



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 20th January 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
| [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Disability and Carers](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Population Health](#) | [Chronic Conditions and Screening](#) |
[Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Immunisation](#) | [Health Systems Strategies](#)
| [Health Economics & Research](#) | [First Nations Health](#)
| [Public Hospital and Health Reform](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 6) reports that a senior nurse stole a patient's ADHD medication and falsified hospital records while working as a senior nurse at Modbury Hospital.
- **[The Australian](#)** (online) reports that a new method of detecting pancreas cancer early has been discovered, tailor-made for people at high risk of the disease.
- **[The Australian](#)** (online) reports that the doctor who first raised the alarm over Erin Patterson's mushroom poisoning has closed his clinic, citing lack of support from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and a refusal from colleagues to limit bulk billing. *Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#)*
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (online) reports that just five minutes walking a day can contribute to extending life expectancy.
- **[The Canberra Times](#)** (online) reports that NDIS care provider Oak Tasmania has been fined \$1.1 million in Federal court for providing sub-standard care and failing to report more than 400 incidents. *Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#)*
- **[The Canberra Times](#)** (online) reports that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is advising parents and carers to take children for hearing tests prior to returning to school. *Also*

reported by: [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#)

- **[The Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 9) reports that a director of an NDIS business has been charged for his alleged role in defrauding \$3.5 million from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- **[The Adelaide Advertiser](#)** (page 12) reports that watching television may contribute to memory deterioration owing to extended periods of sitting. *Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#)*
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 13) reports that stress is a major factor in compromising the heart health of Australians and a significantly raises the risk of a sudden cardiac event.
- **[The Guardian](#)** (online) reports that Australia has one of the world's highest consumption rates of ultra-processed foods which have been linked to diet-related chronic diseases.
- **[Perth Now](#)** (online) reports that Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has said the opening of Lagoon Medical Centre inside the ECU Health Centre will ease pressure on nearby hospitals.
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (online) reports that LGBTIQA+ advocates fear that Catholic healthcare provider Calvary's purchase of Hobart Private Hospital would make gender affirming surgeries harder to access. *Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#)*

MINISTER BUTLER

Medicare clinic to open in Yanchep in bid to give residents easier access to urgent care

Perth Now, Other, 19/01/2026, Liam Murphy

The Federal Government has confirmed Lagoon Medical Centre will operate the clinic at 15 Ikara Lane inside the ECU Health Centre. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new clinic in Perth's north would help ease pressure on nearby hospitals by treating many of these semi-urgent or non-urgent cases.

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Government's latest health and medical research scholarships released

WEB Region Canberra, Other, 19/01/2026, Chris Johnson

Groundbreaking medical research into women living with multiple sclerosis (MS) is one of almost 70 projects to be given a boost from new Federal Government grants. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler announced the outcome of the most recent NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships scheme, saying the "67 outstanding graduates" would receive scholarships to pursue research that spanned the full spectrum of health.

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Fearnley reappointed to NDIA

Freedom2Live, Other, 20/01/2026

The Federal government has reappointed Paralympian and disability advocate Kurt Fearnley AO as Chair of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board. [...] "It is not a responsibility to be taken lightly, and Mr Fearnley has shown great stewardship ensuring the needs of NDIS participants, their families and carers are at the heart of the scheme," Disability Minister Mark Butler said.

[Read More](#)

ACRRM oversubscribed for training again

The Medical Republic, Other, 19/01/2026, Holly Payne

For the third year running, the rural college will be taking on more GP registrars than its contractual obligation. In what Health Minister Mark Butler has already dubbed a "record" year for GP training, 370 registrars will commence training with rural college ACRRM.

[Read More](#)

Comparison platform signals largest health premium rise in decade

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 19/01/2026, Roxanne Libatique

Compare the Market is advising Australians with private health cover to prepare for higher premiums in 2026, as industry projections and government processes point to what could be the largest average increase in close to a decade. [...] Over the past few years, we have seen Health Minister Mark Butler push back on health funds and demand lower, more affordable premium adjustments.

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Channel 9, Today , 19/01/2026, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Panel discussion with Mark Butler, Federal Minister for Health, and Ted O'Brien, Federal Deputy Opposition Leader. Butler discusses the government's recently introduced Omnibus Bill in the public sphere. He states that they were open to suggestions during that time from other parties. He adds that they haven't gotten amendments yet from the Opposition, as they didn't want gun reform contained in the same bill.

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER MCALLISTER

I am stuck in a death trap

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 20/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 14

Tiffany Poulton was promised the NDIS home of her dreams, but claims when she moved in she discovered not only was it a deadly firetrap, she could not even wash her hands in any of the sinks. The 31-year-old with cerebral palsy said she had many complaints, the most concerning being that she could not get out the back gate in her wheelchair if there was a fire.

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER RAE

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

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[Back to Top](#)

SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

Alleged \$3.5m fraud of NDIS

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 17

A director of an NDIS business will appear before a Sydney court charged for his alleged role in defrauding \$3.5 million from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Australia Federal Police officers, along with NDIS fraud investigators, raided a home in western Sydney last month seizing \$35,000 cash alleged to be the proceeds of crime, along with air guns and gel blasters.

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Computer support

Emerald Today, General News, 17/01/2026, Janette Young, Page 12

The countdown is on to a seismic shift in the way the NDIS is delivered to people with disability. As of 1 July, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) starts a shift from an advocacy-focused planning model for participants to one in which their information is entered into a computer program which produces a finalised Statement of Participant Supports.

Also reported by: [Cap Coast Today \(Rockhampton\)](#)

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Care in demand

The SE Voice, Other, 20/01/2026

Mount Gambier's newly reopened Medicare Urgent Care Clinic proved popular during its first week of operation. [...] The service is funded by the Country SA PHN and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing for walk-in care for urgent but non-life-threatening conditions which will be fully bulk billed.

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[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

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[Back to Top](#)

DISABILITY AND CARERS

Director 'cheated' NDIS of \$3.5m

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 9

A director of an NDIS business will appear before a Sydney court charged for his alleged role in defrauding \$3.5 million from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Australia Federal Police officers, along with NDIS fraud investigators, raided a home in western Sydney last month seizing \$35,000 cash alleged to be the proceeds of crime, along with air guns and gel blasters.

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Disability care breaches prompt million-dollar fine

A disability care provider has been fined \$1.1 million for providing sub-standard care and failing to report more than 400 incidents, including relating to alleged abuse, neglect and sexual misconduct, to the regulator within required time frames. Oak Tasmania was taken to the Federal Court by the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission in 2024.

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

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Federal court orders Oak Tasmania to pay \$1.1m fine for NDIS service failures

The Mercury, Other, 19/01/2026, Duncan Evans

One of Australia's largest disability providers has copped a huge fine from the Federal Court for a jaw-dropping 474 service breakdowns, including failing to administer insulin to a diabetic client. Oak Tasmania, a registered charity that provides employment, training, lifestyle and accommodation services for people with disabilities, failed to properly care for five clients between March 2021 and June 2023, the Federal Court ruled this week.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#)

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Excluded from NDIS due to age, man with MND opts for assisted dying

HelloCare, Other, 19/01/2026, Jakob Neeland

Tony Lewis is 71. Diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease last year, he falls outside the eligibility criteria for the NDIS, which excludes people diagnosed after the age of 65.

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

One needle prick to start the next generation of cancer care

The Australian, Other, 19/01/2026, Steve Robson

With one blood test today, I will be part of the start of a revolution in cancer care in Australia. This is how it happened.

[Read More](#)

Doctor who exposed mushroom murderer Erin Patterson closes rural clinic, cites risk of 'financial oblivion'

The Australian, Other, 19/01/2026, Phoebe Griffiths

The doctor who helped expose convicted mushroom murderer Erin Patterson has broken his silence over the reason why he chose to close down his rural practice. The doctor who first alerted police about mushroom murderer Erin Patterson is closing down his local practice to avoid "financial oblivion".

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#)

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Rural doctor who exposed triple mushroom killer Erin Patterson is forced to make tough decision: 'People were not in favour of me'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/01/2026, Maisy Rae

The country doctor who first alerted police to triple mushroom killer Erin Patterson has closed his local practice to avoid 'financial oblivion.' Dr Chris Webster was deemed a star witness in the case against Patterson, having been the on-call doctor when she presented to hospital two days after she poisoned her in-laws during a lunch at her Leongatha home on July 29, 2023.

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Interview with RACGP president Dr. Michael Wright about Ozempic-style weight loss injections. Wright says that while the drugs are effective for weight loss, rapid weight loss can also lead to loss of muscle and bone mass, increasing the risk of frailty, osteoporosis and fractures. He stresses the importance of GP supervision, alongside diet, weight-bearing exercise and monitoring for side effects and medication interactions.

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Is there a cereal killer in your bowl

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/01/2026, Taylor Penny, Page 1

Cereals are an easy grab for early mornings on autopilot, but your favourite pick is often packing more sugar than you realise. In a new ranking of cereal nutrition value, plain rolled oats took first place, and Corn Flakes were only just ahead of kid favourites such as Coco Pops and Froot Loops, which came in last due to their high sugar content and low fibre.

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Stress is a heartbreaker

Courier Mail, General News, 20/01/2026, Page 7

Stress is compromising heart function and increasing our risk of heart attacks and sudden cardiac events, health experts have warned. Financial worry is the biggest factor affecting the wellbeing of nearly half of Australians, with more than a third of workers suffering from burnout each week.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#)

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Walking an extra five minutes a day helps you live longer

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 19/01/2026, Laura Donnelly

An extra five minutes walking a day can cut the risk of an early death by one tenth, research suggests. A study of over-40s in The Lancet came as separate data found that healthy living could extend life by a decade.

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Essential sun protection step too many Aussies are missing

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/01/2026, Melody Teh

An optometrist has issued a warning about a common habit that could cause "irreversible eye damage" - and many Australians don't realise they're doing it. Australians are better than ever at protecting their skin, and you only need to look at your social media feeds for proof.

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Hearing checks urged before children return to school

Canberra Times, Other, 19/01/2026, Keira Jenkins

As children head back for 2026, parents and carers are being encouraged to make sure their child's hearing has been checked. [...] Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, released in December, showed the proportion of Indigenous children who had long-term ear or hearing problems had halved since 2001.

Also reported by: [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#)

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Nine easy swaps to reduce ultra-processed foods in your diet: it's not an 'all-or-nothing approach'

The Guardian, Other, 20/01/2026, Emma Joyce

"It's not poor willpower," says Mark Lawrence. The ecological nutrition professor from Deakin University is a global expert in ultra-processed foods, a beacon of knowledge in the proliferation of UPFs..including, he says, "It's really difficult to avoid them."

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Ageing, smoking, oral bacteria and genetic mutations linked to higher stomach cancer risk

Ballarat Courier, Other, 19/01/2026

Age-related blood cell mutations may trigger early changes in the stomach lining, offering new insights into how cancer risk builds over time and underscoring the importance of healthy ageing. Findings point to new ways to identify individuals at highest risk of developing stomach cancer, opening opportunities for targeted prevention and precise screening.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Are GLP-1 RAs becoming lifelong medicines?

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 19/01/2026, Chloe Hava

A recent systematic review published in the BMJ has reignited debate about what happens when patients stop taking glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs) and related GLP-1-based incretin therapies. The analysis found that weight often returns quickly once treatment is discontinued – in some cases faster than with other weight-loss interventions.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/01/2026

Australia's first blood test to detect pancreatic cancer before symptoms appear has been trialled, with specialist obstetrician Steve Robson becoming the first patient to take it. The test, which uses pregnancy-test-style technology to detect cancer DNA in the bloodstream, could dramatically improve survival for the deadliest major cancer. Advocates are calling for government support, warning that the \$1,500 test is not covered by Medicare and may be out of reach for those who need it most.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 19/01/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with Cancer Council SA chief executive Kerry Rowlands about South Australia's nation-leading reforms to the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. Rowlands says the changes are transformative for regional cancer patients, lifting accommodation rebates from \$44 to \$110, easing financial pressure and improving access to treatment. She says the reforms also secure the sustainability of Cancer Council's Greenhill Lodge and enable planning for a second regional lodge to meet growing demand.

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[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mental health support available

Border Watch, Other, 19/01/2026

BEYOND Blue is providing mental health support to those impacted by the fires in Victoria. The impact of extreme weather events and natural disasters on our lives is wide-ranging, extending to our mental health, even for those not directly impacted.

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IMMUNISATION

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Calvary's bid for Hobart Private Hospital threatens access to 'lifesaving' surgeries

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/01/2026, Judy Augustine

LGBTIQA+ advocates are watching closely as Healthcare provider Calvary attempts to acquire the Hobart Private Hospital, fearing gender affirming surgeries could become harder to access if the sale goes through. Calvary announced the acquisition on Christmas Eve, and if successful, it would be the only private hospital provider in the state's south.

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

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Comparison platform signals largest health premium rise in decade

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 19/01/2026, Roxanne Libatique

Compare the Market is advising Australians with private health cover to prepare for higher premiums in 2026, as industry projections and government processes point to what could be the largest average increase in close to a decade. [...] Over the past few years, we have seen Health Minister Mark Butler push back on health funds and demand lower, more affordable premium adjustments.

[Read More](#)[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Cancer drug helps treat malaria patients

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/01/2026, Isabella Pesch, Page 11

A drug used for treating blood cancers could be used to boost survival rates from life-threatening malaria, Queensland scientists have discovered. Malaria, a disease spread through mosquitoes, kills more than 600,000 people every year, with three quarters of those deaths being children under the age of five.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#)

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TV really does rot your brain

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/01/2026, Isabella Pesch, Page 12

Watching television could actually be detrimental to your memory, shock findings from Queensland researchers have revealed. It is the latest research from the University of Queensland, which also found that playing cards or even driving your car could be beneficial for brain health.

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New gene breakthrough could pave the way for treatments to halt the growth of bowel and liver cancers

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/01/2026

Researchers are on the trail of discovering new treatments to suppress the growth of bowel and liver cancers. Genes in the bowel and liver were studied to find out why they only cause cancer in specific

tissues.

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South Australian trial finds UV light helps protect aged care residents from viruses

HelloCare, Other, 19/01/2026, Jakob Neeland

A recent Australian clinical trial has highlighted the potential of germicidal ultraviolet (UV) light in reducing acute respiratory infections among residents of long-term care facilities. The study, led by Dr Andrew Shoubridge and colleagues, marks one of the first multicentre, pragmatic evaluations of commercially available UV appliances in aged care settings.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Forum plea to fix rock attack crisis

Cairns Post, General News, 20/01/2026, Emma Cam, Page 1

Key stakeholders are calling for an urgent public meeting in Yarrabah to address rockthrowing attacks on medical transport and health care workers, saying the community must be at the forefront of the solution. After a visit to the Indigenous community, about 60km from Cairns, on Friday, Mulgrave MP Terry James met Yarrabah Mayor Daryl Sexton and chief executive Michael Miller, who agreed a forum could find a solution and protect health services.

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'Follow what your heart needs': First Nations young leaders' advice

National Indigenous Times, Other, 19/01/2026, Jarred Cross

First Nations young people are encouraging others to look after themselves and one another in the lead up to January 26. 26-year-old Wiradjuri person Ley Laupama and 22-year-old Palawa man Reede Adams-Beckett both say prioritising yourself, engaging with community and avoiding social media can be helpful actions in a testing and emotional period for Indigenous people.

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[Back to Top](#)

PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Up to half of all hospital food is wasted in 'baffling' system

The Mercury, Other, 19/01/2026, Isabella Pesch

There are calls for big changes to hospitals and aged care facilities as a "baffling" truth is revealed. Experts are urging for an audit of food wastage across the nation's healthcare system, saying hospitals and care services could save thousands if they tracked uneaten meals or discarded food.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Nurse banned for drug theft plot and cover-up

The Australian, General News, 20/01/2026, Clareese Packer, Page 6

A senior nurse stole a patient's ADHD medication and then tried to cover it up by manipulating a colleague's Facebook page and falsifying hospital records in a series of "troubling" actions, a tribunal

has found. [...] Ms Nolan further failed to notify the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia within seven days that she had been charged over the incident.

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Tribunal bans senior nurse for trying to take patient's medication, altering hospital records

ABC Online, Other, 19/01/2026

A public hospital nurse tried to steal a patient's ADHD medication, falsified that patient's notes and then "manipulated" a colleague's Facebook account in a bid to help cover up her actions, a tribunal has found. [...] The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia referred the complaint to the tribunal which noted Ms Nolan "doesn't acknowledge or admit the allegations wholesale", but did not take issue with the tribunal making findings of fact.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Training hospital staff in person-centred dementia care improves recovery outcomes

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 19/01/2026, Natalie Dragon

Tailored education for hospital staff is improving care for people with dementia, a new Australian study shows. Educating hospital staff in person-centred dementia care leads to better care experiences, greater staff confidence, and improved rehabilitation outcomes for older people, the research found.

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ACRRM oversubscribed for training again

The Medical Republic, Other, 19/01/2026, Holly Payne

For the third year running, the rural college will be taking on more GP registrars than its contractual obligation. In what Health Minister Mark Butler has already dubbed a "record" year for GP training, 370 registrars will commence training with rural college ACRRM.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/01/2026

The Central Adelaide Local Health Network is facing allegations of workplace bullying, with the Public Service Association warning that some staff are at risk of suicide and that nearly half the workforce has left in six months. Shadow Health Minister Heidi Girolamo said staff and patients deserve better, while Acting Health Minister Blair Boyer confirmed that the allegations will be investigated, with the network given until 27 January to respond.

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[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

'Judgment error': south-west surgeon referred to top medical regulator

Warrnambool Standard, Other, 19/01/2026, Sophia Baker

A surgeon who worked at Hamilton Base Hospital during 2025 has been referred to Australia's health regulator following a surgical complication. At the time of the operation, the surgeon had conditions on his medical registration.

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[Back to Top](#)

AUSTRALIAN CDC

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Adrenaline nasal spray TGA approved

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/01/2026

CSL Seqirus has announced the listing of Neffy adrenaline (epinephrine) nasal spray on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG), approved for the treatment of anaphylaxis in adults and children weighing 15kg or more, and aged four years and over. The only adrenaline nasal spray approved for use in Australia, its introduction represents the first significant innovation in anaphylaxis treatment in more than 25 years.

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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[Back to Top](#)

FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

AICIS

Black salve ads, supply conviction

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/01/2026

Belinda Gae Harris, trading under the name Ticky-Boo Herbal, has been sentenced to seven months' imprisonment, a community corrections order, and fines of \$20,000 for unlawfully advertising and supplying black salve and bloodroot capsules, and for advertising other unapproved therapeutic goods to treat serious conditions. [...] The conviction followed a TGA investigation, where Harris was charged with 12 offences and found guilty of 10.

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