



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 17th March 2026

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Canberra Times \(page 1\)](#) reports federal departments are offering voluntary redundancies or quietly shuffling staff to meet 5 per cent savings targets ahead of the May budget, with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing opting for an internal reassignment register following a consultation process.
- The [Adelaide Advertiser \(page 10\)](#) reports that Opal HealthCare has walked back its plan to introduce a “premium” two-tier menu to access hot breakfasts through Higher Everyday Living Fees, following criticisms from Aged Care Minister Sam Rae.
- The [Australian Financial Review \(page 1\)](#) reports that Tino La Spina has been stood down as CEO of private hospital operator Healthscope by receivers McGrathNicol, raising uncertainties for the future of the company's hospitals.
- The [Sydney Morning Herald \(page 3\)](#) reports that researchers from the University of Sydney have published a study in the journal *Lancet Psychiatry* finding that cannabis had no effect on the treatment of depression, anxiety and PTSD, with the study also finding beneficial effects for managing Tourette's syndrome, insomnia and autism.
- The [West Australian \(page 7\)](#) reports that new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows that the number of women aged 55 and over in Western Australia seeking support for homelessness has risen by 33 per cent over five years.

- The [Daily Telegraph \(page 11\)](#), reports that the proportion of teenagers that vape in NSW have fallen over two years, from 29.6 per cent in April 2024 to 20.1 per cent in October 2025.
- The [ABC \(online\)](#), reports that the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand has called for the Federal Government to implement stricter exposure limits for deadly chemicals, coming as a Safe Work report calls for a five-fold reduction in benzene exposure, a ten-fold reduction in chlorine exposure, and for exposure to silica to be halved.
- The [ABC \(online\)](#), reports that a NSW Government review has found microplastic contamination in every one of the 120 waterways tested, with 19 per cent of those estuaries given a severe contamination grading.

MINISTER BUTLER

Women's health pilot gets mixed reactions

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 16/03/2026, Page 1

A national women's health pilot designed to improve access to hormonal contraception and treatment for uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) was announced by the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler at APP2026. From Jan 2027, an estimated 250,000 women concession card holders between the ages of 18-55 years will be eligible to access pharmacy-prescribed contraceptives, in accordance with state regulations, and uncomplicated UTI treatments, at the concession rate of \$7.70.

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

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The Zap: wrapping the latest health and aged care news, plus key consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 16/03/2026, Melissa Sweet

More than 82 million Americans report having rationed their prescriptions, borrowed money or made other such changes due to the burden of healthcare expenses, according to new research featured in The Zap. [...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) announced that it would be introducing pricing risk assessments for residential aged care from the June quarter "to examine the impact of misreporting on residential aged care pricing".

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Minister's assurances on new national medicine record

Pulse+IT, Other, 16/03/2026, Heather Fletcher

Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler gave a keynote address at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference last week with assurances the government would work closely with the profession to implement the National Medicines Record. "A National Medicines Record matters to pharmacists, who are central to medicines safety and continuity of care," Minister Butler said to the Pharmacy Guild conference.

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Pharmacy trial 'the lowest point for Australian healthcare'

The Medical Republic, Other, 16/03/2026, Euan Kielly

The announcement of a national pharmacist prescribing trial sparked backlash from GPs and rural pharmacist bodies alike. One prominent GP leader has accused the Pharmacy Guild of Australia of using women's health as "trojan horse", as the fallout from last week's announcement of a nationwide pharmacist-led prescribing trial begins. Speaking at the Australasian Pharmacy Professionals (APP) conference at the Gold Coast on Friday, Health Minister Mark Butler unveiled new changes to pharmacy prescribing.

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Dept seeks expansion for big drugs

Pharma In Focus, Other, 16/03/2026

AbbVie and companies marketing biosimilars of Humira could see an expanded listing to a higher line heading their way, thanks to a move by the Department of Health, Disability, and Aged Care. [...] Turning to the Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Labor Senator Jenny McAllister, Pocock pushed for a commitment from the Government that they would advise the PBAC the Department supported such a listing.

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MINISTER RAE

Backflip on hot brekkie

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/03/2026, Julie Cross, Page 10

An aged care giant has retreated from plans to "paywall" hot breakfasts and other treats for residents who used to get them for free, after an investigation by this masthead triggered a watchdog inquiry. [...] Federal Aged Care Minister Sam Rae said he had made it "crystal clear" that HELF could only be charged for services that went above and beyond what a provider was already required to deliver.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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

Aged care minister pursues claims providers charging premium for basic services

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Isabella Tolhurst and Declan Bowring

Aged Care Minister Sam Rae says he is asking the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to look into claims of misuse of the higher everyday living fee (HELF). The HELF was introduced on November 1 last year for aged care residents to pay for services above standard care.

[Read More](#)

Minister criticises Opal HealthCare's HELF trial

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/03/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The aged care minister has called Opal HealthCare's reported HELF plans to include in-room TVs as a premium service "absolutely disgusting", but the provider argues it is implementing the government-mandated system. [...] Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae was quick to criticise the provider, appearing on Channel 9 news and calling the reported policy "absolutely disgusting".

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'Hidden and misunderstood': national plan to tackle elder abuse

Law Society Journal, Other, 16/03/2026, Karl Hoerr

The Federal government launches a 10-year plan to prevent, respond to and eliminate the abuse of older people in Australia. [...] Announcing the National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People 2026-2036, Attorney General Michelle Rowland and Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae said older people experiencing abuse or mistreatment often don't seek help, "as this form of abuse and family violence is often hidden and misunderstood".

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Aged Care Minister slams fees allowed under new rules

The Weekly Source, Other, 16/03/2026, Caroline Egan

Aged Care Minister Sam Rae has labelled new Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELF) packages

reportedly being trialled as "disgusting" – even though the services are in line with Government policy. [...] TV excluded from Service List However, under the Government's Residential Aged Care Service List and HELF Guidance for Providers , published by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, televisions are not included on the Service List.

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Aged Care Minister slams Opal fees allowed under new rules

The Weekly Source, Other, 16/03/2026, Caroline Egan

Aged Care Minister Sam Rae has labelled new Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELF) packages being trialled by Opal HealthCare as "disgusting" – even though the services are in line with Government policy. On Friday (13 March), The Daily Telegraph revealed leaked details of Opal HealthCare 's trial of new fees and charges, including 'basic' packages that exclude hot breakfasts, dessert after dinner, and free-to-air television in resident rooms.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

Star 101.9, 06:30 News, 16/03/2026

A new Medicare mental health centre is coming to Mackay to support locals. Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Emma McBride, says its welcome news, particularly following the recent severe weather.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

The Zap: wrapping the latest health and aged care news, plus key consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 16/03/2026, Melissa Sweet

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

No relevant coverage

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DEPARTMENT

APS to 'manage with less'

Canberra Times, General News, 17/03/2026, Miriam Webber, Page 1

A Federal department is offering voluntary redundancies as at least two others quietly shuffle staff around in response to "changing priorities" in the lead-up to a budget widely expected to be tough on

the public service. [...] While the Health and Infrastructure departments have processes in place to reassign staff, The Canberra Times understands other departments and agencies are in similar positions, but have not said so publicly.

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Flu cases prompt jab push

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 7

Australians 50 years and over are being warned to start the conversation with their GP or pharmacist about flu prevention options. [...] In the four weeks to March 13, flu cases among Australians over 50 jumped 147 per cent, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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

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Referrals too short

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 1

Health officials have proposed extending the default referral period from 12 months to several years or even making indefinite referrals standard. [...] The current 12-month default time limit can also mean unnecessary out-of-pocket costs as patients renew referrals, according to a Department of Health, Disability and Ageing consultation paper published last month.

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The Zap: wrapping the latest health and aged care news, plus key consultations now open

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More than 82 million Americans report having rationed their prescriptions, borrowed money or made other such changes due to the burden of healthcare expenses, according to new research featured in The Zap. [...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) announced that it would be introducing pricing risk assessments for residential aged care from the June quarter "to examine the impact of misreporting on residential aged care pricing".

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Indefinite referrals would likely backfire, AMA warns

The Medical Republic, Other, 16/03/2026, Holly Payne

Cutting out mandatory GP reconnection points is almost certainly a bad idea. The ongoing war between patient convenience and clinical safety has opened a new front in the referral field, with the AMA sending a strongly-worded warning to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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Something is afoot with the rural WIP

The Medical Republic, Other, 16/03/2026, Holly Payne

But one of the biggest rural medical advocacy bodies was kept out of the loop. [...] For a start, the royal college's announcement on Thursday last week actually preceded any updates from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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Aged Care Minister slams fees allowed under new rules

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Solving depopulation needs more than baby steps

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 17/03/2026, Luara Ferracioli, Page 23

Matt Canavan has used his first week as leader of the Nationals to call for Australians to have more children. He joins a long list of political leaders who have called attention to the problem of depopulation, and to the importance of demographic renewal.

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Where are they now? What Victoria's Covid leaders did after the pandemic

Adelaide Now, Other, 16/03/2026, Brendan Kearns

The faces Victorians saw daily during Covid lockdowns have moved on, some to lucrative new positions, despite the state now paying a staggering \$125 million settlement to affected businesses. 'Joke' Families call for accountability after care home deaths Family members of residents who died in a Covid outbreak at a Melbourne aged care home have called for.

[Read More](#)

The differences between land lease and retirement villages

Canberra Times, Other, 16/03/2026, Noel Whittaker

Last week I looked at retirement communities and pointed out that there are two main structures: retirement village and land lease community. To recap, in a land lease community you buy your home but lease the land, paying ongoing site fees set at market rates, which often makes them higher than a retirement village's ongoing fees.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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RACGP warning on aged care safety

Aged Care Insite, Other, 16/03/2026, Stefanie Schultz

The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) is urging the Tasmanian government to rethink its spending priorities ahead of the state budget, warning that proposed pharmacy prescribing trials could compromise patient safety and divert funding from older Tasmanians who need it most. The College wants the government to redirect the \$5 million allocated for a pharmacy scope-of-practice expansion pilot and instead embed pharmacists directly inside residential aged care facilities.

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Tasmania welcomes 48 new aged care beds

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/03/2026

Following a \$24 million development at Uniting AgeWell's Sorrell Community, the home now has the capacity to house 112 residents. Victoria and Tasmania-based aged care provider Uniting AgeWell has opened three new wings at its Sorrell Community, Ningana, north-east of Hobart.

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Fringe festival shows bring the community in

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 16/03/2026

Southern Cross Care (SA, NT & VIC) is bringing the Adelaide Fringe festival fun to its Adelaide residents so no one misses out on the fun. Adelaide Fringe is a major event in the city's social calendar attended by millions of people every year.

[Read More](#)

When the carer is struggling, the older person often suffers too

HelloCare, Other, 16/03/2026, Jakob Neeland

In Australian aged care, we spend a lot of time thinking about the person receiving care: their health problems, daily needs, risks like falls or hospital stays, and how long they might live. But there is something important we sometimes overlook, the family carer, the person looking after them at home, often a spouse, adult child, or close relative.

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UnitingSA adds to its retirement living portfolio

The Weekly Source, Other, 16/03/2026, Ian Horswill

The Not For Profit organisation, which employs over 1,000 full-time and volunteer workers in South Australia, has secured a new acquisition. UnitingSA has purchased 16 one-bedroom apartments on Levels 11, 12 and 13 at Housing Choices Australia 's Spence on Light in Adelaide's CBD.

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The proximity paradox: Why living closer can create tension

Your Life Choices, Other, 16/03/2026

Retirement brings many dreams . Among the most cherished is the idea of living close to your grown children—sharing Sunday roasts, seeing the grandchildren more often, and feeling part of everyday family life. For many Australians, that dream eventually becomes reality. Later life can offer the freedom to move closer to family, especially once work commitments fade and priorities shift.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Want a job? Move along if you're old or disabled

The Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Ewin Hannan, Page 8

Hiring intentions of employers have fallen to a three-year low, and 70 per cent of companies are excluding candidates on the basis of mental illness, disability and age. The Australian Human Resources Institute surveyed 612 senior HR and business decisionmakers and found recruitment intentions had dropped sharply, with 59 per cent of organisations planning to hire in the upcoming quarter, down from 71 per cent in December 2025, marking the lowest level since the survey began in May 2023.

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

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Cut corruption before raising our taxes, Jim

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/03/2026, Tim Wilson, Page 12

The Albanese government should not be introducing new taxes when it will not stop rivers of tax revenue flowing to organised crime for corruption. We already know Treasurer Jim Chalmers is considering a new housing tax by adjusting the capital gains discount, a higher income tax by ending negative gearing, and a new family savings tax on trusts.

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

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Corridor fix for ED bed block?

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 14

Bella Rough doctors want a formalised process for transferring patients into corridors, lounges or other "unconventional" spaces on wards when faced with critical ED overcrowding. Emergency physician Dr Daniel Haustead acknowledged that bed block often meant patients were already being moved into spare spaces within ED.

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Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 16/03/2026, Tom Connell

Panel discussion with Patrick Gorman, Assistant Minister to the PM, and Jason Falinski, former Liberal MP. Gorman explains that the Albanese government works to constrain NDIS growth, cracking down on shonky providers and unsustainable spending. Falinski argues the scheme suffers from mission creep and fraud, citing instances like funding sex workers and an overabundance of providers in areas like Lakemba.

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PRIMARY CARE

A \$220 million cost-saver?

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 3

The 2020 Deeble paper said GPs wrote around 15 million specialist referrals a year. Given there were 9,300,000 'initial' consultations claimed by specialists in same time period, the authors said it implied that at least 5,700,000 referrals were associated with continuing care.

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RACP president-elect drops bullying case

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 12

Jamie Thannoo the president-elect of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians has dropped her Fair Work Commission case that accused senior figures within the college of bullying. Dr Sharmila Chandran started the proceedings almost a year ago, naming current college president Professor Jennifer Martin,

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DVA ups payments for doctors by 35%

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 12

The Federal Government has increased its payments to doctors for vet erans' compensation claims by 35% while increasing its funding for completing forms from \$14.70 to \$22.55 per page. However, it is also launching a compliance crackdown. The crackdown will target rorts, including doctors attempting to charge more than the fees on offer, as well as third parties soliciting doctors to write reports to secure unjustified compensation claims.

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Time to give UCC waste the boot

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 17

An urgent care clinic Dr consult costs \$236 but half the patients say they would have gone to a GP A friend attended an urgent care clinic (UCC) and was provided with an X-ray request, a pair of crutches and a moon boot for a possible toe fracture. When she offered to return the crutches and the moon boot, she was told to keep them.

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A hidden cause of dyspnoea

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 38

Inducible laryngeal obstruction is an important contributor to both undiagnosed breathlessness and poorly controlled asthma. Dr Alice Crawford (top left) is a respiratory physician at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and adjunct clinical lecturer at Curtin Medical School and the School of Allied Health, Curtin University, Perth, WA.

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The bizarre tale of one doctor's fight against the quacks

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Paul Smith, Page 40

There have been court injunctions, police summonses, a social media ban (later lifted) and the spectacle of watching his research being retracted by journals fearful of the litigation it might attract. Over the last 10 years, Dr Cyriac Abby Philips has become the most visible and most legally vulnerable critic of alternative medicine in a country where pseudoscience is not merely tolerated but institutionalised.

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Use of AI-enabled stethoscopes in primary care examined

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026, Melanie Hinze

The findings of two recent studies have indicated that artificial intelligence (AI)-stethoscope implementation in primary care may have the potential to improve detection of cardiovascular disease. Published in *The Lancet*, the first study was a cluster randomised trial involving 205 primary care practices in the UK, which services 1.55 million adults.

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WIN Toowoomba, WIN News Darling Downs, 16/03/2026, Steve Hart

Bulk billing rates in Qld exceed 78%, with 3400 Medicare bulk billing practices nationwide, helping ease cost-of-living pressures for patients. The increase follows the federal government's \$8.5b investment to strengthen Medicare, though the RACGP warns rebates still lag behind inflation and require further funding to remain sustainable.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Vapers go up in smoke

Daily Telegraph, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 11

Fewer teenagers are taking up vaping in NSW since tough laws were introduced. New findings from the Generation Vape project show the number of teens who have tried vaping has declined from 29.6 per cent in April 2024 to 20.1 per cent in October 2025.

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Slow burn on urgent laws

Herald Sun, Editorials, 17/03/2026, Page 22

As ground zero for the illicit tobacco trade that has seen criminal syndicates wage war for control, you would think the Victorian government would be leading with tough legislation to counter the crisis. Yet, the Allan government has been, for some inexplicable reason, excruciatingly slow and inept at rolling out laws that specifically target the trade that has seen an innocent victim killed, at least two targeted murders and well over 200 shops and businesses firebombed.

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Big increase in homeless women as crisis grows

West Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Hannah Cross, Page 7

Children and older women are bearing the brunt of WA's housing crisis as demand for emergency accommodation soars. More older women than ever are seeking homelessness support, according to the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, with the proportion of women aged 55 and over seeking support rising by 33 per cent over the past five years.

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

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Vape, tobacco businesses forced to close

Border Mail, General News, 17/03/2026, Blair Thomson, Page 5

Three Albury tobacco and vape shops have been closed after raids by health authorities over

suspected illegal sales. Two sites on Dean Street and an AMP Lane business have been hit with short term closure orders from Thursday, March 12.

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Six questions to ask teenage girls to check for common condition

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 17/03/2026, Rachel Riley, Page 10

A simple new five-minute test could help slash years off the time it takes most young women to be diagnosed with endometriosis. University of Queensland researchers have developed a five-question test to identify patients at risk of endometriosis and fast track specialist referrals for further investigation.

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Australia's tobacco tax model 'broken' as black market hits \$6.9bn, tobacco boss warns

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 15/03/2026, Charles Chadwick

Australia's once-celebrated tobacco policies have spectacularly backfired, with illicit products now comprising half of all sales and excise revenue plummeting from \$16.3bn to a projected \$1.5bn. A top global tobacco executive has branded Australia "a busted flush" amid a booming black market for illicit cigarettes and vapes and a continued collapse in revenue from tobacco excise.

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The ACT is campaigning to have housing debt wiped. The federal government says no

Canberra Times, Other, 16/03/2026, Lucinda Garbutt-Young

ACT federal and territory politicians have renewed calls for historic public housing debt to be wiped, as Canberra claws towards new home goals. The territory owed the Commonwealth \$66 million at the end of last financial year for government-built homes. Interest on the debt was \$3.3 million.

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Perron Institute and Curtin University researchers utilising aged garlic in endometriosis pain study

West Australian, Other, 16/03/2026, Claire Sadler

A West Australian study will research an alternative pain treatment for endometriosis including using extracts from aged garlic. One in seven women are expected to live with endometriosis, which often causes debilitating pain due to tissue similar to the uterine lining growing outside the uterus.

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

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Calls for more government action to help prevent youth homelessness in WA

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Keane Bourke

Youth homelessness is becoming such an issue in Perth that on one average night earlier this month, services identified 73 young people sleeping rough, but only three available beds in crisis services. Agencies say they have to regularly turn young people away because they cannot cope with the demand.

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What the government knew about SA's toxic algal bloom and what it told the public

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Jade Toomey, Alex McDonald and Angus Grigg

The South Australian government took months to update its health advice after the discovery of a potentially harmful toxin in the state's disastrous algal bloom, insisting it posed minimal risk to humans. For the last year, algae has flared at hotspots along the SA coastline, wiping out vast populations of marine life, closing parts of the fishing industry, and making some who went to the beach sick.

How did a vape trigger an urgent call on a Virgin Australia domestic flight?

The Guardian, Other, 17/03/2026, Donna Lu

A flight from Brisbane to Melbourne was met by firefighters after landing on Sunday afternoon, after smoke was seen coming from a vape on board. The pilots of Virgin Australia flight VA328 issued a “pan” call after a vape activated in the cabin during descent, with smoke seen coming from the device.

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Hospitalisation and deaths from gamma-hydroxybutyrate use increasing in Australia

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026, Melanie Hinze

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (ghb) use, harms and treatment engagement have increased in Australia over the past decade, finds new research. Published in *Addiction*, the research analysed annual trend data from Australian triennial population surveys and annual interviews with cross-sectional, nonrepresentative samples of people who use illicit stimulants or who inject drugs.

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The lost art that could transform your relationships: Why active listening matters more as we age

Your Life Choices, Other, 16/03/2026, Don Turrobia

When did you last have a conversation that left you feeling truly understood? Not just heard, but genuinely seen and valued?

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Channel 9, Nine News, 16/03/2026, Peter Overton

Teen vaping in NSW is declining, with rates among 14 to 17yos dropping from nearly 30% to 20% between April 2024 and October 2025. The survey also finds that almost 90% of respondents report little or no experience with vaping products.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Brisbane, Evenings, 16/03/2026, Philip Clark

Interview with James Armitage, Professor of Optometry and Associate Head of School of Medicine at Deakin University, about the importance of regular eye examinations and eye health. Armitage explains that eye tests help detect not only vision issues but also broader health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and nerve problems. He stresses that maintaining overall health and seeking early check-ups helps prevent or slow the progression of eye disease.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Brisbane \(Brisbane\)](#).

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Survivor support tool

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 9

For some breast cancer survivors, the chronic condition of lymphoedema can be a painful challenge, health experts warn. The ongoing illness causes swelling, usually in the arms or legs, due to a build-up of protein-rich fluid in body tissues, post-treatment.

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Deadliest cancer is one few are aware of

One type of cancer is killing more Australians than any other growing at double the rate of other cancers but too few people are aware of it, a national cancer charity says. It reports that one in five cancer deaths are now caused by upper gastrointestinal (GI) cancers, overtaking the toll from lung cancer which has held the record for decades.

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Younger bowel cancer concerns

Courier Mail, General News, 17/03/2026, Paul Brescia, Page 5

A Queensland study is testing whether artificial sweeteners and food additives could be behind a shocking rise in bowel cancer diagnosis for Australians under 36. Bowel cancer takes more than 5000 lives in Australia annually, making it one of our most deadly cancers.

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Kids' joint pain struggle

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 8

Symptoms generally associated with older adults, such as joint inflammation, chronic pain and vision loss, are affecting thousands of Australian children and young adults. The warning comes amid a push for earlier diagnosis of potentially crippling juvenile arthritis, an incurable childhood autoimmune disease that remains widely misunderstood.

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Former detective on the case to bust MS misconceptions

Newcastle Herald, General News, 17/03/2026, Anna Falkenmire, Page 3

Rachel Fallis had a demanding career in the police force's child abuse squad in Newcastle. She was solo parenting twins, travelling the world, and enjoying a new relationship.

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GP retires with no regrets

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Heather Saxena, Page 1

Dr Nick Carr has many achievements to choose from when nominating his proudest, from pushing to ban temazepam gel capsules to fighting the Federal Government in court over its definition of voluntary assisted dying as suicide. But the 69-year-old says his resolve to work four days a week tops the list.

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AI mammography 'cuts interval cancers by 12%'

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Bella Rough, Page 8

AI-assisted mammography screening reduces interval cancers by 12% compared with standard screening, according to final results from a world-first trial. The Mammography Screening with AI trial, which was embedded within Sweden's national breast screening program, involved 105,934 women aged 40-74.

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Ovarian cancer risk cut by 75%

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Bella Rough, Page 9

Opportunistic bilateral salpingectomy reduces the risk of serous ovarian cancer by more than 75% compared with hysterectomy or tubal ligation, research suggests. Researchers have compared 40,527 patients who underwent opportunistic bilateral salpingectomy (OBS) with 45,296 patients who had either hysterectomy alone or tubal ligation between 2008 and 2020.

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Terminally ill Australians denied peaceful death by 'one line' of federal law

The Mercury, Other, 16/03/2026, Kate Kyriacou

Terminally ill Australians in regional areas have died without dignity because a legal loophole prevents doctors using a standard tool for end-of-life consultations. Australians with terminal illnesses living in regional and remote communities are dying in traumatic circumstances, without dignity, because of a legal technicality requiring a "one line" fix.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Big Red Kidney Bus brings lifesaving dialysis to Echuca tourists

Shepparton News Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Jaci Hicken

Kidney Health Australia's Big Red Kidney Bus has arrived at NRMA Echuca Holiday Park, bringing lifesaving dialysis services to tourists until March 28. The mobile dialysis unit allows people with kidney failure to travel and holiday while maintaining their essential treatment routine.

[Read More](#)

Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 16/03/2026, Laura Jayes

Perth doctor Sanjay Ramakrishnan is urging the federal government to subsidise treatment for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is the nation's fifth leading cause of death. Although the biologic treatment Dupixent reduces severe flare-ups, patients currently face costs of over \$1000 per month due to a lack of government subsidy.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hard tasks put ADHD brains in sleep mode

West Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 12

People with adhd are more likely to have their brain enter sleep mode during a difficult task, new Australian research has revealed. Brains sometimes enter brief periods of sleep-like activity when they need a break from difficult tasks but researchers from Monash University found it was amplified for those with ADHD, highlighting cognitive challenges in adults with the disorder.

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Crisis as kids hit breaking point

West Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Rhianna Mitchell, Page 12

A worrying pattern of declining mental health and rising developmental concerns is emerging in WA's youth, with the Commissioner for Children and Young People warning a lack of early intervention is behind the crisis. The 2026 Profile of Children and Young People in WA, to be tabled in State Parliament on Tuesday by Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, also contains insights from a new youth survey which points to escalating distress, growing disengagement from school and a gender divide in teen wellbeing.

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

Chance to notice the signs before it's too late

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 17/03/2026, Jessica Antoniou, Page 3

A suicide intervention workshop will be offered to community members in Kalgoorlie-Boulder to help people develop the confidence and skills to respond to those at risk of taking their own lives. Facilitated by Australian charity The Men's Table in partnership with LivingWorks, the two-day workshop will guide its participants through a highly practical and evidence-based session which combines teaching, discussion and role-play practices.

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

Mental health patients in seclusion longer at Mater

Newcastle Herald, General News, 17/03/2026, Dylan Nicholson, Page 2

Patients requiring seclusion at Calvary Mater Newcastle spent an average of 17 hours longer alone when compared to patients at other NSW hospitals, new data reveals. Mental health patients in the Newcastle hospital were secluded on average for longer than those anywhere else in the state, data from the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) has revealed.

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Schizophrenia guidelines loom

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 13

Rachel Carter psychiatrists have drawn up new schizophrenia management guidelines that would, if endorsed, mark the first Australasian update in a decade. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) last published guidelines in 2016, but has been warning doctors that they are not considered current because they are more than five years old.

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Emotional dysregulation: bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, or both?

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026

Emotional dysregulation (also known as affective instability) is a common and challenging presentation in general practice. Patients may present with a marked reactivity of mood, with intense dysphoria, irritability or anxiety, typically lasting a few hours and rarely more than a few days, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 5th Edition.

[Read More](#)

2GB, Drive, 16/03/2026, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Sarah Mitchell, Shadow Minister for Health in NSW, about mental health pressures in emergency departments. Mitchell says Blacktown Hospital and other facilities face overcrowding because mental health patients occupy most ED beds, leaving elderly, cardiac, and stroke patients waiting long periods. She stresses the need for more mental health beds, investment in workforce support, and tangible government action.

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IMMUNISATION

Taxpayers slugged \$125m for Covid fiasco

The Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Lily McCaffrey, Page 9

Taxpayers will pay \$125m after the Allan government settled a class action brought by business owners over its bungled Covid-19 hotel quarantine program, in a move that avoids an election year Supreme Court trial interrogating the Victorian government's pandemic response. The \$125m settlement was agreed to last week on the eve of a trial in which former government ministers and departmental secretaries were expected to be called to give evidence in relation to the state Labor government's management of its controversial hotel quarantine program.

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

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

\$125m for labor to 'cover up' covid-19 case

Herald Sun, General News, 17/03/2026, Ashley Argoon, Page 10

The Victorian taxpayer will be slugged a whopping \$125m after the state government settled a court case with businesses forced to shut down during the Covid-19 pandemic. The payout avoids what would have been a lengthy and politically sensitive trial in the lead up to November's state election examining the decision-making behind Victoria's pandemic response.

Also reported by: [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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

Lethal complacency season

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/03/2026, Sue Bailey, Page 9

With nearly 100 deaths in Tasmania from Covid and influenza last year, doctors are urging people to get vaccinated. Health Department data shows that last year 50 people died from Covid compared with 120 in 2024, 46 from influenza up from 28 in 2024, and eight from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) compared with 12 in 2024.

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Opposition wants free flu jabs to start before winter crisis hits WA

West Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Jessica Page, Page 5

There's a push for free flu vaccines to be offered earlier, and for longer, as Perth hospitals brace for winter. The Opposition is calling for the vaccination campaign to start in April instead of May, and for the jabs to be free for everyone for six months.

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

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

Victorian government agrees to \$125 million COVID hotel quarantine class action settlement

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026

The Victorian government has settled a multi-million-dollar class action by businesses shut down during the state's second wave of coronavirus in 2020. The compensation claim on behalf of thousands of businesses sought financial damages caused to businesses by alleged negligence in relation to Victoria's hotel quarantine program.

[Read More](#)

Childhood pneumococcal vaccinations: what's behind the new schedule?

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026

Pneumococcal infection can lead to a range of diseases, including invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD), a severe form that can be life-threatening in children. Although rates of pneumococcal disease declined substantially during COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, they have since returned to pre-pandemic levels.

[Read More](#)

2026 influenza vaccination program resources

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026

New Australian Government resources on the 2026 influenza vaccination program have been released. The National Immunisation Program has produced advice for health professionals, including guidance on vaccination timing, cell-based vaccines, special considerations and eligibility, as well as a consumer fact sheet.

[Read More](#)

Fluad approved for people 50

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 16/03/2026

Csl Seqirus' adjuvanted influenza vaccine Fluad is now approved in Australia for active immunisation against flu in people aged 50 and over. Registered and funded since 2018 for adults aged 65 and over on the NIP, data in adults aged 50-64 years has shown higher antibody titres compared with nonadjuvanted vaccines, particularly against vaccine A-strains, for up to nine months postvaccination.

[Read More](#)

Govt to pay \$125m to settle Covid class action

The New Daily, Other, 16/03/2026, Emily Woods

Businesses impacted by Victoria's long Covid-19 lockdowns will receive \$125 million from taxpayers under a settlement agreed by the state government. It follows a class action being brought in the

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Healthscope CEO out after receiver row

Australian Financial Review, General News, 17/03/2026, Michael Smith, Page 1

The race to save Australia's second-largest private hospital operator Healthscope is in turmoil after chief executive Tino La Spina was ousted following a breakdown in his relationship with receivers McGrathNicol.

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

'They put the needle up their arse and walk around with it'

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Bella Rough and Paul Smith, Page 5

Bad things happen in prisons, but sometimes the reasons bad things happen are not the fault of the inmates themselves. Take drug use. Australian prisons, specifically the officers working in those prisons, have resisted any move to introduce needle and syringe programs to prevent the spread of significant bloodborne viruses, such as hepatitis C and HIV.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Statins getting a bad 'wrap'

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Antony Scholefield, Page 6

Warnings on statins about the risks of renal failure, pancreatitis and depression are probably unnecessary and based on poor research, according to a study in The Lancet. Of the dozens of potential side effects analysed, it only found randomised controlled trial data to back up abnormal liver function, urinary composition alteration and oedema as part of a review and meta-analysis.

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SAHMRI takeover plan sparks bitter dispute between Adelaide and Flinders universities

Adelaide Now, Other, 16/03/2026, Andrew Hough

South Australia's universities are in a high-stakes dispute over the future of the state's embattled medical institute amid claims that an official "takeover" plans threaten its flagship research. The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute is the subject of secret merger talks with the new \$450m taxpayer-funded Adelaide University after a cancer bunker scandal.

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

[Read More](#)

Study of Brisbane family helps researchers uncover genetic mutation linked to ulcerative colitis

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Janelle Miles

Three generations of one Australian family have helped scientists identify a new gene linked to a debilitating inflammatory bowel condition, offering hope of new treatments for the disease. Five members of the Brisbane family — a grandmother, two of her children and two grandchildren — have all been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, a chronic disorder causing inflammation and ulcers in the lining of the large intestine and rectum.

[Read More](#)

Largest Parkinson's cohort study in Australia shows gender differences

Aged Care Insite, Other, 16/03/2026, Lyndsey Collins-Praino

Parkinson's disease is the fastest growing neurological disorder, with over 10 million cases worldwide. Up to Australians currently live with the disease and 50 new cases are diagnosed each day. The number of people living with Parkinson's is projected to more than triple between 2020 and 2050.

[Read More](#)

Study finds long-term PPI use is not linked to stomach cancer

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026, Sasha Ellery

Long-term proton pump inhibitor (PPI) therapy does not increase the risk of noncardia gastric adenocarcinoma when key biases seen in earlier studies are minimised, according to a large Nordic registry analysis published in the BMJ. Researchers compared data on 17,232 individuals with gastric (noncardia) adenocarcinoma with 172,297 matched population controls across five Nordic countries.

[Read More](#)

Neither paracetamol nor ibuprofen appears to increase eczema or bronchiolitis risk in infants

Medicine Today, Other, 16/03/2026, Sasha Ellery

Paracetamol used for fever or pain in the first year of life does not appear to increase the risk of eczema or bronchiolitis by 1 year of age compared with ibuprofen, reports a large randomised controlled trial published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. The multicentre, open-label trial was conducted in New Zealand and enrolled 3923 infants younger than 8 weeks of age who were randomised to use either paracetamol alone or ibuprofen alone as needed for fever or pain until age 12 months.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Homeless Indigenous elder died after years on 'priority' WA public housing waitlist

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Jarrod Lucas

An Indigenous elder undergoing cancer treatment died after spending nearly three years sleeping in cars and on sofas while waiting for public housing in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, his family says. The Wongatha man from Western Australia's Goldfields, known as Mr McIntyre for cultural reasons, died in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, about 600 kilometres east of Perth, on February 6 after battling emphysema and lung cancer.

[Read More](#)

Kimberley Aboriginal community sets new blueprint for health and wellbeing

National Indigenous Times, Other, 16/03/2026, Natasha Clark

A remote Aboriginal community north of Broome has released a new strategy aimed at strengthening health and wellbeing through cultural governance and community control. The Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation last week launched its updated Binimal Aambooriny - Strong People, Healthy Living Strategy, setting out how organisations and service providers are expected to work with the community.

[Read More](#)

Souths rally around Nathan Merritt amid health battle

National Indigenous Times, Other, 16/03/2026, Jasper Bruce

Wayne Bennett says South Sydney are rallying around Nathan Merritt after the club legend announced he was battling stage-four oesophageal and liver cancer. Only hours before Alex Johnston broke the

NRL's try-scoring record on Friday night, the Rabbitohs' previous try-scoring wizard Merritt went public with news of his twin diagnoses.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Cairns Hospital's ramping rise

Cairns Post, General News, 17/03/2026, Samuel Davis, Page 1

The LNP is going backwards in its bid to fulfill a promise to reduce ramping at Cairns Hospital, with the latest data revealing wait times for beds have exceeded a critical threshold yet again. But Health Minister Tim Nicholls dismissed concerns that the emergency department is struggling, arguing statewide figures have reached a five-year low.

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Ramping rise is no joke

Cairns Post, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 26

The state government's response to Cairns Hospital's subpar ramping rates is like that zany meme of the dog calmly sipping coffee while the room burns around him. Wearing a stylish red bowler hat, the cartoon canine drinks his brew then says, "This is fine" as flames engulf the walls, roof and doorway.

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Advocates make a case for MLHD split

Daily Advertiser, General News, 17/03/2026, Allan Wilson, Page 5

"I have seen a degradation of services at the hospital and I want to make sure we can get things back up to scratch." Those are the words of former Griffith Base Hospital nurse Carolyn Groat who was one of about 40 who participated in a health district rally on Thursday.

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Why young families are flocking to Geelong as it becomes a 300,000-strong city

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 16/03/2026, Olivia Shying

A demographer warns Geelong faces a critical test as its population races toward 300,000 while emergency department wait times stretch beyond two hours. Geelong's population has just hit 300,000 – a milestone that cements its transformation from industrial outpost to one of Australia's fastest-growing regional cities.

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

[Read More](#)

Inside newly approved mega SEQ hospital

The Courier Mail, Other, 16/03/2026, Judith Kerr

A \$750 million private hospital planned for Brisbane's east has been given the green light by the state government, bypassing council approvals and potentially reshaping traffic on one of the area's busiest roads. Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie formally granted a Ministerial Infrastructure Designation for Hub68 Centre for Excellence in Ormiston, with the decision announced in Friday's Queensland Gazette.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Minister's ramping claims 'lies' says union after filming Townsville hospital chaos

The Courier Mail, Other, 16/03/2026, Daniel Shirkie

While the government celebrates statewide ramping improvements, frontline workers reveal the

shocking truth at one hospital where ambulance queues tell a completely different story. Fed-up health union representatives have blasted the government's claims to have addressed ramping as "lies", tagging the health minister in a video which shows ambulances lined up outside Townsville University Hospital.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 16/03/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with Mark Ferguson, Intensive Care Paramedic at St John Ambulance, about the temporary emergency department in Katherine during the floods. Ferguson describes setting up triage and treatment areas in the St John training hall, treating over 100 patients with mostly minor injuries and guidance needs. He highlights challenges like limited rest space for crews, praises the collaboration between St John, NT Health, CareFlight, and the community.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Doctors warned on excessive fees

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 4

Paul Smith australia's medical colleges have unveiled new guidance on ethical billing for specialists, including demands to avoid setting fees that "maximise profit at the expense of patient equity". It comes amid renewed political pressure on the profession, with the Federal Government wanting to name those who it considers are charging excessive fees through a mandatory disclosure of all specialist fees on the Medical Costs Finder website.

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Labor and Liberal leaders agree on urgent need for more country doctors

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 16/03/2026, Brad Crouch

Labor and Liberal health leaders managed to agree on one vital issue during The Advertiser's People's Cabinet debate on health – the state needs more GPs and, crucially, more GPs in country areas. The People's Cabinet Health Minister Alex Thomas grilled Health Minister Chris Picton and Opposition health spokeswoman Heidi Girolamo on issues ranging from C-sections to ramping in a spirited debate which aimed for solutions rather than point scoring.

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

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Royal Flying Doctor Service to have \$4 billion impact in next 30 years, new study says

West Australian, Other, 16/03/2026

The Royal Flying Doctor Service will provide a \$4 billion benefit to WA across the next three decades, according to a new independent report published amid record demand for the organisation's services. The report by Deloitte Access Economics found the RFDS was critical to providing essential health care for more than 20,000 people living and working in regional WA each year.

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

VR training helps nursing students manage aggressive patients

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 16/03/2026

Nursing students are gaining confidence in managing aggressive patients thanks to innovative virtual reality (VR) training, new research from Edith Cowan University (ECU) has found. The program, known as I-VADE, allows clinicians and students to practice de-escalation strategies in realistic, fully immersive scenarios before they encounter them on the clinical floor.

[Read More](#)

Urgent care clinic hours extended across Tasmania to ease hospital strike pressure

The Mercury, Other, 16/03/2026, Sue Bailey

Health workers refuse to back down from industrial action that is causing hospital delays, forcing Tasmania to extend urgent care clinic hours as negotiations intensify. As industrial action continues to hit the state's hospitals, the Health Department has announced extended hours for Medicare Urgent Care Clinics to ease increasing demand.

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

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Competing while staying cost-competitive in diagnostics manufacturing

Manufacturers' Monthly, General News, 01/03/2026, Page 32

The Australian Medtech Manufacturing Alliance highlights how three local manufacturers are winning through automation, design-for-manufacture and system integration. Australian manufacturers are challenging the idea that high-wage economies cannot compete in medical technology production.

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Australian children could be prescribed weight loss drugs like Wegovy to combat obesity

7News.com.au, Other, 16/03/2026, Jennifer Bechwati

Australian children battling obesity could soon be prescribed weight loss drugs like Wegovy, with the pharmaceutical company's CEO claiming early intervention could save lives. [...] As well as pushing for subsidies through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Doustdar on Monday revealed price cuts are on the table and workplaces could play a part covering costs.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 16/03/2026, Peter Mitchell

A new three-year partnership between Novo Nordisk and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute explores how Wegovy could support children with obesity in the Pacific. CEO Mike Doustdar warns Australia faces an obesity crisis and experts highlight the need for equal access as the drugs remain costly.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 16/03/2026, Mark Burrows

Doctors push back at Novo Nordisk over calls to expand subsidised access to its weight-loss drug Ozempic for children with obesity, arguing that more affordable options exist. The CEO of Novo Nordisk urges the federal government to extend the subsidy beyond people with type 2 diabetes, citing rising adolescent obesity in Western countries.

Report continues on: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Many reasons for Cauchi's killing spree

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 17

'For the want of a Dr \$240 Medicare rebate, my daughter lost her life': Grieving mother on the Joel Cauchi killings Very deeply moving, Elizabeth, and I am deeply sorry for the loss of your beautiful daughter. I think there are some other complex reasons for the mental health system failure other than the lack of \$240 Medicare rebate for psychiatrists to do telehealth back in 2019.

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

FIVEAA, Afternoons, 16/03/2026, Stacey Lee

Australians in regional areas face challenges accessing voluntary assisted dying due to a change in the Commonwealth Criminal Code that bans telehealth consultations for terminally ill patients. Dr Helen Hayden says telehealth could offer benefits that outweigh the risks for VAD access.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Ex-nurse dobs on herself to cops

Courier Mail, General News, 17/03/2026, Brendan O'Malley, Page 16

A former nurse whose life spiralled into addiction to prescription painkillers after the Covid pandemic has faced court again after dobbing herself in to police. Amelia Kathleen Kautiainen, 29, lost her job and her nursing registration was cancelled after she was previously charged with over 20 counts of fraud, uttering and other offences.

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

Suspended Hobart doctor Brett Daniels reappears in court on assault charges

The Courier Mail, Other, 16/03/2026, Duncan Abey

A Hobart magistrate has postponed legal proceedings involving a doctor charged with assaulting former patients, extending his professional limbo until at least June. A Tasmanian gynaecologist and obstetrician who denies assaulting two former patients has made a new appearance in the Hobart Magistrates Court.

[Read More](#)

Islamophobia in health risks lives

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 16/03/2026, Megan Haggan

Ahpra has issued a statement saying it is committed to eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination in Australia's regulated health workforce.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Western Australian health authorities issue new alert after fifth measles

case detected in returned traveller

The Australian, Other, 16/03/2026, Emma Kirk

A health alert has been issued across Perth after a traveller returned from overseas with measles. It is the fifth measles case in Western Australia this year, with 10 new exposure sites listed across the city's east and inner suburbs.

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

[Read More](#)

Illawarra on alert for measles, hospital and service station named as exposure sites

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 16/03/2026, Natalie Croxon

A person with measles has visited several locations in the Illawarra, prompting an alert from health authorities. The new case was confirmed in a person who recently returned from Southeast Asia, where there are ongoing outbreaks of the disease in several countries.

[Read More](#)

Japanese encephalitis detected in Hay

Shepparton News Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Eamon Kurta

Health authorities are urging Murrumbidgee residents to stay vigilant after Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus was detected at Hay. JE is a rare but serious mosquito-borne illness that can cause severe neurological symptoms.

[Read More](#)

Aussie capital on major health alert

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 16/03/2026

A health alert has been issued across Perth after a traveller returned from overseas with measles. It is the fifth measles case in Western Australia this year, with 10 new exposure sites listed across the city's east and inner suburbs.

[Read More](#)

ABC, Four Corners, 16/03/2026, Angus Grigg

It has been revealed that the SA government took months to update public health advice after the discovery of a potentially harmful toxin linked to a widespread algal bloom affecting the state's coastline. Officials learned that as early as June, brevetoxins appeared in Australian waters for the first time, though authorities say they did not yet know the toxin-producing species dominated the bloom or that toxins are airborne. SA Premier Peter Malinauskas faced scrutiny while insisting health advice decisions rest with SA Health.

Report continues on: [ABC \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC \(Sydney\)](#).

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Drive, 16/03/2026, Nikolai Beilharz

Interview with Prof Nicola Spurrier, Chief Public Health Officer of SA Health, about managing health risks from algal blooms. Spurrier explains that SA Health makes decisions based on public health risks and clarifies that hospital data is captured via electronic medical records. She notes her team is planning a study that accounts for confounding factors like flu outbreaks, pollen, and weather to accurately assess symptoms linked to algae exposure.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Health-tech firm tackles concussions

Artificial intelligence and virtual reality could help halve Australia's \$1bn concussion bill under a new brain-scanning technology proposed for pharmacies. [...] The NeuroFlex technology is registered with the US Food and Drug Administration, and Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration.

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

Cannabis of little help for mental health

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 17/03/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 3

There is no evidence medicinal cannabis is effective for treating anxiety, depression and PTSD, a new study has found, despite hundreds of thousands of Australians being prescribed the products to treat mental health conditions. [...] They pointed to submissions to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's regulatory review from patients describing the benefits they had experienced.

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

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Flu's no joke, over-50s

Herald Sun, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 8

Australians aged 50 and over are being warned to start the conversation with their GP or pharmacist about flu prevention options. [...] To combat this, the Therapeutic Goods Administration has extended approval of adjuvanted flu vaccine Flud to Australians aged 50 and over.

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

Vic pharmacists to initiate OCP

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Page 3

The move will spare women the 'hassle' of GP appointments, the state Premier says. [...] Her plan was immediately lambasted by the RACGP, which accused the Victorian Government of ignoring the TGA's repeated decisions to keep contraceptive pills as S4 drugs.

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Eucalyptus sold for \$1.6 billion

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/03/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 8

A publicly listed US telehealth company with a \$3.6 billion market cap will pay \$1.6 billion for Eucalyptus, the Australian company behind telehealth sites prescribing GLP-1 receptor agonists. [...] The RACGP has repeatedly accused it of fragmenting care, while the TGA investigated its advertising in 2023 even the Uniting Church took it to court over alleged copyright infringements of its logo.

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

'Dangerous' decision to allow pharmacists to prescribe the pill

Medical Forum, Other, 16/03/2026

Doctors are warning of a risk to women's health amid a "dangerous" decision by the federal government to allow pharmacists to prescribe the oral contraceptive pill. The RACGP has accused the government of ignoring expert advice from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which in 2021 blocked proposals for the contraceptive pill to be sold over the counter at pharmacies.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 16/03/2026, Peter Mitchell

Experts warn the "looksmaxxing" trend is concerning for boys and men, as young influencers like Androgenic and Nocturnal Kent amass huge followings promoting extreme appearance-altering methods. They preach everything from skincare routines to risky practices like using peptides, which the Therapeutic Goods Administration has recently cautioned against.

[Play Now](#)

4BC, Afternoons, 16/03/2026, Carla Bignasca

Interview with Dr Jules Bayliss, Vaccines Medical Director for CSL Seqirus, about the expanded Flud

vaccine for Australians over 50. Bayliss explains that immune systems decline from midlife and that the TGA's registration expansion is backed by clinical trials showing safety and efficacy. She emphasises that the vaccine is free in Queensland, not for children, and that the strains in this year's vaccine target circulating variants, including the "Super K" strain.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Channel 10, 10 News, 16/03/2026, Kate Freebairn

The Legalised Cannabis SA Party urges changes to drug driving laws to allow medicinal cannabis use, arguing it does not impair road safety. They advocate for the adoption of the DRUID app, which tests for driving under the influence of drugs, in police enforcement.

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FOOD STANDARDS

Labelling unhealthy foods carries weight

West Australian, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 14

Australia should turn its experience reducing smoking rates to the obesity epidemic by introducing more obvious labels on unhealthy foods, making workplaces run staff health checks and speeding up the development of crucial medications, the head of a leading drug company says. Mike Doustdar, president of Novo Nordisk, which created the weight-loss wonder drug Ozempic, said the 13 million Australians who were overweight or obese were making the nation less productive and putting extra strain on the health system.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Shepparton News Online \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Popular mango farm forced to sell as compliance measures pressure producers

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Claudia Sullivan

On the outskirts of Rockhampton sits a popular, family run mango farm, supplying the beloved fruit to hungry families around the state each summer. For more than three decades, the Keogh and McDouall families have grown mangoes.

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AICIS

Microplastics, major problem for creek

Newcastle Herald, General News, 17/03/2026, Page 16

Stunning beaches and a glittering coastline can make the Hunter feel like a natural paradise. For many of us, it is part of why we live in this part of the world. Yet what lies beneath that glossy veneer matters. News that Throsby Creek is among the state's hot spots for microplastic contamination is both interesting and concerning.

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Developing a biosensor for on-site PFAS detection

A new portable biosensor, designed for rapid scale-up in manufacturing, could transform PFAS monitoring by enabling swift on-site water testing. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, better known as PFAS, are a ubiquitous group of synthetic chemicals used in firefighting foams, food packaging, and stain-resistant fabrics.

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Every NSW waterway contaminated with microplastics, study finds

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Kelly Fuller and Tony Ibrahim

A state government study found microplastics in all 120 NSW estuaries sampled, with 19 per cent rated E for severe contamination. Experts are calling for urgent action and targeting sources such as foam, turf fragments and industrial pellets, while prioritising urban catchments.

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Doctors want better protection for workers exposed to workplace chemicals labelled 'silent killers'

ABC Online, Other, 16/03/2026, Holly Tregenza

Leading lung doctors want workers to receive better protection from nine workplace chemicals they say are "silent killers", and which the government's own regulator has twice recommended be subject to tougher exposure limits. The government is expected to respond to the Safe Work report, which says the current levels fail to sufficiently protect workers, by the end of the month.

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