties doing to solve this national crisis?

ABC Online, Other, 02/05/2025, Heidi Davoren and Mary Lloyd

In the five weeks since the election was announced at least five Australian women have allegedly been killed by men. Countless more have been assaulted, emotionally tormented, harassed, coerced, financially abused and left to pick up the pieces, often with kids in tow.

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## Who's left behind in the government's multi-million dollar women's health investment?

SBS, Other, 02/05/2025

Millions of women across the country are celebrating the federal government's pre-election \$793 million women's health investment, following a national survey which found two thirds of women reported experiencing gender bias or discrimination in the health system. But not everyone is included in the benefits around cheaper medication and rebates for longer consultations, with women on temporary visas still often forced to sacrifice health care needs due to financial and cultural barriers.

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## Channel 9, Today , 02/05/2025, Sarah Abo and Karl Stefanovic

Interview with John Kehoe, Economics Editor, The Australian Financial Review. Compere mentions that the Coalition showcased a new tax on vapes and has taken it slow on climate programmes in its final election campaign. Kehoe says the Coalition has released their full costings for the election yesterday with a \$3.6b new tax on vapes. He adds that this allows a broader set of retailers to sell vapes, unlike Labor's legislation, which confines them to pharmacies.

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## 2GB, Mornings, 02/05/2025, Mark Levy

Compere mentions that the Coalition wants to regulate and tax vapes, which he thinks is a great idea as a plan to regulate and tax vapes and hike up the fee paid by Australians who travel overseas and slashing the public service will help fund Opposition leader Peter Dutton's election promise.

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## Radio National, Breakfast, 02/05/2025, David Rutledge

Interview with Katy Gallagher, ACT Senator and Labor spokesperson. Gallagher criticises the Coalition's plan to tax vaping, as she mentions that they want to save kids from vapes, and Opposition

leader Peter Dutton simply wants to make money off kids using vapes. She states that they've had a generation of people dealing with tobacco addiction, and she adds that Dutton seems like he doesn't want to worry about another generation being addicted to vapes.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

### Check for a time bomb

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/05/2025, Page 34

Australians are being urged to roll up their sleeves and check their blood pressure during May as part of a national call to action to reduce the risk of stroke. Stroke Foundation's month-long campaign, Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check, encourages Aussies of all ages to get a health check at their doctor or local pharmacy to determine if they have high blood pressure (also known as hypertension).

*Also reported by:* [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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### Multidisciplinary care program for endo

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 02/05/2025

Qendo, a leading voice for those impacted by endometriosis, adenomyosis, PCOS and pelvic pain, has announced the launch of Manage Endo, a multidisciplinary care program designed to transform how these conditions are managed in Australia. The initiative brings together a team of expert healthcare professionals, including gynaecologists, pain specialists, pelvic physiotherapists, dietitians, psychologists and general practitioners, to provide holistic, patient-centred care.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### 'Wrong and degrading'

The Saturday Paper, General News, 03/05/2025, Rick Morton, Page 6

The incidence of Australians forced to fight the National Disability Insurance Scheme for support funding has reached levels not seen since the end of the Coalition government. Their treatment has left independent reviewers of the appeals process "appalled".

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### NDIS provider pleads guilty over death

Central Western Daily, General News, 03/05/2025, Stephanie Gardiner, Page 9

A regional disability provider has admitted to serious safety breaches after the death of a young Aboriginal woman who was badly burned in a bathtub. Kyah Lucas suffered burns to almost half her body when she was bathed at a home in Orange by two workers from NDIS provider LiveBetter in February 2022.

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### Channel 7, Seven News, 02/05/2025, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

Pre-recorded interview with PM Anthony Albanese. Albanese points out that they are looking to strengthen Medicare with 50 urgent care clinics, and a 1800 Medicare hotline so people can get access to convenient and helpful health advice.

*Also reported by:* [Channel 7 \(Perth\)](#).



## Channel 9, Today , 02/05/2025, Sarah Abo and Karl Stefanovic

PM Anthony Albanese and Opposition leader Peter Dutton have launched their last day of the election campaign today. Albanese has again focused on Medicare urgent care clinics.

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

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## Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 02/05/2025, Laura Jayes

According to recent polling, Labor might fall short in securing a majority government. This comes as PM Anthony Albanese initiates his last call for the campaign, continuing to push forward calls for Medicare urgent care clinics in the Liberal seat of Longman.

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 02/05/2025, Leon Compton

Interview with Jess Teesdale, Labor Candidate for Bass. Teesdale points out that over 28,000 patients have been to the Launceston Medicare urgent care clinics since it opened, and it's the busiest in the nation. She admits that they are aware of ongoing health problems within Northern Tasmania and Tasmania broadly.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### RAW making a difference

Hobart Mercury, General News, 03/05/2025, Alison Foletta, Page 13

Mental health is one of the biggest challenges in farming and agricultural communities. RAW Rural Alive and Well is a community-based support system that is making a massive impact.

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### Mum says murder sentence is an 'insult to women globally'

Newcastle Herald, General News, 03/05/2025, Sam Rigney and Anna Falkenmire, Page 5

Standing outside Newcastle courthouse, a swarm of supporters at her back, Tabitha Acret had to compose herself. Moments earlier she had run from the courtroom, sobbing after a judge not only spared her daughter's murderer from a life sentence, but ordered he could be released before his 39th birthday.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Nurses' union says pay rises withheld

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 03/05/2025, Natalie Croxon, Page 10

The nurses' union and a major Illawarra aged care provider are at loggerheads over whether the

company has given its staff pay rises intended to remedy the historical undervaluation of female-dominated work. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) says IRT is the only provider in the country it knows of that is not passing on pay increases introduced from March as a result of a Fair Work Commission (FWC) decision on nurses working in aged care.

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## Combating Doctor shortfalls in rural areas

2GB, Other, 02/05/2025, Dusty Fitzpatrick

Rural Health practitioners are calling for a re-think to attract and retain more doctors in regional areas across the country. The Department of Health estimates Australia is short close to two and a half thousand full-time equivalent GPs with the problem disproportionately affecting rural areas.

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## Coalition to slash paid clinical placements for student nurses and midwives

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 02/05/2025, Anmj Staff

A \$331 per week 'Prac Payment' to support student nurses and midwives during clinical placements, set to come into effect in July, would be axed under a Dutton government, costings released just two days out from the federal election have revealed. A range of other cuts, aimed at improving the nation's budget bottom line, include getting rid of key Labor policies such as fee-free TAFE and a 20 per cent reduction in HELP or student loan debt.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Are Medicare's only-in-Australia rules outdated?

The Medical Republic, Other, 02/05/2025, Holly Payne

As DoHAC prepares to send thousands of compliance letters to GPs it suspects of having billed Medicare for consultations performed on foreign soil, doctors are questioning why the rule exists. A relatively obscure Medicare rule has received renewed attention in light of the Department of Health and Aged Care's latest compliance campaign, which is targeting GPs who may have billed Medicare while outside of Australia.

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### Coalition's vaping plan risks dismantling protections for young people

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 02/05/2025, Natalie Dragon

The Liberal-National Coalition's plan to raise revenue from vape taxation will undo years of public health progress, warns the public health community. The public health community has called on the Coalition to retract its plan, arguing it will see the legalisation of vape sales through retail outlets and dramatically increase access to vapes by young Australians.

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## Coalition vape policy risks youth uptake: PHAA

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 02/05/2025

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has expressed dismay over the Coalition's plan to raise \$3.6 billion in revenue over the next four years from vape taxation. In its costings document released yesterday, the Coalition confirmed that in a departure from the current legislation, which allows for vapes only to be sold at pharmacies, it would allow vapes to be sold at retail stores.

[Read More](#)

## Coalition plan to make vapes more widely available 'exactly what big tobacco wants', public health experts warn

The Guardian, Other, 02/05/2025, Henry Belot

The Coalition's plan to raise \$3.6bn by increasing tax on vapes and making them more widely available would lead to "serious short- and long-term harm" and is "exactly what big tobacco have been asking for", according to public health experts. The experts, who are calling on the Coalition to apologise for the policy, believe it is not based on "credible evidence" and that the savings cannot be achieved unless current regulation – supported by all states and territory governments – is completely dismantled.

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## SPORT

### US investor saves A-League team Western United

AFR Weekend, General News, 03/05/2025, Michael Bleby and Peter Ker, Page 2

US-based property investor Maciek Kaminski will take majority ownership of A-League team Western United in a reported \$100 million deal that staves off financial failure for the club and its parent company in the face of mounting calls from creditors.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

### 'We're flying blind': Study calls for disaggregated health data

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 02/05/2025, Anastasia Tsirtsakis

A global analysis has highlighted a need for better data to address hidden inequities. But a GP expert is concerned about further bias.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Radio National, Breakfast, 02/05/2025, David Rutledge

Interview with Catherine Liddle, CEO, SNAICC. Liddle points out that the detention centre in the NT is quite overwhelmed with juvenile prisoners, and that the Aboriginal Health Service has withdrawn

## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

### Meningococcal vaccine

Daily Telegraph, General News, 03/05/2025, Page 23

A lifesaving meningococcal vaccine covering all five common strains of the deadly disease could soon be available in Australia. Researchers at Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases, based in Victoria, found the combination vaccine to be highly effective in providing protection for young adults and teenagers.

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

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### Law change plea as tunnel workers face silica danger

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 03/05/2025, Max Maddison, Page 10

Companies responsible for exposing tunnel workers to dangerous levels of deadly silica dust would face an extended window to be prosecuted under reforms demanded by unions, as a parliamentary inquiry hears concerns Australia is facing a "full-blown occupational disease crisis". The NSW upper house inquiry into silica heard a failure of leadership on Sydney infrastructure projects was undermining worker safety, and one occupational safety expert said contracting companies had been prioritising cost over staff wellbeing.

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### Plumbing for superbugs

Courier Mail, General News, 03/05/2025, Page 33

New research has uncovered a growing threat of antimicrobial resistant (AMR) pathogens in drinking water plumbing systems. A study involving Flinders University researchers identified significant transmission risks in both hospital and residential environments.

Also reported by: [The West Australian \(Saturday edition\) \(Perth\)](#).

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### Channel 7, Sunrise, 02/05/2025, Matt Shirvington and Natalie Barr

Experts are warning of a severe flu season ahead in Queensland, with six children in hospital. More than 15,000 flu cases have been reported so far this year. The Australian Medical Association says vaccination rates are in steady decline, and emerging virus strains from the northern hemisphere are putting hospitals under pressure.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Brisbane\)](#).

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### ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 02/05/2025, Craig Zonca and Loreta Ryan

Grim new figures show just how bleak Queensland's flu season is shaping up to be. More than 15,500 cases have already been diagnosed this year. 4,000 of them have been children as young as six months. The Australian Medical Association Qld is concerned about the uptake of flu jabs, with vaccination fatigue being blamed for falling rates.

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## Help our kids

Weekend Post, General News, 03/05/2025, Peter Carruthers, Page 1

There have been renewed calls for the mandatory use of suction airway clearance devices in Queensland early childhood education facilities following the shocking choking death of a little boy at a Cairns daycare centre last week. [...] The airway clearance device LifeVac was approved for Australian use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in 2017.

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## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### Major kava seizure in remote community, two men charged

Canberra Times, Other, 02/05/2025, Lloyd Jones

A huge haul of kava has been seized in a remote community where police have arrested and charged two men with supplying the intoxicant. The seizure of 235kg of the alcohol substitute was made on Tuesday at Galiwinku on Elcho Island 550km northeast of Darwin following reports kava was being distributed in the area. [...] The Department of Health's Office of Drug Control says on its website that incoming passengers can bring up to 4kg of kava powder into most of Australia for personal use, but this is not allowed in the Northern Territory.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#).

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### NSW EPA approves remediation plan for Lake Munmorah site cleanup

Newcastle Herald, Other, 02/05/2025, Matthew-Kelly

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has approved a Voluntary Management Proposal for the former Lake Munmorah Power Station site as part of the first phase of a complex remediation process. Part of the site was declared significantly contaminated in April last year due to PFAS and petroleum hydrocarbon pollution, stemming from the historical operation of the coal-fired power station and past use of firefighting foams.

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