



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 21st January 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian Financial Review](#)** (online) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has said the Federal government is unlikely to support offers to purchase Australian hospitals from offshore private equity firms.
- **[The Australian](#)** (online) reports that the Grattan Institute recommends that the NDIS should include a recovery-focused model, following precedents such as the Thriving Kids program created by Health Minister Mark Butler.
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 6) reports that Australia will play a leading role in a global study of cardiac health in post-menopausal women.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 6) reports that National Disability Insurance Scheme service provider Billal Chami has faced court charged with using fraudulent claims to help launder millions of dollars.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 25) reports that the most expensive purchase most Australians will make in their lives is now likely to be aged care. *Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).*
- **[The Guardian](#)** (online) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler says the Federal government is working to keep aged care residents out of hospital care and into geriatric care in homes.

- [The Hobart Mercury](#) (page 9) reports that Assistant Aged Care Minister Rebecca White has confirmed the Federal government is working closely with Southern Cross Care, as the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation highlights the need to create more aged care beds.
- [The Guardian](#) (online) reports that president of the Australian Psychological Society Dr Kelly Gough has warned the NDIS's new I-CAN assessment tool hasn't been tested on a variety of disability types, including diverse autism needs.
- [The Herald Sun](#) (page 3) reports that a nasal saline spray helps relieve symptoms of obstructive sleep disordered breathing for many children. *Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury](#) ([Hobart](#)).*
- [The Herald Sun](#) (page 15) reports that the rate of polypharmacy in Australians has increased almost 10 percent over the last decade.
- [9News](#) (online) reports that melanoma remains one of Australia's most frequently diagnosed cancers, while many children continue to be exposed to dangerous UV levels.
- [The Courier Mail](#) (online) reports that the purchase of Gold Coast Private Hospital by Catholic church-owned Mater Misericordiae this week puts at risk many reproductive health services. *Also reported by: [The Mercury](#) ([Online](#)), [Daily Telegraph Australia](#) ([Online](#)).*

MINISTER BUTLER

Gawler East pharmacy closes amid PBS registration battle

Bunyip, General News, 21/01/2026, Mahala Gainer, Page 13

A Gawler East pharmacy has closed after years of unsuccessful attempts to gain Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) registration, with the owner saying recent changes to co-payments made the business unsustainable. [...] Two of those decisions were later upheld by the Minister for Health, Disability and Ageing Mark Butler.

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

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Private equity wants to buy this Sydney 'hospital to the stars'

Australian Financial Review, Other, 20/01/2026, Michael Smith

Healthscope's management team has urged the distressed healthcare group's lenders to reject a private equity offer for Sydney's Prince of Wales Private Hospital, a prestigious private hospital popular with celebrities. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has suggested the Albanese government will be less receptive to offshore private equity firms owning Australian hospitals.

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The NDIS has become a luxury liner. Why we need more, smaller boats

The Australian, Other, 20/01/2026, Patrick McGorry

The National Disability Insurance Scheme offers only first-class travel and a permanent berth. [...] The National Psychosocial Disability Program proposed by the Grattan Institute following the precedent set by the Thriving Kids program created by Health Minister Mark Butler should be a recovery-focused model with a variable time frame for both young people and older adults.

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Australia politics live: Ley and Leeser use question time to pressure PM on apology to Jewish community over antisemitism response

The Guardian, Other, 20/01/2026

In a change of tone, independent MP Rebekha Sharkie asks the Health minister about the increase of older South Australians being stuck in hospital while waiting for residential aged care. [...] Health minister, Mark Butler, says the government has been working to stop aged care residents going into hospitals to get care in the first place, and instead funding geriatricians to go to homes.

Pocock slams federal delay as \$10 million election funding sits idle and ACT respite access worsens

WEB Region Canberra, Other, 20/01/2026, Ian Bushnell

Access to aged care respite services has worsened in the ACT despite a \$10 million election commitment from the Albanese Government, according to ACT Senator David Pocock. [...] Last year, he raised this with the office of the Health and Aged Care Minister, Mark Butler, but had not received a response.

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Bringing all the health and aged care news, plus key consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 20/01/2026, Melissa Sweet

The mental health aftermath of the Bondi shootings, concerns about new dietary guidelines for Americans, and a caution about the use of weight-loss medicines are among topics covered in the first edition of The Zap for 2026. [...] Following the Bondi mass shooting, Health Minister Mark Butler announced "\$42.6 million in immediate mental health supports to meet the needs of those impacted", including funding for "targeted mental supports for the Jewish community... made available through organisations with established links to communities nationally", and funding to establish a temporary Medicare Mental Health Centre within the Bondi area, with a specific focus on trauma support.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

Channel 7, Seven News, 20/01/2026, Mark Ferguson

A Western Sydney NDIS support worker faces allegations of stealing millions of dollars from disability services, with investigators accusing him of using fraudulent claims to fund a lavish lifestyle and his business now set to shut down. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister warns fraudsters they will face consequences, saying every stolen dollar robs people with disability of vital support.

Also reported by: [Channel 7 \(Melbourne\)](#).

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MINISTER RAE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

Call for more aged care beds

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/01/2026, Judy Augustine, Page 9

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation says governments need to work together to create more aged care beds, to replace nearly 100 that will be lost when the Rosary Gardens home closes in June. [...] Assistant Aged Care Minister Rebecca White said the Federal government had been working closely with Southern Cross Care.

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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DEPARTMENT

Care in demand

SE Voice, General News, 20/01/2026, Page 3

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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New endometriosis and pelvic pain clinic to open in Wagga

Tumut & Adelong Times, General News, 20/01/2026, Page 9

A new endometriosis and pelvic pain clinic 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 top three problems with aged care reforms

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/01/2026, Caroline Egan

Less than three months into the new aged care regime, submissions to a Senate review of the Aged Care Rules have revealed providers are already grappling with significant issues. [...] Ageing Australia notes the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is undertaking an evaluation of HELF, including to assess whether the legislation is "fit for purpose and is achieving its policy intent".

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More rules now, says telehealth group backed by cannabis giant

The Medical Republic, Other, 20/01/2026, Holly Payne

Former health minister Greg Hunt has stepped down as chair of the group, but not before calling on the government to implement mandatory telehealth regulations. The Telehealth Sector Working Group has issued a new missive urging the Australian Digital Health Agency to work with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on mandating certain telehealth standards ... namely, its own.

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Aruma partnerships to improve health outcomes

Freedom2Live, Other, 20/01/2026

Disability provider Aruma has kicked off four separate multi-sector partnerships to improve health outcomes for its NDIS participants. [...] Aruma is one of two industry partners in a \$1.8M Department of Health and Aged Care research grant awarded to Macey Barratt from University of Canberra to lead a three-year research project to tailor the SPECTROM program to the Australian context.

AGEING AND AGED CARE

Why your aged care could cost even more than a Ferrari

Sydney Morning Herald, Money, 21/01/2026, Rachel Lane, Page 25

While many people baulk at the price tag on a luxury car, for many Australians the most expensive purchase they will ever make isn't a Ferrari, it's aged care. Across most capital cities, the price of a typical aged care bed now comes with a lump sum of around \$750,000.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Age-care fire death referred to coroner

Western Advocate, General News, 21/01/2026, Benjamin Palmer, Page 3

The death of Kandos aged-care resident, Charles Frederick Gill, is under investigation after a fire at RSL LifeCare's Ada Cottage in August 2025. [...] RSL LifeCare said it reported the incident to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, and police later advised the organisation that no electrical fault, or fault with RSL LifeCare's fire prevention systems, had been identified.

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With the right information, you can enjoy sex after 60

The Australian, Other, 20/01/2026, Dr Magdalena Simonis

Sexuality remains important as we age, but there are barriers in chronic conditions – and attitudes – that can be overcome with the right help from your doctor. We must dismantle ageist attitudes that assume older people don't want to maintain their sexuality, especially with respect to women.

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Think twice before using ChatGPT to help with aged care documentation

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/01/2026, Caroline Egan

With last year's aged care reforms requiring a higher evidentiary standard from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, many operators are turning to generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. Isabelle Kimler, Aged Care Management Consultant with Aged Care Provider Assistance, says providers are "understandably" exploring AI tools, particularly to help write policies and procedures and in applications to become approved providers.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 20/01/2026, Steve Austin

Interview with Dr Nathan Cook, Researcher at UQ School of Human Movement and Nutrition Science, about reducing hospital and aged care food waste. Cook explains that hospitals and aged care facilities in Australia generate tens of thousands of tonnes of food waste annually, driven by patient illness, rigid meal schedules, and inflexible ordering systems. He emphasises that addressing these issues with better menu systems and more patient-centered approaches could significantly reduce waste while ensuring meals remain nutritious and edible.

DISABILITY AND CARERS

Claims of dirty cash in pants drawer

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/01/2026, Jack Gramenz & Perry Duffin, Page 6

The director of a National Disability Insurance Scheme service provider has been accused of using fraudulent claims to help launder millions of dollars of dirty cash after police allegedly found firearms and bundles of money in an underwear drawer. Billal Chami, 31, faced Downing Centre Local Court yesterday after a raid on his south-west Sydney home in December.

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NDIS fraud accused in court

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/01/2026, Julie Cross, Page 9

The director of an NDIS business has appeared in court charged for his alleged role in defrauding \$3.5m from the disability scheme. Wearing denim shorts and a grey T-shirt, Billal Chami appeared at Sydney's Downing Centre Local Court on Tuesday, charged with one count of dealing with money reasonably suspected of being proceeds of an indictable crime to the value of \$1m or more.

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NDIS provider handed \$1.1m fine for serious safety failures

Launceston Examiner, General News, 21/01/2026, Annika Rhoades, Page 3

A Tasmanian NDIS provider has been given a \$1.1 million penalty for failing to keep its participants safe and failing to report hundreds of "extensive and serious" incidents in mandatory timeframes. It is the largest penalty ever imposed on a Tasmanian NDIS provider.

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New details revealed after man allegedly defrauded and laundered \$3.5m in cash from the NDIS

The Australian, Other, 20/01/2026, Clareese Packer

The lawyer of a man accused of defrauding \$3.5m in cash from the NDIS and laundering the money has failed in his bid to throw out "onerous" bail conditions relating to his client's use of smartphones. Billal Chami, 31, is the director of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider.

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The NDIS has become a luxury liner. Why we need more, smaller boats

The Australian, Other, 20/01/2026, Patrick McGorry

The National Disability Insurance Scheme offers only first-class travel and a permanent berth. [...] The National Psychosocial Disability Program proposed by the Grattan Institute following the precedent set by the Thriving Kids program created by Health Minister Mark Butler should be a recovery-focused model with a variable time frame for both young people and older adults.

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Strict bail for 'risky' accused \$3.6m NDIS fraudster

Canberra Times, Other, 20/01/2026, Miklos Bolza

A man accused of defrauding \$3.6 million of government funds from the National Disability Insurance Scheme has failed to get less onerous bail conditions imposed in court. Billal Chami is the director of an NDIS provider allegedly caught siphoning funds meant for those diagnosed with disabilities into his own pockets.

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

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Sydney NDIS provider director accused of \$3.6m fraud as cash seized at home

ABC Online, Other, 20/01/2026

The director of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider has been charged over his alleged role in defrauding millions of taxpayer dollars. Bilal Chami, 31, is accused of being involved in laundering \$3.6 million in cash, which police said derived from fraudulent claims to the NDIS.

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Oak Tasmania issued \$1.1m penalty over hundreds of NDIS compliance failures

ABC Online, Other, 20/01/2026, Adam Holmes

A National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider in Tasmania has been issued with a \$1.1 million penalty after admitting to 474 reporting breaches and leaving vulnerable clients at risk of injury or death. It included a failure to administer insulin to a diabetic client, resulting in her hospitalisation, a client suffering a leg fracture after the wrong lifting device was used, and a highly vulnerable client being left unattended in a respite centre.

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NDIS tool to determine support not tested on variety of disability types – including diverse autism, experts warn

The Guardian, Other, 21/01/2026, Kate Lyons

The head of Australia's peak body of psychologists and disability experts have warned the NDIS's new assessment tool hasn't been tested on a variety of disability types – including diverse autistic needs – which may lead to "tragedies" occurring, if more research is not conducted. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) announced in September it had procured the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (I-CAN) to be used as the basis for determining support plans for NDIS participants.

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Aruma partnerships to improve health outcomes

Freedom2Live, Other, 20/01/2026

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Channel 10, 10 News, 20/01/2026, Hugh Riminton

Villawood man Bilal Chami faced court charged with defrauding the NDIS of \$3.5m by submitting fake claims for services never provided to disabled clients. Police say he directed a company offering NDIS services and is accused of handling money suspected to be proceeds of crime.

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SBS, World News Australia, 20/01/2026, Janice Petersen

NDIS provider director Bilal Chami has faced court accused of defrauding the scheme of \$3.5m by withdrawing cash from multiple bank accounts between 2022 and 2025 using fraudulent claims.

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PRIMARY CARE

GP bulk-billing on the up

Healthcare directory Cleanbill's first Blue Report since the Australian Government expanded the bulk-billing incentive to non-concession patients has been released. The government's decision appears to be vindicated with the report finding that over 40 per cent of GP clinics nationwide are fully bulk-billing.

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Doctor found guilty of sexual touching

Border Mail, General News, 21/01/2026, Page 8

An Albury doctor who targeted a vulnerable woman has been found guilty of sexual touching. [...] The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency doesn't have any doctors registered under his name.

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Gambling on good health

Medical Forum, Other, 20/01/2026, Cathy O'Leary

With Australia mid-way through another summer sports season with its omnipresent gambling advertising, doctors are warning it's a sure bet that the health of thousands of families is at risk. The head of one of Australia's peak medical groups admits many people are baffled at why doctors would have any role in problem gambling.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 20/01/2026, Loretta Ryan & Craig Zonca

Interview with Dr Maria Boulton, former President, AMA Qld. Boulton discusses the shortages of childhood vaccines recently. She admits that from time-to-time they have issues with access and normally they sort themselves out in a week, but this time the shortage is taking a big longer to be settled. She adds that they are having a hard time getting vaccines for 18mos and 4yos.

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POPULATION HEALTH

More parents are wanting girl babies. So why do they fear raising boys so much?

The Australian, General News, 21/01/2026, Rachel Samson & Phil Bird, Page 7

Something is happening in Australia that we are not naming. Parents are increasingly reporting experiences that psychologists describe as "gender disappointment" distress or discomfort when the sex of the child does not match their hopes.

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Salt spray gives parents sniff of good night's sleep

Herald Sun, General News, 21/01/2026, Robyn Riley, Page 3

A safe and cheap saline nasal spray may be the secret to a good night's sleep for cranky, overtired children and weary parents. An Australian study has found a daily squirt up the nose with simple saltwater helps relieve symptoms of obstructive sleep disordered breathing (OSBD) for many children.

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

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Multi-medicine risks

Herald Sun, General News, 21/01/2026, Page 15

The number of Australians taking five or more medications, known as polypharmacy, has risen over the past decade, driven mainly by men. A University of Western Australia study found polypharmacy increased from 8 per cent in 2013 to 9.2 per cent in 2024, with nearly two million Australians affected.

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TV really does rot your brain, says study

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/01/2026, Isabella Pesch, Page 9

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

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Unhealthy cereals for kids

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 21/01/2026, Taylor Penny, Page 1

Parents have been warned popular family cereals are often packed with more sugar than they realise, amid claims the wrong breakfast choice could affect their child's metabolism for the entire day. While eggs, avocado on toast or oats with Greek yoghurt is the recommended choice for breakfast among dietitians, cereals remain a popular morning choice for families, prompting health warnings from nutritionists.

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Gut check: are at-home microbiome tests a way to 'hack your health' or simply a waste?

The Guardian, Other, 21/01/2026, Melissa Davey

For a few hundred dollars you can put your poo in an envelope and post it off to a laboratory. In return you'll get a report (sometimes generated by AI) outlining your food sensitivities, metabolic fitness, and what pathogens or fungi you're harbouring.

[Read More](#)

3AW, Breakfast, 20/01/2026, Ross Stevenson & Russel Howcroft

Interview with Professor Gary Sacks, Institute for Health Transformation, Deakin University, about why Coco Pops are getting a four-star rating despite being considered "junk food". Sacks admits that four stars in the Health Star Rating for the cereal is quite too high; however, he still suggests that people should go for those who are on the five-star lists. ou.

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4BC, Drive, 20/01/2026, Carla Bignasca

Interview with Rhys Hoole, Community Ambassador for the Common Good Foundation, about his journey and the impact of the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation. Hoole shares that after suffering a cardiac arrest while playing touch football at 26, he faced worsening heart failure that led to his transplant, becoming the hospital's 500th heart recipient. He highlights how the foundation's research, investment, and patient care support were crucial throughout his recovery and will continue to help future patients.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 20/01/2026, David Reilly

Interview with Hunter Bennett, Lecturer in Exercise and Sport at Adelaide University, about running and its benefits. Hunter says participation in running spikes in January as people pursue New Year's resolutions, and events like parkrun have contributed to a wider interest in running over the past five to six years. He explains that running improves cardiovascular and metabolic health and lowers risk of heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 20/01/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with professional cyclist Brendan 'Trekky' Johnston about his cross-country ride from Perth to Sydney for cancer research. Brendan says he completed the 8.5-day ride, facing strong headwinds, as a personal and charitable challenge after beating cancer at 17. He explains the ride pushed him beyond his usual professional races, demanding extreme physical effort, mental resilience, and coping with sleep deprivation over several days.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 20/01/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with Paul Gardiner, Associate Professor at The University of Qld, about the impact of television on brain health. Gardiner explains that high levels of TV watching may correlate with lower brain health, but factors like content type, viewing habits, and prolonged sitting matter more than the act of watching itself. He emphasises that staying mentally and physically active, balancing sitting with movement, and considering the effects of binge-watching and sleep are key to protecting brain function.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Palliative care doctor's school sunscreen plea

9News, Other, 20/01/2026, Sarah Swain

According to Cancer Australia, melanoma, the worst form of skin cancer was the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia in 2021. It was the tenth most common cause of cancer death.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Volunteers needed for group helping dads experiencing separation

West Australian, Other, 20/01/2026

A national organisation aimed at helping individuals dealing with separation is calling out for more volunteers. Part of Australian charity Parents Beyond Breakup, Dads in Distress is on the lookout for volunteers in the South West.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 20/01/2026, Michael Thomson

Dr Kim Pedlow from Geraldton warns the demersal fishing ban could trigger a rise in suicides, highlighting concerns for men's mental health. Furious fishers are protesting in Lancelin, arguing the ban threatens tourism.

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IMMUNISATION

Brisbane suffers vaccine shortages after wall collapses at Toll Group distribution centre

ABC Online, Other, 20/01/2026, Craig Zonca , Loretta Ryan & Kenji Sato

Brisbane parents are being turned away from GP clinics due to a shortage of childhood vaccines. Vaccine deliveries were disrupted after a retaining wall collapsed at a Richlands distribution centre earlier this month, forcing it to close.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Major Gold Coast hospital to stop abortion, contraceptive services after religious group takeover

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/01/2026, Kathleen Skene

Patients of one of the Gold Coast's largest private hospitals will lose access to a range of procedures – mostly for women's health – following its purchase by a religious organisation. Catholic Church-run Mater Misericordiae this week confirmed its purchase of Gold Coast Private Hospital, amid the receivership of parent company Healthscope.

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

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 20/01/2026, Rory McClaren

Interview with Jesse Trout, CEO of equila Pty, about reactivating McLaren Vale and District's War Memorial Hospital. Trout says the hospital has an underutilised ward that could reopen in about 12 weeks with minimal work, providing much-needed relief for SA's stressed hospitals and ambulance services. He emphasises that the state government simply needs to approve funding and support patient flow to make the space operational again.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 20/01/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with Jesse Trout, CEO of equila Pty, about reactivating McLaren Vale Hospital to ease pressure on SA hospitals. Trout explains that 20 beds remain idle because a previous board closed the hospital a few years ago, and the site only needs minor upgrades to reopen within about 12 weeks. He says staffing the hospital will be manageable since local nurses are eager to return, and all that's needed now is government approval and funding to bring the facility back into full operation for the community.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Hickey to lead heart menopause project

The Australian, General News, 21/01/2026, Penny Timms, Page 6

Australia will play a leading role in a landmark \$15m global effort to research how to manage heart disease in post-menopausal women. It was announced late on Tuesday that highly respected women's health expert Martha Hickey has been selected to co-lead the multimillion-dollar global study, which will aim to shape global guidelines and redefine the nation's understanding of how heart health is affected by menopause.

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Stress is a heartbreaker

Cairns Post, General News, 21/01/2026, 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: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Fracture prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: research uncovers perspectives on bone health

National Indigenous Times, Other, 20/01/2026, Giovanni Torre

Research from the National Centre for Healthy Ageing's Living Labs Research Program, led by Associate Professor Ayse Zengin from Monash University, has identified unique perspectives and beliefs on bone health among Indigenous adults in Victoria to help inform future policy and prevention programs. Despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing a higher rate of fragility fractures from low-impact injuries, such as a fall from standing height, bone health remains an under-researched health issue.

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Yarrabah risks losing vital health services amid escalating rock-throwing attacks

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/01/2026, Emma Cam

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

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

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

ABC, ABC News, 20/01/2026, Jeremy Fernandez

NSW Health Minister Ryan Park says the public hospital bed shortage now sits at its worst level since the pandemic, with 1200 beds tied up by patients waiting for aged or disability care. He blames inadequate Commonwealth funding as work prepares to add 30 new beds at Blacktown Hospital, while the federal government says it has lifted funding by 11% this financial year.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 20/01/2026, Mark Ferguson

Concerns are raised over two-thirds of Blacktown Hospital's 30 new beds set to immediately house patients who cannot be discharged due to aged care delays. With 1200 beds blocked statewide and doctors forecasting a tripling of emergency department demand, clinicians warn the crisis will worsen unless the federal government delivers a funding fix soon.

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2GB, Drive, 20/01/2026, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Ryan Park, Minister for Health and Regional Health in NSW, about addressing overcrowding at Blacktown Hospital. Ryan Park says the government will open 30 new beds at Blacktown by the end of this year or early next year to meet growing demand, alongside staffing increases. He emphasises that long-term relief also requires Commonwealth support to move patients into residential aged care or NDIS services so existing beds are freed for new admissions.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Call for more aged care beds

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/01/2026, Judy Augustine, Page 9

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation says governments need to work together to create more aged care beds, to replace nearly 100 that will be lost when the Rosary Gardens home closes in June. [...] Assistant Aged Care Minister Rebecca White said the Federal government had been working closely with Southern Cross Care.

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Nurse-led model of care poised to tackle Australia's skin cancer crisis

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 20/01/2026, Annj Staff

Australia needs to be innovative when it comes to skin cancer detection by embracing a nurse-led model that could save thousands of lives in the long run, according to a new paper. With the highest melanoma rates in the world – two in three people are diagnosed with skin cancer by the age of 70 – a new approach is needed to reverse this trend, say University of South Australia (UniSA) researchers.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Fight for a 'fair day's pay'

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 21/01/2026, Ben Loughran, Page 1

"We went from hero to zero in under six years." This is the feeling of the Health Workers Union (HWU) workers who say they put their safety on the line during the COVID-19 pandemic, but now feel overlooked and underappreciated.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Hospital politics 'will cost lives'

Canberra Times, General News, 21/01/2026, Lanie Tindale, Page 1

Patients have joined cardiologists in raising the alarm about cardiac care in the territory, saying current management practices are putting the care of vulnerable patients at risk. [...] "Continuity of care is supported by the shared Digital Health Record and the team working together for best patient outcomes."

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Radio National, Life Matters, 20/01/2026, Tegan Taylor

Interview with David Hanson, CEO, Australian eHealth Research Centre. Hanson discusses the difference between ChatGPT Health, which is a new offering that helps people be well-informed and be more confident when navigating their health, and the My Health Record, which is a system for recording patient records in Australia.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Dentist faces sexual accusations by three women

Canberra Times, Other, 20/01/2026, Miklos Bolza

A Sydney dentist is in further strife in court as the number of women who have made sexual abuse claims against him grows. Maged Fouad Farag, 61, was first accused in September 2024 of molesting one victim during a job trial at his clinic in Rockdale in southern Sydney.

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Melissa Heath: Southport aged care worker guilty of defrauding resident with dementia of \$20,000

The Courier Mail, Other, 20/01/2026, Alex Treacy

A Gold Coast aged-care worker drained more than \$20,000 from the account of a resident with dementia, a court has heard. Southport woman Melissa Louise Heath, 50, appeared in Southport Magistrates Court on January 15, where she pleaded guilty to a charge of fraud by way of dishonestly obtaining money.

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

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Health alert issued for greater western Sydney after confirmed case of measles returns to Australia, visits several sites

The Australian, Other, 20/01/2026, Blake Antrobus

An urgent health alert has been issued for parts of western greater Sydney after an overseas traveller returned to Australia while infected with measles. NSW Health issued the warning on Monday after the detection from a returned traveller who was visiting Thailand — where there is currently an ongoing measles outbreak.

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

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

How local advocacy can lead to lifesaving change

Council, General News, 31/12/2025, Page 16

A campaign spearheaded by Perth local, Brian Bwoga, after a personal tragedy, has transformed local safety protocols and sparked a broader conversation about emergency medical interventions, by introducing a life-saving choking prevention device to the Joondalup area. [...] So, the Therapeutic Goods Administration approved it.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

2GB, Drive, 20/01/2026, Clinton Maynard

Maynard explains that NSW Health is adding a drug checking service to music festivals as part of a 12-month trial. He says festival-goers can anonymously and freely have small amounts of their illegally

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FOOD STANDARDS

'Chaotic' scenes as \$35 Brisbane cake swap event unravels

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/01/2026, Lauren Robinson

A cake swap event has left a bitter taste in mouths, with the business now being accused by customers of deleting negative reviews. [...] "This event is currently being investigated following complaints. All food businesses, including temporary stalls or market vendors, must meet Australia's food safety standards," a council spokesperson told news.com.au.

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

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Popular Thai restaurant at Westfield Carousel fined \$40,000 for disgusting food safety breaches

West Australian, Other, 20/01/2026

The owners of a popular Thai restaurant in Perth's southern suburbs has been fined \$40,000 for a shocking number of food safety breaches, including washing lettuce in a sink used for cleaning mops. Little Bangkok Carousel, a trendy eatery in the Westfield shopping complex, popular among Perth influencers, was charged with 15 breaches of the Food Safety Act despite being warned last year by City of Canning health inspectors to clean up its act.

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AICIS

Under your skin: toxic metals abound in tattoo inks sold in Australia, new study finds

The Guardian, Other, 20/01/2026, William Alexander Donald & Jake P. Violi

Many tattoo inks available in Australia fail to meet current EU standards, with no national regulatory framework to protect consumers. In recent decades, millions of Australians have embraced body art – an estimated 30% of adults have a tattoo.

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