



TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 26th February 2026

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 11) reports NSW Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson has announced a new independent team, headed by NSW Health's chief psychiatrist Dr Murray Wright, will oversee Cumberland Hospital's operations after two escaped patients allegedly killed three people. Minister Jackson said the incidents undermined "the sense of safety and security people rightly expect in the management of our mental health system".
- **[The Australian Financial Review](#)** (page 1) reports that new NDIS data shows payments to participants with autism have increased to over \$10 billion annually, following a record 62,500 children and adults diagnosed entering the scheme last year.
- **[NEWS.com.au](#)** (online) reports that NSW Health has declared there is an increased risk of measles exposure following two new confirmed cases reported in Sydney.

MINISTER BUTLER

Our elderly shouldn't be stranded in hospitals: Sharkie

Islander, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 9

Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie is calling on the Federal Government to boost its funding offer for public hospitals. [...] In response to Ms Sharkie's question, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged the longer stay of older patients in hospitals was "quite significant" and that rising demand for residential aged care resulted in increased pressure on the public hospital system.

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

Peak body urges PM to act on tobacco

Latrobe Valley Express, General News, 25/02/2026, Aidan Knight, Page 4

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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Could one surgeon's actions undo decades of endometriosis advocacy?

ABC Online, Other, 25/02/2026, Stephanie Dalzell and Rhiannon Hobbins

Australians with endometriosis have been left angry and reeling over the findings of a months-long ABC investigation into a Melbourne gynaecologist. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the allegations in the Four Corners story were "sickening".

[Read More](#)

Ageing Australia's six point plan to improve aged care system

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

The peak body for aged care providers has met with State and Federal Governments and politicians across the political spectrum, pressing for fixes to problems with the recent reforms. [...] In the past fortnight, Tom and General Manager Policy and Advocacy, Roald Versteeg, have met with Health Minister Mark Butler, Aged Care Minister Sam Rae, Shadow Aged Care Minister Anne Ruston and more than a dozen backbenchers and crossbenchers.

[Read More](#)

Financial pressures threaten future of northside's only Aboriginal Community Controlled health service

WEB Region Canberra, Other, 25/02/2026, Claire Fenwicke

Canberra's only northside Aboriginal Health Service will have to pause its services unless the Federal and ACT Governments step in. [...] "I've written to my federal counterpart Mark Butler to encourage the Commonwealth to talk to Yerrabi and consider the demand for Aboriginal community-controlled health services in Canberra's north," Ms Stephen-Smith said.

[Read More](#)

ABC Illawarra, 06:30 News, 25/02/2026

Health Minister Mark Butler has officially opened the Shellharbour Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Barrack Heights, marking the 130th site in the national network. The clinic offers free, bulk-billed walk-in care from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week.

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Salt 106.5, The Morning Wake-up with Jordana, 25/02/2026, Nathan 'Nato' Sauer

According to nurses, urgent care clinics are struggling to recruit and retain qualified staff. Health Minister Mark Butler has defended the success of the clinics, with 130 to 137 funded by Labor that have now been made operational.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

No relevant coverage

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MINISTER RAE

Ageing Australia's six point plan to improve aged care system

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

The peak body for aged care providers has met with State and Federal Governments and politicians across the political spectrum, pressing for fixes to problems with the recent reforms. [...] In the past fortnight, Tom and General Manager Policy and Advocacy, Roald Versteeg, have met with Health Minister Mark Butler, Aged Care Minister Sam Rae, Shadow Aged Care Minister Anne Ruston and more than a dozen backbenchers and crossbenchers.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

Rockhampton Medicare Mental Health Centre expansion confirmed

WEB The Rockhampton News, Other, 26/02/2026

The Australian Government is expanding the Rockhampton Medicare Mental Health Centre as part of its \$1.1 billion mental health election commitment. Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Emma McBride, visited Rockhampton to announce that work on the expansion is underway.

[Read More](#)

ABC Tropical North, Breakfast, 25/02/2026, Rob Kidd

Interview with Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride. Compere mentions that Medicare healthcare centres are being rolled out around regional Qld, particularly at Mackay, Gladstone, and Rockhampton. McBride points out that these types of centres are making a huge splash in regional Qld, as the centres she has helped open last year have seen more than 4000 patients.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

Nine-year wait ends as eight aged care beds commence in Tasmania

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

Following years of community advocacy and with the backing of a Federal Government grant, the second stage of a three-stage aged care development is finally underway. [...] Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Rebecca White, acknowledged the community for "their tireless advocacy which has helped to secure funding for these upgrades."

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

DEPARTMENT

Equip-ping communities at the Angaston Show

Leader - Barossa Valley, General News, 25/02/2026, Page 7

Barossa Valley residents are being invited to take part in research aimed at strengthening preparedness for fire and drought at this weekend's Angaston Show, with the Equip program offering residents the opportunity to speak directly with university researchers about their experiences and perspectives. [...] Equip is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care through the Medical Research Future Fund.

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Veteran clinic lodges formal complaint over DVA medicinal cannabis framework

Cannabiz, Other, 25/02/2026, Adam Sheldon

Apex Health has lodged a formal complaint with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), calling for the suspension of its updated medicinal cannabis framework introduced last week. [...] In terms of consultation with external providers, the DVA said it worked closely with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in shaping policy.

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New MBS items put GPs in the room for specialist telehealth

The Limbic, Other, 25/02/2026, Siobhan Calafiore

GPs and nurse practitioners will soon be able to bill Medicare for providing face-to-face support to patients during video consultations with private specialists and consultant physicians. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing announced 32 new patient end support items will be added to the MBS from 1 March, stating the items will enhance specialist video attendances by allowing physical assessment, enabling a multidisciplinary approach and improving handover between care providers.

[Read More](#)

DoHDA blames humans if algorithm gets SAH assessment wrong

The Medical Republic, Other, 25/02/2026, Cate Swannell

The department wants it both ways, forbidding clinical assessors from correcting the IAT's mistakes and then saying it's the assessors' fault if the IAT makes the mistake in the first place. Come on. Independent federal MP Monique Ryan says the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has "missed the point" by blaming human assessors if the Support at Home algorithmic Integrated Assessment Tool spits out an incorrect or inappropriate needs assessment.

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Ageing Australia's six point plan to improve aged care system

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

The peak body for aged care providers has met with State and Federal Governments and politicians across the political spectrum, pressing for fixes to problems with the recent reforms. [...] In the past fortnight, Tom and General Manager Policy and Advocacy, Roald Versteeg, have met with Health Minister Mark Butler, Aged Care Minister Sam Rae, Shadow Aged Care Minister Anne Ruston and more than a dozen backbenchers and crossbenchers.

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Appeals surge against Govt's automated aged care assessments

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

Since human oversight was removed from the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) last year, requests to

have decisions reviewed have soared. Consumers have lodged 414 appeals against decisions made by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing 's Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) since the new Aged Care Act came into effect last year.

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Nine-year wait ends as eight aged care beds commence in Tasmania

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

Following years of community advocacy and with the backing of a Federal Government grant, the second stage of a three-stage aged care development is finally underway. [...] Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Rebecca White, acknowledged the community for "their tireless advocacy which has helped to secure funding for these upgrades."

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Tech issues put council \$500k in red

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 26/02/2026, Jessica Greenan, Page 2

A south-west council is \$500,000 in the red after a software issue stopped it from claiming funds from clients for four months. Moyne Shire Council has been experiencing issues with the CareLink client management system since November, which has impacted its ability to claim funds from client budgets and invoice client contributions.

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Peak welcomes WA's winter aged care plan

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 25/02/2026

The state government's expansion of care-at-home and aged care vaccine programs proves "ageing is everyone's business," says Ageing Australia CEO Tom Symondson. Aged care peak body Ageing Australia has congratulated the Western Australian State Government for its commitment to aged care and older people in its plan to manage winter hospital demand.

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"Square peg, round hole": Why program design makes CHSP-Support at Home merger impossible

HelloCare, Other, 25/02/2026, Jakob Neeland

Professor Kathy Eagar, a leading expert in aged care funding and policy, has delivered a scathing critique of the federal government's plan to transition the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) into the Support at Home program, branding the move as fundamentally flawed at its core.

[Read More](#)

ABC's Anne Connolly to turn spotlight on aged care – again

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

Eight years after the ABC's damaging Four Corners broadcast 'Who Cares?' helped trigger the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, investigative reporter Anne Connolly is again calling on families to contact her.

[Read More](#)

WA Govt spends big to keep aged care residents out of hospitals

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

The State Government has pledged an additional \$140 million in a bid to prevent a repeat of Western Australia's worst-ever flu season last year. In its 16-page Winter Strategy 2026 document, the Cook Government has committed to the following aged care measures:

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Govt fails commitment to younger people in aged care homes

The Weekly Source, Other, 25/02/2026, Caroline Egan

The Albanese Government has again missed its own target to keep younger people out of residential aged care. In November 2019, the Government announced strengthened targets for Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) and a new strategy aimed at meeting the goals, in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's interim report, 'Neglect'.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Councils stall vital builds

The Australian, Business News, 26/02/2026, Robert Gottlieb, Page 23

Australian state and federal governments have regularly failed in their forecasting for renewable energy and housing. As I have pointed out previously, energy targets failed partly because of the cost of transmission and back-up, including the Snowy 2.0 \$40bn disaster.

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

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

NDIS autism costs blow out to \$10b

Australian Financial Review, General News, 26/02/2026, Michael Smith and Joshua Peach, Page 1

The cost of National Disability Insurance Scheme payments to participants with autism has blown out to more than \$10 billion annually, after a record 62,500 children and adults diagnosed with the disorder...

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Truly sustainable NDIS must stop autism creep

Australian Financial Review, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 1

The continued growth in the National Disability Insurance Scheme juggernaut continues to defy economic gravity.

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

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The state of play on Thriving Kids – and the role of GPs

Medical Forum, Other, 25/02/2026, Aleisha Orr

Thriving Kids may have been a federal initiative but state and territory governments are preparing to become a bigger part of the conversation. Bilateral agreements for the rollout of Thriving Kids by state and territory governments are anticipated to be finalised soon.

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PRIMARY CARE

One Nation's rural GP plan a dose of old world socialism

The Australian, General News, 26/02/2026, Zachary Gorman, Page 13

In 2017, while visiting India as a part of a parliamentary delegation, Pauline Hanson identified Robert Menzies as her favourite Australian prime minister. Unfortunately, One Nation's policy of conscripting doctors to serve in the regions before they would be allowed to practise under Medicare in the cities epitomises how a party that claims to be the true champion of conservatism stands removed from many quintessential conservative values.

More ways to stay healthy and informed ahead of winter

West Australian, General News, 26/02/2026, Rita Saffioti, Page 13

On Tuesday, we released our \$140 million Winter Health Strategy. It includes a number of initiatives aimed at supporting our community through the upcoming flu season.

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Pharmacists call for medicine review program to be expanded

ABC Online, Other, 25/02/2026, Caitlyn Davey and Jacinta Bowler

When fire brigade officer Colin O'Rourke left hospital after a heart procedure, he ended up on 32 different medications. Not all of them agreed with him.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Kids' weight a worry

Courier Mail, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 7

Body size in younger children does not necessarily lead to higher rates of obesity in adulthood, landmark new Brisbane research shows. But a child's weight at age 10 could raise a red flag for illness in their later life.

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Cancer crisis for Oz men

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 13

New data reveals a 25 per cent increase in the number of deaths from prostate cancer in Australia since 2007, prompting calls for greater awareness of the disease. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates 25,487 Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, a 5 per cent increase in just 12 months.

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Tax drives outlaw smokes

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 26/02/2026, Nadine Morton, Page 1

The state's health minister has blamed Canberra's high tobacco excise for pushing people into buying black market smokes as two more illegal tobacconists were shut down in the Illawarra. Twelve stores in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Local Health District have been shut down since new laws targeting illegal tobacco and vapes were introduced in NSW on November 3, 2025.

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Minister's warning to rogue traders

Newcastle Herald, General News, 26/02/2026, Archibald McGill, Page 5

The Health Minister has warned Hunter tobacconists they "will be found out" and "face the consequences", after a second operator was mandated to shut up shop for selling illegal tobacco. However, the Coalition says the Minns government has "gone soft" on tobacco, and those running illegal tobacco stores "know they can reopen days after being closed and face no repercussion".

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Charles Darwin University a life-changing regional pioneer

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026

A groundbreaking drone flight across flood-affected terrain has delivered lifesaving cardiac medication to a remote Northern Territory patient, marking an Australian medical milestone. History is often made

under challenging circumstances and in the most unsuspecting of places.

[Read More](#)

Trial helps teens kick vape habit

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Sian Powell

An Australian program designed to stop teenagers vaping has proved to be one of the few successful anti-vaping interventions in the world. A research paper published earlier this year in the Lancet Public Health journal found students in a trial were 65 per cent less likely to vape in the year after they went through the OurFutures Vaping program.

[Read More](#)

The simple 'life-saving' drug check we're not using enough

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Penny Timms

A quarter of a million Australians are hospitalised each year because of dangerous medication mismanagement. Pharmacists say there's a simple fix.

[Read More](#)

Does your kid mix-up these sounds? New tool sorts 'red flags' from common mistakes

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 25/02/2026, Sarah Booth

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

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

[Read More](#)

Melbourne researchers develop new tool to identify children's speech disorders

7news.com.au, Other, 25/02/2026, Jennifer Bechwati

The groundbreaking online tool that could save thousands of kids from unnecessary therapy waitlists. Melbourne researchers have developed a new tool to help identify children at risk of serious speech disorders, aiming to reduce unnecessary therapy for common speech errors that many youngsters grow out of.

[Read More](#)

Queensland doctors push for urgent e-bike and e-scooter safety reforms as parliamentary inquiry examines safety risks

7news.com.au, Other, 25/02/2026, Katharina Loesche

Tragic and dangerous incidents are increasing in Queensland and experts are calling for age restrictions and speed limits. Queensland 's peak medical body is calling for urgent reforms to e-bike and e-scooter safety as a parliamentary inquiry continues to examine rising injuries across the state.

[Read More](#)

Pharmacists want to 'take the shackles off'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 25/02/2026, Megan Haggan

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has issued a pre-Budget submission in which it urgently calls on the Albanese federal government to support the delivery of medicine safety

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The innovators shaping Australia's future

The Australian, General News, 26/02/2026, Joanna Panagopoulos, Page 8

Research revolutionising the fight against melanoma and a program that connects student teachers with experienced educators have been named as winners in the 2025 Shaping Australia Awards. Three winners, selected from the three categories of Problem Solver, Future Builder and Community Champion, were chosen by an eminent panel of judges, and three winners from each category were chosen by the public.

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Major spike in prostate cases

Courier Mail, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 20

New data reveals a 25 per cent spike in deaths from prostate cancer in Australia since 2007. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates 25,487 Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, a 5 per cent increase in just 12 months.

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

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Breakthrough in cancer scanning

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Sian Powell

Whole-body three-dimensional scanners have been used to photograph all the sun-affected skin of nearly 10,000 volunteers for a revolutionary research study which has so far found 500 potentially fatal melanomas, along with many other less dangerous skin cancers. The Australian Centre of Excellence in Melanoma Imaging and Diagnosis (ACEMID) has boosted skin-cancer screening research with this cohort study using 15 huge body-scanning machines.

[Read More](#)

New weapon in pancreatic battle

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Sian Powell

A novel way of attacking pancreatic cancer, one of the deadliest forms of the disease, is proving promising and could have relevance for many other types of tumour. Pancreatic cancer has a survival rate of less than 12 per cent over five years, partly because the pancreas is shielded from systemic treatment by the stroma, a dense surrounding framework of connective tissue.

[Read More](#)

Pilot study into early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer by screening diabetes patients to launch in Brisbane

ABC Online, Other, 25/02/2026, Joshua McIntosh

Diabetic Paul Williams says his pancreas is slowly eating itself after doctors discovered a small mass a few years ago. He does not know if the tumour is cancerous at this stage, but says it developed after a serious bout of pancreatitis.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Adelaide, Evenings, 25/02/2026, Spence Denny

Interview with Bowel Cancer Australia medical director Professor Graham Newstead. Newstead says there are over 15,000 Australians diagnosed with bowel cancer every year and notes that 12 per cent of people with the disease are under the age of 50. He claims that there is still no solid proof on why bowel cancers are becoming common among the younger population, noting that Australia now has the highest incidence of young-onset bowel cancer in the world.

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Independent experts set to guide hospital

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 26/02/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 5

An independent team of experts led by the state's chief psychiatrist will oversee NSW's oldest psychiatric hospital in its final stages of operation, after three people died in two separate incidents allegedly involving patients who had absconded from its care. Sydney's Cumberland Hospital is due to close at the end of next year once a new \$540 million integrated mental health complex at Westmead is built.

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

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Police, not GPs, to make call on recruits' fitness

Age, General News, 26/02/2026, Chris Vedelago, Page 5

Victoria Police has been forced to backtrack on its controversial policy of using GPs to sign off on the mental and physical suitability of recruits following intense opposition from the peak doctors' group and concerns the policy was a risk to public safety. The move will push decisionmaking authority for assessing recruit health back onto Victoria Police medical officers, potentially causing massive delays in the midst of a staffing crisis for the force.

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

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Hospital escapees' alleged killings spark overhaul

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/02/2026, Madeleine Bower, Page 11

An expert independent team will oversee a beleaguered western Sydney mental health hospital after two escaped patients this month allegedly killed three people. Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson yesterday revealed the new independent team headed by chief government psychiatrist Dr Murray Wright will now oversee Cumberland Hospital operations.

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

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Lifeline for health sufferers

Hobart Mercury, General News, 26/02/2026, Rob Inglis, Page 3

A new partnership between a mental health charity and a not-for-profit supporting people with Parkinson's could be a sign of things to come for the community sector, as the state's budget constraints compel non-government organisations to do less with more. Lifeline Tasmania has partnered with Parkinson's Tasmania to improve support for the thousands of people in the state who are living with the neurological condition.

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Police release man over patient's death

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 26/02/2026, Mark Murray, Page 3

A man at the centre of a probe into the death of a Swanston Centre patient has been released by detectives. The man, also a patient, was arrested after a 31-year-old man from Highton was found dead inside the centre about 2am on Monday.

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Independent team seizes control of Cumberland Hospital after three patients absconded

9News, Other, 25/02/2026, Joseph Sahyoun

An independent team of experts will manage Cumberland Hospital after a string of patients absconding from the facility resulted in the deaths of three people, including the fatal stabbing of a man in Sydney's west. Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson made the decision after three men allegedly absconded from the mental health unit in as many weeks.

Also reported by: [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News](#)

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ABC, ABC News, 25/02/2026, Jeremy Fernandez

Security is being boosted at a psychiatric hospital in Western Sydney as part of an intervention following two fatal incidents allegedly involving escapees. Two patients escaped from Cumberland Hospital earlier this month within 24 hours of each other before going on to allegedly kill three people in separate incidents. Two additional full-time security guards and a senior supervisor are now being rostered on. The NSW Government is also appointing an independent team to oversee hospital operations from today.

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Channel 10, 10 News, 25/02/2026, Sandra Sully

NSW Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson says the state government has boosted security at the Cumberland Hospital following the escape of multiple patients from the site, leading to three people dying in separate incidents. The government has also set up an independent review into the incidents.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/02/2026, Mark Burrows

An expert team has seized control of Cumberland Hospital after a series of mental health breaches led to the deaths of three people. The intervention is aimed at preventing patients from absconding, but the union says the NSW Government should increase staff numbers instead of security.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 25/02/2026, Thomas Oriti

Security is being boosted at a Western Sydney psychiatric hospital as part of an intervention following two fatal incidents allegedly involving escapees. Two additional full-time guards and a senior supervisor are being rostered at Cumberland Hospital, where two patients absconded from care within 24 hours.

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IMMUNISATION

Doctors call for free meningococcal B vaccine as cases rise

West Australian, General News, 26/02/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 11

Australia's peak body for GPs is again calling for free meningococcal B vaccinations for children and teenagers after 12 cases of the strain, including a death, were recorded in WA last year. A further two cases of the uncommon but life-threatening bacterial infection have been recorded so far this year, prompting the Royal Australian College of GPs to put the State Government on notice.

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

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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Speaking disorders

Hobart Mercury, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 6

Melbourne researchers have developed a tool for identifying children at risk of speech disorders, reducing unnecessary treatment for common speech errors that often resolve on their own. The research, led by Murdoch Children's Research Institute, identifies red flags to help guide speech therapy referrals. Using speech tasks, the assessment tool identifies the lowest performing children within their age group.

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Testosterone cream being tested to help boost low libido in world-first Australian trial

9News, Other, 25/02/2026, Gabriella Rogers

Testosterone cream is being tested on dozens of women in their later reproductive years to help boost their low libido as part of a world-first Australian study. There are currently no treatments available for women in their 30s and 40s who feel distressed about the issue.

[Read More](#)

A caring approach to autism

The Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Sian Powell

Ensuring the thoughts and preferences of autistic people are at the heart of every policy and research decision is a central tenet at La Trobe University's Olga Tennyson Autism Research Centre. The first Australian research centre dedicated to autism, OTARC opened in 2008, and there has always been an unwavering focus on establishing what the community wants and what the community needs, says lead autism researcher Professor Dawn Adams.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 25/02/2026, Angela Cox and Mark Ferguson

Australian researchers have developed a new tool to help identify children at risk of serious speech disorders. It aims to eliminate unnecessary therapy for common speech errors that many kids simply outgrow. Experts say about one in 20 preschool children has a serious speech issue and should begin therapy before primary school to improve language development.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 25/02/2026, Brett Mcleod

A new clinical trial is testing whether a simple cream treatment can restore intimacy for women in their 30s and 40s. Monash researchers are currently investigating the use of a testosterone cream as treatment for people with low libido. Women living in Victoria can participate in the trial.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/02/2026, Brett Mcleod

New research from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute reveals that some children waiting to see speech pathologists may not even need therapy. The report has found that developmental speech errors were common in children aged two to six. The Institute has developed a free online tool to help better target referrals.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 25/02/2026, Melissa Downes and Joel Dry

QIMR researchers have launched a new study to investigate whether certain people with diabetes should be screened for pancreatic cancer. Developing diabetes later in life can be an early warning sign of cancer. The study hopes to reduce the number of people dying from the disease.

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4BC, Afternoons, 25/02/2026, Carla Bignasca

Research is underway to determine whether people with a recent diabetes diagnosis could benefit from being screened for pancreatic cancer. The Berghofer Institute believes that developing diabetes later in life can be an early warning sign.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Three Aboriginal doctors who recently graduated from Curtin Medical School committed to helping close the gap

West Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Kate Campbell

Yamatji and Njama woman Arkayla McPhee is one of three Aboriginal doctors who recently graduated from Curtin University, driven by a deep desire to help close the gap and improve rural health care. Earlier this month Dr McPhee, Dr Jaaron Davis and Dr Daisy Alps graduated from their five-year, full-time bachelor of medicine, bachelor of surgery undergraduate degree at Curtin Medical School.

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

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Confusing services prompts call to split suburb

Age, General News, 26/02/2026, Adam Carey, Page 4

When Deni Dee returned home after spending four weeks in the intensive care unit at Royal Melbourne Hospital in 2023, the single mother of two needed a lot of care. Dee, who had recently moved to the community of Mount Atkinson in Melbourne's west, had no idea her new address would make getting that care so difficult.

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Quicker patient handovers

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 4

Ambulance Victoria (AV) paramedics and first responders are getting back on the road faster and improving response times thanks to a significant drop in clearing times in the Loddon Mallee Region. Hospital clearing times are the duration between an ambulance crew completing their patient handover and being available to attend another case.

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Four years on and still no update on reinstatement of maternity services at Carnarvon Health Campus

West Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Sally Q Davies

Maternity services in Carnarvon have been suspended for four years, with uncertainty still surrounding when local mothers can expect to deliver in their hometown again. This month marks four years since maternity services were cut at Carnarvon Health Campus due to a shortage of specialist staff.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 25/02/2026, Tim McMillan and Angela Tsun

The WA Government has spent \$3 million on a new website to keep people with minor ailments out of hospital emergency departments. The Access Health website is a one-stop service that shows the nearest urgent clinic and provides links to telehealth services. The website was launched ahead of a predicted spike in hospitalisations during the winter flu season.

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

SA nurses secure interim wage rise, call off industrial action

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 25/02/2026

After months of negotiations with the state government, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) has won a 6% interim administrative wage increase, with planned industrial action suspended while Enterprise Agreement talks continue. The ANMF (SA Branch) has been fighting for fairer wages and improved conditions across the public sector.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Scholarships to attract doctors

Northern Territory News, General News, 26/02/2026, Thomas McLean, Page 7

General Practice Registrars Australia has launched its 2026 NT scholarships, aimed at attracting, supporting and retaining general practitioners and rural generalists in training across the Territory. Applications have opened for the Dr Debbie Stach Northern Territory GP/RG Registrar of the Year Award; Ada Wilmadda Parry Aboriginal Health Scholarships; and Professor Alan Walker Paediatric Scholarships; Kanyini Scholarships.

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

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Dozens of new nurses and midwives join NT Health to boost frontline services

Northern Territory News, Other, 25/02/2026, Matilda McDermott

NT's medical front lines have been granted some relief with over 70 newly graduated nurses and midwives joining the workforce, with more on the way. In the first three months of 2026, 72 graduate nurses and midwives have joined NT Health's ranks, in order to boost the health front line.

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

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Royal Hobart Hospital cleaners walk off the job over 'reneged' pay deal

The Mercury, Other, 25/02/2026, Genevieve Holding

Around 65 Royal Hobart Hospital cleaners walked off the job on Wednesday as negotiations continue to sour between the government and the health union, with the implementation of another "middle management" position leaving workers with "no choice" but to take action.

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

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Three Aboriginal doctors who recently graduated from Curtin Medical School committed to helping close the gap

West Australian, Other, 25/02/2026, Kate Campbell

Yamatji and Njamaal woman Arkayla McPhee is one of three Aboriginal doctors who recently graduated from Curtin University, driven by a deep desire to help close the gap and improve rural health care.

Earlier this month Dr McPhee, Dr Jaaron Davis and Dr Daisy Alps graduated from their five-year, full-time bachelor of medicine, bachelor of surgery undergraduate degree at Curtin Medical School.

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

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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

Doctors reminded of 'critical role' in raising concerns about professional standards

Medical Forum, Other, 25/02/2026

Doctors and other health professionals are being reminded of the "critical role" they play in reporting concerns about professional standards. The national regulator put out a statement on the legal responsibility to report concerns in response to investigations into Melbourne-based, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Simon Gordon.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Need for virus defence

Northern Territory News, General News, 26/02/2026, Page 3

New strategies may be needed to protect infants older than six months against the highly infectious respiratory syncytial virus, Australian research has found. The University of Queensland study examined 18,683 cases of RSV among children under two between 2022 and 2023, finding particularly high rates of the virus in ages 0-15 months.

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Hundreds of former prisoners potentially exposed to HIV and hepatitis C after a prisoner shared needles

ABC Online, Other, 25/02/2026, Janelle Miles and Emma Pollard

Hundreds of former prisoners may have been exposed to HIV and hepatitis C by an infected male offender who shared injecting equipment in jail. About 300 people "now in the community" would be advised of their risk and recommended to seek testing, Queensland sexual health services were told.

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

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NSW Health declares increased measles risk as new cases emerge across Sydney

Two new confirmed cases of measles have been reported in Sydney, with NSW Health declaring there is an increased risk of exposure. The cases who were unknowingly infected visited several locations in western Sydney, the inner west and Sydney CBD.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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2GB, Afternoons, 25/02/2026, Michael McLaren

Two more cases of measles have been identified in Sydney, bringing the state's total to 21 since the start of this year.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 25/02/2026, Thomas Oriti

NSW Health has issued warnings following two new confirmed measles cases in Sydney, bringing the state's total to 21 since the start of the year. One person caught measles while at a known exposure site of a case earlier this month, while the other recently visited Southeast Asia, where there are ongoing outbreaks. People are urged to watch for symptoms including a fever, runny nose, and a red blotchy rash.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

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FOOD STANDARDS

Recall alert for Kagro NSW Pinkfong Seasoned Seaweed Flakes amid plastic contamination

7news.com.au, Other, 25/02/2026, Savannah Meacham

A recall alert has been issued for a seaweed seasoning product amid concerns it has been contaminated with plastic. The Food Standards Australia New Zealand body issued the alert on Wednesday for Kagro NSW Pty Ltd's Pinkfong Seasoned Seaweed Flakes 40g which has been available in Korean grocery stores in NSW and the ACT.

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AICIS

'Absurd': Toxic chemical risks in Kimberley fracking plan 'downplayed', environmentalists say

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 25/02/2026, Holly Thompson

Environmental groups claim the risk of toxic chemicals to groundwater in WA's Kimberley was downplayed in the environmental watchdog's recent approval of plans for a controversial fracking project in the region. Documents from Texan-owned Black Mountain Energy which cited the region's sparse population as the reason risk to human health would be low were provided to the WA Environmental Protection Authority during the assessment of the company's proposed Valhalla project.

[Read More](#)

Wittenoom traditional owners launch \$1.5b asbestos contamination claim against WA government

ABC Online, Other, 25/02/2026, Alistair Bates

For more than three decades, successive state governments have rejected calls to clean up the toxic remnants of mining at Wittenoom, 1,400 kilometres north-east of Perth. Millions of tonnes of blue asbestos waste still surround three abandoned mines near the former Pilbara town.

Also reported by: [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#), [National Indigenous Times \(Online\)](#).

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