



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 25th February 2026

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

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 6) reports that a syndicate of NDIS contractors has been permanently barred from working in the sector after an investigation by the Fraud Fusion Taskforce found it offered cash payments to attract participants and then later spent funding meant to go towards services on luxury items and services.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 10) reports that Victorian Health Minister, Mary-Anne Thomas, is calling for changes to national procedures after federal regulator AHPRA failed to alert a private hospital group that it was investigating claims gynaecologist, Dr Simon Gordon, performed unnecessary surgery.
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 12) reports that the Queensland Government has announced a plan to a modular hospital expansion at the deteriorating Gladstone Hospital to maintain services until at least 2028. Queensland Health Minister Tim Nicholls said the modular block, which will add 51 beds to the hospital, will address the hospital's significant infrastructure challenges that require immediate measures.
- **[The Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 6) reports that the second stage of construction is set to begin on the \$7.3m upgrade to the Midlands Multi-Purpose Health Centre redevelopment at Oatlands. Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Rebecca White, said "These improvements mean more capacity, better facilities, and a more comfortable environment for residents and their families".

- [ABC Online](#) reports that the WA government has announced a \$140 million "winter strategy" that will create more hospital beds and boost immunisation rates.

MINISTER BUTLER

PM demands ministers find billions in savings

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 25/02/2026, Paul Sakkal, Page 1

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has demanded ministers find savings and delay spending to avoid adding fuel to the inflation fire ahead of a budget insiders say will be a belt-tightening exercise. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler's goal of crunching the NDIS yearly growth rate down to 5-6 per cent, down from 8 per cent, was ratified at a cabinet meeting last month, giving Labor the option of putting it in budget forecasts.

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

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Mark Butler

Adelaide Advertiser, Wrap, 25/02/2026, Page 4

Another of the Prime Minister's close associates, Butler is a key player federally who has added the major challenge of overhauling the troubled National Disability Insurance Scheme to his already gargantuan health portfolio. A former national and state ALP president, Butler was a regular confidant of Anthony Albanese during the campaign for May's federal election.

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Rosebud youth service at risk of funding cut

Mornington News, General News, 24/02/2026, Brendan Rees, Page 13

A Rosebud youth service charity is facing an uncertain future after a federal government decision to redirect mental health funding away from local initiatives. [...] A letter seen by The News from the Health Minister Mark Butler to YMCA Victoria on 2 February, said "supporting young people to reach their full potential is a key priority for the Australian government and we will continue to increase our investment in youth mental health services".

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'Fantastic resource for our community'

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 2

The federal Health Minister says the government is working to improve access to imaging and pathology services at its urgent care clinics as he officially opens a new service in Shellharbour, the third of its kind in the Illawarra. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said that once all 137 urgent care clinics were open in Australia, they would see two million people each year, half of which would have otherwise attended an emergency department.

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

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Kingston urgent care clinic opens

Kingborough Chronicle, General News, 24/02/2026, Page 3

The Kingston Medicare Urgent Care Clinic officially opens on Channel Highway, providing bulk-billed urgent care services for Kingborough residents. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the clinic would help patients receive timely treatment closer to home, while Member for Franklin Julie Collins said the facility would improve access to convenient, bulk-billed care for local families.

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Clinics to ease strain on emergency rooms

Midwest Times & Northern Guardian, General News, 25/02/2026, Katina Curtis, Page 7

Geraldton locals will soon have a new option to get free medical help , with a new urgent care clinic set

to open next month. [...] "These three new clinics across WA will be open seven days a week for extended hours and, most importantly, patients will be fully bulk-billed," said Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who was in Perth to open two of the metropolitan sites.

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More 'free' GPs

Moreton Bay Sentinel News, General News, 25/02/2026, Page 16

Residents in Blair have gained greater access to free GP appointments, with new figures showing the number of bulk billing practices in the electorate has risen from 13 to 23. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler said more Australians are finding it easier to find a bulk billing doctor right across the country, including in Blair.

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Victorian Premier refers surgeon Simon Gordon allegations to police after Four Corners revelations

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026

The Victorian government has referred allegations against gynaecologist Simon Gordon to police, the premier says. [...] After being briefed about the Four Corners story, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who told the program the allegations in it were "sickening", wrote to his Victorian counterpart, Mary-Anne Thomas, asking her to consider commissioning a Safer Care Victoria inquiry into the clinical governance at Epworth Private Hospital.

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Urgent care clinics ease emergency department demand, but wait times unchanged

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026, Clare Armstrong

An independent review has found Labor's urgent care clinics are cost-effective and popular with patients, but face workforce shortages and problems with after-hours services. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the report confirmed the clinics were "providing exceptional care" and "taking pressure off hospitals".

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Regulator 'dropped the ball' by dismissing complaints about gynaecologist's practices, expert says

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026, Louise Milligan, Mary Fallon and Lara Sonnenschein

Australia's medical regulator, AHPRA, has been criticised for failing to act on complaints from patients about surgeries by renowned Melbourne gynaecologist Simon Gordon that their doctor, a professor of gynaecology, has described as inappropriately aggressive. [...] After being briefed about the Four Corners story, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who told the program the allegations in it were "sickening", wrote to his Victorian counterpart, Mary-Anne Thomas, asking her to consider commissioning a Safer Care Victoria inquiry into the clinical governance at Epworth Private Hospital.

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Doctors urge sunscreen break in schools

Education Review, Other, 24/02/2026

More than 650 medical experts have called on the Albanese government to establish a mandatory five-minute sunscreen break in schools. The group made its request for a sunscreen application period in an open letter to Education Minister Jason Clare and Health Minister Mark Butler.

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Peak body urges PM to act on tobacco

Latrobe Valley Express, Other, 24/02/2026, Aidan Knight

Following new economic modelling, the Australian Association of Convenience Stores (AACS) has urged the Prime Minister to reassess the country's tobacco excise. [...] "The Prime Minister needs to

step in and have an honest conversation with his Health Minister Mark Butler, and Treasurer Jim Chalmers about whether current excise settings are unintentionally driving the black market.

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'Infertile': Australian doctor accused of unnecessary infertility operations in explosive Four Corners

NEWS.com.au, Other, 24/02/2026

A surgeon has denied claims he has allegedly been operating on women unnecessarily in Australia. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the allegations were "incredibly distressing" and made him "physically sick".

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

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Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick opens expanded ED and cancer centre

The Indian Sun, Other, 24/02/2026

Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick has entered a new phase with the official opening of a major redevelopment that expands emergency care, boosts cancer treatment and research, and adds new specialist services for children across New South Wales. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre would strengthen paediatric cancer care by combining treatment and research.

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New Medicare Urgent Care Clinic Opens in Shellharbour

Wave FM, Other, 24/02/2026, Saskia Channing

Shellharbour residents now have easier access to urgent medical care with the official opening of the Shellharbour Medicare Urgent Care Clinic. The new clinic was opened today by Federal Health Minister Mark Butler alongside Member for Whitlam Carol Berry, providing walk-in treatment for urgent but non-life threatening conditions.

[Read More](#)

WIN Wollongong, WIN News, 24/02/2026, Bruce Roberts

The Shellharbour Urgent Care Centre has officially opened, while Shoalhaven patients await their delayed clinic. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says all clinics are still set to open by 30 June and remain ahead of schedule despite some final adjustments.

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2MCE, 14:00 National Radio News, 24/02/2026

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler welcomes the referral of Melbourne doctor Simon Gordon to Vic Police after dozens of women allege he performed unnecessary surgeries. Butler emphasises the need to bring any wrongdoing to justice.

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ABC Ballarat, Statewide Drive, 24/02/2026, Prue Bentley

[...] You know, I guess it's certainly an issue that OPAN, the Older Persons Advocacy Network, has raised. I think Craig Asiyo had a meeting last week with Minister Wray, as well as the aged and health minister, Mark Butler, as well.

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ABC Illawarra, Mornings, 24/02/2026, Nick Rheinberger

Interview with Terence Cheng, Associate Professor from the Centre for Health Economics at Monash University, about recent private health insurance premium increases. Cheng explains the 4.4% rise, noting it outpaces general inflation and adds financial pressure to households already facing high living

costs. He outlines that insurers submit data to the APRA, which advises Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, who approves the increases unless they breach the public interest.

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ABC Illawarra, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Melinda James

Interview with Mark Butler, Federal Minister for Health, Disability and Ageing, about the rollout of urgent care clinics in regional NSW. Butler says the Shellharbour clinic opens today, with Nowra scheduled next week, bringing the network close to completion at 137 clinics. He highlights the clinics' popularity and cost-effectiveness, notes workforce shortages as a key challenge, and emphasises ongoing evaluation to improve staffing, access to imaging, and overall effectiveness.

Interview continues on: [ABC Illawarra \(Wollongong\)](#).

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ABC Radio Melbourne, Drive, 24/02/2026, Ali Moore

Interview with Geoff Rowe, CEO of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, about the impact of the federal government's Integrated Assessment Tool for home care support. Rowe says the 50% surge in requests for help since the tool's November launch was driven by older Australians seeking clarity or support with their care packages, noting that the volume of calls is unprecedented. He notes that while Aged Care Minister Sam Rae and Health Minister Mark Butler are aware and engaging with advocacy networks, many older people still struggle to have their concerns heard.

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ABC Radio Melbourne, 12:00 News, 24/02/2026

The Vic Government declines to hold a state inquiry into Melbourne surgeon Simon Gordon despite a request from Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. The state government reports Gordon to the police after Four Corners reveals he performed major surgery on young women for endometriosis when pathology showed no trace of the disease.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

NDIS blitz on dodgy practice cleans house

The Australian, General News, 25/02/2026, Paul Garvey, Page 6

A syndicate of NDIS contractors who offered cash payments to attract participants and who blew funding that was supposed to go towards services on luxury handbags and supercar rentals are among dozens of operators who have been permanently barred from working in the sector in recent months. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said the surge in bans was a product of the 320 additional staff delivered by the Albanese government to provide "more muscle" to weed out dodgy operators.

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

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MINISTER RAE

Help calls surge 50 per cent amid AI aged care assessment backlash

HelloCare, Other, 24/02/2026, Jakob Neeland

Calls to aged care advocacy services have surged in the months since the Federal Government rolled out its new AI driven assessment system, fuelling an escalating dispute over whether algorithms are quietly overriding clinical judgement. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae rejected the characterisation.

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ABC Central Victoria, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Fiona Parker

Interview with Dr Anne Webster, Federal MP for Mallee, about efforts to reopen the Pyramid Hill aged care home. Webster says the community is united and has a plan to repurpose the facility as a hostel or independent living space where aged care packages can be delivered. She highlights bureaucratic hurdles, strict accreditation standards, and workforce shortages as challenges, and says she is lobbying the Federal Aged Care Minister Sam Rae to support the initiative.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

Hub delivers more beds

Hobart Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Rob Inglis, Page 6

Construction is set to begin on stage 2 of a \$7.3m health hub redevelopment in Tasmania's Southern Midlands, as local demand for care surges. [...] Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Rebecca White paid tribute to the local community, who she said had advocated tirelessly for the redevelopment and helped secure funding for the upgrades.

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Oatlands health centre gets \$3.9 million upgrade to support aged care

WEB Pulse Tasmania, Other, 24/02/2026

Work has begun on a significant expansion of the Midlands Multi-Purpose Health Centre in Oatlands, delivering eight additional aged care beds to better support the local community. [...] Federal Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White praised the local community's advocacy in securing the funding.

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LA FM, 07:30 News, 24/02/2026

Tasmanians now have access to nearly 60 bulk-billing GPs, with 17 in the electorate of Lyons fully bulk-billing every eligible patient, up from six before 1 November. Federal Assistant Minister for Health Rebecca White says Tasmania's bulk billing rate now stands at 77%.

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ABC Radio Hobart, 07:00 News, 24/02/2026

Federal Assistant Minister Rebecca White emphasises that antibiotic use in the southeast Tas salmon industry must not affect trade or other aquaculture sectors. Recent tests found traces of florefenicol in sea life over 10km from the nearest fish pen, prompting calls for careful management.

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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Rosebud youth service at risk of funding cut

Mornington News, General News, 24/02/2026, Brendan Rees, Page 13

A Rosebud youth service charity is facing an uncertain future after a federal government decision to redirect mental health funding away from local initiatives. [...] A letter seen by The News from the Health Minister Mark Butler to YMCA Victoria on 2 February, said "supporting young people to reach their full potential is a key priority for the Australian government and we will continue to increase our investment in youth mental health services".

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Independent report finds nurses not working to full scope in urgent care

Aesthetic Medical Practitioner, Other, 25/02/2026, Aimée Rodrigues

An independent interim evaluation of Australia's Medicare Urgent Care Clinics has found nurses are not being supported to work to the top of their scope, despite workforce shortages and plans to expand the program. The Second Interim Evaluation of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, released by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, identified a clear gap between nursing and medical staff in how well they are supported within the model.

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Help calls surge 50 per cent amid AI aged care assessment backlash

HelloCare, Other, 24/02/2026, Jakob Neeland

Calls to aged care advocacy services have surged in the months since the Federal Government rolled out its new AI driven assessment system, fuelling an escalating dispute over whether algorithms are quietly overriding clinical judgement. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae rejected the characterisation.

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ABC Western Queensland, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Danny Kennedy

Interview with Dr David Walker, Executive Director of Medical Services at Central West Hospital and Health Service, about Prof Jenny May's visit to rural Queensland. Walker says the National Rural Health Commissioner will tour Longreach and Barkholden to understand local healthcare challenges and advocate for solutions that can inform federal policy. He hopes May can see successful workforce models like the Central West Pipeline program.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Minister does a runner

Herald Sun, General News, 25/02/2026, Ryan Bourke, Page 12

An Allan government minister has been accused of turning his back on elderly Victorians after walking out of an event where he was grilled over aged care reforms critics say will leave retirees stranded in housing limbo. Leaders from across the retirement living sector gathered at the Property Council breakfast on Tuesday to hear Consumer Affairs Minister Nick Staikos address concerns about reforms to the sector that were designed to put the rights of residents first.

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Providers can connect to help address bed block

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 24/02/2026, Natasha Egan

FTI Consulting has identified seven system-wide solutions to unlock capacity across health and aged care, and Nicki Doyle says care providers also have a role to play. A single source of truth for capacity data, concessional finance to address an annual shortfall of 10,600 residential care beds and more

dedicated aged care navigators within hospitals are among measures FTI Consulting has proposed in the final report of its three-part "unlocking capacity" series.

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Who will look after our elders as workers retire in droves?

HelloCare, Other, 24/02/2026, Jakob Neeland

Australia's aged care sector faces unprecedented pressure as the nation enters a period of accelerated population ageing, according to new analysis from spatial intelligence specialists Informed Decisions. A report titled *Caring For An Ageing Australia*, released in February 2026, highlights a critical mismatch between surging demand for care and a shrinking workforce supply.

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The Stats Guy: The money problems each generation will face in the 2030s

The New Daily, Other, 24/02/2026, Simon Kuestenmacher

Australia's cost of living conversation usually focuses on short-term pressures. We zoom in on fuel prices, supermarket specials and interest rate speculation.

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ABC Illawarra, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Melinda James

Interview with Rob Hall, Chief Economist at Informed Decisions, about the impact of Australia's ageing population on aged care. Hall explains a two-wave surge, with the first wave being the growth of retirees and the second wave driving a doubling of the 80-plus population over the next 20 years. He highlights workforce pressures, particularly in regions like Shoalhaven and the Southern Highlands, where a third of healthcare workers are over 55.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Evenings, 24/02/2026, Spence Denny

Interview with Patricia Sparrow, CEO of the Council on the Ageing. [...] Too often the story of older Australians is reduced to one of two basic plot lines. The first goes like this. Older people, often framed as baby boomers, are wealthy, secure, asset rich, sitting on housing, insulated from economic pressure and blocking opportunities for younger generations. The second sits at the opposite extreme. Older people, often those in their late 70s and 80s, are portrayed as frail, dependent, in nursing homes, clogging hospital beds and placing an unsustainable burden on public resources. At first glance, these stories seem to contradict one another. But in truth, they share something important. They are both wrong.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, Evenings, 24/02/2026, Kelly Higgins-Devine

Interview with Henry Brodati, Senior Australian of the Year for 2026 and Scientia Professor at the University of NSW Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing. [...] I think one of the great fears of older people, dementia, is what I would like to talk about. I want to get to that issue in particular, but more broadly, first up, I suppose, the major health issues that need addressing for old Australians in 2026, apart from dementia, what are. Falls. Yep. It's a huge issue. The other issues are, I guess, the, well, incapacity is, so immobility, incompetence and incapacity. So they're the sort of the big lies that occur with older people. With age, there comes a lot of physical health problems too. Our immunity is not as strong. And so we're more likely, I'm saying we, because I'm an older person, definitely older.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 24/02/2026, Thomas Oriti

Interview with Rhonda Locke, CEO of Deafness Forum Australia, about cochlear implant upgrades for over-65s. Locke explains that while the implant itself lasts long, the sound processor usually needs replacement every six years, and technology improvements greatly enhance accessibility and safety for users. She highlights the lack of public funding for upgrades after age 65, stressing that this exclusion risks social isolation and health impacts.

DISABILITY AND CARERS

NDIS cash for sport

Burnie Advocate, General News, 25/02/2026, Matt Maloney, Page 1

A small National Disability Insurance Scheme provider with fewer than 50 clients is making such a profit that it is one of the major sponsors of local sport. Cradle Coast Care chief executive and Waratah-Wynyard councillor, Dillon Roberts, confirmed the company has provided over \$20,000 in sponsorships to municipal clubs this financial year, with further funding expected.

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Breaking point

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 25/02/2026, Bella Munro, Page 1

Jensen remembers a she couldn't face going She was left broken, and empty after disabled 10-year-old son a devastating cut to his NDIS cut Hugh's funds but doesn't mean the need's not there, it's just transferred over to me," Ms Jensen said. "I feel Hugh's needs are becoming more because most 10-year-old boys can dress themselves independently, can shower independently, can toilet independently Hugh can't."

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

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Top cop provides update on investigation into Mosman Park double-murder suicide

7news.com.au, Other, 24/02/2026, Jessica Evensen

The investigation into the Mosman Park double-murder suicide has been handed over to the WA coroner, but the State's top cop says it could be months before reports reveal how two young brothers were killed. [...] Recent reports have suggested one of the brothers had their NDIS funding cut.

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PRIMARY CARE

GPs push for brain hub

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 25/02/2026, Page 18

GPs are calling for a \$20m Centre of Excellence in Neurodiversity as the state election heats up. The Royal Australian College of GPs says it is needed to deliver "faster, fairer, and more holistic care for neurodiverse people".

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2CC, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Dr Michael Wright, President of the RACGP, about pre-budget recommendations for Medicare rebates. Wright explains that rebates have not kept pace with inflation or rising practice costs, leaving patients with higher gap payments and GPs struggling to plan for the future. He calls for an independent pricing authority to set rebates based on the true cost of care, which would reduce pressure on hospitals.

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ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Ross Solly

Interview with Rachel Stephen-Smith, Minister for Health and Finance in the ACT, about nurse-led

walk-in centres. Stephen-Smith says the centres primarily divert patients from emergency departments, saving both time and money, and that the Commonwealth-funded evaluation by NALSA is already providing data to assess costs and effectiveness. She adds that any local review should focus on Canberra-specific issues and the relationship between walk-in centres and GPs.

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ABC Radio Perth, Drive, 24/02/2026, Oliver Peterson

Interview with Dr Kyle Hoath, WA President of the Australian Medical Association, about the WA government's \$140m winter surge plan. Hoath says the plan gives hospitals a better shot at handling seasonal pressure, credits the government for acting early, and stresses that execution and staffing conditions determine whether it truly delivers. He supports using private hospital beds and shifting some elective surgeries to free up public capacity, but warns leaders must carefully manage waitlists and workforce burnout.

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Radio National, Life Matters, 24/02/2026, Tegan Taylor

Interview with Jess Taylor, CEO of QENDO, about the fallout from allegations against Melbourne gynaecologist Simon Gordon. Taylor highlights that many patients face complex decisions about surgery, with fewer than 40% seeing symptomatic relief, and stresses that the focus should be on patient safety and comprehensive care. She calls for multidisciplinary support to protect patients and reduce reliance on a single surgeon.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Speaking to right audience

Herald Sun, General News, 25/02/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 15

A new assessment for young kids' speech will help detect 'red flag' errors earlier and reduce unnecessary treatment, researchers say. Speech pathologists tested more than 1000 Australian kids to develop the guidelines, identifying patterns and sound mix-ups 'normal' for certain ages versus those that raise concerns.

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Chemist call for review funding

Hobart Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Ria Pandey, Page 11

Australia's peak pharmaceutical body has urged the Albanese government to boost investment and modernise pharmacy programs, amid fears Australians vulnerable to medicine-related harm are increasingly at risk. The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has proposed a reform package for programs such as home medicine reviews, residential medication management reviews, and an aged-care on-site pharmacists scheme, according to its submission for the 2026-27 federal budget.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#).

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A visit from his pharmacist saw Col's medications halved

Canberra Times, General News, 25/02/2026, Lanie Tindale, Page 7

When Yarralumla resident Colin "Col" O'Rourke left a Sydney hospital after a heart procedure, he was on 32 medications. "They were treating the problem that I had, and at the time were supporting my recovery," Mr O'Rourke said of the medication.

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Clear message to shut these shops

West Australian, Letters, 25/02/2026, Laura Hunter, Page 34

You don't have to go looking for illegal tobacco in Perth anymore. It finds you.

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Liberals to demand tougher fines and longer closures when debate begins on tobacco crackdown

West Australian, Other, 24/02/2026, Oliver Lane

The State Opposition will push to beef-up Labor's new tobacco laws in Parliament on Tuesday, demanding the inclusion of long-term closure orders and increased penalties for those that sell vapes or cigarettes to minors. Legislation to combat the illicit tobacco trade was announced last week, however the Liberals will move to introduce a number of amendments to give the laws more bite.

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What is the difference between a homebirth and a freebirth?

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026, Kellie Scott

While freebirths and planned homebirths both happen outside of a medical setting, they are different birthing experiences. Separating them is important because they also come with "very different" potential risks, explains Hannah Dahlen, professor of midwifery at Western Sydney University.

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More hospital beds and free jobs as government prepares for winter

Medical Forum, Other, 24/02/2026

Free vaccinations, more hospital beds and a focus on patient flow and strengthening the workforce are all part of the state government's plan to bolster hospitals this winter. The Winter Strategy 2026 has been designed to boost health system resilience and support patients during the months with the highest demand on services.

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Road stop results in \$785,000 seizure from van on rural highway as concerning tobacco trend takes hold

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 24/02/2026

A man has been charged after a police road stop resulted in the seizure of almost \$800,000 in illegal tobacco products. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Drug Strategy Household Survey, daily smoking among people aged 14+ fell to 11.0 per cent in 2019, down from 12.2 per cent in 2016 and dramatically lower than the 24 per cent recorded in 1991.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 24/02/2026, Brett Mcleod

Thousands of Australians are travelling overseas for cheaper dental work, with deals of up to 70% off driving demand. The Australian Dental Association warns that while some treatments are high quality, issues with consent, proper treatment, and follow-up care remain significant concerns.

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ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 24/02/2026, Damian Smith

The Australian Council on Smoking and Health calls for stronger laws to tackle illicit tobacco sales targeting children, finding over 80% of 103 investigated shops are within 1km of a school. Opposition police spokesman Adam Hort says the current \$10,000 fine for selling tobacco to minors is insufficient.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Emma tries IVF fine tuning

Brisbane musician Emma Sheppard will undergo IVF so she can genetically test her embryos for early-onset dementia after members of her husband's family were diagnosed with the condition. Experts say genetic testing for early-onset dementia is increasingly common in IVF and the standard offer of genetic counselling for people with the condition has allowed more families to discover their risk.

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

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Shoe's on other foot

Hobart Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Page 3

Australian researchers say supportive, stability focused shoes appear to be no better than flat, flexible shoes at reducing hip pain in people with hip osteoarthritis (OA). The University of Melbourne trialled the shoes in 120 adults with hip OA.

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The safety hazard businesses forget

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 25/02/2026, Zoe De Koning, Page 16

A Cancer Council Victoria survey has revealed one in five businesses with outdoor workers don't have a sun protection policy in place. Businesses with a policy were more likely to provide outdoor workers with potentially lifesaving sun protection gear, such as UV-protective clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses and hats, according to the survey.

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Top surgeon reveals his personal battle with the enlarged prostate condition he treats

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/02/2026, Tamara McDonald

Top surgeon Henry Woo has spent plenty of time treating patients struggling with enlarged prostates — so when he started suffering the common condition, he recognised it. He began experiencing issues with urination, but was cleared of prostate cancer and initially did not take action.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#)

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Perth grandmother left waiting five days for brain tumour treatment receives apology from Health Minister

7news.com.au, Other, 24/02/2026, Lucy Murray

A Perth grandmother diagnosed with a brain tumour has received an apology from the Health Minister after being left waiting five days for specialist and potentially life-saving care. Jill Carnicelli, 74, took herself to Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital in Perth's southeast with double vision and was quickly diagnosed with a brain tumour.

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Everyday plastic exposure could increase prostate cancer risk, scientists warn - as cases climb

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 24/02/2026, Jonathan Neal

Everyday contact with plastic – from food packaging and cosmetics to household items – may pose a hidden risk to men's health, scientists have warned, after plastic particles were found inside prostate cancer tumours. New research suggests that tiny fragments known as microplastics can build up inside the prostate, with significantly higher levels detected in cancerous tissue than in healthy areas of the organ.

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Furious response to mental health cuts

Age, General News, 25/02/2026, Rachel Eddie, Page 15

Gutting the mental health regulator would weaken the system and break promises made after the royal commission, the sector has warned, as upper house MPs prepare to block the cost-cutting measures. More than a dozen organisations are lobbying to stop changes to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission and the Victorian Collaborative Centre, announced as part of Helen Silver's review to find \$4 billion in savings.

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

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AI needs medical touch in remedies

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 25/02/2026, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 19

The nation's peak body for psychology is urging for caution in the roll out of emerging digital mental health services (DMHS). Australian Psychological Society (APS) president Kelly Gough warns digital and AI-based mental health solutions must be "integrated with models of care based in human relationships and experience".

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IMMUNISATION

WA government announces \$140m plan to prevent repeat of record-breaking flu season

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026

Creating more hospital beds and boosting immunisation will be key features of a \$140 million "winter strategy" aimed at avoiding a repeat of WA's worst-ever flu season. Premier Roger Cook said the funding would strengthen resilience across the state's besieged health system and reduce pressure on emergency departments, which are among the most stretched in the nation.

Also reported by: [Medical Forum \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

NSW helps parents avoid missed child vaccinations

Nursing Review, Other, 24/02/2026

The NSW government has launched a personalised childhood vaccination schedule tool for parents amid a sudden surge in the highly infectious disease measles across the state. Health Minister Ryan Park said it was important for parents to be aware and proactive with their children's vaccination schedules.

[Read More](#)

ABC Northern Tasmania, Breakfast, 24/02/2026, Kim Napier

Interview with Dr Tim Jones, Chair of Child and Young Persons Health at the RACGP, about measles protection in Australia. Jones explains that people born after 1966 are unlikely to have full immunity and recommends a free booster through a GP for peace of mind, especially if childhood vaccination records are missing. He highlights that measles can cause serious complications like pneumonia in older adults and stresses that vaccination protects both individuals and the wider community.

Interview continues on: [ABC Northern Tasmania \(Launceston\)](#).

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4BC, Afternoons, 24/02/2026, Carla Bignasca

Interview with Dr Marianne Gale, Chief Health Officer in Qld, about her priorities and health strategies.

Gale highlights her commitment to engaging with communities and clinicians across Qld to identify health needs while bringing her diverse experience from previous health roles nationally and internationally. She emphasises the importance of vaccination for flu prevention in 2026, including a free, needle-free option for children aged two to five.

Interview continues on: [4BC \(Brisbane\)](#).

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ABC Pilbara, Statewide Drive, 24/02/2026, Andrew Collins

Interview with Dr Ramya Raman, WA Chair of the RACGP, about WA's \$140m winter health investment after record flu deaths. Raman says strong investment in preventative care, including broader access to flu vaccines and the intranasal option, reduces severity, hospitalisations and ICU admissions. She adds that lifting vaccination rates requires tackling hesitancy head-on by addressing fears about vaccine safety and needles.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Private health insurance: Millions of Aussies sabotaging own savings as premiums jump up to 5.98 per cent

7news.com.au, Other, 24/02/2026, Aimee Edwards

A staggering number of customers are settling for a deal they don't think is great value. Private health insurance premiums are set to rise by an average of 4.41 per cent this year, the highest increase in eight years, adding fresh pressure to household budgets already grappling with higher mortgage repayments and energy bills.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Hospital uses \$300k to tackle four research projects

Hobart Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Page 4

More than \$300,000 will be poured into cutting-edge medical research in Tasmania this year, with local scientists tackling some of the state's most devastating diseases from aggressive brain cancer to multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's. The Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation has announced it will invest more than \$310,000 into four new research projects in 2026, lifting its total annual commitment to Tasmanian medical research to \$762,254.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 24/02/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with A/Prof Lyndsey Collins-Praino, Head of the Cognition, Ageing and Neurodegenerative Disease Laboratory at the University of Adelaide, about the long-term effects of head injuries. Collins-Praino explains that concussions and traumatic brain injuries can trigger brain changes detectable decades later, sometimes increasing the risk of neurodegenerative diseases like dementia. She adds that individual outcomes vary and are influenced by factors such as sex, age, and prior mental health.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Decrepit hospital on urgent life support

Courier Mail, General News, 25/02/2026, Taylah Fellows, Page 12

Crumbling buildings, collapsing ceilings and mould outbreaks have forced a major intervention at the struggling Gladstone Hospital, with the state government moving to install a modular hospital to keep services running through to 2028. A masterplan for a new hospital upgrade at Gladstone developed under the former Labor government has been scrapped in favour of a new modular expansion that will add 51 beds to the hospital.

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Winter hospital splurge is cold comfort

West Australian, General News, 25/02/2026, Jessica Page, Page 15

A \$140 million winter surge plan has been announced to ensure Perth's hospitals are better prepared after record ramping and elective surgery cancellations embarrassed the Cook Government last year. But Health Minister Meredith Hammat conceded she can't guarantee it will avoid a repeat of 2025, when ambulance ramping exceeded 7000 hours for three months in a row.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#).

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Back to the drawing board for parking

Western Advocate, General News, 25/02/2026, Jacinta Carroll, Page 3

Plans to ease parking congestion at Bathurst Base Hospital have again fallen flat after the NSW Government rejected an application to fund a temporary car park at Victoria Park. Bathurst Regional Council made a request for around \$2 million to build a temporary car park in Victoria Park, opposite the hospital, which would accommodate 200 cars, but the request for funding has been knocked back.

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'Game-changer': Major new building opens at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick

The Courier Mail, Other, 24/02/2026, Thomas Sargeant

A major children's hospital in Sydney's east has opened a new building with an expanded emergency department and improved facilities for carers of sick kids, which a local mother said is a 'game-changer' for parents. Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick unveiled its new 12-storey building on Tuesday as part of a \$658 million redevelopment which is set to provide more privacy and comfort for patients and their families.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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Channel 10, 10 News, 24/02/2026, Sandra Sully

The redeveloped Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick opens with an expanded emergency department, a combined cancer treatment and research facility, and private single rooms with extra beds for parents. This is part of a larger investment that includes the \$659m, 14-storey Westmead Children's Hospital building set to open mid-year.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 24/02/2026, Tim McMillan and Angela Tsun

WA Health Minister Meredith Hammat has apologised to Perth grandmother Jill Carnicelli, who spent five days in limbo after a brain tumour diagnosis and waited in an open-plan ward at Royal Perth Hospital. The Health Department says doctors placed the 74yo on a waitlist because she did not require emergency surgery.

ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 24/02/2026, Thomas Oriti

Interview with Ryan Park, Minister for Health in NSW, about the redeveloped Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick. Park highlights the \$658m upgrades, including an expanded emergency department, the Mindaroo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre, and a 24/7 virtual care hub connecting families statewide to health professionals. He also details major investments in north-western Sydney, including \$900m for Rouse Hill Hospital to open in 2029 and \$120m for interim expansions at Blacktown and Mount Druitt.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 24/02/2026, Nadia Mitsoupolos

Interview with Scott Fitzgerald, WA Secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union, about Notre Dame University's nursing course enrolment issues. Fitzgerald says staff are concerned that the university blocked first-year nursing enrolments this term without a clear explanation, likely linked to accreditation concerns raised by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Teacher of the Year calls for 'prac cash' help to be extended

The Australian, General News, 25/02/2026, Natasha Bitu, Page 7

Australian University Teacher of the Year Roma Forbes warns soaring living costs are keeping students away from campus as they juggle work and study. Calling on the Albanese government to extend taxpayerfunded "prac payments" of \$320 per week to allied health students, the University of Queensland associate professor in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences said too many poor or regional students were locked out of degrees.

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

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LifeFlight saves 4yo, who returns favour and joins the ranks

Northern Territory News, General News, 25/02/2026, Matilda McDermott, Page 7

Among the 33 new critical care doctors joining LifeFlight's ranks this year is Dr Bassim Jebelli, originally from the Northern Territory, whose journey to being a critical care doctor began with a life saving flight decades ago. Doctor Bassim Jebelli, from Nhulunbuy, had his relationship with aeromedical services begin a lot earlier than many other recruits after being saved by an NT aeromedical service when he was just four years old.

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Tania Walker: Ex-Gold Coast University Hospital staffer loses reinstatement bid

The Courier Mail, Other, 24/02/2026, Alex Treacy

A sacked Gold Coast University Hospital staffer who accessed a locked-down ward during the Covid-19 era in a bid to visit a sick friend has lost her bid to win her job back. According to a recent decision of the Industrial Court of Queensland, Tania Walker, the hospital's former casual pool co-ordinator and a 17-year veteran of the health department, was sacked on May 5, 2022.

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

[Read More](#)

University of Notre Dame abruptly halts new enrolments in nursing course

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026, Emma Wynne

For most staff and prospective students, the first they heard that the University of Notre Dame would not be accepting new applicants to the nursing school in the first semester of 2026 was this month. Since then, the union representing university staff has been trying to get answers from the university, which has campuses in Fremantle and Sydney.

[Read More](#)

ANMF priorities 2026: Gender equity

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 24/02/2026, Anmj Staff

Over recent years, nurses, midwives and care workers have helped drive significant reforms made to healthcare and the professions they work in. This has included advances in gender equity; industrial relations reforms including wage increases through the Aged Care Work Value Case, stronger delegate rights; and long-awaited improvements in aged care with 24/

[Read More](#)

SA nurses secure pay rise, call off strike

Nursing Review, Other, 24/02/2026, Stefanie Schultz

After an ongoing period of strike action and negotiations with the state government, South Australian nurses agreed to a six per cent pay rise on Friday. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) has confirmed that members have secured the interim increase through collective industrial action.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Health minister blasts secrecy over probe on surgeon's actions

Age, General News, 25/02/2026, Liam Mannix and Henrietta Cook, Page 10

Victoria's health minister is demanding changes to prevent a repeat of the federal regulator failing to alert a private hospital group that it was investigating claims a gynaecologist performed unnecessary surgery. Dr Simon Gordon is under investigation by the regulator over allegations he performed unnecessary endometriosis surgery, including removing women's ovaries and uterus, despite no clinical evidence justifying the procedures.

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Patients' stories swamp lawyers

Herald Sun, General News, 25/02/2026, Craig Dunlop, Page 6

Hundreds of distressed patients of former Epworth hospital gynaecologist Simon Gordon have

contacted lawyers with horror stories about their medical treatment as Premier Jacinta Allan calls in Victoria Police to investigate. Arnold Thomas and Becker medical negligence lawyer Emily Hart said her firm had spoken with more than 200 former patients of Dr Gordon, including more than 50 since an ABC 4 Corners episode on Monday night.

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

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Bad break for chemist

Hobart Mercury, General News, 25/02/2026, Amber Wilson, Page 10

A former Tasmanian pharmacist has had her registration cancelled after she was convicted of selling the drugs ice, cannabis and MDMA and prescription medications. Cindy Maree Strachan, who was first registered as a pharmacist in 2007, was caught with the drugs when intercepted by Tasmania Police while driving in April 2020.

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Dr Simon Gordon allegations referred to police for investigation after endometriosis claims

NEWS.com.au, Other, 24/02/2026, Abisha Sapkota

A former leading surgeon has denied performing unnecessary operations for a debilitating condition on more than 100 women. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan has referred allegations against gynaecologist Simon Gordon to police for investigation.

Also reported by: [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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ABC, 7:30, 24/02/2026, Sarah Ferguson

Vic Premier Jacinta Allan refers allegations against Melbourne surgeon Simon Gordon to police after a Four Corners investigation reveals patients underwent repeated surgeries for "severe" endometriosis not supported by pathology results. Women have lodged complaints with Apha over several years, but the regulator has yet to take action. Allan spoke at a press conference, noting that systemic issues in the private health system demand answers, though she stopped short of calling a separate state inquiry.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 24/02/2026, Brett Mcleod

Renowned gynaecologist Simon Gordon may face charges for allegedly performing unnecessary invasive surgeries on hundreds of young women, with victims claiming permanent life changes after reproductive organs were removed. Epworth Hospital has launched an independent inquiry, with a Safer Care Victoria representative joining the panel.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 10, 10 News, 24/02/2026, Jennifer Keyte

Allegations that Epworth Hospital doctor Simon Gordon performed unnecessary and preemptive surgeries on women for suspected endometriosis have been referred to Vic Police. Premier Jacinta Allan and Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas express being sickened and plan a roundtable of colleges without launching a separate inquiry.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Australians warned of measles risk as vaccinated traveller brings virus home from Indonesia

An 18-year-old Perth woman has become the latest Australian to unwittingly bring measles home from Indonesia as the Southeast Asian nation experiences a surge in the highly-infectious and potentially fatal viral illness. Indonesia's Public Information ministry confirmed on Sunday that Australian authorities had informed them the young woman tested positive for the disease after returning from Bandung in West Java earlier this month, despite having a complete MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccination history.

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Most flu deaths this century were recorded in 2025, ABS finds

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026

There were more deaths associated with influenza last year than any other year this century, according to the Australia Bureau of Statistics. The number of deaths in Australia involving influenza has also been higher than deaths related to COVID-19 since August 2025, the bureau's latest report found.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

The supplements doctors want you to stop taking

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/02/2026, Euan Black

It's not uncommon for health-conscious Australians to take a bunch of vitamins and minerals every morning "just in case" they're not getting enough from their diet.

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Guardian Essential poll: more than half of Australians open to voting for One Nation despite Hanson's Muslim comments

The Guardian, Other, 25/02/2026, Josh Butler

Nearly 60% of Australians say they'd be open to voting for One Nation at the next federal election, with nearly half of those currently backing Labor saying they'd consider backing, ringing alarm bells for both the government and Coalition about the march of the rightwing populist party. [...] One Nation's surge comes despite the lack of a workable policy agenda, including vague plans to deport 75,000 "illegal immigrants" and slash student and skilled work visas, to allow "citizens initiated referenda" for constitutional change, and abolish the federal department of climate change, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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Medicinal cannabis framework 'not fit for purpose'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 24/02/2026

Submissions to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) Consultation: reviewing the safety and regulatory oversight of unapproved medicinal cannabis products say the current model needs reform.

[Read More](#)

Med cannabis needs more oversight

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 24/02/2026

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has provided an overview of responses to its recent medicinal cannabis safety and regulation review, with concerns over lack of awareness surrounding its regulatory status paramount. With more than 1,000 unapproved products being accessed through the Special Access Scheme (SAS) and Authorised Prescriber (AP) scheme, the review was prompted by increasing concern about the safety risks, particularly for products containing higher levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Brisbane, Evenings, 24/02/2026, Kelly Higgins-Devine

Interview with Henry Brodati, Senior Australian of the Year for 2026. [...] And they were approved, as I said, just last year by the TGA, but they're complicated drugs and they don't cure the disease.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Medicinal cannabis company offered 'kickbacks' to military advocates for veteran referrals

ABC Online, Other, 24/02/2026, Hannah Meagher

A medicinal cannabis company has been offering thousands of dollars in financial "kickbacks" to military advocates in exchange for referring veterans to its services, a 7.30 investigation has uncovered. Under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, receiving financial incentives for referrals may be unlawful.

[Read More](#)

ABC, 7:30, 24/02/2026, Sarah Ferguson

A 7.30 investigation uncovered how medicinal cannabis company VeteranCann offered thousands of dollars in financial kickbacks to military advocates for referring veterans to its services, despite potential breaches of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. A recording captured the telehealth firm offering a 7% ongoing commission for every veteran who signs up. Its parent company, Dispensed, faced scrutiny in 2024 over prescribing practices linked to serious patient harm.

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FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

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AICIS

NT firefighters vote to take industrial action to ensure cancer health and safety protections

Northern Territory News, Other, 24/02/2026, Zizi Averill

Territory firefighters say the NT Government is failing to protect them from deadly cancerous materials and are planning industrial action to get it fixed. On Monday, the United Workers Union confirmed that firefighters had "overwhelmingly" voted in favour of pursuing protected industrial action after failing to secure essential health and safety protections from the NT Government, including occupational cancer safeguards.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#).

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