



TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 16th January 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian \(page 7\)](#)** reports that Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said this week that more than 400,000 Australians are currently using GLP-1 weight loss drugs. *Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#).*
- **[The Australian \(online\)](#)** reports that groundbreaking Australian research is offering hope for the fatal childhood brain cancer DIPG.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 19\)](#)** reports that small lifestyle changes such as five minutes of extra movement could limit preventable deaths in Australia.
- **[The Age \(page 14\)](#)** reports that evidence is growing that artificial turf poses damage to human health by leaching forever chemicals and microplastics into waterways.
- **[The Herald \(online\)](#)** reports that Meals on Wheels has begun a meals waiting list for the first time as a response to funding shortfalls, with Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing Sam Rae facing questions over major changes to the Federal Aged Care Act and Home Care Packages. *Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).*
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 3\)](#)** reports that Australians may avoid 10 years of ageing caused by potential side-effects of weight-loss injections by starting strength training to prevent the loss of

muscle and bone mass. *Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).*

- **[The Courier Mail \(page 21\)](#)** reports that AHPRA is working to add hundreds of permanent sexual misconduct marks to health worker's records on the national public health register dating back as far as 2010. *Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).*
- **[The Hobart Mercury \(page 7\)](#)** reports that an Australian breakthrough cure for sepsis may save millions of lives.
- **[ABC Online \(online\)](#)** reports that older Australians are being warned to avoid climbing ladders, as Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures show there were more than 6000 falls from ladders resulting in hospitalisation in 2023-24.
- **[The Guardian \(online\)](#)** reports that unregulated medical advice could endanger the public with the launch of ChatGPT Health in Australia.

MINISTER BUTLER

Wealth gap drives push for cheaper weight-loss drugs

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/01/2026, Michael Smith, Page 4

Doctors are calling on pharmaceutical companies to charge less for weightloss drugs on the private market as the federal government grapples with a push to broaden access to the medications beyond people with diabetes and heart disease.

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

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Weight loss drugs changing how people spend money

The Australian, General News, 16/01/2026, Emma Kirk, Page 7

Weight-loss medications are changing how people spend their money, with new research finding some users are cutting back on groceries but splurging on items like beauty products. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler revealed on Sunrise this week that more than 400,000 Australians were currently using Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) weight loss drugs.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#).

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Cutting costs a focus

Bundaberg Today, General News, 16/01/2026, Janette Young, Page 3

The Federal Government has set its sights on reining in the cost of the NDIS, which now supports about 750,000 Australians. Health Minister Mark Butler has said the government aims to get the growth rate of new participants down from 12 per cent a year, to 5 per cent to 6 per cent.

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RFW welcomes funding boost

Dubbo Photo News, General News, 15/01/2026, Sharon Bonthuys, Page 31

Royal Far West (RFW) has welcomed the Australian Government's announcement last month of \$3.5 million in funding for 2026-27 to continue its paediatric allied health service, which supports children with developmental delays in rural and remote schools and preschools across Australia. [...] We sincerely thank Minister for Health Mark Butler and the Department of Health for their continued support of country kids and their families," she added.

Also reported by: [South Burnett Today \(Kingaroy\)](#).

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Ellenbrook Medicare urgent care clinic is officially open

Echo News, Other, 15/01/2026

The Ellenbrook Medicare urgent care clinic, located at 7/150 Coolamon Boulevard, has officially

opened with extended hours seven days a week from 10am to 8pm. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new clinic will be open seven days a week, for extended hours and most importantly patients will be fully bulk billed.

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Hundreds of additional GP training places for 2026

Medical Forum, Other, 15/01/2026

The Federal government will invest \$14.5 million to support an additional 306 fully funded places on the Australian GP Training (AGPT) Program in 2026.[...] The investment will take the total number of doctors commencing GP training to around 2,100, a 14% increase on the 1,840 achieved in 2025, according to Health Minister Mark Butler.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

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MINISTER RAE

Aged Care funding for Temora

Temora Independent, General News, 15/01/2026, Noel Fisher, Page 5

Temora has received another large investment in the health and well being of the shire with the Federal government's announcement of \$19.5 million through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program (ACCAP), to support Whiddon's \$25.6 million redevelopment of Narraburra Lodge.[...] Federal Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, The Hon Sam Rae MP, expressed the Government's commitment with the announcement.

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Meals on Wheels CEO warns aged care reforms could overwhelm providers

Herald Sun, Other, 15/01/2026, Tom McGann

A major Australian elderly charity has warned new federal aged care reforms could overwhelm community providers, with the organisation's leader revealing the shake-up comes after funding shortfalls last year triggered meal waiting lists for the first time. [...] The Daily Telegraph asked Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing, Sam Rae why CHSP funding had not been reviewed.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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DEPARTMENT

Changes a concern

Bundaberg Today, General News, 16/01/2026, Janette Young, Page 1

The countdown is on to a seismic shift in the way the NDIS is delivered to people with disability. [...] A spokesperson for the NDIA said public consultation on the New Framework Planning rules would commence shortly and would be undertaken by the Department of Health Disability and Ageing (DHDA).

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Also reported by: [South Burnett Today \(Kingsley\)](#).

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New endometriosis and pelvic pain clinic to open in Wagga

Gundagai Independent, General News, 15/01/2026, Page 9

Gundagai patients will be able to benefit from a new Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinic that will open in Wagga Wagga in early 2026, providing access to specialised care for endometriosis, pelvic pain, perimenopause and menopause for people across the Murrumbidgee region. The clinic, which will be delivered by Nova Health Co, is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing as part of its national expansion of Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinics.

Also reported by: [Tumut and Adelong Times \(Online\)](#).

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UM lands \$10m federal campaign for cheaper medicines

Mumbrella, Other, 15/01/2026, Eleanor Dickinson

The Federal government has launched a new campaign promoting capped PBS prescription charges, awarding UM Australia a \$10 million contract to run the campaign over the next six months. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing unveiled a new ad yesterday highlighting the new \$25 cap on prescriptions under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for those with a Medicare card.

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Charging just the gap will soon be possible

The Medical Republic, Other, 15/01/2026, Holly Payne

But it's gonna be kind of lame.[...] Now, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has officially launched a consultation on the proposed new system, which is set to kick off by 1 July 2028.

[Read More](#)

WIN Bendigo, WIN News, 14/01/2026, Bruce Roberts

News Starting your plan from age 60 can help to ensure you have comprehensive documents in place. I have made a plan with myself.

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ABC Newcastle, Early Mornings, 15/01/2026, Paul Turton

Interview with Michael Wright, President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, on UK-trained doctors moving to Australia. Turnton reports figures from the Department of Health and Aged Care and the National Health Service show that 80% of doctors who moved to Australia between October 2024 and December last year were from the UK. Wright says pressures in the UK health system, including underfunding and high demand, have made Australia an attractive option, while GP shortages remain across much of regional and non-metropolitan Australia.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Changes a concern

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Meals on Wheels CEO warns aged care reforms could overwhelm providers

Herald Sun, Other, 15/01/2026, Tom McGann

A major Australian elderly charity has warned new federal aged care reforms could overwhelm community providers, with the organisation's leader revealing the shake-up comes after funding shortfalls last year triggered meal waiting lists for the first time. [...] The Daily Telegraph asked Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing, Sam Rae why CHSP funding had not been reviewed.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Bed shortage likely to worsen

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 15/01/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Providers have told CBRE the sector is improving, but challenges remain in addressing the supply shortage, Marcello Caspani-Muto tells AAA. Australia is 65 years behind schedule to meet the forecasted demand for aged care beds in 2047, CBRE Australia notes in its 2026 Seniors Living Report, and with occupancy rates in the residential aged care sector already hovering in the mid-nineties, the country is facing a major supply challenge.

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Spotlight on health inequality

Community Care Review, Other, 15/01/2026

This year, AAG will be focusing its attention on the chronic disease divide, how it impacts the independence of older people and how prevention, management and treatment can be improved. Around 80 per cent of Australians aged 65 or older have at least one selected chronic health condition and 28 per cent had three or more.

[Read More](#)

How aged care reforms are quietly gutting food and nutrition support for older Australians

HelloCare, Other, 15/01/2026, Jakob Neeland

Australia's aged care reforms were sold as a long-overdue reset: safer, fairer and centred on dignity and choice. But beneath the policy slogans lies an uncomfortable reality.

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Will 2026 deliver Australia's first super-sized aged care operator?

The Weekly Source, Other, 15/01/2026, Lauren Broomham

To truly break into super-scale territory, operators will have to build – and this is where the maths starts to fall apart. The end of the Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) on 1 November theoretically gives providers more freedom to decide where, what and how to build

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Cutting costs a focus

Bundaberg Today, General News, 16/01/2026, Janette Young, Page 3

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PRIMARY CARE

'Catastrophic': Teens buying peptides online

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/01/2026, Euan Black, Page 3

Teenagers as young as 14 are injecting themselves with peptides bought online. Queensland academic Timothy Piatkowski says peptides are a bigger problem than steroids.

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

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Doctors: lose the fat, but keep the muscle

Courier Mail, General News, 16/01/2026, Georgia Palgan & Adrienne Tam, Page 3

Australians may beat 10 years of ageing if they start strength training exercises to prevent losing muscle and bone mass now identified as one of the potential detrimental side-effects of weight-loss injections. New Deakin University research has revealed up to 50 per cent of weight lost from injectable GLP-1 medication soon to be subsidised by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme might be associated with muscle and bone mass, the equivalent to 10 years of ageing.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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ABC Radio Sydney, Evenings, 15/01/2026, Rebecca De Unamuno

Interview with Kate Day, Program Coordinator at Doctors for Mudgee Region, on the reopening of the Gulgong Medical Centre. Day says the town's only GP clinic has reopened after an 18-month closure caused by staff shortages, which had forced residents to travel long distances for medical care. She says the closure led to increased pressure on nearby services, including a rise in emergency department presentations in Mudgee.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Wealth gap drives push for cheaper weight-loss drugs

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/01/2026, Michael Smith, Page 4

Doctors are calling on pharmaceutical companies to charge less for weightloss drugs on the private market as the federal government grapples with a push to broaden access to the medications beyond people with diabetes and heart disease.

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

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Six rules to fight the battle of the bulge

Australian Financial Review, General News, 16/01/2026, Euan Black, Page 31

Health a growing school of thought says getting slimmer is more complicated than appetite versus exercise, writes Euan Black. Eat less, move more.

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Weight loss drugs changing how people spend money

The Australian, General News, 16/01/2026, Emma Kirk, Page 7

Weight-loss medications are changing how people spend their money, with new research finding some users are cutting back on groceries but splurging on items like beauty products. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler revealed on Sunrise this week that more than 400,000 Australians were currently using Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) weight loss drugs.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#).

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The goal posts for a longer, healthier life are closer than you think they are

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/01/2026, Sarah Berry, Page 19

What are the smallest lifestyle changes we need to make to live longer and to extend our healthspan? Two new studies suggest that the goalposts to a healthier, longer life are much closer than we think.

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Aussie cure for sepsis may save millions

Hobart Mercury, General News, 16/01/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 7

Australian scientists have cracked the secret to treating deadly, advanced sepsis in a breakthrough that

could save millions of lives each year. A drug developed by teams in Brisbane and Canberra is on track to be the first on the world market to reverse organ failure in sepsis patients when antibiotics fail to halt the silent killer.

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Beat the heat

Safe To Work, General News, 01/02/2026, Page 40

Even though dehydration and heat stress are preventable, miners across the country continue to be affected by these conditions every summer. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in a recent 10-year window, extreme heat was responsible for 7104 hospitalisations and 293 deaths across Australia.

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Antidepressants less effective for many living with atypical depression, new study finds

ABC Online, Other, 16/01/2026, Stephanie Dalzell & Paige Cockburn

After trying different treatments for a severe depressive episode, Alexis Hutcheon felt like she was "constantly failing". [...] Antidepressant use is growing in Australia, with various forms dispensed to about 3.7 million people in 2023-24, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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Trauma medics warn over-60s against climbing ladders as 6,000 people hospitalised in a year

ABC Online, Other, 15/01/2026, Emma Pollard & Janelle Miles

Peter Wood had been cleaning windows on the second storey of his home when the extension ladder he was using gave way and he tumbled more than three metres, landing on his back.[...] Across the nation in 2023-24, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures show there were more than 6000 falls on and from ladders that resulted in hospitalisations.

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'Not regulated': launch of ChatGPT Health in Australia causes concern among experts

The Guardian, Other, 16/01/2026, Melissa Davey

A 60-year-old man with no history of mental illness presented at a hospital emergency department insisting that his neighbour was poisoning him. Over the next 24 hours he had worsening hallucinations, and tried to escape the hospital.

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'They quiet the food noise': the battle to get weight-loss drugs on the PBS

Newcastle Herald, Other, 15/01/2026, Damon Cronshaw

Louise Troy dropped three dress sizes, her blood sugar stabilised and her thunderclap migraines stopped after taking GLP-1 weight-loss drugs. Mrs Troy, 41, has tried Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro over the past year.

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Do I have a drinking problem?

Mamamia, Other, 15/01/2026

Why are women less likely to receive CPR than men? Is your drinking a problem?

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Leap in drug development gives hope to children with incurable brain cancer

The Australian, Other, 15/01/2026, Natasha Robinson

The childhood brain cancer DIPG is a death sentence for kids diagnosed with the disease. That could be about to change thanks to groundbreaking Australian research.

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Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 15/01/2026, Holly Stearnes

Interview with Holly Holliday, Early Career Researcher with the Brain Tumour Group at the Children's Cancer Institute, on a new combination treatment for childhood brain cancer. Holliday says the research focuses on diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), a highly aggressive tumour with a typical survival of nine to 12 months. She says two existing drugs were found to work synergistically in laboratory studies to halt tumour cell growth, with one drug already proven safe in children through clinical trials.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Gen-Z service rewrites approach to male mental health

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 15/01/2026

A Gen-Z led mental health organisation is using a new approach to connect with young men experiencing behavioural and other challenges, with plans to expand across Australia. Australian males, particularly young men, face one of the nation's most severe mental health crises.

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IMMUNISATION

Boost to shingles vax uptake

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 15/01/2026

The introduction of a two-dose schedule of Shingrix (recombinant protein subunit) herpes zoster vaccine on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) in Nov 2023 has resulted in a 40% increase in vaccination in Australians aged 65 , according to the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). Shingrix (GSK), which was previously only available privately, replaced the single-dose Zostavax on the NIP, as it provides superior, longer-lasting protection and is safe for immunocompromised people.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

RFW welcomes funding boost

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Also reported by: [South Burnett Today \(Kingaroy\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News, 15/01/2026, Jennifer Keyte

Professor Mark von Itzstein and a team of Queensland researchers have developed a potential new drug to treat advanced sepsis, a condition that kills about 11 million people globally each year and can cause widespread organ failure. The experimental treatment, designed to reverse organ damage when antibiotics fail, has been trialled in 180 patients in early-stage studies in China with promising results. A global phase three human clinical trial is planned, and if successful, the drug could be available within two years.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 15/01/2026, Monique Wright & David Woiwod

A drug developed in a Brisbane laboratory by Professor Mark von Itzstein is being reported as a potential treatment for antibiotic-resistant sepsis. Sepsis is estimated to cause 11 million deaths globally each year, accounting for about 20% of annual deaths in 2020, and is a leading cause of disability worldwide. The drug has completed two major clinical trials in China with reported success and is expected to enter phase three trials.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Channel 9, Nine News, 15/01/2026, Monika Kos

WA's public hospital maintenance system has been described as inadequate in a system-wide audit that delivered 24 findings and eight recommendations. The report found maintenance was largely reactive and underdeveloped, with resourcing constraints, limited oversight, a growing backlog and lengthy procurement processes contributing to delays. Health Infrastructure Minister John Carey says he accepts responsibility and all recommendations, while the opposition notes the findings confirm long-standing warnings about the state of hospital maintenance.

Report continues on: [Channel 9 \(Perth\)](#).

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ABC Radio Darwin , Territory-wide Mornings, 15/01/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with John Zorbas, President of the Australian Medical Association NT, on the performance of the NT Health system. Zorbas says the NT Health annual report shows major targets were missed, including emergency department wait times and elective surgery admissions. He says staff are working hard but face burnout due to funding shortfalls, ageing infrastructure, bed block from lack of aged care places, and a reported health funding gap of about \$400m.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Evenings, 15/01/2026, Rebecca De Unamuno

The WA Government has promised an overhaul of public hospital maintenance following a scathing review that identified problems with processes, funding, and data collection. The review found maintenance was overly reactive and inconsistent, with about three-quarters of work at major health services focused on reactive maintenance and no dedicated fund for infrastructure renewal. Health Infrastructure Minister John Carey says responsibility rests with him to deliver improvements, while Opposition Leader Basil Zempilas says the reforms are long overdue.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Record cancer care nurses investment

South Burnett Today, General News, 15/01/2026, Jessica McGrath, Page 6

The possible reality of a Burnett cancer care nurse is a little closer after the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler announced a record investment in cancer nursing. On 6 January Jane McGrath Day saw the Sydney Cricket Grounds turn pink on day three of the NRMA Insurance Pink Test in support of the McGrath Foundation's bid for breast cancer.

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Medical Forum, Other, 15/01/2026

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

'Kickbacks' for surgeons trio's 'operating profit'

Courier Mail, General News, 16/01/2026, Nicola Mcnamara & Taylah Fellows, Page 1

A medical company director received nearly \$3m in a kickback scheme involving Queensland Health surgeons, police have alleged in court documents as the man faces court for the first time. Elliott Charles Lacaze, 38, faced Brisbane Magistrates Court on Thursday alongside Ashgrove neurosurgeon Richard William Laherty, 53, and Brookfield surgeon Dihan Taranga Aponso, 45.

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Indecent exposure

Courier Mail, General News, 16/01/2026, Ashleigh Gleeson, Page 21

Hundreds of doctors and other health professionals will have a permanent sexual misconduct mark slapped against their names on the national public health register from April this year. [...] AHPRA is now working to add permanent sexual misconduct marks to the names of what is anticipated to be hundreds of health workers relating to matters dating back as far as 2010.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Surgeons 'took bribes' for \$2.8 million hospital sales

Canberra Times, Other, 15/01/2026, Rex Martinich

Two surgeons allegedly took secret payments to have public hospitals purchase or lease more than \$2.8 million worth of medical equipment and surgical implants. Spine surgeons Richard William Laherty, 53, and Dihan Taranga Aponso, 45, faced Brisbane Magistrates Court on Thursday each on multiple counts of misconduct in public office and official corruption.

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

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

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AICIS

Push to turf out plastic grass amid growing environmental, health disaster

Age, General News, 16/01/2026, Caitlin Fitzsimmons, Page 14

Public backlash against synthetic turf and rubber crumb is growing as evidence mounts about the damage to human health and the environment from the plastic heating to extreme temperatures and leaching forever chemicals and microplastics into waterways. The plastic surfaces have become popular with councils and schools for parks, playgrounds and sporting pitches across Australian cities because it is cheaper, easier to maintain and can allow a higher usage for community sport.

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

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