



Australian Government
Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 18th May 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Sun Herald](#)** (page 1) reports the parents of two children who died of rare genetic mutations are leading a campaign calling for mandatory genetic testing in all coronial investigations into unexplained deaths. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Age](#)
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports health experts are calling for a new approach to childhood vaccination programs as immunisation rates in children have significantly decreased amid growing skepticism and hesitancy from parents. Health Minister Mark Butler called the decrease "alarming" and said a new National Immunisation Strategy is currently being finalised, which will outline new strategies to increase rates for 2025 - 2030. *Also reported by:* [MSN Australia](#)
- **[The Sunday Mail Adelaide](#)** (page 3) reports a parliamentary committee into Yorke health services has heard from a nurse who was attacked by a woman with two knives at Yorketown Hospital health services last year as understaffing and security issues continue to affect regional hospitals in South Australia.
- **[The Sunday Telegraph](#)** (page 3) reports an AI test to detect dementia has been developed by a team of US and Australian researchers, with the algorithm analysing medical records to uncover "clues" to identify early signs of the disease. *Also reported by:* [Sunday Herald Sun](#), [Sunday Tasmanian](#), [Sunday Mail Adelaide](#).

- **The Sunday Age** (page 4) reports a study into one of Australia's longest-running mental health programs for school children, the Resilience Project, has shown to be most successful for participants who remain in the program for more than three years.
- **The Sunday Tasmanian** (page 5) reports the Tasmanian State Government is attempting to increase the number of doctors working in public hospitals by allowing rural general practitioners to have a larger role in hospital care by putting them through specialist training.

MINISTER BUTLER

Why childhood vaccination is dropping and what we can do about it

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2025, Caitlyn Gribbin, Rachel Carbonell & Paige Cockburn

An alarming decline in childhood vaccination rates is a "wake-up call" for all levels of Australian government and the health sector, according to the peak body for doctors. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the decline in childhood vaccination was "alarming" and the government was currently finalising its National Immunisation Strategy for 2025 to 2030 which will outline how to improve uptake.

Also reported by: [MSN Australia \(Online\)](#).

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MINISTER WELLS

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

DEPARTMENT

Bush nurse

R M Williams Outback, General News, 01/05/2025, Kerry Sharp, Page 100

Baby John Wright jumped the starter's gun when he was born, suddenly arriving in the back of a car rushing his mum to hospital. [...] In 2010, while studying for one of 2 Master's degrees, John won a Department of Health and Aged Care scholarship to join an Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) course and was the only person from the health field among 32 course participants.

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New hope for eating disorder patients in outback Australia

Queensland Country Life, Other, 17/05/2025, Neave Duff

A lack of access to specialised healthcare in rural areas is nothing new, and those from the bush know the frustration and isolation of trying to get the help you need when and where you need it. [...] Funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care, The Right Care Right Place (RCRP) project seeks to establish a more accessible and integrated system of care for eating disorder patients.

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Morning tea for seniors

Star Community, Other, 17/05/2025, Jin Hui

On Friday 9 May, Pakenham MP Emma Vulin and Minister Harriet Shing hosted a morning tea for local seniors at the Pakenham Community Hall. [...] Representatives from Cardinia Shire Council's Ageing Well team, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and Services Australia were also present to help and answer questions about government services.

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VACCINES

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

New reforms to boost care

Sunday Mail Adelaide, Supplements, 18/05/2025, Lynn Cameron, Page 8

Australia's aged care sector will undergo reform this year with the introduction of a new Aged Care Act and the transition to Support at Home commencing on July 1. The Act follows on from the release of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's final report, released in March 2021.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Their hearts will go on

Sun Herald, General News, 18/05/2025, Frances Howe, Page 1

When Danielle Green's five-month-old daughter Airlie started showing symptoms of gastro, she rushed her to hospital. A little over a year earlier, Green's nine-month-old baby boy, Sonny, had died after a bout of gastro had caused his heart to arrest.

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

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Genetic testing is essential at post-mortems

Sun Herald, Editorials, 18/05/2025, Page 26

There are few experiences harder to fathom than a parent losing a child in an unexpected and unexplained way. In their darkest hour, parents must navigate the coronial system where, for all the care and professionalism they may encounter, they must answer difficult questions and make what must seem like impossible choices.

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Heartbreak for Aussie families as death toll from 'killer' disease hits 'unprecedented' numbers

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 17/05/2025, Caitlin Powell

A grieving family have warned Australians to take the 'unprecedented' rise in cases of a deadly, soil-borne disease seriously. At least 31 Aussies have died after being infected by tropical disease melioidosis so far this year , with 211 cases recorded across the state.

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Debate erupts over controversial trend after mum pays \$45,000 to choose baby's sex

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 17/05/2025, Joe Attanasio

Australia's ban on non-medical sex selection remains a necessary safeguard, a leading human rights lawyer has warned, despite growing calls from some in the community to overturn it. Professor Paula Gerber, who is also a children's rights specialist, urged Australians to reflect on the broader implications of what lifting the ban might mean, as reports emerge some families are spending tens of thousands of dollars travelling overseas to choose the sex of their babies.

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'Huge shock': unprecedented rise of killer soil disease

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 17/05/2025, Savannah Meacham

Evan Brown thought he had been suffering from the flu after being sick on and off for a month. But soon after his 40th birthday, the Cairns father-of-two was rushed to hospital.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Costly melanoma scanners performing no better than a GP's simple skin check

Sunday Age, General News, 18/05/2025, Liam Mannix, Page 14

A huge and much-hyped government investment into 3D skin cancer scanners has hit an unexpected snag after early data showed the scanners performed no better than a simple skin check from a GP and may lead to overdiagnosis. The new data has stunned researchers, who are debating whether this represents a blip that will be ironed out as the tech improves or a cautionary tale about the promise and perils of shiny new medical technology.

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

AI spots the early clues to dementia

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 18/05/2025, Sarah Booth, Page 3

An artificial intelligence tool that detects dementia by analysing medical records for hundreds of "clues" has been developed in Australia, paving the way for earlier diagnosis and treatment. The Australian-US team behind the initiative has hailed the responsible use of AI as a potential game-changer for dementia research, and said their algorithms could help diagnose people whose illness goes undetected.

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

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Stricken model in breast cancer call

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 18/05/2025, Rosie Gale, Page 9

A 28-year-old Brisbane woman who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer says her message to other young people is: "Cancer doesn't discriminate". Tianah Groundwater is in the midst of a gruelling year-long fight with Triple-negative breast cancer after being diagnosed in March.

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Incontinence management

In The Know, General News, 01/06/2025, Page 40

Incontinence is a common issue for older patients with chronic conditions. Chronic medical conditions like dementia, diabetes, and chronic heart failure can increase the chances of developing incontinence.

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Danger of nasal tanning sprays that can cause skin cancer

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/05/2025

e-mail Experts have warned about Nasal tanning sprays that have been linked to deadly skin cancer. The unregulated sprays - which claim to accelerate tanning - may also trigger nausea, vomiting, and high blood pressure according to the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI).

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An outbreak of this once-eradicated disease has been declared on Australia's doorstep

SBS, Other, 17/05/2025

Poliovirus, most often spread through sewage and contaminated water, is highly infectious and potentially fatal. It can cause deformities and paralysis, and mainly affects children under five years old.

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Critical diabetes challenge in Hunter New England

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 17/05/2025

Diabetes is a "critical health challenge" for the Hunter New England, with one in eight people living with the condition and many more undiagnosed. "If left unmanaged, diabetes can result in serious complications," NSW Health Minister Ryan Park said.

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ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, 17/05/2025, Fauziah Ibrahim & Thomas Oriti

Interview with Emma Beardsley, Acting Spokesperson, Autism Spectrum Australia or Aspect. Beardsley discusses Autism Spectrum Australia or Aspect's partnership with BreastScreen NSW to help increase the rates of screening for autistic women. She discusses their pilot programme in Western Sydney.

Also reported by: [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#).

PRIMARY CARE

New twist in lawsuit over pie king's death

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/05/2025, Sean Fewster, Page 9

A top Sydney hospital released an uncensored list of the names of its transplant patients to lawyers involved in the Vili Milisits wrongful death lawsuit, a court has heard. The Supreme Court has heard St Vincent's Public Hospital had finally answered a subpoena in the case but said it would only redact its patients' names if ordered by a judge.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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SA's laws not for 'tired of life'

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/05/2025, Page 23

End-of-life expert Ben White says having a terminal illness is a requirement to access voluntary assisted dying (VAD) laws in every Australian jurisdiction. Some European countries, including The Netherlands and Belgium, allow people with nonterminal conditions, including the condition experienced by the very old known as "tired of life", to voluntarily end their own lives.

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I'm old, in pain, so why can't choose to end my life

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/05/2025, Paul Ashenden, Page 23

Betsy Thredgold turned 96 this month. But it's a milestone she's not terribly excited to reach. It's not that she's worried about the social stigma of being another year older.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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ATO urged to address super dental 'racket'

Sunday Times, Edition Changes, 18/05/2025, John Flint, Page 16

WA's peak dentists' body has called for action after revelations 132 patients have been left high and dry after the death of a leading prosthodontist. The Australian Dental Association's WA branch is also looking for solutions to assist those caught up in the mess.

Also reported by: [Sunday Times \(Perth\)](#), [Sunday Times \(Perth\)](#).

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One man's drive for blood bus

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 17/05/2025, Carwyn Monck, Page 1

A prominent Kalgoorlie-Boulder resident has continued his drive for a mobile blood donation bus to service regional WA which he believes would benefit patients and blood research. Nick Fardell, who has been battling cancer for the past 2 years, helped spark discussions on the re-establishment of an Australian Red Cross Lifeblood donation centre in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

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Australia moves towards a US-style health system - is that a good thing?

Australian Financial Review, Other, 17/05/2025, Michael Smith

If you live in a capital Australian city and need to see a dentist or optometrist, there is a good chance

you will end up in a clinic owned by your private health insurer. The same could be true for hospitals in the near future.

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2SM, 05:00 News (Weekend), 17/05/2025

The Association of Rural Doctors is calling for meetings with newly returned Federal Government to build on reforms enacted during Labor's first term in office. President R.T. Lewandowski hopes their relationship with Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Minister Emma McBride continues.

Also reported by: [2SM \(Sydney\)](#).

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health program for kids proves a slow success

Sunday Age, General News, 18/05/2025, Noel Towell, Page 4

There are effective tools to improve young people's mental health, a new landmark study has found, but only with teachers, parents and school communities in it for the long haul. An academic analysis of the Resilience Project's schools program, Australia's largest and one of its longest-running education mental health initiatives, has found clear benefits to the mental health and wellbeing of its young participants.

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Bupa to open 60 mental health clinics in primary care push

Australian Financial Review, Other, 17/05/2025, Michael Smith

Health insurance giant Bupa says it will become one of Australia's biggest mental health providers in three years with a plan to open 60 clinics offering face-to-face sessions with psychologists and telehealth consultations.

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At first, it was shocking: condolences for a killer's family. Then sympathy crept in

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 17/05/2025, Perry Duffin

The inquest into last year's mass stabbing at Bondi Junction Westfield promised to light the cracks in the mental health systems through which Joel Cauchi slipped on his path to unspeakable violence. To that end, it is asking questions no one wants to answer; how do we care for, and listen to people who may not even know they're unwell?

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Everyone agreed Joel Cauchi was psychotic when he murdered six people at Bondi Junction. Until his psychiatrist didn't

The Guardian, Other, 17/05/2025, Daisy Dumas

One point that has never been in dispute over the course of the coronial inquest into a mass stabbing in Sydney last year was that schizophrenic man Joel Cauchi was psychotic when he wielded a 30cm Ka-Bar knife, attacking 16 people and killing six. The expert psychiatric evidence was "clear and unanimous" about Cauchi, 40, being "floridly psychotic" on 13 April 2024, the senior counsel assisting, Dr Peggy Dwyer SC, told the New South Wales coroner's court in her opening remarks almost three weeks ago.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Security 'disgrace' slammed by nurse

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/05/2025, Brad Crouch, Page 3

A courageous nurse has recounted a terrifying ordeal when she fought off a berserk armed woman using a chair, then feared her other patients would be stabbed. Megan Hoile has given harrowing evidence to a parliamentary committee looking at Yorke Peninsula health services.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#).

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Boost to doctor numbers ramps up

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 18/05/2025, Sue Bailey, Page 5

The state government is trying to boost the number of doctors working in the state's public hospitals. Health Minister Jacquie Petrusma said the government was creating new opportunities for rural generalist general practitioners to work in public hospitals, particularly in the North-West.

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Doctor heads for Julia

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 17/05/2025, Daneka Hill, Page 3

Julia Creek has secured a new doctor after months of advertising the attractive \$680,000 salary, free accommodation, and a work vehicle. In a statement, North West Hospital and Health Service said a new medical officer had been appointed to the outback town and they were due to start in mid-August, just in time for tourists to flock to the small centre for the Dirt n Dust Festival.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Implementing full scope of practice in community pharmacy

In The Know, General News, 01/06/2025, Jonathan Bray, Page 61

Community pharmacies in Australia play a crucial role in healthcare, acting as the primary point of contact for many patients. Bridging primary and acute care, community pharmacies are vital for managing medicines, promoting health, preventing illness, and treating minor ailments.

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Why Trump's a term-long problem for the Coalition

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 17/05/2025, Peter Hartcher

The federal election cast Australia against the spectre of Donald Trump. It was a resounding victory for Australia. [...] Starting with the cherished Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme .

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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SPORT

Stadium more than a sporting arena

Sunday Examiner, General News, 18/05/2025, Craig Thomson, Page 21

The proposed Macquarie Point stadium in Hobart has become a lightning rod for public debate in Tasmania. Most of the furore surrounds the view that the stadium is only a venue for AFL games, and perhaps cricket.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

The long and short of cancer

Sunday Times, General News, 18/05/2025, Page 13

Two new studies suggest patients with some cancers may do just as well with a shorter course of radiation or less extensive surgery as with standard treatments. Researchers reported that in men who needed radiation after undergoing the most extensive type of surgery for prostate cancer, a form of highdose radiation delivered in just five sessions known as stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT) appeared to be as safe as conventional treatment delivered daily for seven weeks.

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OCD genes uncovered — what does it change?

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2025, Preeya Alexander & Norman Swan

Australian researchers say they've identified about 250 genes linked to OCD, including 25 they believe to be causal. We take a look at how this study was conducted, and whether it means anything in the short-term for sufferers.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Gija mother-daughter duo leading rural health change

National Indigenous Times, Other, 17/05/2025, Joseph Guenzler

Dr Ellen Engelke, a Curtin Medical School graduate, and her mother Dr Catherine Engelke, a Curtin

School of Nursing alumna and Senior Medical Officer in Kununurra, are contributing to better health outcomes in rural and Indigenous communities. The Gija women have pursued careers in medicine that reflect their commitment to community and country.

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Is it a UTI or STI?

In The Know, General News, 01/06/2025, Page 54

Several STIs, including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and trichomoniasis, can have overlapping signs and symptoms similar to a UTI, such as painful or burning urination, increased frequency or urgency, and lower abdominal discomfort, which can potentially lead to a misdiagnosis. As such, it is important that pharmacists recognise overlapping signs and symptoms and be alert for STI red flags enabling timely identification and appropriate referral for patients presenting with urinary concerns who may have underlying STIs.

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ABC, Late Night ABC News, 16/05/2025, Michael Tetlow

Experts are warning a rise in deadly diseases is inevitable if Australia doesn't act on the decline in vaccination rates. Childhood immunisations have dropped steadily for five years to hit decade lows. Dr Frank Beard from National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance and Dr Gary Grohmann from Immunisation Coalition comment on the issue.

Continuing report on: [ABC \(Melbourne\)](#).

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