



# TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 19th March 2026

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## LINKS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian](#)** (page 7) reports that a new paper published in the Journal of the American Medical Association has revealed that cancer patients are dying years earlier than they needed to due to widespread inequities in the accessibility of targeted therapies.
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 8) reports that a disability support worker has been sentenced to three years in jail for defrauding the NDIS of nearly \$200,000. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said "Our operations to tackle fraud are getting stronger every day."
- **[The Age](#)** (page 1) reports that Greenslopes Supported Residential Service in Templestowe Lower has been shut down after Victoria's Social Services Regulator found residents living in unsafe and unhygienic conditions, including being tied to chairs and left on soiled mattresses.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 3) reports that Assistant Minister for Customs Julian Hill will unveil a range of policies intensifying the fight against Australia's booming illicit tobacco and vape trade, including tougher penalties, new offences, and expanded police powers, along with the possibility of abolishing small tobacconists altogether.
- **[The Northern Territory News](#)** (page 9) reports that Code Yellows have been declared at three of the NT's main hospitals, signalling "capacity issues" resulting from increased presentations during the current flood emergency.

- [The West Australian](#) (page 3) reports that 41 surgeries are being cancelled every day in Western Australia, a third of which were due to “hospital initiated reasons”, leading the Opposition to attack Labor’s health policies.
- [ABC Online](#) reports that the current US-Iran conflict and the Strait of Hormuz blockade are forcing pharmaceutical companies to redirect essential medicine shipments from sea to air freight, and are seeking other routes to avoid the Gulf airspace, which is increasing costs for the sector.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### National pharmacy prescription trial

Huon News, General News, 18/03/2026, Page 10

A federal trial from January 2027 builds on the Tasmanian successes of pharmacy prescribing. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said it delivers choice and savings via a \$792.2 million package.

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### Federal funding boost for more rural GPs

Islander, General News, 19/03/2026, Page 8

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) has secured \$331.7 million from the Federal Government to deliver its national training program from now to December 2030. The funding, announced by Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler, provides five years of certainty for the training of Rural Generalist doctors serving rural, remote and First Nations communities across Australia.

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### Cairns North Medicare Urgent Care Clinic opens in Smithfield

The Courier Mail, Other, 18/03/2026, Molly Frew

A new urgent care clinic has opened on Cairns' northside, hoping to take much-needed pressure off Cairns Hospital's emergency department. [...] Mr Smith presented a petition with hundreds of signatures for a northside urgent care clinic to health minister Mark Butler after his election in May 2025.

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

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### The AMA is in existential crisis — why the profession should be alarmed

Australian Doctor, Other, 17/03/2026, Paul Smith

The federal AMA is in trouble and its predicament is serious enough to affect the medical profession as a whole. Its historic membership demise is accelerating, with a heavy impact on revenue.

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### Health insurance price hikes higher than ever: What you're really paying

Choice, Other, 18/03/2026, Pru Engel

A choice analysis shows that Australians with private health insurance will be hit by increases of up to 25% when price rises come into effect on 1 April. [...] Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler announced the 4.41% average premium increase to the price of health insurance policies in February.

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### PBAC lets slip reason for 'go-slow'

Pharma In Focus, Other, 18/03/2026

The PBAC has revealed it's holding back on giving a recommendation to drugs to treat obesity over concerns doing so will keep the price of the drugs high. In a letter written to the Minister for Health and

Aged Care, Mark Butler, dated 15 December 2025 but just released to the public, the Committee outlined its expectations that the obesity market would become more competitive.

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## It's not all about drugs, we want to help, Novo Nordisk boss says

The Medical Republic, Other, 18/03/2026, Mariella Attard

The pharmaceutical company with an income higher than the GDP of its host nation is not just about spruiking drugs; it really wants to help Australia deal with our "chronic disease crisis", according to global CEO of Novo Nordisk, Mike Doustdar. [...] The Australian government retorted that the PBS was not for sale, but federal health minister Mark Butler did agree that 466 days was too long.

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## Medicare 'not fit for purpose' for rural Australia

Weekly Times Now, Other, 18/03/2026, Kate Dowler

Australia's universal health insurance scheme, Medicare is "not fit for purpose" as it fails to provide fair access and equitable funding for rural and regional Australians. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler's office was contacted for comment.

[Read More](#)

## ABC North Queensland, 06:30 News, 18/03/2026

Federal member for Herbert, Phil Thompson, says he has written to Health Minister Mark Butler, calling for a solution for children with autism affected by the closure of the AEIOU Foundation for Children with Autism. Thompson says his daughter previously attended the service and the early intervention provided had been life-changing for his family.

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## MINISTER MCALLISTER

### NDIS worker jailed for \$200,000 rip-off

The Australian, General News, 19/03/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 8

A disability support worker found guilty of defrauding the National Disability Insurance Scheme has been sentenced to three years in jail after rorting nearly \$200,000 from the scheme. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said anyone who abused the scheme risked fines and jail time.

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

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### Kim Michael Schubert fronts court over false NDIS claims

South East Leader, Other, 18/03/2026, Imran Ali

A respected Melbourne community leader and youth mentor who ripped off nearly \$92,000 meant to help people with disabilities, has been jailed [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said Schubert's case was the 23rd successful conviction for crimes committed against the NDIS since the Federal government established the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce in November 2022.

[Read More](#)

### ABC Newcastle, Drive, 18/03/2026, Jenny Marchant

Interview with Community Disability Alliance Hunter project coordinator Justine Lorenz. Lorenz expresses her thanks to NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister for the extra funding they get for the Deafblind Connect program, which helps deafblind communities across NSW.

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### ABC Radio Adelaide, Evenings, 18/03/2026, Spence Denny

A National Disability Insurance Agency investigation has found Kim Michael Schubert abused his position as a disability support worker after sharing details of 90 NDIS participants with the operator of a dodgy provider and sharing in more than \$190,000 obtained through fraudulent claims. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister says she expects to see more prosecutions for NDIS fraud as her department reviews more claims.

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## MINISTER RAE

### **She helped design aged care reform. Now she is questioning how it works in practice**

Hello Leaders Australia, Other, 18/03/2026, Jakob Neeland

Aged care consultant Lynda Henderson helped shape the assessment tool now underpinning Support at Home. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae has stated that the assessment relies on assessor input and clinician advice, with documentation entered before the classification is generated.

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### **Decade-long plan to stamp out elder abuse sparks urgent calls for funding**

The Senior, Other, 18/03/2026, Phoebe Loomes

Advocates for older Australians say the government's new 10-year plan to end elder abuse cannot succeed without urgent additional funding, with frontline services saying they are "already under significant pressure". [...] Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae said the announcement of the plan was the result of "years of close and ongoing work with the states and territories to support older Australians".

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

### **NBN Coffs Harbour, NBN News, 18/03/2026, Gavin Morris and Natasha Beyersdorf**

Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride has visited the Medicare Mental Health Centre in Coffs Harbour today, which will soon move to a new location. McBride says more than 7,000 occasions of care have been provided to local people for free since the opening of the centre in the area.

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### **ABC Coffs Coast, Breakfast, 18/03/2026, Fi Poole**

Interview with Assistant Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing Emma McBride. McBride points out that they want Medicare mental health centres across the country to be placed in the most accessible locations for people and are very convenient for them. She adds that the Private Health Network, which assists local service providers in identifying suitable locations have outgrown its space and they need some more room, given the demand, has decided to move to the centre at Coffs Harbour due to the space being outgrown.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

## LA FM, 07:30 News, 18/03/2026

The Federal Government has announced a landmark \$31.1 million investment to modernise and expand six aged care facilities across Tasmania. Spearheaded by Assistant Minister Rebecca White, the funding targets critical infrastructure gaps in regional hubs, including Deloraine, St Helens, and Launceston. The upgrades include the construction of new residential wings, the conversion of unused space into specialised Memory Support Units for dementia care, and significant room refurbishments.

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## SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

No relevant coverage

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## DEPARTMENT

### Flu warning to people aged over 50

PerthNow Western Suburbs, General News, 19/03/2026, Page 3

Australians 50 years and over are being warned to start the conversation with their GP or pharmacist about flu prevention options. [...] In the past month alone, from February 12 to March 13, flu cases among Australians aged over 50 jumped 147 per cent, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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### Equipping communities to better prepare for natural disasters

Murray Pioneer, General News, 18/03/2026, Page 4

The Riverland community will take part in a major national mental wellbeing and preparedness initiative when the National Equip Program is delivered in Berri, on Friday, May 29, and Saturday, May 30, at the Berri Hotel. [...] The project is funded through a \$5m grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care via the Medical Research Future Fund, supporting selected fire, drought and flood-prone communities across Australia.

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### Where you live should feel like home – free webinar series to help make this a reality in aged care

HelloCare, Other, 18/03/2026, Jakob Neeland

Wanting to feel at home and safe where you live doesn't change with age. [...] Dementia Training Australia, in collaboration with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, have created a free national eight-part series designed to support everyone to do just that.

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### Canberra moves to scrap 12-month specialist referral limit

The Limbic, Other, 18/03/2026, Emma Koehn

The federal government wants to make specialist referrals indefinite by default, ending a system critics say was designed for acute illness, not the chronic disease burden facing Australian patients today. A consultation paper released by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing proposes replacing the current 12-month default validity period for GP-to-specialist referrals with either a longer fixed term or an open-ended arrangement.

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### Govt's MMM review makes 15 aged care recommendations

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/03/2026, Caroline Egan

The Government has released the Final Report on its review of the Modified Monash Model (MMM), the tool used to allocate rural, regional and remote aged care funding. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing found the MMM is "an appropriate tool for the aged care context" with "broad support" in the sector for its continued use.

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## Not For Profit doubles capacity with latest aged care expansion

The Weekly Source, Other, 18/03/2026, Caroline Egan

Uniting AgeWell, which operates in Tasmania and Victoria, has opened three new wings at its Ningana aged care facility in Sorrell, 25km northeast of central Hobart. [...] When disability and home care provider Annecto went into liquidation last year, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing selected Uniting AgeWell to take over their Victorian CHSP services and Home Care Packages.

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## ABC Alice Springs, Breakfast, 18/03/2026, Stewart Brash

Interview with researcher Dr Victoria Cornell. Cornell is leading a National Seniors Australia survey around regional Australia, asking seniors about what services they want in their town. She notes that access and availability of medical and aged care services remain the main issues. She notes that the research will be put into a report for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Bain flaunts Estia 2.0 as IPO show kicks off

Australian Financial Review, General News, 19/03/2026, Page 1

Australia's second-largest aged care provider, Estia Health, has added nearly half a billion dollars to its topline in the two years since it bolted from the ASX into Bain Capital's stables.

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

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### Aged care home residents left in filthy conditions

Age, General News, 19/03/2026, Grant McArthur, Page 1

A specialist aged care home has been shut down after authorities found vulnerable residents repeatedly tied to chairs, sleeping on soiled mattresses, suffering open wounds and living in filthy conditions. In one instance an elderly woman was kept in her room for six weeks at Greenslopes Supported Residential Service, which staff said was to keep her safe from another resident.

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### No site for sore eyes

Courier Mail, General News, 19/03/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 21

Health Minister Tim Nicholls refuses to commit to a new eye unit in a senior citizen hot spot as frail octogenarians even those on 24-hour oxygen are forced to travel hundreds of kilometres every month for sight-saving treatment. As a brand new multi-billion dollar hospital is being built at Toowoomba as part of the government's Hospital Rescue Plan the minister offered no guarantee there will be an ophthalmic ward at the facility and that the decision is in the hands of the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service.

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

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### Group renews call for CHSP to remain separate

Community Care Review, Other, 18/03/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The CHSP Alliance is urging the government to announce its decision on CHSP's future in the upcoming federal budget and for improved accessibility to the program. A group of more than 40 home care providers, community services, advocacy organisations, researchers and individuals are advocating for the "continuation, expansion and sustainability" of the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

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## **A powerful alliance of aged care heavyweights has united to push back on reforms**

HelloCare, Other, 18/03/2026, Jakob Neeland

As details of the sweeping aged care reforms emerged in the lead-up to their rollout late last year, alarm bells rang loudly across the sector about the devastating real-world consequences these changes would inflict on older Australians.

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## **Could ignorance about dementia put you at risk? Experts reveal why it's Australia's top killer**

Your Life Choices, Other, 18/03/2026, Lexanne Garcia

Dementia has quietly overtaken heart disease to become the leading cause of death in Australia, a sobering milestone that's prompting experts to call for a radical rethink of how we view, prevent, and manage this complex condition.

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## **DISABILITY AND CARERS**

### **NDIS probe after Corey left battered**

West Australian, General News, 19/03/2026, Lucy Murray, Page 18

A Perth family wants answers after a 25-year-old man with severe autism was allegedly assaulted in his NDIS accommodation and left for hours without medical care. Corey Wooller, who has multiple disabilities, including a developmental disorder, was discovered by his mother, Kim McBearty, during a visit to the home on December 14.

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

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### **NDIS support worker cleared of rape charge**

Cairns Post, General News, 19/03/2026, Grace Carter, Page 18

A jury has found a support worker not guilty of raping an NDIS recipient in her care. Daniella Paulette Crowe had been accused of inserting a finger in an NDIS recipient's anus while helping him shower using a chair at his Edmonton home on September 30, 2024.

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

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### **North Queensland's vulnerable at risk as fuel costs push NDIS provider to the brink**

The Courier Mail, Other, 18/03/2026, Andrew McKaysmith

North Queensland's largest social services organisation may be forced to pull out of some rural and remote areas with no way to absorb the rising cost of fuel. Selectability chief operating officer Aaron Farrell warned the charity's fleet of 130 vehicles were not immune to the "significant impact" of rising prices at the pump.

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

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## Sam endured four miserable years in a disability group home. The NDIS was meant to change that – but reports of neglect are surging

The Guardian, Other, 19/03/2026, Christopher Knaus

Sam Petersen describes living in a disability group home as death by a thousand cuts. The four years Sam spent in a group home were marked by severe understaffing, a product of a system where cost-cutting was the priority, which led to neglect of Sam's most basic needs.

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## Family claims their son living with autism was allegedly assaulted and neglected at NDIS supported home in West Australia

7News.com.au, Other, 18/03/2026, Lucy Murray

A young disabled man has allegedly received shocking injuries while living in a NDIS supported home, only discovered when his mother made an unexpected visit finding him sitting alone, covered in cuts and bruises with no medical help. Corey who lives with severe autism was allegedly attacked at home in a supported house in West Australia with his family haunted by the alleged neglect.

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## ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 18/03/2026, Steve Austin

Interview with Aruma CEO Martin Lavery. Last week, Brisbane-based specialist service for children with various levels of autism, the AEIOU Foundation, went into administration. Lavery says the NDIS was established to only serve 400,000 Australians, but today, the scheme is serving at least 800,000. He claims that the Federal Government is now spending \$50 billion on NDIS, arguing that there is a need to rein in the scheme costs.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Surgeries feel heat to manage winter flu

West Australian, General News, 19/03/2026, Jessica Page, Page 3

More than 7500 elective surgeries were cancelled in just four months last year, as Labor has again been forced to defend its upcoming \$140 million winter strategy. Statistics tabled in Parliament show 7530 operations were cancelled between September and December, of which two-thirds were for "hospital initiated" reasons.

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

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### Second urgent care clinic opens in Cairns

Cairns Post, General News, 19/03/2026, Molly Frew, Page 5

A new urgent care clinic has opened on the city's northside to help take pressure off Cairns Hospital's emergency department. The Cairns North Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Smithfield offers walk-in, bulk-billed services for conditions that require medical attention but not life-threatening, such as cuts, viral infections and sprained ankles.

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### Women 'stranded'

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 19/03/2026, Jessica Greenan, Page 1

A "shocking" new report is exposing the true scale of barriers south-west women face in accessing healthcare. From both sides of the door: Community voices and service provider perspectives on sexual and reproductive healthcare in the Barwon South West, released by Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West on Tuesday, draws on more than 450 south-west residents and healthcare providers.

## POPULATION HEALTH

### Labor floats radical idea as sales of illegal cigarettes rise

Age, General News, 19/03/2026, Paul Sakkal and Shane Wright, Page 3

Labor has floated the radical idea of shutting down tobacconists so that cigarettes are sold only in places such as supermarkets as one way of curbing a flourishing tobacco black market, while revealing new laws to take on tobacco kingpins. Assistant minister for customs Julian Hill is questioning the existence of small tobacconists where criminality and firebombings have taken off, although he has closed the door on the faint prospect of cutting the tobacco excise to make legal cigarette prices more competitive with illicit products.

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

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### New link between drugs and violence

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/03/2026, Page 14

A new study has found that more than four in five women who inject drugs experience violence, highlighting an urgent gap in national efforts to end violence against women. The Burnett Institute research found that more than 80 per cent of women who inject drugs reported a history of assault and more than one-third reported sexual assault.

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### This is how you need to prepare, health boss says

Cairns Post, General News, 19/03/2026, Emma Cam, Page 7

The state's health department has urged residents to prepare emergency kits containing long-life food, drinking water, a radio, a torch, spare batteries and toiletries. Residents should also stock at least a week's worth of prescription medicines and essential pet supplies, including food and medications, to prepare for potential power outages or shop closures.

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### \$12m up in smoke

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 19/03/2026, Cameron Bates, Page 1

Relentless federal and state enforcement authorities have seized more than \$12m worth of illicit tobacco during a fresh series of raids across North Queensland. Across multiple days, Australian Border Force, Queensland Health, Queensland Police Service and the Australian Federal Police seized more than 5.89 million illicit cigarette sticks, 1.2 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco and more than 18,800 vapes.

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### Top Australian scientists forced out as multibillion-dollar research fund hoards cash

The Australian, Other, 18/03/2026, John Fraser

Too many brilliant minds are being lost to overseas opportunities or more secure jobs – like Uber driving – that pay better than subsistence medical grants. [...] In my own field, for example, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates that cardiovascular disease costs the Australian health system more than \$15bn a year.

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### Australia to toughen tobacco crime laws as cigarette and vape black markets surge

ABC Online, Other, 19/03/2026, Clare Armstrong

Criminal gangs cashing in on Australia's illicit tobacco boom will face tougher penalties and expanded police surveillance powers in a fresh crackdown on the black market. Assistant Minister for Customs Julian Hill will today announce plans to arm investigators with tools like wire taps and stronger asset seizure powers, targeting the organised crime networks behind the multi-billion-dollar trade.

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## **Medical advocacy is crucial for young women but it can feel like a 'catch-22'**

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2026, Tessa Flemming

At 11, Emily W hadn't even had her first period when she began feeling pain in her lower stomach and back. Her family initially dismissed it as growing pains, while doctors thought she might have had irritable bowel syndrome.

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## **WA emergency departments 'creaking' under capacity needs**

Medical Forum, Other, 18/03/2026

Emergency department waiting times in WA are some of the worst in the country. [...] Compiled using Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2024-25, the report card showed WA emergency departments delivered the worst urgent-care timeliness in the country, with only 29% of Category 3 presentations seen within 30 minutes.

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## **Firefly First Nations Fund launched to support women and children escaping domestic violence**

National Indigenous Times, Other, 18/03/2026, Alexandra Giorgianni

Women's Community Shelters has launched its Firefly First Nations Fund following International Women's Day, aiming to provide immediate and culturally safe support for First Nations women and children escaping domestic and family violence. As of 2026, First Nations women are 27 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than other women in Australia.

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## **Sexual offences and domestic violence rise, but how much isn't reported?**

Newcastle Herald, Other, 18/03/2026, Sage Swinton

Domestic violence rates in Newcastle have hit a 10-year high amid a rise in sexual offences, according to new crime statistics. [...] A report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found police were contacted in relation to 8.3 per cent of sexual assaults in 2021-22.

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## **Young vapers diss risks**

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/03/2026

Young people rarely consider the health risks of vaping and regard it as normalised and socially embedded, according to recent Flinders University research into the perceptions and motivations of young vapers. Findings from the qualitative study involving people aged 16-24 highlighted a need for tailored messages to disrupt youths downplaying its risks.

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## **Australia's new physical activity guidelines won't shift the needle – here are 4 better ideas**

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 18/03/2026

The federal government has just released updated physical activity guidelines for adults and older adults (aged 65+) for the first time in more than a decade. The Australian government first produced guidelines for adults in , building on decades of strong evidence that physical activity delivers tremendous health benefits.

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## CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

### Cancer therapy out of reach in drugs lottery

The Australian, Edition Changes - All-round Metro, 19/03/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 7

Cancer patients who could be kept alive years longer are dying after missing out on targeted therapies amid widespread inequities in Australia's drug access systems. Groundbreaking data from the national molecular screening and drug-matching program has revealed almost one in four people with rare and advanced cancers could have their survival extended with targeted treatments but less than 10 per cent of these patients are receiving a matched therapy.

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### Setback in top Tassie doctor's health battle

Hobart Mercury, General News, 19/03/2026, Georgia Palgan, Page 8

Former Australian of the Year and world-leading pathologist Professor Richard Scolyer has announced a heartbreaking update on his battle with brain cancer, while sharing an uplifting message that it is "not the end of the road". On Tuesday night, Professor Scolyer took to his blog on Facebook, My Uncertain Path, to share some challenging news with his friends and fans.

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

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### Younger bowel cancer concerns

Cairns Post, 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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### Clinicians and experts share the early signs that can indicate a child has autism

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/03/2026, Darcy Fitzgerald

Autism diagnoses have surged 35 per cent over four years as one in every 27 Aussie children is diagnosed with autism, according to the latest National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) data. Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition which affects how an individual understands and relates to people and the world around them.

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

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### Wild way owner saved cancer-ridden dog

NEWS.com.au, Other, 18/03/2026, Lauren Robinson

An Australian tech boss without any background in biology has used ChatGPT to create a personalised vaccination for his dying rescue dog. Paul Conyngham's Staffy-Shar Pei cross, Rose, has had a rough couple of years.

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

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### Delayed diagnosis of juvenile arthritis putting children at risk

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 18/03/2026

Australian children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) are reportedly waiting an average of 10 months for diagnosis, a delay that experts warn can cause preventable and permanent harm. Clinicians urged to recognise signs sooner During Juvenile Arthritis Week (16–22 March 2026), the Juvenile Arthritis

Foundation Australia (JAFA), the Australian Paediatric Rheumatology Group (APRG), and more than 20 national health organisations are urging healthcare professionals to recognise the early signs of JIA sooner and refer without delay.

[Read More](#)

## Channel 7, Seven News, 18/03/2026, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

A new campaign has been launched in Adelaide today to get more people talking about bowel cancer. Called the Bowel Movement, it is hoped that it will lead to more screening and early detection. Bowel cancer is Australia's second most deadly cancer. While screening kits are sent to everyone over 50, most are never sent back.

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

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### We're psyched out over a lack of support

Herald Sun, General News, 19/03/2026, Ria Pandey, Page 8

Most Australians believe the mental health system is failing those who need it most, a poll has found, as a peak psychiatry body demands urgent federal investment in the sector. An Essential poll commissioned by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists surveyed 1020 Australians most of whom had indirect or direct experience of mental illness on the state of the nation's mental health care services.

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

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### Clinicians and experts share the early signs that can indicate a child has ADHD

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 18/03/2026, Darcy Fitzgerald

Australian children are being increasingly diagnosed with and medicated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). An estimated one in 20 Aussie kids have ADHD, a neurodevelopmental disorder typically characterised by poor concentration, lack of impulse control and hyperactivity.

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

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### 'So disappointing': King Frederik X loses in a game of ping pong during visit to Melbourne mental health foundation

9News, Other, 18/03/2026

The energy in the room shifts the moment Australia's very own Queen Mary and her husband King Frederik X of Denmark walk in. You can hear a pin drop despite eager reporters and photographers, including myself, quietly jostling for the perfect shot inside the tiny room in South Melbourne.

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### Community-led suicide prevention training to roll out in Broome

National Indigenous Times, Other, 18/03/2026, Natasha Clark

Suicide rates in Western Australia's Kimberley region remain among the highest in the world, with Aboriginal communities bearing the overwhelming burden, according to research published in the Medical Journal of Australia. Studies indicate Aboriginal people in the Kimberley die by suicide at rates several times higher than both the national average and the broader Indigenous population, pointing to a crisis that has persisted for more than a decade.

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## **ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 18/03/2026, Lucy Breaden and Kylie Baxter**

Interview with Brighton Mayor Leigh Gray. Gray says the Federal Government has promised Medicare card access to a mental health hub in Brighton, on top of a youth mental health clinic funded by the Tasmanian Government.

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## **ABC Radio Perth, Mornings, 18/03/2026, Nadia Mitsopoulos**

Interview with WA Association for Mental Health CEO Taryn Harvey. Almost 50 doctors sent a letter to the Director-General of Health last month, raising concerns about the closure of 25 acute mental health beds. Harvey says they do not have the mental health support that they need in the community.

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## **IMMUNISATION**

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## **HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES**

### **Premium rises are bad for Health**

Courier Mail, General News, 19/03/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 11

The spike in private health insurance coming next month combined with interest rate hikes, fuel prices and cost of living will bring down the public health system, the state's peak doctors body has warned. Australian Medical Association Queensland President Nick Yim has slammed the federal government's approved 4.41 per cent hike for the 15 million Australians with private health cover.

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## **HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH**

### **Thumbs-up for queen of hearts**

Courier Mail, General News, 19/03/2026, Patrick Carlyon, Page 3

Danish royals Mary and Frederik met with stem cell researchers at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital on their second and final day in Melbourne on Wednesday. The institute's reNEW Centre drives stem cell research into clinical therapies for incurable diseases and draws on collaboration with about 100 medical researchers at Copenhagen universities.

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### **Polio is a distant memory, but one Hunter historian believes it is the key to better public health**

Newcastle Herald, Other, 18/03/2026, Simon McCarthy

Professor Catharine Coleborne, a tenured health historian in the Hunter, will reveal the initial findings of her most recent research at the University of Newcastle this month. Dr Coleborne's investigation of the community's experience of polio in the 1950s and 1960s was awarded a portion of more than \$5 million in funding delivered to the University of Newcastle by the Australian Research Council in October last year.

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## Channel 7, Seven News, 18/03/2026, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

Australian scientist Dr Clarissa Yates is doing a world-first test that could predict if women are at risk of postpartum depression as early as six months pregnant. By analysing blood samples from pregnant women at the Mater Hospital, she identified a panel of 12 proteins that predict postpartum depression with 94 per cent accuracy. The research has been funded by investors and the Queensland Government. The test could be available as early as next year, with further trials still underway.

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

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### What is a healthy birth weight? Urgency to close the gap for all babies

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2026, Tahnee Jash and Stephanie Boltje

As a first-time mother, Whitney Fordham was worried when she learned she was pregnant. "I was scared about pregnancy; to be honest, I never wanted kids. I was never maternal," the proud Cullunghutti, Jerrinja, Wandj Wandandian woman said.

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### Closing the Gap: Suicide, incarceration and child development targets go backwards; land and economic participation show progress

National Indigenous Times, Other, 18/03/2026, Dechlan Brennan

Australia's Indigenous incarceration rates continue to rise sharply, while the proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track has declined, according to the latest data. The Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap dashboard, released on Wednesday night, also shows suicide rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to worsen, now more than three times higher than for non-Indigenous Australians. At the same time, there has been no improvement in youth detention rates.

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## PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

### Mary queen of hearts and minds

Herald Sun, General News, 19/03/2026, Patrick Carlyon and Brooke Grebert-Craig, Page 3

As much she's a queen, Mary is also a mum and it was clear how moved she was by her visit to the Royal Children's Hospital on Wednesday. Mary spoke to sick children, parents and staff as crowds gathered in the foyer of the hospital to spot the Danish royals.

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### Weather nightmare: Code Yellow declared for three NT hospitals

Northern Territory News, General News, 19/03/2026, Camden Smith and Lottie Hood, Page 9

Code Yellows have been declared at three of the Northern Territory's main hospitals as the wet weather continues to batter the region. On Tuesday morning, NT Health issued an alert saying that Alice Springs Hospital had been experiencing "capacity issues" due to an influx of patients as overnight rainfall caused rivers to rise.

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### Surgeries feel heat to manage winter flu

West Australian, General News, 19/03/2026, Jessica Page, Page 3

More than 7500 elective surgeries were cancelled in just four months last year, as Labor has again been forced to defend its upcoming \$140 million winter strategy. Statistics tabled in Parliament show 7530 operations were cancelled between September and December, of which two-thirds were for "hospital initiated" reasons.

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

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## Danish Royals turn heads playing table tennis with youth volunteers at headspace on second day in Melbourne

NEWS.com.au, Other, 18/03/2026, Georgia Palgan

Danish royals King Frederik and Aussie-born Queen Mary have shown off their competitive sides on their last day in Melbourne, playing against volunteers during a tour of a key mental health advocacy centre in the state. After a jam-packed day focused on business and strengthening relations with Australia, the royals visited a headspace centre in South Melbourne where King Frederick took up the challenge of playing table tennis with volunteers.

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## Border councillor under scrutiny for speaking out over surgeon's departure

The Border Mail, Other, 18/03/2026, Hana Humboldt

An Albury councillor is reportedly being investigated for comments made about the termination of a Border surgeon. Albury deputy mayor Jessica Kellahan has become the focus of an investigation regarding a possible breach of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Addicts hunting nurses

Daily Telegraph, General News, 19/03/2026, Eliza Barr, Page 18

Nurses being held hostage by violent patients at a northern rivers detox unit are being offered "de-escalation and resilience" training instead of permanent security. The Riverlands Inpatient Withdrawal Unit next to Lismore Base Hospital provides a supervised, medicated withdrawal service for substance-dependent adults.

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

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### ACRRM vs the RACGP — do we still need two GP colleges?

Australian Doctor, Other, 16/03/2026, Paul Smith and Rachel Carter

Three decades after an uprising split Australian general practice, an old question is beginning to resurface. Does the profession really need two GP colleges?

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## Cancer therapy out of reach in drugs lottery

The Australian, Edition Changes - All-round Metro, 19/03/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 7

Cancer patients who could be kept alive years longer are dying after missing out on targeted therapies amid widespread inequities in Australia's drug access systems. Groundbreaking data from the national molecular screening and drug-matching program has revealed almost one in four people with rare and advanced cancers could have their survival extended with targeted treatments but less than 10 per cent of these patients are receiving a matched therapy.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### Dentist loses his appeal

Herald Sun, General News, 19/03/2026, Alexander Blain, Page 21

A Lara dentist who squeezed an employee's buttocks during a massage has lost his appeal against a sexual assault conviction, despite arguing it had left him unable to work and drowning in debt. Mohamad Hagra, 39, appeared in the County Court at Geelong to appeal against a sexual assault conviction and \$3000 fine received last September after he pleaded guilty in Geelong Magistrates Court.

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

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### AHPRA takes stand against Islamophobia

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/03/2026

The Australian Health Practitioner Agency (AHPRA) and Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, Mr Aftab Malik, have issued a joint statement on efforts to combat Islamophobia in healthcare. It comes ahead of Malik's presentation to the United Nations on Australia's efforts to combat Islamophobia.

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### AHPRA sets out strategy for reform

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 18/03/2026

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has released a new five-year strategy for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, with safety and sustainability at its core. The strategy outlines AHPRA's commitment to further protecting the public, improving access to and trust in regulated health practitioners, while supporting a rapidly evolving health system.

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## AUSTRALIAN CDC

Channel 9, A Current Affair, 18/03/2026, Allison Langdon

Chris Nemeth has suffered from Guillain-Barre syndrome after getting an AstraZeneca vaccination in 2021. He is one of almost 5,000 Australians who applied for compensation through the federal government's COVID-19 Vaccination Claims Scheme. He has received more than six million dollars, but one-third of his settlement has been subject to a tax bill.

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

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## **ABC Radio Sydney, Evenings, 18/03/2026, Renee Krosch**

Interview with Dr Vicky Sheppard from NSW Health. Sheppard discusses Japanese encephalitis, a mosquito-borne flavivirus causing brain inflammation. She notes that 21 cases have been recorded in NSW, with four of them dying from the infection. She urges people to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

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## **THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION**

### **Middle East war forces pharmaceutical companies to reroute critical medicines to ensure Australian supply**

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2026, Stephanie Dalzell and Syan Vallance

The Middle East war has forced pharmaceutical companies to reroute critical medicines, to ensure they land in Australia. [...] Pharmaceutical supply is already an issue in Australia, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration listing shortages of almost 400 medicines.

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### **Is antibacterial or regular hand soap best for killing germs?**

ABC Online, Other, 18/03/2026, Amy Sheehan

Experts say products labelled as antibacterial are not necessarily substantiated as being any better than regular soap and water. [...] Dr Short says there are a few different terms used on products: Antibacterial — describes products that kill or prevent the growth of bacteria (not necessarily fungi or viruses) Antimicrobial — is more of a catch-all, as this includes fungi and viruses as well Antiseptic — is used to describe antimicrobial products that are used on the skin, in Australia these products are strictly regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), and they contain antimicrobial additives beyond regular soap or detergent.

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### **Can brevetoxins from algal blooms make me sick? A toxicologist explains**

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 18/03/2026

For about a year, an algal bloom in South Australian waters has had devastating effects on marine life. [...] He is currently a member of one of the Therapeutic Goods Administration's statutory councils.

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## **ABC Radio Canberra, PM, 18/03/2026, Samantha Donovan**

There are currently shortages of almost 400 medicines, according to the Therapeutic Goods Administration. The RACGP says more could be done to make sure that Australia is more resilient to these kinds of shocks by reducing the reliance on overseas imports. In a statement, a federal government spokesperson said that medicine supply chains were being closely monitored by the Commonwealth.

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## FOOD STANDARDS

### **Recall issued for Biocheese Pty Ltd's Cheddar Shred 200g amid undeclared allergen**

7News.com.au, Other, 18/03/2026, Savannah Meacham

A popular vegan product is being recalled as authorities fear it contains an undeclared allergen. [...] Food Standards Australia New Zealand said the recall only applies to the products that do not declare milk.

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