



TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 17th January 2026

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The **[Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 1) reports that high-needs NDIS clients are being virtually imprisoned and traded among unscrupulous care providers for their lucrative NDIS packages. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#), [Courier Mail](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Hobart Mercury](#).*
- The **[Saturday Age](#)** (page 1) reports that overseas-trained professionals including nurses are using New Zealand as an employment 'back door' to sidestep regulators in Australia.
- The **[Courier Mail](#)** (page 1) reports that a Brisbane man says Townsville University Hospital should have contacted him when his adult son died instead of holding his body for six weeks.
- The **[West Australian](#)** (page 1) reports that WA Premier Roger Cook has not explained why he skipped Thursday's press conference unveiling a scathing report on hospital maintenance.
- The **[Canberra Times](#)** (page 1) reports that 63 per cent of new medical interns at Canberra's public hospitals are ANU graduates, significantly up on previous years.
- The **[Australian Financial Review](#)** (page 2) reports that top-tier private health insurance policies have ballooned in price in the last five years. Minister for Health Mark Butler is expected to announce a decision on annual premium increases in the next month.
- The **[Weekend Australian](#)** (page 3) reports that restrictions have been placed on prominent cosmetic injectables practitioner John Holbrook following an unspecified complaint to the

- The **Saturday Paper** (page 3) reports that declining private health cover and struggling private hospitals have led to calls for a National Efficient Price, which Minister for Health Mark Butler said is not government policy but is among options being considered by the sector.
- The **West Australian** (page 3) reports that Curtin University is developing an AI chatbot to help with the mental wellbeing of students unwilling to seek out professional assistance.
- The **Sydney Morning Herald** (page 7) reports that Heart Research Institute chief Professor Andrew Coats says Australia's research sector is in crisis while an excess \$5 billion sits in the Medical Research Future Fund. Minister for Health Mark Butler said the government is considering the results of a review into the fund's operation. *Also reported by: Saturday Age*
- The **Weekend Australian** (page 9) reports that Monash University researchers are pushing for a national genomic screening program for congenital cancer markers based on their DNA Screen study. *Also reported by: The Australian, Daily Telegraph, Channel 10 News+*

MINISTER BUTLER

The new year insurance shock facing Australians

AFR Weekend, General News, 17/01/2026, Michael Smith, Page 2

The price of top private health insurance cover for a family has blown out to almost \$17,000 a year as consumers brace for above-inflation premium hikes from April and consumers abandon gold-tier policies in droves.

Also reported by: Australian Financial Review (Online).

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'Toxic dynamics'

The Saturday Paper, General News, 17/01/2026, Mike Secombe, Page 3

To an increasing extent, Australians in private healthcare are downgrading their insurance cover, private hospitals are failing and millions of Australians are delaying or skipping the care they need because they can't meet rising out-of-pocket costs. [...] A spokesperson for Health Minister Mark Butler said the proposals "are not Government policy" but one of a range of options "being considered" by the CEO Forum, a body established a year ago that comprises the heads of for-profit and non-profit private health businesses, including insurers and hospital operators.

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Leading cardiologist warns medical research in crisis over unspent funding

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 17/01/2026, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 6

The head of Australia's Heart Research Institute has seen first hand what world-leading medical research can do: the centre was the first to uncover a link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease and, more recently, has pioneered world-first clinical trials for an anti-clotting drug to treat strokes. [...] Asked about the issue earlier this month, Health Minister Mark Butler said the health and medical research budget was about 250 per cent bigger than it was 15 years ago.

Also reported by: The Saturday Age (Melbourne).

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We have to unplug our tech addiction

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 68

More than 100,000 Australian kids could be affected by clinical gaming disorder, say experts [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler admitted gaming and screen addiction "is a real and growing concern for children" but would not commit to any new initiatives.

Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Herald Sun (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Mercury (Online), Northern Territory News (Online).

Ellenbrook Medicare urgent care clinic is officially open

Echo, General News, 16/01/2026, Page 4

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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Medicare urgent care clinics open at Brookvale and Chatswood

Manly Daily, Other, 16/01/2026, Joanne Vella

Medicare urgent care clinics have arrived on the north shore and northern beaches with practices at Brookvale and Chatswood. [...] "The Chatswood Medicare Urgent Care Clinic is a game changer for families in the Chatswood region," Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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New data shows over 40 per cent of GP clinics now bulk-billing nationwide

Ranges Trader Mail, Other, 16/01/2026, Callum Ludwig

Healthcare directory Cleanbill's first Blue Report since the Australian Government expanded the bulk-billing incentive to non-concession patients has been released. [...] Minister for Health Mark Butler was asked about the report in an interview with ABC Radio National, and despite previously holding and maintaining a view that Cleanbill's data 'should not be relied upon', said if there are other parts of the country that also are finding it difficult to see levels of bulk billing that we enjoy in other parts of the country, then they're open to looking at intervention.

Also reported by: [Upper Yarra Mail \(Online\)](#), [Mountain Views Mail \(Online\)](#), [Ferntree Gully Mail \(Online\)](#).

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More doctors are coming into the health system

Starts at 60, Other, 16/01/2026, Matt Lennon

The Albanese Government has announced a \$14.5 million investment to fund an additional 306 general practice training places in 2026, lifting the total number of doctors commencing GP training to around 2,100. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the additional training places would have a nationwide impact.

[Read More](#)

3AW, Drive, 16/01/2026, James Willis

Interview with Push Mobility managing director Shane Hryhorec about Jetstar's policy on disabled passengers. He says as a wheelchair user, he can say that airlines in Australia are disgraceful. He says the Federal Government is undertaking a review but he believes it is going to be a tokenistic effort. He says that he visited Minister for Disability Mark Butler recently and he could not even get inside the office.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

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MINISTER RAE

Council of Elders welcomes new members

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/01/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The government has appointed nine new members to the Aged Care Council of Elders. [...] Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae said Australia's aged care system is better thanks to the "practical, passionate insights and diverse experience" of the council members.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

ABC News, News Breakfast, 16/01/2026, Catherine Murphy and Emma Rebellato

Interview with Communications Minister Anika Wells on the impact of the social media ban for under-16s. New data shows nearly 5 million social media accounts in Australia have been deactivate since the ban. Wells says the Albanese Government had a huge boost to mental health funding in the budget in May in the run-up to this December reform. She says she and Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride will continue to work with mental health peaks on the issue of the mental health of young people.

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

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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DEPARTMENT

New endometriosis and pelvic pain clinic to open in Wagga

Tumut & Adelong Times, General News, 16/01/2026, Page 7

Tumut 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.

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The NT's last private obstetrician walks away as maternity services face collapse

ABC Online, Other, 16/01/2026, Roxanne Fitzgerald

When Sophia Scaturchio gave birth to her daughter in Darwin last year, it was under the care of a private obstetrician who knew her medical history, her risks and her name. [...] While the NT

government promised to "act swiftly", almost a year on, a spokesperson from the federal health department confirmed it was still waiting to receive a final funding request from the territory for more support.

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Narrogin Regional Homecare Services transition to external provider Silverchain following Aged Care Act change

Narrogin Observer, Other, 16/01/2026, Hannah Whitehead

A State homecare provider is set to take Wheatbelt residents under its wing after the Shire of Narrogin council resolved to transition its shire-run service to an external provider. [...] Before this transition, the shire must receive approval from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to exit its Commonwealth Home Support Program agreement.

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

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Hate late nights? Day raves are the new way to party (and over-30s are obsessed)

Body And Soul, Other, 16/01/2026, Alex Davies

If a night out is too exhausting, embrace the new wave of day dance parties and enjoy the beat without the burnout. [...] Having the same bed and wake-up time each day helps set up healthy sleep patterns, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website.

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Proposed expansion of Medicare rebated MRI access

Medical Forum, Other, 16/01/2026

A review of Medicare covered MRI services could result in an expansion to the indications GPs can claim a rebate for. The federal health department is currently reviewing the rebates for MRI services, as well as the requesting and access pathways of the services.

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Winners and losers in new gap payment scheme

The Medical Republic, Other, 16/01/2026, Holly Payne

There will be very few winners out of the government's plan to modernise gap-only billing for Medicare, but one of those will be the big banks. As reported by The Medical Republic this week, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has released firm plans to axe the somewhat obscure Pay Doctor Via Claimant cheque system by July 2028, to be replaced by a more limited EFT process.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, 10 News+, 16/01/2026, Ashleigh Raper and Johnpaul Gonzo

There is a push for the Federal Government to fund a DNA test being developed by Monash University that can determine a person's likelihood of developing cancer. A spokesperson for the Federal Health Department said it is considering the proposal.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

\$1m hostages

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 1

Disabled people with million-dollar NDIS packages are being bought, traded and held "hostage" in homes by unscrupulous providers using them as cash cows. Four whistleblowers are speaking out to expose what they describe as the widespread hijacking of the \$52bn-a-year scheme by dodgy providers and criminal networks.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Urgent pleas were ignored

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 7

A man classed as one of the most significantly disabled people on the NDIS died while fighting to reinstate support that would have kept him alive. Noah Johnston, 22, who had cerebral palsy, epilepsy and chronic lung disease due to a hypoxic birth injury, died on December 8, when the tube came off his ventilator during the night.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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It's criminal what's going on in the NDIS

Daily Telegraph, Editorials, 17/01/2026, Page 74

By now the NDIS has become something of a national joke beset by cost overruns, rorting, and over-diagnosis that has turned what started out as a program to make sure the most vulnerable got what they need into a budget sinking behemoth. But put aside the bill for all this which, eventually, must come due, and what makes the woeful problems with the NDIS more tragedy than comedy is the fact real people with real and often unimaginable problems are in the crosshairs.

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Innocents lost amid NDIS clampdown

Courier Mail, Editorials, 17/01/2026, Page 69

Many Australians have rightly been appalled at the stories of waste coming out of the NDIS. But then, we are reminded of the core role the NDIS was supposed to play and how horrific the consequences are when the system fails our most vulnerable. Noah Johnston, who had cerebral palsy, epilepsy and chronic lung disease due to a hypoxic birth injury, died on December 8, when the tube came off his ventilator during the night.

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Man who earns \$6 million clearing deceased estates sparks fury among Aussies - but there's a major catch

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 16/01/2026, Maisy Rae

An Aussie man has claimed a fellow gym-goer has earned an eye-watering \$6 million from the National Disability Insurance Scheme for clearing out deceased estates. Danny Brown, who runs the Danny Money Moves TikTok channel, said the man had approached him at the gym and told him about the 'side hustle goldmine'.

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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PRIMARY CARE

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POPULATION HEALTH

A squeaky hinge in NYC

The Saturday Paper, General News, 17/01/2026, Stan Grant, Page 14

New York is my escape. I come here each January to see in the new year. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, First Nations people suffer disease at twice the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

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They're foods to diet for

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/01/2026, Ruby Kraner-Tucci, Page 11

Australia should update its national diet advice so it focuses less on refined carbohydrates and more on vegetables, fruits and plant-based proteins, dietitians say. With Canberra in the midst of a review into the nation's dietary guidelines, nutrition experts have praised US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr's emphasis on "real food" such as vegetables but slammed his emphasis on red meat and cooking with beef tallow.

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

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Australia must find the courage to rethink what we have been putting on our plates

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/01/2026, Cr Louise Bloomfield, Page 30

There are moments when social changes gently tap us on the shoulder. And then there are moments when it furiously knocks our door down. The global rethink of dietary advice is one of those louder moments and Australia should not pretend it cannot hear it.

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Lose weight on the job

Herald Sun, General News, 17/01/2026, Page 7

Research has found very few people change their diet or exercise habits after retirement, suggesting Australians should make positive lifestyle choices during their working life. The Flinders University study found little change in weight or diet among retirees, compared to during their working life.

Also reported by: [Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#), [The West Australian \(Saturday edition\) \(Perth\)](#).

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Strong case to lift some weight after you lose it

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 17/01/2026, Georgia Palgan and Adrienne Tam, Page 22

Australians who use injectable medications to trim down could be prematurely ageing themselves by 10 years, with half the weight lost made up of essential muscle and bone mass, health experts warn. [...] Recent data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows Australia spends \$10.1 billion annually on overweight issues and obesity and \$38bn on preventable lifestyle-related health conditions.

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A year of progress

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/01/2026

The Registry of Senior Australians, based at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute and Flinders University Caring Futures Institute, has completed the first year of a major research project examining how the aged care workforce impacts the care quality and health outcomes of older Australians. [...] The incorporation of StewartBrown's data into ROSA is being conducted by

the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and is expected to be delivered to the ROSA team in late 2025.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Screen star Zoe wins fight for a future

Weekend Australian, General News, 17/01/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 9

Zoe Wilson thought she may be at risk. It wasn't just a vague gut feeling: the risk was demonstrable and clear, running through three generations of her family.

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

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Government investment in preventive genomic testing will save thousands of lives

The Australian, Other, 16/01/2026, Dr Jane Tiller

Thousands of people unknowingly carry genetic time-bombs. The government needs to invest in expanding access to genomic screening for disease prevention in adults.

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Tests 'key to saving lives'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Page 29

Researchers are urging the government to fund the next phase in a new testing program that could save thousands of Australians from conditions like cancer and heart disease. Genomic health experts from Monash University say the development of a national preventive genomic testing program is key to saving lives.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Weekend Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#).

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Aussies blind to cancer risk

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/01/2026, Page 31

Just one in six Australians has a strong understanding of the UV index, new research says. Data from YouGov found 63 per cent of Australians were concerned about developing skin cancer, but only one in six knew how to interpret the UV index.

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Billboard backlash

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 17/01/2026, Bethany Hiatt, Page 13

A giant Cottesloe billboard depicting a young woman with crisp white lines standing out starkly on her heavily tanned skin has been slammed for glamourising dangerous sun exposure. The controversial billboard – advertising a soothing aloe vera gel produced by skincare company Etto – recently appeared on Stirling Highway, near Cottesloe Beach.

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

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'So relieved': a writer's final hours

Canberra Times, General News, 17/01/2026, Sally Pryor, Page 17

There's sun streaming through the windows of Robert Macklin's bedroom, and he's lying against the pillows looking content. How could he not be, surrounded by books, family and, out in the kitchen, conversation, laughter and the sound of tea being made and cake being cut?

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Thousands screened in first six months of lung cancer screening program

Medical Forum, Other, 16/01/2026

The National Lung Cancer Screening Program has screened more than 45,000 people since it was launched last July. Figures from mid-December 2025 show 49,473 people enrolled in the screening program through the National Cancer Screening Register.

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New Asthma Council board

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/01/2026

The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) has announced the appointment of a new chair and three new directors to its Board, with Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) nominee Dr Amanda Cross replacing Robert Farrier. The new chair is Janelle Reid, an accomplished governance and legal leader with over 15 years' experience across national health, legal and community sectors.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Wellbeing chatbot for unis

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 17/01/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 3

Students to get mental health support from specifically trained AI University students in Perth could have access to a wellbeing-focused AI chatbot this year, designed locally to assist those too worried to reach out to traditional mental health support.

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Screen time, scream time

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 22

Australia is "10 to 15 years" behind the rest of the world in treating and preventing screen and gaming disorders, with experts calling for the issue to be treated like a "drug epidemic". Following Australia's world-leading social media ban for children under 16, Professor Wayne Warburton called for further targeted action to help children suffering from screen or gaming disorders.

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Social media's impact on Australian teenagers' wellbeing isn't black and white, new study finds

ABC Online, Other, 16/01/2026, Yiyang Li

Adolescents who spend either a lot of time — or no time at all — on social media may be more likely to report poorer wellbeing, according to a new Australian study. University of Adelaide researchers tracked more than 100,000 students from Year 4 to Year 12 over three years, finding that the link between screen time and wellbeing wasn't straightforward — and appeared to differ by age and gender.

[Read More](#)

How sunrises and sunsets are helping young people create social connection

ABC Online, Other, 16/01/2026, Daniel Johnson

The ubiquity of social media means, in some ways, we are more connected than ever. But despite having smartphones in our pockets and friends at our fingertips, many Australians are feeling lonelier than ever.

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IMMUNISATION

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Solo or group grief both aid

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Page 33

Grieving older adults can find the same results attending individual or group therapy, new research reveals. A study by the University of Queensland and Denmark's Aarhus University compared health outcomes of grieving adults aged 65 and above.

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

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Channel 9, Nine News, 16/01/2026, Brett McLeod

Up until now, it was thought a heart attack was a death sentence causing permanent and irreversible damage but groundbreaking research from three top Sydney medical institutes has shown that's not true. New muscle cells can regrow and importantly this means opportunities for new treatments for patients.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 16/01/2026, Monika Kos

A new study has uncovered why common antidepressants may not work for some sufferers, paving the way for personalised treatment. Research from the University of Sydney has found biological processes such as a dysregulated body clock could be behind atypical depression.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 16/01/2026, Catherine Murphy and Emma Rebellato

Interview with University of Sydney Brain and Mind Centre co-director Ian Hickie on their finding that one in five people using common antidepressants may suffer from an atypical depression that responds poorly.

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FIVEAA, Afternoons, 16/01/2026, Mel Usher

Interview with University of Sydney Brain and Mind Centre's Dr Jacob Crouse on their finding that one in five people using common antidepressants may suffer from an atypical depression that responds poorly.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 16/01/2026, Tracey Strong

Researchers at Australian National University and Griffiths Institute for Biomedicine have made a breakthrough in the treatment of sepsis. The new drug is on track to be the first available drug in the

world to reverse organ failure in sepsis patients when antibiotics fail.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

We're a rich country being treated poorly

Canberra Times, General News, 17/01/2026, Richard Denniss, Page 41

Australia's health system is in crisis and while the tensions over funding between state and territory leaders and the Commonwealth is at an all-time high. People desperately waiting for medical help need real action, not performative posturing.

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Hospital 'left my son to rot'

Courier Mail, General News, 17/01/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

A distraught father was unaware for 42 days that his son had died, after a hospital labelled the patient as having "no known family". Logan man Mick Evans, 76, has alleged his son Ben's body was "left to rot" at Townsville University Hospital with no one in his family told he lost his life to pancreatic cancer.

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Roger fronts up on health

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 17/01/2026, Jessica Page and Oliver Lane, Page 1

Roger Cook fronted up on Friday and insisted the buck still stopped with him regarding WA's health fiasco but refused to explain why he skipped Thursday's "bad news" conference. The Opposition dubbed the Premier "good news Roger" after he skipped Thursday's press conference when the damning results of a report on hospital maintenance were revealed.

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

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Maggot infestation hits clinic again

Launceston Examiner, General News, 17/01/2026, Benjamin Seeder, Page 4

A patient in a state-run mental health centre has been transferred to hospital following the discovery of a maggot infestation on her foot. The incident at Hobart's Roy Fagan Centre on January 11 came five years after a similar event at the same facility prompted a Health Department investigation into care standards there.

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Patients in painful test of patience

Newcastle Herald, General News, 17/01/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 1

More than 51,500 people were on the waitlist for 15 outpatient clinics at John Hunter Hospital last year, a rise of 71 per cent from 30,100 only four years ago. The skyrocketing waitlists have sparked calls for the federal government to directly fund state hospitals to boost outpatient clinics.

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Queensland family demands answers after grandmother dies from 'preventable' bloodstream infection

Sue Smith was excited to go wedding dress shopping with her daughter when she fell ill with gastro and booked in to see a GP instead. A week later, the 64-year-old grandmother and mother of two was dead.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Darwin , Territory-wide Mornings, 16/01/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with NT Health CEO Chris Hosking on its annual report for 2024-25 which shows big targets were missed. He says the NT public system is structurally underfunded by around \$200 million a year and constrained by ageing infrastructure. He says all states and territories have rejected the latest Commonwealth funding offer through the National Health Reform Agreement as inadequate.

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ABC Radio Perth, Breakfast , 16/01/2026, Mark Gibson

Interview with AMA WA President Kyle Hoath on the scathing report on WA hospital maintenance released this week. He says the report shows the Government and the Health Department need to shift towards a more strategic planned maintenance instead of being reactive.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Workers go through NZ to sidestep regulators

The Saturday Age, General News, 17/01/2026, Grant McArthur and Kieran Rooney, Page 1

Thousands of overseas-trained professionals are using New Zealand as a back door to avoid Australian regulators and gain a shortcut to employment, including some who do not meet the minimum standards to qualify directly. An investigation by The Age has revealed that rising numbers of workers requiring registration including nurses, teachers, builders, electricians, pilots and aircraft mechanics are using New Zealand as a stepping stone into Australian jobs and even citizenship.

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Capital residency

Canberra Times, General News, 17/01/2026, Lanie Tindale, Page 1

More Australian National University medical graduates are staying in Canberra after graduating, but advocates say more is needed to ensure the capital has specialists as the population grows. Of the 94 medical interns starting work at Canberra Hospital and North Canberra Hospital this week, 63 per cent graduated from the ANU.

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68-strong shot in the arm for health industry

Weekend Post, General News, 17/01/2026, Molly Frew, Page 5

Nearly 70 doctors are beginning their medical careers at the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service marking the region's largest ever intake, with the doctors citing the wide case mix and rural focus as major reasons for choosing the health service. The 68-strong cohort is made up of 45 per cent JCU students, with 17 per cent coming from the University of Queensland, 17 per cent from Griffith University, 7 per cent from Bond University and the remaining 14 per cent from interstate.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 16/01/2026, Holly Stearnes

Interview with AMA Public Health Committee chair Dr Michael Bonning on the launch of the ChatGPT Health app in Australia. He says concerns about medical misinformation can be amplified by something like ChatGPT Health. He says the idea is that it is supposed to be connectable to other parts of your health ecosystem, which he admits is undeniably useful. He says it is not same as the clinical knowledge, input and advice that one can get from a doctor. He says ChatGPT is not secured like My Health Record, which is layered behind military grade-encryption and security.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Cosmetic pioneer's practice on notice

Weekend Australian, General News, 17/01/2026, Penny Timms, Page 3

Medical regulators have slapped strict conditions on the registration of one of Australia's most prominent cosmetic injectables doctors, citing "risks to public health and safety". The conditions have been applied to John Holbrook, a cofounder of Fresh Clinics, one of Australia's largest medical tech companies for cosmetic clinics offering injectables, following a complaint.

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

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Recruitment firm that placed Jayant Patel still thriving despite role in scandal

The Australian, Other, 16/01/2026, Karina Berger

The medical recruitment agency that placed disgraced surgeon Jayant Patel at Bundaberg Base Hospital continues to operate 23 years later, claiming to be Australia's leading medical recruitment specialist. [...] A spokesperson for the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency said "the system that allowed Jayant Patel to practice in Queensland predated AHPRA and no longer exists.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Doorknocking about dengue

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/01/2026, Rhiannon Lewin, Page 23

Residents in Sydney's south are on high alert after a warning of a possible case of dengue virus in the area. Locals in Greenhills Beach said on Thursday that NSW Health officials were doorknocking the area and checking water for dengue fever, a virus spread by mosquitoes.

Also reported by: [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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Hepatitis A outbreak confirmed in city

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 17/01/2026, Tom Plevy, Page 6

As the 2026 Tamworth Country Music Festival kicked off Hunter New England Local Health District has warned of a potential outbreak of a highly contagious disease. Six cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed in the city since November, with three occurring in the same household.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Race against Alzheimer's

Weekend Australian, General News, 17/01/2026, Penny Timms, Page 19

What would you do for more time with a loved one facing declining cognition? [...] It's the question facing some Alzheimer's patients and their families after approval of two controversial therapies designed to slow the disease.

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

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Finally, a chance to hit the snooze button

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 17/01/2026, Angela Pownall, Page 32

A novel treatment for sleep apnoea where an electrode is implanted on to nerves under the chin will be tested on WA sufferers of the common sleep disorder in a new trial. [...] In June 2025, Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration approved the weight loss drug Mounjaro to treat moderate to severe OSA in obese adults.

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

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Police say 10 tennis courts' worth of poppies stolen in recent theft

ABC Online, Other, 16/01/2026, Mackenzie Heard

The recent theft of poppies from a regulated crop in Tasmania's Northern Midlands equates to a harvested area about 2,500 square metres, or about 10 tennis courts in size, police say. Police described the incident as one of the largest poppy thefts ever recorded in the state.

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FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

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AICIS

Doubts raised on science behind microplastics and health harms

Sydney Morning Herald, Edition Changes - 2nd Edition, 17/01/2026, Sarah Knapton, Page 30

Microplastics are everywhere. We drink them in our water, we eat them in our food, we breathe them in our air, leading to so we are told alarming levels of plastic accumulating in our tissues. So it was somewhat of a shock this week when The Guardian published a "bombshell" article suggesting that scientists may be overstating the health concerns.

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

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Are our bodies full of microplastics or not? There's a way to resolve this debate, and scientists must hurry

The Guardian, Other, 16/01/2026, Debora MacKenzie

Are we being injured and killed by ubiquitous, teeny-tiny shards of toxic plastic? Or aren't we? For many months, the Guardian has reported a series of worrying scientific results that our bodies are full of jagged microplastic particles that could be giving us everything from heart attacks to reproductive problems.

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