



TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 14th February 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Weekend Australian](#) (page 1) reports that Health Department officials told Senate Estimates that they have prepared advice to Minister Mark Butler on the constitutional legality of direct federal regulation of medical specialist fees.
- The [Weekend Australian](#) (page 3) reports that a Queensland Health review found serious systemic failures in Cairns Hospital's pediatric gender health service.
- The [Daily Telegraph](#) (page 4) reports that the National Disability Quality and Safeguards Commission spent more than \$3.5 million on travel in the 18 months to December 15. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#)*
- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 6) reports that waiting times for 22 specialities in South Australia's public hospitals are longer than 50 months, down from 23 last quarter.
- [Guardian Australia](#) (online) reports that Australia's ministers for food, health and agriculture voted on Friday morning to make Health Star Ratings mandatory on all food labels and directed FSANZ to draft legislation. *Also reported by: [Yahoo! News Australia](#)*

Constitutional test on specialists' fees

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 1

The Albanese government is actively considering how far it can go to "test the constitutional boundaries" that have long constrained direct government regulation of medical specialists' fees. Health Minister Mark Butler has revealed he is examining advice from his department on the constitutional legality of direct fee regulation, a day after introducing legislation that will trigger a mass public upload of data to the government's Medical Costs Finder website and let patients compare specialists' gap fees.

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

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Albanese bill to publish specialist fees and insurer data

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 13/02/2026, Roxanne Libatique

The Albanese government has introduced legislation that would change how specialist medical fees and private health insurance product changes are disclosed, with implications for health funds' pricing, product design, and data reporting. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the proposed changes are intended to give patients clearer information about potential costs before acting on a referral.

[Read More](#)

Legislation introduced to improve private health choice and transparency

Hospital and Healthcare, Other, 13/02/2026

The Australian Government has introduced legislation intended to help Australians find the best value when they need specialist medical advice and treatment. [...] "Specialists and private health funds have been given the opportunity to be upfront about patient costs and out-of-pocket expenses but frankly, have failed to do so," said Mark Butler, Australia's Minister for Health and Ageing.

[Read More](#)

3AW, Afternoons, 13/02/2026, Tony Moclair

Interview with Private Healthcare Australia CEO Dr Rachel David. Moclair says Minister for Health Mark Butler introduced legislation to disclose all specialist fees. David says nearly 30 per cent of Australians are delaying specialist care due to costs, with some initial consultations now costing upwards of \$1,000.

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Stubborn NDIS growth defies Labor target

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 11

[...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister admitted that while there had been a "marginal increase" in the scheme's growth, the annual rate could "move around from month to month". [...] Health Minister Mark Butler announced the need for the program, and associated changes in NDIS eligibility for children with autism, after figures revealed one in 10 young boys with developmental delay was relying on the scheme.

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

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

'Time to deliver': blame shifted on hospital bed block

Canberra Times, Other, 13/02/2026, Stephanie Gardiner

Political tensions over aged care funding appear set to continue while thousands of older Australians remain stranded in public hospital beds. [...] After meeting with his counterparts on Friday, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Commonwealth had proposed \$2 billion of that extra funding be "ring-fenced" for aged care services.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Perth Now \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#) and syndicated widely online

Blame shifting as aged care crisis deepens inside hospitals

West Australian, Other, 13/02/2026, Jessica Page

Local government has been dragged into the debate over aged care as Labor tried to deflect blame for a huge increase in the number of older patients stranded in public hospitals. [...] Mark Butler and State Ministers agreed to "work together" to address "discharge barriers and identify solutions for continuous improvement".

Similar coverage: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

ABC North and West SA, SA Regional Drive, 13/02/2026, Narelle Graham

Interview with Eldercare CEO Jane Pickering on state and territory health ministers meeting with Minister Mark Butler to address bed block. Pickering says SA aged care facilities are at 99 per cent capacity with virtually no beds available to accommodate 380-odd patients stranded in the state's hospitals. He says SA needs 900 to 1000 new beds annually for the next decade, with each bed costing \$500,000 to \$650,000.

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ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 13/02/2026, Nadia Mitsopoulos

Interview with AMA emergency medicine spokesman Dr David Mountain. Mitsopoulos says state health ministers are meeting today with Minister Mark Butler to address bed block. Mountain says the 30 per cent surge in bed block over the last five months is a terrible indictment of long-term government planning.

[Play Now](#)

ABC NewsRadio, Breakfast, 13/02/2026

Interview with AMA president Dr Danielle McMullen about state and territory health ministers meeting with Minister Mark Butler to address bed block. McMullen says more than 3,000 aged care patients are languishing in acute hospital beds due to a lack of nursing home spaces and home care packages.

Continuing interview on: [ABC NewsRadio \(Sydney\)](#).

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 13/02/2026, Sonya Feldhoff and Jules Schiller

Interview with SA Health Minister Chris Picton. Feldhoff says state and territory health ministers are meeting with Minister Mark Butler to address bed block. Picton says the State Government is launching a \$250m no-interest loan scheme for aged care providers and redeveloping state-owned land to bypass federal planning delays.

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Govt reveals new script system

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Bella Rough, Page 4

A new national medicines record of what patients have been prescribed and dispensed will be mandatory for all doctors to use, including those in online-only clinics, Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler says. But before the system is rolled out, the government will force telehealth clinics to upload prescribing and dispensing information to My Health Record, including the clinical context.

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Aborted take-off for frequent flyers

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Antony Scholefield, Page 10

The Federal Government has formally killed off its long-delayed plan to pay thousands of dollars to the GPs caring for hospital 'frequent flyers'. [...] Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler essentially told Australian Doctor in an interview last year that this was the case.

Butler keen to list semaglutide

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Page 10

Health Minister Mark Butler says the Federal Government is keen to list semaglutide on the PBS despite the expected massive cost to taxpayers. In December, the PBAC said Novo Nordisk's Wegovy should be added to the PBS for patients with both cardiovascular disease and obesity, with the caveat that the company would need to reduce its price first.

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85% of fast-track specialists are GPs

The Medical Republic, Other, 13/02/2026, Holly Payne

The number of new doctors registering to practice is up by 50% on pre-pandemic numbers, health minister Mark Butler says. Overseas-trained specialist GPs make up the bulk of doctors using AHPRA's new expedited registration pathway, with the health minister crediting the program for a major jump in registrations.

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3AW, Mornings, 13/02/2026, Tom Elliott

Interview with National Disability Services CEO Michael Perusco. Elliott says John Dardo told senate estimates that up to 10 per cent of NDIS claims are inappropriate, mischievous or criminal. Perusco says only 5 per cent of providers are registered and guardrails are needed. He says Ministers Mark Butler and Jenny McAllister understand the issue and that something needs to be done.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

Stubborn NDIS growth defies Labor target

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 11

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

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PBS safe from Trump's MFN

Pharma In Focus, Other, 13/02/2026

The Department of Health, Disability, and Ageing has pushed back on claims that Australians will find it more difficult to get medications as a result of the 'Most Favoured Nation' policy being promoted by the Trump Administration. [...] The Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Jenny McAllister, pushed back on making policy based on the experience of a single family.

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MINISTER RAE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 13/02/2026, Lucy Breaden/Kylie Baxter

Interview with Assistant Minister for Health Rebecca White about Health Star food labelling. She says a majority of food ministers have agreed to raise a proposal with FSANZ to look at making the ratings mandatory on all food products.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 13/02/2026, Leon Compton

Interview with George Institute for Global Health food governance program lead Dr Alexandra Jones on improving the Health Star rating system. Jones says they are hoping that food ministers will vote to mandate the label. Compton notes Assistant Minister for Health Rebecca White is running the meeting.

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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DEPARTMENT

Constitutional test on specialists' fees

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 1

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

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Work from home nothing but a public disservice

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Chris Uhlmann, Page 15

[...] One of the few prepared to speak plainly is Department of Health, Disability and Ageing secretary

Blair Comley, who has lamented the 22 per cent attendance rate among his 7000 employees, warning it carries consequences for productivity, workplace culture, and personal and professional development.

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MRI expansion for GPs

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Bella Rough, Page 1

GPs would be free to order a range of new MRI scans under Medicare, including foot, ankle, hip and shoulder scans, under proposals by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. It is proposing a staged expansion of MRI under Medicare, including potentially 11 new GP items, such as a \$552 item for thoracolumbar spine MRI and a \$402 item for foot or ankle MRI.

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Proposal to fund drugs without PBAC approval

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 2

When the TGA approved cystic fibrosis drug Trikafta in 2021, the biggest barrier remained in place: the \$250,000-a-year price tag to treat one patient. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing said the government was still assessing the IAG report.

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GPs win \$24 rebate for ECG interpretation

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 6

The ban on GPs billing Medicare for ECG interpretation is finally being undone after more than five years of campaigning by doctors. [...] While the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has not given a full item descriptor, it has confirmed GPs will be allowed to bill the item from 1 March.

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Top jobs beckon fearless cumquats and mandarins

The Mandarin, Other, 13/02/2026, Verona Burgess

Senior public service reshuffles, quiet sackings, and lingering robodebt fallout expose both fierce competition for top roles and unresolved questions about accountability at the highest levels. [...] Among the current cohort of secretaries, the pickings are few, largely because most have only been in their jobs a shortish while, such as health secretary Blair Comely.

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The Australian Centre for Disease Control: hopes, challenges and expectations for the road ahead

Croakey, Other, 13/02/2026, Jason Staines

Australia's new national public health agency formally began operating as a standalone statutory authority on 1 January, marking what many in the sector describe as a generational shift in how the country prepares for and responds to health threats. [...] An interim centre began operating within the Department of Health and Aged Care in January 2024.

[Read More](#)

Sector still struggling with profitability

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 13/02/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

StewartBrown has reiterated the need for the residential aged care sector to be more investable in its September 2025 Aged Care Performance Survey Analysis, covering the 3-month period from 1 July to 30 September 2025. [...] He said this is in line with the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority's "charter of not building in a margin," but further discussion on what margin needs to exist must happen with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and the government.

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Rusty stands out in roomful of obfuscation and lunacy

Health Services Daily, Other, 13/02/2026, Cate Swannell

The nutters have been out in force in Parliament House this week, and I'm not even talking about the Liberal leadership spill. [...] I get that public servants have limits to how they can answer questions, but particularly when it came to aged care, health secretary Blair Comley and his offsideers Sonja Stewart and Greg Pugh, were especially obfuscatory.

[Read More](#)

Government mulls unprecedented move on GP referrals

The Medical Republic, Other, 13/02/2026, Holly Payne

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is looking to go where no federal health administration has ever gone before: GP referrals. A new consultation document proposes that the government mandate that all referrals between GP and non-GP specialists "contain standard information about how referrals operate and where consumers can obtain more details, including about non-GP specialist fees (with a link to the [Medical Costs Finder] website) and informed financial consent rights".

Also reported by: [Health Services Daily \(Online\)](#).

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Albanese bill to publish specialist fees and insurer data

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 13/02/2026, Roxanne Libatique

The Albanese government has introduced legislation that would change how specialist medical fees and private health insurance product changes are disclosed, with implications for health funds' pricing, product design, and data reporting. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the proposed changes are intended to give patients clearer information about potential costs before acting on a referral.

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Health confirms PBS spending decline

MedNews, Other, 13/02/2026, Megan Brodie

Senior bureaucrats from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) confirmed [...]

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Interest-free loans no silver bullet for bed crisis, says Mamarelis

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 13/02/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The South Australian government announced a \$250 million no-interest loan scheme this week to incentivise the construction of 650 new aged care beds, while the Western Australian government introduced a \$100 million low-interest scheme in January. Whiddon chief executive officer Chris Mamarelis welcomes these schemes as important steps to improving the viability of aged care construction but in conversation with Australian Ageing Agenda for our 2026 Leadership Talk series, he added they are no "silver bullet" to the growing bed shortage crisis.

[Read More](#)

\$200 for a shower. This is what aged care has come to

HelloCare, Other, 13/02/2026, Jakob Neeland

A single shower. A \$200 bill. That is the reality one family says they are facing under Australia's aged

care system, as providers transition from Home Care Packages to the new Support at Home program.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 13/02/2026, Damian Smith

Interview with Southern Cross Care WA CEO Clare Grieveson on the aged care sector in WA. She says the sector requires an additional 5,500 beds by 2030 to keep pace with the state's ageing population. She says that while more infrastructure is essential, better system-wide planning, including the use of virtual emergency platforms, is needed to support nursing staff in making clinical decisions that avoid unnecessary hospital transfers.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

NDIS watchdog's \$3.5m travel bill

Daily Telegraph, General News, 14/02/2026, Julie Cross, Page 4

Top executives from the NDIS watchdog, which was slammed in a damning audit for being only "partly effective", spent almost \$800,000 on jetting around Australia over a two and a half year period. The National Disability Quality and Safeguards Commission, as a whole, spent more than \$3.5 million on travel in 18 months, figures show.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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PRIMARY CARE

Aussie GPs' paperwork load lighter

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 6

Do Australian GPs have things easy when it comes to the pain of paperwork? That is the conclusion of US think tank the Commonwealth Fund, which surveyed 10,895 GPs across 10 developed nations for its 2025 International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care Physicians.

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Dollar per minute items: be careful what you wish for

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Dr Nicholas Stanley-Cary, Page 16

Once again, the AMA is pushing a significant structural change to GP consultation time tiers, from five to seven items. The rationale? Better support for complex care, given the current items may not reflect the complexities of modern general practice, such as managing chronic disease and mental illness.

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Expansion of pharmacist prescribing progresses despite GP concerns

Medical Forum, Other, 13/02/2026

When the first West Australian pharmacists are given the go ahead to prescribe medications for a range of common ailments such as shingles and asthma later in the year, they will do so without the backing of the full backing of GPs. The next group of WA pharmacists taking part in the Enhanced Access Community Pharmacy Pilot (EACPP) program are due to begin training at UWA this month.

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SA Liberal Opposition not serious about world class healthcare

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 13/02/2026

South Australian Shadow Health Minister, Heidi Girolamo MLC, made unexpected remarks about

pharmacists' scope of practice, during the Australian Medical Association (AMA) South Australia Health Debate on 11 February. The Pharmacy Guild of Australia's National Executive Director, Gerard Benedet, has responded.

Similar coverage: [Australian Journal of Pharmacy_\(Online\)](#).

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ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 13/02/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with RACGP NT chair Dr Sam Hurd on the Federal Government's \$8.5 billion investment in bulk billing incentives, which has seen rates rise 4 per cent to 81.4 per cent nationwide. He says Darwin has seen 15 practices return to universal bulk billing but the incentive remains insufficient for regional areas where higher operational costs prevent GPs from abandoning out-of-pocket fees.

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POPULATION HEALTH

New machines dispensing proactive health

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 14/02/2026, Lochlainn Heley, Page 15

Mildura Rural City is prioritising its sexual health this National Condom Day thanks to handy vending machines posted through the region. As part of the municipal Community Health and Wellbeing Plan, the MRCC staff have been collaborating with several organisations to promote sexual health and wellbeing in the region.

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Cost-of-living crisis sees more young women neglecting health and basic needs, report finds

ABC Online, Other, 13/02/2026, Jordan Bissell

Every week, 23-year-old Ruby Neisler begins her ritual — trawling for supermarket bargains. She starts at Tribe of Judah, a church-backed discount supermarket in Logan, south of Brisbane, which sells heavily reduced grocery items — many of them end-of-life pantry staples. Ms Neisler says when shopping at the major supermarkets she is limited to buying what is on special, with full priced items out of reach after covering the cost of her rent.

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I bought a home in my 20s. That doesn't mean it's become easier

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 13/02/2026, Millie Muroi

Late last year, I achieved the great Australian dream: I bought my own home — a small, grey apartment — in one of the most expensive housing markets in the world. [...] This week, my colleague Caitlin Fitzsimmons did some digging and talked about how data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare seems to show exactly that: younger Australians — at least Millennials — are entering the housing market later in their lives, but ultimately "catching up" to their predecessors.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 13/02/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with University of NSW Associate Professor BJ Newton. He says that since the National Apology 18 years ago, the number of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care has more than doubled. Citing data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Newton says approximately 20,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain in care as of 2024, far exceeding the 9,000 recorded at the time of the Apology.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

'Like a punch in the heart'

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 14/02/2026, Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 23

Jaz Gray has journals filled with details of her extremely rare condition. The 32-year-old has even sent results of her blood tests overseas and interstate in the hope scientists can find a cure. [...] This month is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#)

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Gender staff in fear, parents shunned

Weekend Australian, General News, 14/02/2026, Rachel Baxendale, Page 3

Children as young as 12 were prescribed puberty blockers without adequate assessment, documentation or monitoring, staff feared reprisal when speaking up about patient safety concerns, and parents who objected to the treatment were alienated, a damning review of the Cairns pediatric gender health service has found.

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Study reveals why a 'lost generation' of women receive autism diagnoses late

Adelaide Now, Other, 13/02/2026, Susie O'Brien

Australian university student Alvita Sam was 21 when she received her "life-saving" diagnosis of autism. "It didn't come as a huge shock at first, but the gravity of it did hit me in waves" she said.

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IMMUNISATION

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Adelaide's Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre opens to

deliver community-focused and culturally safe care

National Indigenous Times, Other, 13/02/2026, Giovanni Torre

The Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Centre is now open in Adelaide, with the purpose of providing community-focused and culturally safe care to First Nations people. The federal and South Australian governments have jointly funded the Centre under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Seven-year wait to see a specialist in struggling public system

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 14/02/2026, Brad Crouch, Page 6

Patients are waiting as long as 83 months almost seven years for a public hospital specialist appointment as the system grapples with surging demand. However, the good news is there have been some cuts to wait times.

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Woman found dead in Enoggera Reservoir had gone to hospital seeking mental health treatment

The Courier Mail, Other, 13/02/2026, Shayla Bulloch, Jackie Sinnerton and Thomas Chamberlin

A woman found dead in a swimming hole had been seeking mental health treatment at a Brisbane hospital just days prior. [...] A Metro North spokesman has confirmed that a Severity Assessment Code 1 (SAC 1) review is under way. It's understood the woman had sought mental health treatment at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital just days before her body was found.

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Roger Cook apologises for mother's Kwinana Freeway birth, St John of God Midland bed mishap

West Australian, Other, 13/02/2026, Caleb Runciman

Premier Roger Cook has apologised to a Perth mother who was forced to give birth on the Kwinana Freeway as senior hospital executives arrange to share the findings of a likely damning review. The WA Health Department has described the treatment of Perth mother Lena as "unacceptable" after The West revealed shocking details about the freeway birth of newborn, Sofia, last November.

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New start for heart clinic

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 14/02/2026, Karli Farrell, Page 13

Mildura Base Public Hospital's cardiac sonographer Amy Stanbrook and her new ultrasound machine, nicknamed Lexie, will be checking hearts in the new cardiac unit, which was funded by the Mildura Base Public Hospital Foundation and opens at the end of this month. Ms Stanbrook joined Emma Bath, the cardiac liaison clinical nurse consultant, last year to champion the new unit, with public rooms finally becoming available at the Mildura Base Specialist Clinic on the corner of Ontario Avenue and Thirteenth Street.

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Family push for Sunshine Coast neurosurgery unit after shock brain cancer diagnosis

ABC Online, Other, 13/02/2026, Jessica Ross and Sarah Howells

With two young children and a small business to run, Brad Collins figured his fatigue at the end of the day was simply from juggling work and family life. But one night the 46-year-old electrician, from Queensland's Sunshine Coast, had trouble seeing.

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

'Dismayed': ACRRM frozen out of GP training expansion

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Ciara Seccombe, Page 10

ACRRM says it was excluded from talks on the Australian General Practice Training program ahead of last month's unexpected announcement of 306 extra RACGP training posts. The decision to increase the number of posts to 2124 some 1772 with the RACGP and 352 with ACRRM reflects resurgent interest in the specialty among junior doctors, the Federal Government says.

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Major Queensland hospital strike looms as hundreds of workers walk off job

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 13/02/2026, Ashleigh Jansen

Hundreds of medical imaging workers across the state will walk off the job between 1pm and 3pm on Friday following months of failed pay negotiations with the Queensland government. A total of 14 hospitals across the state, including Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital, will be impacted.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Addressing Australia's 'missing medicines'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 13/02/2026, Megan Haggan

Australia needs to significantly reform its approach to innovative medicines, one stakeholder body argues. In its 2026-7 Pre-Budget Submission, Medicines Australia tackles the issue of "missing medicines," as well as reform to the lowest cost comparator and discount rate and a boost for research.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Former PSR director's 'abuse of process'

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Heather Saxena, Page 5

A court has ordered a former Professional Services Review director to pay almost \$2 million to an

ophthalmologist after finding she did not read his written defence before sending him to a committee. The Supreme Court of Queensland heard that O&G Professor Julie Quinlivan the Professional Services Review (PSR) director from 2017 to 2022 referred Dr David Kitchen to a PSR committee in 2018 just 17 minutes after her staff sent her his 96-page submission.

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A tribunal heard this case most never get that far

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Heather Saxena, Page 12

Late last year, a tribunal found that a former RACP president had inappropriately touched seven female doctors under his supervision both interns and registrars. Associate Professor Leslie Bolitho's behaviour had occurred between 2014 and 2018, and perhaps because of this, his reputation for failing to respect the personal boundaries of female doctors was known to some staff.

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'Deeply confronting': Hospital unaware surgeon was under investigation for months

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 13/02/2026, Liam Mannix and Henrietta Cook

Victoria's largest private hospital has launched a review after "deeply confronting" allegations one of its gynaecologists performed unnecessary surgeries on women with endometriosis, including removing their ovaries. Epworth HealthCare chief executive Professor Andrew Stripp has also warned that patient safety was being put at risk by strict confidentiality laws surrounding doctors under investigation by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

NSW Health issues warning over rise in measles cases

NEWS.com.au, Other, 13/02/2026, Rhiannon Lewin

Health authorities are warning NSW residents to be on high alert for symptoms of measles after four new cases were identified across the state. Three of the cases have not travelled overseas and acquired their infection within NSW.

Similar coverage: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Measles alert after infectious person travelled through Perth Airport

NEWS.com.au, Other, 13/02/2026, Jessica Paul

West Australian residents are again on high alert for measles, as authorities confirm two new cases of the deadly disease in the first weeks of 2026. An infectious person travelled on Batik Air flight 6080 from Jakarta, Indonesia to Perth from 6.55pm on February 6 to 12.40am on February 7, according to WA Health.

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Hospitals in Melbourne actively testing suspected cases of infectious Nipah virus

ABC Online, Other, 13/02/2026, Ali Moore

774 Drive has confirmed hospitals in Melbourne have actively tested suspected cases for the Nipah virus. The number of cases globally is small, and it's known to be inefficient at human-to-human transmission, but it is causing concern with an outbreak in India and Bangladesh due to its very high mortality rate.

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Scientists warn of escalating mosquito-borne virus threat in Northern

Queensland

Townsville Bulletin, Other, 13/02/2026, Josh Mercer

Northern Queensland is facing an escalating public health threat from mosquito-borne viruses, with new research revealing that climate changing is increasing the chance of transmission. James Cook University scientists have revealed this could pose a public health risk, with cases on the rise.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Live and let larvae

Australian Doctor, General News, 13/02/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 2

The TGA plans to significantly relax controls on the use of maggots for wound debridement, opening the door to a homegrown Australian medical maggot industry. The watchdog says it is responding to calls from doctors who want to use maggots as an alternative to surgery or an add-on treatment for unresponsive wounds.

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Doctors warn against this popular wellness trend

Australian Financial Review, Other, 13/02/2026, Rachael Bolton and Michael Smith

Two deaths at US wellness centres last year have led medical experts to raise the alarm about the increasing popularity of hyperbaric chamber treatments in non-medical settings in Australia.

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WA's OncoRes secures nearly \$30m in funding for breast cancer detection probe

West Australian, Other, 13/02/2026, Cheyanne Enciso

OncoRes has secured nearly \$30 million in funding in what the medical technology firm — which wants to crack the huge US market — says will help progress clinical trials for its breast cancer detecting probe. [...] "Because we have this expedited access to the US market, the quickest way for us to actually get (Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration approval) is to get US approval first," Dr Giles said.

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World-first clinical guide for MDMA

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 13/02/2026

A new Australian Clinical Practice Guideline for the Appropriate Use of methylenedioxyamphetamine-assisted psychotherapy (MDMA-AP) for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

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FOOD STANDARDS

Health star rating to become mandatory on all packaged food in

Australia

The Guardian, Other, 13/02/2026, Melissa Davey and Natasha May

The Star Rating system will be mandatory on all packaged foods in Australia after ministers agreed the voluntary system was not working. [...] As a result of the meeting, the ministers asked Food Standards Australia New Zealand, the food regulatory agency, to draft the legislation to make it mandatory.

Similar coverage: [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Do not eat: Popular cheese sold at IGA is urgently recalled over fears bacteria could cause fever and vomiting

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 13/02/2026, Olivia Day

A popular cheese has been pulled from major supermarket shelves amid fears it could cause nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and fever. Batches of La Vera Fresh Ricotta 500g from La Vera Cheese have been recalled in an alert issued by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) on Thursday.

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AICIS

Water utility 'confident' Hobart drinking water is antibiotic-free after salmon disease outbreak

ABC Online, Other, 13/02/2026, Clancy Balen

Tasmania's water provider says there is no risk of antibiotics entering Hobart's water supply, following Huon Aquaculture's use of oxytetracycline in a hatchery connected to the River Derwent. The salmon giant administered the medication as a "last line of defence" after an increase in deaths at its Meadowbank hatchery located 40 kilometres upstream from TasWater's Bryn Estyn water treatment plant.

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