



Wednesday, 21st May 2025

Minister Butler | Minister Wells | Minister McAllister | Minister Rae |

Assistant Minister McBride | Assistant Minister White | Special Envoy Repacholi

| Department | Vaccines | Ageing and Aged Care | Population Health
| Cancer, Hearing and Chronic Conditions | Primary Care

| Mental Health and Suicide Prevention | Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office
| Health Workforce | Technology Assessment and Access
| Medicare Benefits and Digital Health | Benefits Integrity

| Health Systems Strategies | Sport | Health Economics and Research
| First Nations Health | Interim Australian CDC | Therapeutic Goods Administration
| Office of Drug Control | Food Standards | AICIS

## **LINKS**

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The Herald Sun (page 19) reports the Murdoch Children's Research Institute has signed a \$50 million deal with a US biotech firm to create personalised therapies using human blood stem cells in place of regular blood cells in a move that will aid victims by taking perfectly matched cells, thereby avoiding rejection from the recipient's organs.
- The <u>WA Today</u> (Online) reports Mark Butler is now responsible for more than 25 per cent of the
  federal budget, having added NDIS to the Health and Aged Care portfolios and must now
  manage to constrain costs. "Our task is crystal clear: to strengthen Medicare, protect the PBS,
  deliver generational reform to aged care, and secure the future of the NDIS," Butler said last
  week.
- The <u>Daily Mail Australia</u> (Online) reports the Ainsworth family has donated \$50 million towards endometriosis research, with the UNSW to establish an institute to develop diagnosis and treatment of the debilitating condition, which is estimated to cost Australia between \$7.4 billion-\$9.7 billion a year.
- The <u>Daily Mail Australia</u> (Online) reports a US scientist has told NSW politicians a ban on
  products such as microwavable popcorn, dental flosss and menstrual products is part of the
  solution to prevent PFAS chemicals from entering the water supply, as he cites "exposure
  sources" as a key reason why the "forever chemicals" continue to impact the water supply.

Medicine Today (Online) reports a study of 5000 Australian adolescents finds almost half are
living with a noncommunicable disease or developmental condition, according to research by
the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, as it advises GP's to recommend
lifestyle improvements such as not consuming ultra-processed food and avoiding alcohol and
tobacco.

#### MINISTER BUTLER

## WHO are they to tell us Aussies what to do?

Cairns Post, General News, 21/05/2025, Rocco Loiacono, Page 13

Australia's government, through Health Minister Mark Butler remains "fully committed" to the WHO Pandemic Treaty, which was stalled at the World Health Assembly last year. However, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is this month pushing yet again to finalise a new pandemic treaty with its member nations, including Australia.

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## How Albanese's wingman is now Labor's \$220b minister

WA Today, Other, 20/05/2025, Natassia Chrysanthos

Labor minister Mark Butler's expanded portfolio of health, disability and ageing will put him in charge of about \$220 billion in annual government spending – more than a quarter of the federal budget. After flying across the country alongside Prime Minister Anthony Albanese during the election campaign, Butler's elevated role will require him to jump straight into tense negotiations with states and territories over a new system that must take pressure off the ballooning National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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## Mum spends \$10,000 on painful condition affecting millions of Aussies: 'Face swollen shut'

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 20/05/2025, Brianne Tolj

Just three months into her first pregnancy, Sally Daly suddenly developed a painful and itchy skin condition. What started out as a "slow-growing rash" soon spread and by the time she was due to give birth, it had "taken over" her entire body. [...] The country has one of the highest rates in the world for multiple reasons, including the local climate, Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler said late last year during a press conference about the debilitating condition, which dermatologists argue can have a huge impact on a person's quality of life.

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## FIVEAA, Mornings, 20/05/2025, Graeme Goodings

Goodings says according to health minister Mark Butler's department, older Australians who want to live at home for longer can do so through a reformed Support at Home program as part of their aged care reforms. He says for the first time, older Australians will receive greater support through a dedicated funding scheme of up to \$15,000 for their products, equipment, and home modifications.

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#### MINISTER WELLS

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## Triple J, 11:00 News, 20/05/2025

Australia's new NDIS minister, Jenny McAllister, has pledged to work closely with the disability community moving forward. Sen McAllister has conceded there is still much more to do to connect the health, disability, and aged care systems together.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, 10:00 News, 20/05/2025

The new Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Jenny McAllister is pledging to work closely with the disability community on the next phase of reforms. McAllister has given her first first speech since being appointed to the portfolio. While acknowledging the scheme has transformed the lives of people with disability and their families, she conceded there's still much more to do to connect the health, disability and aged care systems together.

Also reported by: ABC Radio Darwin (Darwin)

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## MINISTER RAE

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## SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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## **DEPARTMENT**

## Savings expected as millions of records are uploaded

Pulse+IT, Other, 20/05/2025

In the first year of sharing by default legislation, Australia could save \$11 million in reducing duplication of pathology and diagnostic imaging tests. Daniel McCabe, the First Assistant Secretary, Medicare Benefits and Digital Health at the Department of Health and Aged Care said \$11 million was a 'conservative figure'.

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#### Research shows how AI can improve dementia detection

Pakenham Gazette, General News, 21/05/2025, Page 20

Researchers from the National Centre for Healthy Ageing (NCHA), a partnership between Monash University and Peninsula Health, have developed a novel method for improving dementia detection in hospitals by combining traditional methods with artificial intelligence (AI). Approximately 50 million people worldwide live with dementia, a number expected to triple by 2050, according to the World Alzheimer Report.

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# The government wants to contain NDIS growth. But ineligible people with disability also need support

The Times Australia, Other, 20/05/2025, Helen Dickinson

Ensuring the provision of high-quality disability services will pose a significant challenge for the Albanese government's second term. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) cost A\$43.9 billion in 2023–24 and is one of the fastest growing pressures on the federal budget.

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## Could AI be the key to catching dementia early? Here's what experts say

Your Life Choices, Other, 20/05/2025, Lexanne Garcia

Dementia is a word that strikes fear into the hearts of many Australians. With more than 400,000 people currently living with dementia in Australia—and that number expected to skyrocket in the coming decades—early detection and proper care have never been more important.

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#### **VACCINES**

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

## Premier Peter Malinauskas labels urban sprawl critics 'borderline immoral'

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 20/05/2025, Paul Starick

Urban sprawl critics have been branded "borderline immoral" by Premier Peter Malinauskas, as he blisteringly rejected tax breaks for baby boomers to downsize their homes. Issuing scorching rhetoric at a top-level economic forum, Mr Malinauskas declared he could not "stand people" who bleated about housing supply for their children living "at home until they're 40', yet then opposed expansion of Adelaide's northern suburbs.

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## 4BC, Drive, 20/05/2025, Gary Hardgrave

Interview with member for Dawson Andrew Willcox on the Regional Australia Future Fund. Willcox says the \$20 billion Regional Australia Future Fund gives them access to money for better health care, childcare, and aged care, among others.

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#### Research team in \$50m US deal

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2025, Sarah Booth, Page 19

The Melbourne team behind a stem cell breakthrough that opened the door to new, personalised blood therapies has signed a \$50 million-plus deal with a US biotech firm. The Murdoch Children's Research Institute successfully created blood stem cells from human cells in a world-first discovery last year and on Tuesday announced a partnership with Retro Biosciences.

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## Banning common items may end 'forever chemicals' crisis

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/05/2025

Banning certain types of microwavable popcorn, dental floss and menstrual products is the solution to stopping cancer-causing "forever chemicals" entering waterways, MPs have been told. Days after an investigation found 30,000 residents near Sydney may have been exposed to high levels of PFAS chemicals for decades, state MPs heard from a US scientist who has studied the synthetic chemicals' effects on humans.

Also reported by: <u>Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser (Online)</u>, <u>Newcastle Herald (Online)</u>, <u>Illawarra Mercury</u> (<u>Online</u>), <u>Ballarat Courier (Online</u>), <u>West Australian (Online)</u>

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## Record gift gives hope to women with painful condition

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/05/2025

Women's health research in Australia has been given a record financial boost, paving the way for better diagnosis and treatment of a debilitating and historically ignored condition. UNSW Sydney will establish the Ainsworth Endometriosis Research Institute, thanks to a record-breaking \$50 million philanthropic donation by the Ainsworth family.

Also reported by: Canberra Times (Online), Newcastle Herald (Online), Bathurst Western Advocate (Online)

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#### Men's mental health in crisis

West Australian, General News, 21/05/2025, Adrian Munro, Page 37

On Saturday, I opened my newsfeed like any other morning, wondering what world news had occurred overnight, and, like most, I was shocked and saddened to see the tragic passing of former West Coast Eagles player Adam Selwood.[...] However, we know that men are half as likely as women to access primary healthcare services, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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# Pfizer signs licensing deal worth about \$6 billion with China's 3SBio for cancer drug

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/05/2025

US drugmaker Pfizer said on Monday it has signed a licensing agreement worth about \$6 billion with Chinese biopharmaceutical company 3SBio Inc for the development, manufacturing and commercialization of a drug which could be used to treat certain types of cancer and tumors.

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## Greens complete deal with Minns government over abortion bill

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/05/2025

Sky News host Rita Panahi discusses the recently passed abortion bill in New South Wales parliament. "The abortion access bill which has now passed in the New South Wales parliament after the Greens did a deal with the Chris Minns government," Ms Panahi said.

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## Almost half of Australian adolescents have a chronic disease or developmental condition

Medicine Today, Other, 20/05/2025, Melanie Hinze

Almost half of Australian adolescents are living with at least one noncommunicable disease or developmental condition, according to a new large-scale study published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. The self-report survey-based study on over 5000 adolescents (mean age, 14.7 years) found that 45.6% reported one or more conditions, including asthma, eczema, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue, food allergies, ADHD/ADD, autism spectrum disorder and type 1 or 2 diabetes.

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## "Wiping its hands of injured nurses": Backlash to proposed cuts to workers' comp

Nursing Review, Other, 20/05/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Compensation payments for psychological injuries will cut off after two and a half years, unless an injured worker can prove they will be significantly impaired for life, under a bid to overhaul the workers compensation scheme. Workers and employers were given their first glimpse at the potential changes after the Minns government released its exposure draft for the new Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill on May 9.

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## WHO estimates global nurse shortage at 5.8 million

Nursing Review, Other, 20/05/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Widespread shortages and vast inequities continue to plague the global nursing workforce, a new report has revealed. The World Health Organization's (WHO) 2025 State of the World's Nursing (SoWN) report uses data collected from 194 countries to paint a detailed picture of the nursing experience across borders, reporting on education, employment, migration, regulation, working conditions, leadership and more.

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## It took six years to diagnose Adele with endometriosis. A \$50m donation aims to end the wait

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/05/2025, Kate Aubusson

A world-first endometriosis institute at the University of NSW aims to accelerate advancements in diagnosis and targeted treatment by harnessing the breakthroughs that revolutionised cancer care for the millions of people with the poorly understood condition. NSW pokies billionaires, the Ainsworth family, have committed \$50 million to establish the Ainsworth Endometriosis Research Institute (AERI) – the biggest known philanthropic donation to endometriosis research worldwide.

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## CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

#### Channel 7, Seven News, 20/05/2025, Peter Mitchell

Survival rates have stalled for Australian women facing some of the most common types of cancer. A group of mums tonight share their personal stories as they fight for more funding to find answers. They have one thing in common: breast cancer, lung cancer, bowel cancer, and ovarian cancer.

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#### Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2025, Peter Overton

There is a new warning tonight for diabetes and weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy, with many users reporting vision loss. The TGA has received 44 reports of eye disorders from people taking the drug, eight of which have reported blindness.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Afternoons, 20/05/2025, Joel Rheinberger

Interview with BTN presenter and reporter Jack Evans on hearing loss. Evans says the World Health Organisation has estimated that more than a billion young people are at risk of permanent avoidable hearing loss, which is due to exposure of loud recreational noise.

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#### PRIMARY CARE

## NT Labor starts process of developing Voluntary Assisted Dying private members Bill

Northern Territory News, Other, 20/05/2025, Fia Walsh

Labor has promised a Private Member's Bill to legislate Voluntary Assisted Dying in the Territory, attempting to force action from the government which remains staunchly mute on the topic. The Northern Territory Opposition has started the process of developing a Voluntary Assisted Dying private members Bill, in an attempt to force action from the government which remains mute on the topic amid another inquiry.

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# "Patient safety must come first": Victorian Government's pharmacy prescribing expansion puts patients at risk

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/05/2025

The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) has warned that the Victorian Government's plan to significantly expand pharmacy prescribing powers threatens patient safety.

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## ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 20/05/2025, Evelyn Manfield

Interview with Liberal MP Zoe McKenzie on the Vic budget. McKenzie says the Allan government had \$650m for regional hospitals and not \$1 for Rosebud Hospital that needs to be rebuilt a couple of kilometres up the road from her home.

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#### Channel 7, Seven News, 20/05/2025, Peter Mitchell

There is an \$11b funding for the long-awaited Footscray and Frankston Hospital redevelopments. Pharmacists will treat more conditions to free up GPs, and consultations will be free. However, the education and the property industry feel shortchanged.

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## Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2025, Alicia Loxley and Tom Steinfort

The Victorian budget will invest heavily in health and hospitals. Pharmacies will offer more services, which will cost taxpayers \$18m, and Premier Jacinta Allan says they will be opening and expanding nine hospitals across the state. Vic's virtual ED will triple in size and take on more patients. The new Footscray Hospital will open by July, and major works at Frankston Hospital should finish by the end of this year.

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#### ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 20/05/2025, Kylie Baxter

Interview with AHPRA Regulatory Operations executive director Kym Ayscough on medicinal cannabis. Ayscough says AHPRA is the national regulator of about 950,000 health practitioners across 16 professions. She says their primary purpose is to make sure the public is safe in their engagement with health practitioners. She says they are working with other regulators like the TGA to understand who is writing the medicinal cannabis prescriptions, who is dispensing the medication, and who is involved in the highest volume of activity.

## ABC Radio Perth, Mornings, 20/05/2025, Nadia Mitsopoulos

Interview with Consumers Health Forum CEO Elizabeth Deveny on AI chatbots being used widely by medical professions. Deveny says when using AI chatbots, patients might get better eye contact because the GP is not trying to type while listening. She says clinicians like it because it makes note-taking faster. She recognises that the issue about informed consent is really important.

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#### MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

## Psychs warn of system collapse

Adelaide Advertiser, Edition Changes, 21/05/2025, James Gratton, Page 10

Overworked and underpaid psychologists are leaving the public sector in droves over poor pay and working conditions, advocates claim. The state's public psychology union says key fields including forensic mental health and community health have 50 per cent vacancy rates, with South Australians either forced to wait for affordable public help or going without care altogether.

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## AFL mental health push

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/05/2025, Rob Inglis, Page 7

Stay ChatTY founder Mitch McPherson has thrown his weight behind a national push for the AFL to hold an annual mental health round after another tragic loss rocked the football community.

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## Channel 10, 10 News First, 20/05/2025, Sandra Sully

More than 1 million Australians live with an eating disorder, including anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, or severe picky eating. The Eating Disorder Genetics Initiative, or EDGI2, needs saliva samples from 4,000 Australians. The data will be used to help pinpoint those at risk of developing a disorder and could lead to new treatments and medications.

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#### Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2025, Michael Thomson

Adam Selwood's death was front of mind today during a national suicide prevention conference in Perth. A new report reveals cost of living is the leading cause of distress for West Australians. New figures show more than 1 in 8 West Australians have experienced serious thoughts of suicide in the past 12 months, higher than the national average.

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## Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 20/05/2025, Tom Connell

Interview with Olympian Lisa Curry on spearheading a campaign launching today for thousands of volunteers to join a genetic study into complex conditions, such as eating disorders. Curry encourage anybody, whether they have an eating disorder now or have had an eating disorder in the past, diagnosed or not, to do the online survey. She says, if eligible, they will then receive a saliva test. She says they need 4,000 people by the end of this year, as the more people, the more impact it will have on the outcomes.

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#### **HEALTH WORKFORCE**

#### 2GB, Drive, 20/05/2025, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Realistic Careers' Tammie Ballis on the nurse shortage in hospitals. Ballis says there are different levels of nurses. She says for registered nurses, for example, they have a three-year degree. She says at the moment, the nurses are not getting paid for their placements.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 20/05/2025, Chris Bath

Interview with Nationals leader David Littleproud on the Regional Australia Future Fund. Littleproud says the \$20b Regional Australia Future Fund would create childcare places in regional Australia and train regional Australians in healthcare, among other things.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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#### MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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#### BENEFITS INTEGRITY

## Professor Andrew Kaye: Tribunal finds brain surgeon made sexual advance on junior doctor

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/05/2025, Craig Dunlop

World-renowned former Melbourne University professor of brain surgery Dr Andrew Kaye's reputation is in tatters, with a tribunal late on Tuesday finding he made an unwanted sexual advance on a junior female medico. Dr Kaye, who is the brother of Supreme Court Justice Stephen Kaye and a former Hawthorn board member, left Australia for Israel shortly after being accused of sexual misconduct in 2019.

Also reported by: Gold Coast Bulletin (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Mercury (Online), The Courier Mail (Online)

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## **HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES**

#### Healthscope lenders call meeting over hospital operator's future

The Australian, Business News, 21/05/2025, Bridget Carter, Page 16

The syndicate of about 20 Healthscope lenders owed about \$1.4bn are holding a meeting in the next two days, sparking more speculation over whether the private hospital operator is headed towards administration. The meeting comes after a lender holding loans worth about \$300m tried in recent days to offload the debt, but it is not yet thought to have traded.

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#### **SPORT**

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

## 2CC, Canberra Live, 20/05/2025, Leon Delaney

Interview with Evrema CEO Charlotte Bradshaw on clinical trials. Bradshaw says they have just launched a trial for basal cell carcinoma, or BCC, in Woden, Canberra. She says a clinical trial is collecting data to show that a potential new treatment is safe and effective.

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Afternoons, 20/05/2025, Joel Rheinberger

Interview with Menzies Research Institute professorial research fellow Prof Mark Nelson on clinical trials. Nelson says a clinical trial is a way of looking at any sort of intervention in medicine to see if it works and is safe. He says generally, if something works, it does have the risk of having adverse effects. He says you want to make sure that even if it works, you are more likely to cause good effects rather than harmful effects.

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#### FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

# The Cairns Hospital will feature in revealing documentary on strained Indigenous healthcare system

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/05/2025

A revealing documentary will highlight the Cairns Hospital in a powerful examination of the strained Indigenous healthcare system. Ngadjonji woman and Cairns-based doctor Tatum Bond, who is one of only 10 Indigenous emergency department specialists in Australia, will feature in a six-part documentary series titled Our Medicine.

Also reported by: <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Adelaide Now (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>

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## "Wiping its hands of injured nurses": Backlash to proposed cuts to workers' comp

Nursing Review, Other, 20/05/2025, Stefanie Schultz

Compensation payments for psychological injuries will cut off after two and a half years, unless an injured worker can prove they will be significantly impaired for life, under a bid to overhaul the workers compensation scheme. Workers and employers were given their first glimpse at the potential changes after the Minns government released its exposure draft for the new Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill on May 9.

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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders launch a class action against Queensland Health over racial discrimination

The Australian, Other, 20/05/2025, Emma Kirk

Queensland Health have been hit with a class action over allegations of racial discrimination that claim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people received inadequate healthcare spanning three decades. The class action alleges First Nations people were withheld or denied adequate treatment, had their concerns dismissed and received substandard medical care, which was unlawful and breached the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth).

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## INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

## Ozempic and Wegovy have been linked to eye strokes as TGA reports ten cases of blindness

Northern Territory News, Other, 20/05/2025, Danielle Gusmaroli

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has received complaints of blindness and vision loss in one eye among users of Ozempic and Wegovy, who are reluctant to ditch the weight-loss drugs. Dozens of Ozempic and Wegovy users have reported suffering from eye disorders they claim are associated with the drugs, including eight who have complained of blindness.

Also reported by: <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Toowoomba)</u>, <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)</u>, <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>

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