



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 13th January 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [The Herald Sun \(page 8\)](#) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has defended the Federal Government's bulk billing reforms following a Cleanbill Blue report finding that average out-of-pocket GP visit costs increased by 13.5 per cent in the past year, with Mr Butler questioning the reliability of the data contained in the Cleanbill analysis.
- [ABC Online](#) reports that following a recommendation by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, weight-loss medication Wegovy (semaglutide) will be added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme significantly reducing its cost for eligible patients, with access to the PBS listing limited to high-risk patients who must have an "established cardiovascular disease" and a BMI of 35 or higher. *Also reported by: Herald Sun, West Australian*
- [The Adelaide Advertiser \(page 1\)](#) reports that the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board's annual report has revealed more than 250 South Australians chose to end their lives through euthanasia last financial year, an increase of 150 per cent since its legalisation three years ago.
- [The Courier Mail \(page 3\)](#) reports that Queensland Premier David Crisafulli has instructed Queensland Health Minister Tim Nicholls to launch an investigation the death of a baby and the serious injury of another at Toowoomba Hospital's maternity unit.
- [The Hobart Mercury \(page 2\)](#) reports that the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), supported by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) have criticised the Tasmanian

State Government's plan to enforce a 45-minute transfer of care mandate in Tasmania's public emergency departments, saying it would not fix access or flow and "simply shifts risk onto clinicians already stretched beyond capacity".

- **The Townsville Bulletin (page 1)** reports that a spike in flu cases in North Queensland that has seen cases hit more than double their five year average, and a rise in deadly soil-borne germs and the return of preventable diseases like measles, is raising concerns that public complacency is winning the "information war" against vaccination.

MINISTER BUTLER

Hospitals accuse insurers of 'dirty tricks'

Australian Financial Review, General News, 13/01/2026, Michael Smith, Page 3

Hospital operators are accusing health insurers of using "dirty tricks" to force members to abandon top-tier gold cover and raising prices to unaffordable levels as the federal government comes under pressure to protect the private health [...]

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

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Butler on defence over GP costs

Herald Sun, General News, 13/01/2026, Aris Schuler-Shah, Page 8

Health Minister Mark Butler has defended reports that more Aussies are struggling to find bulk-billing GPs, rubbishing the opposition's claims. The rebuttal came after shadow health minister Anne Ruston launched a scathing attack on Mr Butler, claiming Labor had failed to protect Australians from soaring healthcare costs.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#).

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Fat drug on PBS for obese

Herald Sun, General News, 13/01/2026, Ria Pandey, Page 14

Wegovy will be heavily subsidised for Australians with severe obesity who have also experienced a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or stroke. The glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) class drug is prescription only and used in clinical care for chronic weight management in eligible patients. [...] On Friday, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the federal government would enter negotiations with manufacturer Novo Nordisk, saying the drug's exclusion from the PBS listing was not just a health issue but an equity one.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Broome Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Albany Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Broome Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Albany Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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Insurers warn Labor of private health exodus under funding shake-up

Australian Financial Review, Other, 12/01/2026, Michael Smith

Health insurers are warning of an exodus from private cover under a Labor plan to change the way private hospitals are funded, which they say will make premiums unaffordable for more than half a million people.

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ACT bulk-billing clinics overwhelmed by new patients after government help

Canberra Times, Other, 12/01/2026, Steve Evans

Patients in Canberra have switched in droves to clinics which bulk-bill since the federal government introduced incentives in November. One ACT clinic told The Canberra Times that a hundred new patients had registered in the past three months since it had switched to bulk-billing. [...] All the same, health minister Mark Butler said he was "thrilled that since the Government's landmark investment more Australians are accessing bulk-billing doctors".

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

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Proposed weight drug price drop only for select few

West Australian, Other, 12/01/2026, Tom Wark

Patients struggling with chronic weight and heart issues could soon get some relief in their hip pocket but many more will still fork out thousands of dollars for a popular drug. Negotiations will soon begin to add the appetite-suppressing drug Wegovy on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the federal government has confirmed. [...] But Health Minister Mark Butler indicated on Friday it would be substantial.

Also reported by: [Benalla Ensign \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [Bunbury Herald \(Online\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#)

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National bulk-billing rates are increasing, according to Cleanbill report

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026, Tamara Clark

The national bulk-billing landscape is changing fast, according to a new survey that shows the percentage of fully bulk-billing medical clinics has almost doubled in a year. Cleanbill, an online GP directory, has released its January 2026 Blue Report, which was informed by 6,900 GP clinics across the country and shows 40. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the data in the Cleanbill report "should not be relied upon".

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Weight loss drug Wegovy to be subsidised for Australians with severe obesity

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026, Evelyn Manfield

The cost of weight loss drug Wegovy will soon be massively subsidised for Australians with severe obesity who have had a stroke or heart attack. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has committed to listing weight loss drug Wegovy on the PBS for patients with an "established cardiovascular disease", such as someone who's had a heart attack or stroke, and has a BMI of 35 or higher, as recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) late last year.

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'Big bill' for taxpayers but cheaper for patients: Wegovy to be subsidised, says minister

SBS, Other, 12/01/2026, Rashida Yosufzai

It's going to cost taxpayers a lot of money — but the federal government says subsidising weight loss drug Wegovy is an equity issue, not just a health issue. Australians could soon get cheaper access to popular weight loss drug Wegovy with the federal government set to act soon on advice to list the Ozempic-like medication on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme (PBS). However, it's unclear by how much it's set to be reduced, with Health Minister Mark Butler saying he's in the process of negotiating the price with the drug maker Novo Nordisk.

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Revealed: Where Australians are paying the most (and least) to see a doctor

SBS, Other, 12/01/2026, Cameron Carr

Thousands of medical clinics across the country were contacted for a new report. Here's what it found. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said "specific data" in the report "cannot be relied upon".

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Windsor Medicare Urgent Care Clinic Coming Soon

Hawkesbury Gazette, Other, 12/01/2026

A provider has been selected to operate the new Windsor Medicare Urgent Care Clinic, with the service expected to open in the coming months. Following a competitive tender process led by the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, MyHealth Kable Street has been confirmed as the successful operator. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the clinic would improve access to care while reducing strain on local hospitals.

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Queenslanders face GP fee hike of 12 per cent

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 11/01/2026, Judith Kerr

Queenslanders who aren't bulk billed now face forking out about 12.1 per cent more to see their GP compared to last year, new analysis shows. Queenslanders are paying almost \$50 per visit to their local doctor, with the out-of-pocket bill climbing by \$5 in the past year, new analysis shows. [...] But Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected the figures and defended government's bulk billing incentives.

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Weight loss drug Wegovy to be listed on PBS

Yahoo! Lifestyle Australia, Other, 12/01/2026

Wegovy will be heavily subsidised for Australians with severe obesity, who have also experienced a cardiovascular event, like a heart attack or stroke. The glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) class drug that is prescription-only and used in clinical care for chronic weight management in eligible patients. [...] On Friday, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the federal government would enter negotiations with manufacturer Novo Nordisk, saying the drug's exclusion from the PBS listing was not just a health issue, but an equity one too.

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Under pressure: The reality of Australia's hospital emergency departments

Australian Rural & Regional News, Other, 12/01/2026

Walk into Royal Adelaide Hospital's emergency department on any given day and you'll find a chaotic but functioning system. The wait might be 30 minutes. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler counters that urgent care clinics are making a difference and that the government is working towards a comprehensive National Health Reform Agreement.

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Chronic conditions strain hospitals as RACP seeks Medicare reform

Gloucester Advocate, Other, 12/01/2026, Damon Cronshaw

Chronic conditions cause more than 5100 deaths a year in the Hunter, a problem that is set to worsen with the ageing population. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler conceded in November that "in terms of scale, chronic disease is our big public health challenge".

Also reported by: [The Scone Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Muswellbrook Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Port Stephens Examiner \(Online\)](#), [Dungog Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Hunter Valley News \(Online\)](#), [Maitland Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Singleton Argus \(Online\)](#), [Cessnock Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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\$10m boost propels next wave of Australian health researchers

Health Services Daily, Other, 12/01/2026

Federal funding will back 67 emerging scientists through NHMRC scholarships, including research into ageing, menopause and multiple sclerosis. The federal government has committed \$10.1 million to fast-track the careers of Australia's next generation of health and medical researchers. [...] Federal health and aged care minister Mark Butler said the funding reinforced the government's focus on building long-term research capability and accelerating innovation.

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Insurers warn funding overhaul may cut private health participation

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 12/01/2026, Roxanne Libatique

Australian private health insurers are warning that proposed changes to private hospital funding could lead to a reduction in private health insurance participation, at a time when premium increases and higher medical costs are already influencing consumer behaviour. [...]

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'A complete reversal': Surge in bulk-billing practices

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 12/01/2026

New Cleanbill data shows a sharp rise in the number of general practices offering full bulk billing – but gap fees are also climbing significantly. More than 1000 clinics have switched to offer full bulk billing for all patients, new figures suggest. [...] Federal Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler told the ABC the data in the Cleanbill report 'should not be relied upon'.

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Health Minister progresses Wegovy's PBS listing

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 12/01/2026

Following PBAC's recommendation, Mark Butler says he will begin working with manufacturers to list Wegovy on the PBS for obesity. A newsGP poll found 24% of respondents said patients' continued interest in weight-loss drugs was the issue that impacted them most in 2025.

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Impact of women's health PBS listings revealed

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 12/01/2026

More than 610,000 women have accessed cheaper medicines since they were listed last year, with 1.7 million scripts filled. The Federal Government says women have saved almost \$62 million since women's health items were added to the PBS last year. [...] Federal Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler said the Government's focus remains on 'giving women more choice, lower costs and better access to services and treatments'.

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More than 40 percent of Victorian GPs bulk bill, but at what cost?

The Eastern Melburnian, Other, 12/01/2026, Matthew Sims

The initial response to the Federal Government's extra subsidies to GPs who provide bulk billing has been positive. But is it the panacea GPs need? [...] Minister's rebuttal: Federal Health Minister Mark Butler told the Cleanbill's data "cannot be relied upon and should not be reported as accurate", citing the fact they did not include clinics which did not respond to the survey.

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Butler working on GLP-1 PBS subsidy expansion

The Medical Republic, Other, 12/01/2026, Mariella Attard

People with severe obesity and established cardiovascular disease will get Wegovy on the PBS, after some price negotiations. Health Minister Mark Butler has kicked off the new year assuring Australians that he's acting on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommendation that Wegovy be subsidised for obesity treatment for a select group.

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ABC News, Mornings, 12/01/2026, Lorna Dunkley

Health Minister Mark Butler has confirmed that the weight-loss drug Wegovy will be added to the PBS, providing a massive financial reprieve for thousands of Australians. The subsidy will target those with a BMI over 35 and established heart disease, who are currently paying up to \$5,000 annually for private prescriptions.

Also reported by: [3RRR FM \(Melbourne\)](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 12/01/2026, Mike Amor and Karina Carvalho

New Medicare data shows that more GP clinics are shifting to fully bulk billing after expanded federal incentives. Health Minister Mark Butler says almost half of GP clinics are now 100% bulk billing, delivering millions of extra free visits. However, many patients still face out-of-pocket costs of up to \$50, with doctors warning that fees will keep rising unless Medicare rebates for longer consultations increase.

[Play Now](#)**SBS, World News Australia, 12/01/2026, Janice Petersen**

Wegovy has been added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, significantly reducing the cost for some Australians. The subsidy will apply only to people with severe obesity and established cardiovascular disease, meaning many users will still pay full price. Health Minister Mark Butler says eligible patients will save thousands of dollars, but the move will come with a substantial cost to taxpayers.

[Play Now](#)**2MCE, 11:00 National Radio News, 12/01/2026**

Australians with severe obesity and heart disease will soon have cheaper access to the weight-loss drug Wegovy under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Health Minister Mark Butler says the government has accepted a recommendation to list the medication, with eligibility limited to people with a BMI of 35 or above and a diagnosed cardiovascular condition.

[Play Now](#)**4BC, 11:00 News, 12/01/2026**

Queenslanders are paying nearly \$50 per GP visit, up 12% on last year, despite the number of fully bulk-billing clinics in the state rising to 413. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has dismissed the analysis, questioning its accuracy and defending the government's bulk-billing incentives, with Labor expecting 4,800 fully bulk-billing practices nationwide by 2030.

[Play Now](#)**ABC Radio Brisbane, Afternoons, 12/01/2026, Katherine Feeney**

Interview with Growlife Medical Dr. Aaron Chambers about the PBS listing of Wegovy for obesity and cardiovascular disease, in which Health Minister Mark Butler said the change would result in a big bill for taxpayers, though the exact cost was not specified. Chambers discusses how the drug could drop to about \$25 per script for eligible patients. He notes that Wegovy is already recognised for diabetes treatment and cites trial evidence showing a modest but meaningful reduction in cardiovascular events.

[Play Now](#)**ABC Radio Sydney, Evenings (Early), 12/01/2026, Rebecca De Unamuno**

Interview with NSW/ACT RACGP deputy chair Dr. Kim Loo about bulk billing and GP funding. Loo discusses the impact of long-term Medicare rebate freezes, rising practice costs, and increasing patient complexity, explaining why many practices operate mixed billing despite expanded bulk billing incentives. She says Health Minister Mark Butler understands the need for multidisciplinary and longer-consult models of care, but warns that practices remain financially strained and funding certainty is crucial to sustain access and quality care.

[Play Now](#)**ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 12/01/2026, Dom Knight**

Interview with ABC Isabella Tolhurst about the Federal Government adding the weight-loss drug Wegovy to the PBS. Tolhurst explains that Health Minister Mark Butler says more than 400,000 Australians are paying market prices for GLP-1 medications, which can cost \$4,000-\$5,000 a year, and that the subsidy will be limited to people with established cardiovascular disease and a BMI of 35 or

higher to manage costs. She also notes ongoing discussion about potential mental health side effects, with the TGA issuing a safety alert.

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DEPARTMENT

Hospitals accuse insurers of 'dirty tricks'

Australian Financial Review, General News, 13/01/2026, Michael Smith, Page 3

Hospital operators are accusing health insurers of using "dirty tricks" to force members to abandon top-tier gold cover and raising prices to unaffordable levels as the federal government comes under pressure to protect the private health [...]

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#)

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Insurers warn funding overhaul may cut private health participation

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 12/01/2026, Roxanne Libatique

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'A complete reversal': Surge in bulk-billing practices

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 12/01/2026

New Cleanbill data shows a sharp rise in the number of general practices offering full bulk billing – but gap fees are also climbing significantly. More than 1000 clinics have switched to offer full bulk billing for all patients, new figures suggest. [...] Federal Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler told the ABC the data in the Cleanbill report 'should not be relied upon'.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Men are lining up for Becks-backed biohack

Australian Financial Review, General News, 13/01/2026, Hannah Tattersall, Page 6

Wellness Is the latest anti-ageing fad NMN the real deal? Call it the David Beckham effect or the sign of an anti-ageing obsessed population but IM8, one of a spate of longevity treatments to hit the \$5.5 billion supplements market recently has [...]

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#)

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Baby bonus alone won't do it

The Australian, Editorials, 13/01/2026, Page 10

To be born in Australia is to win the lottery of life, former prime minister Tony Abbott famously said. Fewer families are collecting the prize for their children.

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

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Are we ready for the next centenarians?

Canberra Times, General News, 13/01/2026, Petlee Peter, Page 3

At 102, Marina O'Rourke still takes the bus and does her own shopping. Route 44 is her favourite bus, and Belconnen Mall is her preferred shopping spot, where she gets her cup of tea and daily newspaper.

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South Australia faces demographic crisis with ageing population and youth brain drain

Adelaide Now, Other, 12/01/2026, Aden Hill

New federal modelling reveals SA will join Tasmania in recording more deaths than births within decades, creating an unprecedented threat to the state's future. South Australia is on track to have more deaths than births, as it grapples with an increasingly ageing population.

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

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Australia's birth rate headed for record low, startling figures reveal

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 12/01/2026

Startling new figures have revealed fewer couples are having children, with Australia's birth rate set to drop to a historic low. The 2025 Population Statement expects the fertility rate to fall to 1.42 children per woman in 2025-26, before a slight recovery to 1.62 by 2031-32.

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Why nutrition is central to independence under Support at Home

HelloCare, Other, 12/01/2026, Jakob Neeland

As the Support at Home reforms reshape the aged care landscape, providers face increasing demands to deliver tangible outcomes while navigating operational challenges and costs. Nutrition stands out as a key area for demonstrating real impact.

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How many Aussies are aged over 85? About the size of a whole state

The Senior, Other, 12/01/2026, Phoebe Loomes

There will soon be as many people over the age of 85 as there are South Australians, as a new report finds better health outcomes and declining birth rates are pushing the country's average age higher. The number of young Australians will make up a smaller percentage of the overall cohort over the next four decades, as a decrease in births and longer life expectancy increases population ageing , according to the 2025 Population Statement.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 12/01/2026, Lucy Breaden

Interview with Tasmanian Deputy Premier Guy Barnett about the state government's purchase of the Southern Cross Care site at St John's Park. Barnett discusses plans to transform the site into a new older person's mental health facility, providing care for those with mental illness and complex dementia, and says a master plan will be released mid-year to guide upgrades and service expansion. He emphasises that this is a long-term investment in state-of-the-art mental health services for older Tasmanians.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Campus Life program helping young people with disabilities transition after school

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026, Sarah Richards

Kathy Harris had often worried about what her son would do after high school due to the limited options available for neurodivergent young adults. The Brisbane mum said students who attended special school were often not expected to work and would attend programs that were "predominantly adult minding".

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PRIMARY CARE

When Anthony began taking a hair loss drug, the side effects emerged

Age, General News, 13/01/2026, Broede Carmody, Page 10

A spike in men presenting to GPs with unexpected depression and erectile dysfunction after taking hair loss medication has prompted doctors to issue a warning about slick social media advertisements and speedy telehealth appointments. The recommendation to consult a doctor face-to-face and use additional safeguards such as premedication blood tests comes as Gen Zs and Millennials increasingly turn to digital subscription services for hair, skin and mental health medications shipped to their door.

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

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GP bulk billing clinics surge

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/01/2026, Rob Inglis and Sue Bailey, Page 5

Thirty-seven Tasmanian general practice clinics are now offering full bulk billing after the federal government introduced an incentive scheme to encourage GPs to offer the benefit, a new report has

revealed. Online healthcare directory Cleanbill will release its annual Blue Report today, tracking trends in general practice costs across the nation.

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

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Why substituting one profession for another will not fix our health system, but make the problems worse

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/01/2026, Page 16

Experienced doctors Meg Creely and Fiona Beer say investment in health is a necessity It's late in the day. Your youngest child has had a fever for two days, is refusing to eat, and is clearly miserable.

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We've got your back

Border Mail, General News, 13/01/2026, Chelsea Wilson, Page 1

Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare has seen an overwhelming response by the community to help those forced from their homes in the Upper Murray bushfires. More than 2300 kilograms of food and essential items have been dropped to the FoodShare warehouse in West Wodonga.

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Bid to halt transfer limits

Launceston Examiner, General News, 13/01/2026, Annika Rhoades and Lauren Richardson, Page 1

A nursing union has called upon Tasmania's industrial tribunal to permanently halt the government's "unsafe and dangerous" patient transfer time limits. It comes after the Health Minister announced in late November 2025 that patients arriving at emergency departments via ambulance would be transferred to hospital staff within 45 minutes instead of 60 in a bid to combat ambulance ramping.

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Bulk-billing clinics balloon across Queensland, but patients are paying more

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 12/01/2026, Courtney Kruk

Queenslanders are paying nearly \$50 in out-of-pocket costs to visit a doctor, despite the number of bulk-billing services nearly doubling across the state in the past year, a report shows. The data, released on Monday by healthcare directory Cleanbill, puts the average out-of-pocket cost to visit a GP in Queensland at \$48.

[Read More](#)

Corryong urgent care centre and paramedics return amid anger over shutdown

The Border Mail, Other, 12/01/2026, Jodie Bruton

The Corryong hospital will fully reopen only when services can be delivered safely, Corryong Health's chief executive has said. Login or signup to continue reading Corryong Health reopened its urgent care centre on Monday morning, but other services remained closed since Friday, January 9, until further notice.

[Read More](#)

Surge in bulk billing GPs as report reveals cheapest and most expensive places to see a doctor

9News, Other, 12/01/2026, Sarah Swain

The average Sydneysider is paying \$50 to visit the GP despite a surge in practices offering bulk billing across the country. The latest data from health care directory Cleanbill has revealed a stunning turnaround in the number of GP clinics bulk billing.

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ABC Elite Athletes in Australian Women's Sport Survey: Results summary

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026

ABC Sport has released the results of its Elite Athletes in Australian Women's Sport Survey, in partnership with Deakin University. Here is a summary of the findings, based on 152 responses from elite athletes spanning 47 sports (including some participating in multiple sports).

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Nancarrow to oversee ECH home, community services

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 12/01/2026

Former ECH chief financial officer Merrin Nancarrow has been chosen to oversee the profit-for-purpose's domestic support, nursing and home care, allied health services and respite care. ECH – Enabling Confidence at Home – has appointed Merrin Nancarrow as the new head of home and community services.

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New 1800MEDICARE offers free health advice from a registered nurse, 24/7

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 12/01/2026, Anmj Staff

Australians can now access free health information and advice from a registered nurse from anywhere in the country, 24/7, by calling 1800MEDICARE (1800 633 422). Launched at the beginning of the year, the Albanese Government election commitment provides immediate support for non-emergency health concerns, including health information and advice and referral to other services such as GPs, hospitals, or Medicare Urgent Care clinics.

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Channel 10, 10 News, 12/01/2026

Australia's bulk billing rate has doubled over the past year, rising from 21% to 40%, largely in rural and regional areas, following federal changes to Medicare incentives for doctors. RACGP president Dr. Michael Wright said the increase shows that funding general practice works, though more is needed to ensure all Australians have affordable GP access. Out-of-pocket costs, however, continue to rise nationally, up 13% to between \$46 and \$61 for patients who cannot find a bulk billing GP.

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2CC, Canberra Live, 12/01/2026

The ACT has seen a rise in bulk billing GP clinics, increasing from 3 to 11 out of 101 practices following new federal incentive payments introduced in November. This means over 10% of Canberra's clinics now offer bulk billing, but the rate remains well below the national average of around 40%.

[Play Now](#)

2GB, Mornings, 12/01/2026, Luke Grant

Interview with Cleanbill CEO James Gillespie about the latest Blue Report on bulk billing. Gillespie says the Federal Government's expanded bulk billing incentive has reversed a long-term decline. He notes that out-of-pocket costs are increasing at clinics that don't bulk bill, while less urbanised states and territories such as Tasmania and the NT have seen larger gains in fully bulk billing due to higher regional incentives.

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4BC, Breakfast , 12/01/2026

Queensland patients are paying 12% more to see their doctor than they were just two years ago, as AMA Queensland warns the state's GP network is at a breaking point. President Dr Nick Yim stated that while doctors would prefer to bulk-bill, the 'decade-long failure' of Medicare rebates to keep pace with inflation has made it impossible for many.

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4BC, Breakfast , 12/01/2026, Jason Matthews

Interview with Dr Nick Yim, President, AMA Qld. Yim points out that they need the doctors, nurses, and allied health workers to work closely together. He points out that they also need Qld Health and management to provide good solutions for the community because Queenslanders deserve it.

[Play Now](#)

6PR, Drive, 12/01/2026, Mark Doran

Interview with Cleanbill CEO James Gillespie about fully bulk billing GP clinics. Gillespie discusses national growth, noting that the proportion of fully bulk billing clinics has doubled from one in five to two in five, with over 1,000 clinics switching to fully bulk billing. He highlights that WA and the ACT lag behind more rural states like the NT, and notes that average out-of-pocket costs have also increased for patients at non-bulk billing clinics.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 12/01/2026, Kelly Higgins-Devine

Interview with GP Dr. Bruce Willett about GP out-of-pocket costs and bulk billing. Willett says average gap fees of around \$50 align with what practices are experiencing, driven by years of Medicare rebate freezes and inadequate indexation that have failed to keep up with rising practice costs. He says that while bulk billing has increased, gaps are growing for non-bulk-billed patients and argues that reform is needed.

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

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 12/01/2026, David Reilly

Interview with Cleanbill CEO James Gillespie about changes to GP bulk billing in Tasmania. Gillespie says new federal incentives introduced on November 1 have led to a significant increase in fully bulk-billing clinics, with one in three clinics in Tasmania now offering bulk billing to all patients. He notes that the outcome is mixed, with average out-of-pocket costs for patients attending non-bulk-billing clinics rising above \$60, making Tasmania the most expensive state for standard GP consultations.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Breakfast , 12/01/2026, Clint Wheeldon

Interview with Cleanbill CEO James Gillespie about bulk billing trends in WA. Gillespie says his organisation's new report shows a significant turnaround, with the proportion of fully bulk-billing GP clinics in WA rising from about 6% last year to around one in five. He adds that while this is good news for patients who can access those clinics, out-of-pocket costs have continued to rise at practices that do not fully bulk bill, making the overall picture mixed.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Doctors seek action on e-scooter toll

The Australian, General News, 13/01/2026, Marcus de Blonk Smith, Page 3

Health experts have urged the Crisafulli government to take action as injuries and deaths linked to personal mobility devices such as e-scooters rise across the state. Last year, Queensland recorded 14 deaths linked to e-mobility devices including the deaths of an eight-year-old boy and 15-year-old just days apart.

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

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Drunk in public is a crime again

Courier Mail, General News, 13/01/2026, Hayden Johnson, Page 9

Public drunkenness is to be a criminal offence again in Queensland with Police Minister Dan Purdie indicating the government would reverse a Labor-era change and give police more power. The Courier-Mail last month reported the state LNP government was investigating whether to reintroduce public urination and public intoxication offences after they were removed in 2023 by the then Labor government.

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Lipoprotein (a) blood tests may prevent deadly inherited cholesterol in adults

The Courier Mail, Other, 12/01/2026, Robyn Riley

Health experts are calling for all adults to be screened for a potentially deadly type of cholesterol that cannot be controlled via exercise or diet. @rileyrobyn08 Every Australian adult should be screened for a potentially deadly type of inherited cholesterol, and if the simple blood test is funded experts say it would make Australia a leader in the fight against lipoprotein (a).

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

[Read More](#)

Former Labor Premier Peter Dowding urges WA to get on with it and copy NSW crackdown on illicit tobacco

West Australian, Other, 12/01/2026

The Labor Premier who passed WA's tobacco act has lashed the Cook Government over the slow pace of new laws to stop the flourishing black market trade of cheap cigarettes and vapes. Peter Dowding said he had been "badgering" the Government about the issue since the middle of last year — including Health Minister Meredith Hammat.

[Read More](#)

'Alarming': Calls grow for WA to follow other states lead in combatting illicit tobacco

6PR, Other, 12/01/2026, Chrissy Morrissy

New figures have revealed inspections of stores suspected of selling illicit tobacco have dropped as the Cook government has defended the delay in giving Western Australia Police greater powers to deal with illicit tobacco.

[Read More](#)

Health expert says 'it's a mystery' why WA is falling behind eastern states on illegal tobacco laws

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026

A public health expert has said "it's a mystery" why Western Australia is lagging behind the rest of the country on updating its illicit tobacco laws. A prominent public health expert says "it's a mystery" why Western Australia is lagging so far behind the rest of the country on updating its illicit tobacco laws.

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Labor pledges fertility treatment rebates as SA state election nears

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026

South Australian women and families could access a \$2,000 rebate to help cover out-of-pocket fertility treatment costs, Premier Peter Malinauskas has pledged ahead of the upcoming state election. He said that, if re-elected in March, a Labor government would cover up to \$4,000 — \$2,000 per cycle for two cycles — along with a \$250 rebate for pre-IVF fertility testing.

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WA health report card exposes where the state is struggling most

A stark divide between the wellbeing of regional West Australians and their metropolitan counterparts has been revealed in a new WA health report. Data from the WA Health and Wellbeing Surveillance 2024 shows a clear divide in health outcomes depending on where you live.

[Read More](#)

Truth about 'wonder supplement' creatine

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 12/01/2026, Will Stoddart

These days, you're just as likely to see a glamorous TikTok influencer espousing the benefits of taking creatine as you are a bodybuilder. Once the preserve of athletes looking to bulk up, it is the wellness supplement du jour – taken to boost energy, ease menopause symptoms, and even prevent brain decline.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

A little girl who wrote the book on courage

Daily Telegraph, General News, 13/01/2026, Savannah Pocock, Page 7

A 12-year-old girl who passed away from brain cancer will live on through her inspirational words after surprising her parents by leaving a book telling her remarkable story. Baulkham Hills schoolgirl Mikayla Lo died last month after spending most of her young life battling Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (GIPG) a condition she was diagnosed with at age 4.

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Huge spike in death by euthanasia

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 13/01/2026, Erin Jones, Page 1

More than 250 South Australians chose to end their lives through euthanasia last financial year a 150 per cent increase since it was legalised three years ago. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board's annual report shows the median age of applicants was 75, but the age range spanned from 25 to 104.

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

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Multiple myeloma hits men

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/01/2026, Page 10

Rates of multiple myeloma, the second most common blood cancer in the US, are increasing and are twice as high in men than in women, international researchers have found. They found the difference between the sexes was likely to be heavily influenced by biological differences.

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Where's our scanner?

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 13/01/2026, Ben Silvester, Page 1

A leading south-west cancer care campaigner says locals have been "hoodwinked" by a key state government election promise. The Labor government promised Warrnambool one of eight positron emission tomography (PET) scanners on the condition locals voted them back into office in 2022.

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At the end of life, pharmacists are essential

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 12/01/2026, Chloe Hava

PSA's aspire Palliative Care Foundation Training Program gives pharmacists the skills to deliver this vital care – to patients and families alike. Australia's population is living to a greater age, which in turn

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Menopause, ADHD add up to harder daily juggle

Age, General News, 13/01/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 12

When Vivian Dunstan hit menopause about four years ago, life suddenly got much harder. Diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in her 50s, Dunstan had struggled with staying attentive and on time at various stages of her life.

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

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\$33m for mental health hub site

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/01/2026, David Killick, Page 2

The state government has paid \$33m for a prime inner suburban site to use as the home for a new mental health hub. The 3.9-hectare St Johns Park property includes Southern Cross Care's Rosary Gardens Residential Aged Care facility and will become the location of Tasmania's new Older Persons Mental Health Facility.

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

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Doctors are losing patients

West Australian, General News, 13/01/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 11

Mental health and chronic pain patients are more likely to be considered difficult by their doctor, according to an international study. Researchers found that doctors perceived one in six of their patients as difficult.

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Australian teenagers plead for help as school pressure fuels youth mental health crisis

Adelaide Now, Other, 12/01/2026

Teenagers like the Truongs are crying out for adults to take their mental health concerns seriously. And schools can play a huge part in making or breaking stress and anxiety.

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

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Management of ADHD – a guide for GPs

Medical Forum, Other, 12/01/2026, David Roberts

Most Australian states are changing stimulant medicines prescribing rules to enable GPs to independently diagnose and manage Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in response to increasing demand for assessment. In WA, GP's will be able to diagnose and treat adults and children over 10 years of age.

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Stupid risk

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 13/01/2026, Page 14

People who shun vaccinations are leaving children and the most vulnerable exposed. Researchers found that doctors perceived one in six of their patients as difficult.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Basecamp Research launches world-first AI models for programmable gene insertion

Ballarat Courier, Other, 13/01/2026

The breakthrough tackles a longstanding challenge in genetic medicine with the goal of developing a new generation of curative cell and gene therapies. Developed in collaboration with NVIDIA by training the largest evolutionary AI models on a new, globally collected dataset, accelerated by NVIDIA BioNeMo.

Also reported by: [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#)

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Fears over wait times

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 13/01/2026, Isabella Davis, Page 1

A local medical imaging service is concerned Kalgoorlie-Boulder's hospital is not referring them, meaning patients could be waiting weeks for urgent scans. However, the WA Country Health Service says it works closely with other service providers in the community and the team at Kalgoorlie Health Campus continues to advise patients of their imaging options.

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The Sydney suburbs saying no to fast food giants in the name of 'heart and character'

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026

For certain Sydney communities, protecting their identity means pushing back against the fast food giants. In recent months, some inner-city suburbs have rallied in a bid to reject development proposals, voicing their opinions on social media, in submissions to council and even with vandalism.

[Read More](#)

Funding conflict could close some homeless services in Medicine Hat

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 13/01/2026

A stop-gap measure to help Medicine Hat's unhoused and vulnerable population this winter may close as a funding controversy comes to the fore. The southeast Alberta city has been without a dedicated daytime shelter since last winter when uproar from neighbours as well as zoning problems forced a services hub operated by The Mustard Seed near downtown to close.

PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Premier wants baby unit probe

Courier Mail, General News, 13/01/2026, Hayden Johnson, Page 3

Premier David Crisafulli has ordered his health minister investigate the death of a baby and the serious injury of another at Toowoomba Hospital's maternity unit. The tragedies were among a litany of horror claims by mothers in the Darling Downs region that sparked calls for an independent inquiry.

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

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'Very busy and distracted': S8 drugs kept in unlocked locker

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 12/01/2026, Kate Cowling

Open metal lockers in the staff locker room. In one of them, a nurse's clothes are hanging on a hanger - one turquoise smocks and white trousers.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Medics slam 'unsafe' solution for ramping

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/01/2026, Rob Inglis, Page 2

Nurses and doctors are calling on the state government to scrap a new measure designed to reduce ambulance ramping, saying its implementation would "make an unsafe situation worse". The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), supported by the Australian Medical Association (AMA), has escalated a longstanding dispute with the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) to the state's industrial tribunal.

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

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'Serious concerns': Nobody in charge Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital, admin claims

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 12/01/2026, Thomas Sargeant

A major Sydney hospital has claimed the top doctor in the emergency room overnight is not 'in-charge', after a union asked for tens of thousands of dollars in back pay over five years. Nobody is technically in charge at one of Sydney's busiest emergency departments overnight, a senior hospital leader has claimed in a pay dispute with doctors, saving the state government just \$22.

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

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Cosmetic nurse banned for two years after injecting botox without consultation or script

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 12/01/2026, Anmj Staff

A Queensland nurse who unlawfully injected botox into a patient without consulting a doctor or obtaining a prescription has been banned from practising for at least two years. Investigations by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, found Thia Sullivan also created false records in relation to the cosmetic treatments and provided false and misleading information and documents to Ahpra investigators on three occasions in September 2019 and March 2020.

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Nurse banned for illegal botox

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 12/01/2026

Queensland nurse Thia Sullivan has been banned from nursing for two years after investigations from Ahpra determined she had unlawfully and inappropriately injected a formulation of botulinum toxin into a patient without consulting a doctor or obtaining a prescription

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Anthony Albanese's government set to slash the cost of blockbuster weight-loss drug

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 12/01/2026, Sarah Brookes

Millions of Australians living with obesity could soon gain cheaper access to a blockbuster weight-loss drug, with the federal government preparing to act on expert advice to subsidise the Ozempic-like medication Wegovy. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has recommended that Wegovy be listed on the PBS for adults with obesity and established cardiovascular disease.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

The north's flu-nami

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 13/01/2026, Caitlan Charles, Page 1

North Queensland is facing a health perfect storm as flu cases more than double their five year average, while a rise in deadly soil-borne germs and the return of preventable diseases like measles spark fears that public complacency is winning the "information war" against vaccination. Official figures showing 4400 labconfirmed flu cases are just the "tip of the iceberg," health experts warn.

Super K flu strain sparks concern as Australia braces for brutal season in 2026

7news.com.au, Other, 12/01/2026, Aimee Edwards

'You're going to feel absolutely dreadful. And those who are vulnerable can end up in hospital or worse.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 12/01/2026, Monique Wright and David Woiwod

Interview with Dr Ginni Mansberg, Sunrise GP. Compere discusses that more than 2500 Australians are battling a highly transmissible new strain of influenza dubbed "Super-K". Mansberg explains that if a lot of people are around with the strain, people are going to feel dreadful, and those who are vulnerable could end up in the hospital or worse.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

2026 is the year of obesity pills. Here's how they could reshape the GLP-1 market

West Australian, Other, 12/01/2026, Annika Kim

The booming glp-1 space was built on weekly injections. In 2026, new obesity pills will push the market into its next chapter.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#)

[Read More](#)

Herbal remedy ArmaForce causes severe reaction for Perth woman

ABC Online, Other, 12/01/2026, Emma Wynne

On December 30, Perth woman Kerry Smith felt a scratchy throat coming on and decided to take ArmaForce, a complementary medicine that promotes boosted immunity and relief from cold and flu symptoms, which she had taken before with no ill effects. [...] Multiple safety reviews While many members of the public have never heard of Andrographis paniculata, it has been on the radar of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) since 2008, when it first reviewed the medication "in response to adverse event reports and community concerns about anaphylaxis," it said in a statement.

[Read More](#)

Scheduling change for adrenaline product

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 12/01/2026, Chris Brooker

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has decided to downschedule intransal preparations containing 2% or less of adrenaline to Pharmacist Only (Schedule 3) medicines. The TGA's Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling (ACMS) made the interim decision at its June 2025 meeting, publicly released in late December.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 12/01/2026, Damian Smith

Interview with ASCIA president Dr. Michael O'Sullivan about allergic reactions to complementary medicines containing andrographis paniculata. O'Sullivan discusses the unpredictability of severe allergic reactions, and emphasises the importance of prompt treatment and reporting adverse events to the TGA. He argues that there is limited evidence of benefit for many complementary medicines, making the risk-benefit balance questionable when serious side effects like anaphylaxis are possible.

Continuing on: [ABC Radio Perth \(Perth\)](#), [ABC Radio Perth \(Perth\)](#)

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Out with the old for top kitchen hygiene

Age, General News, 13/01/2026, Emily Smith, Page 18

You're spending time, effort and money cooking good food at home but you might be missing one crucial ingredient: kitchen hygiene. You might think you keep a pretty clean kitchen.

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

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AICIS

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