



TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 21st March 2026

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Weekend Australian](#)** (page 8) reports that the Royal Australasian College of Physicians has asked the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission to suspend the college's directors, hours before voting is to open to decide whether to remove its president.
- **[The Weekend Australian](#)** (page 9) reports that dangerous sex predator and murderer, Wayne Wilmot, has been approved for a \$220,000 NDIS package which includes four hours of daily assistance with social and community participation.
- **[The Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 8) reports that pharmacist Ben Huynh has confessed in court to defrauding \$5.1m in taxpayer funds by generating 19,105 false claims under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme between July 2014 and October 2023.
- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 1) reports that Melbourne MND patients are participating in a trial for a brain implant that allows people to control their phone with their thoughts.
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 3) reports that the Queensland government is preparing to reopen the Biloela maternity unit as a Level Two facility, where there would be no full-time obstetrician or anaesthetist rostered on in case of birth emergencies.
- **[The Northern Territory News](#)** (page 7) reports that AMA NT president John Zorbas says the union welcomes a prolonged Code Yellow being called to better support staff ahead of damage

MINISTER BUTLER

It's gold as awards honour our finest

Herald Sun, General News, 21/03/2026, Page 4

Herald Sun medical editor Robyn Riley has won the state's top journalism award the Melbourne Press Club's Gold Quill for her exclusive investigation revealing the IVF mix-up scandal where a baby was born to the wrong mother. [...] It also led the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler to call an urgent review into the IVF sector and its accreditation standards and led to reforms including that the sector would no longer be able to police itself and would be regulated by an independent body.

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

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Clear vision for eye injections

Subiaco Post, General News, 21/03/2026, Jen Rewell, Page 30

A proposal to remove eye injection procedures from private health rebates has been scrapped by the Federal Health Minister. [...] Glen Power, managing director of the Lions Eye Institute, said he was delighted that minister Mark Butler had decided to not proceed with the policy proposal.

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Royal Flying Doctor Service forced to plan service cuts amid fuel crisis

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/03/2026, Harrison Finlay

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been forced to create contingency plans to preserve fuel, amid skyrocketing costs and short supply across the country. [...] His federal counterpart, Mark Butler said the federal government was also working with the service to "identify any emerging or potential issues to support the health needs of rural, regional and remote communities".

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

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Is our health system prepared for this unprecedented disruption to global oil supplies?

Croakey, Other, 20/03/2026, Melissa Sweet

Warning that conflict in the Middle East has created "the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market", the International Energy Agency has today issued recommendations for how households, businesses and governments can respond by reducing demand. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has said current fuel shipments are continuing to arrive as scheduled, but warned that conditions beyond mid-April remain uncertain.

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Health insurance is a luxury. It shouldn't be

Health Services Daily, Other, 20/03/2026, Cate Swannell

I was today years old when I realised that even though the federal health minister announces the annual average health insurance premium rise every February – more or less – it's not actually the government that is in control of that particular number. [...] The DoHDA boffins presumably work out the average and then the minister decides whether that's a palatable number – read, "will this cost me votes?"

[Read More](#)

ABC North West Qld, Breakfast, 20/03/2026, Zara Margolis

Analysis by consumer group CHOICE shows health insurance premiums rise by as much as 25%. It

comes after Health Minister Mark Butler recently approved a 4.41% average increase in premium health insurance from next month, which is the highest rate rise in almost a decade.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

Woman jailed for defrauding vulnerable, non-English speaking NDIS clients

The Australian, Other, 20/03/2026, Bimini Plesser

A former NDIS provider has been jailed for three years after issuing almost \$300,000 in fraudulent payment requests against the plans of her disabled, non-English speaking clients. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said criminals like Kantara and Schubert would not be allowed to get away with targeting vulnerable Australians.

[Read More](#)

Disability support director Mumthaj Begam Kantara sentenced for roting NDIS of almost \$300k

North Leader, Other, 20/03/2026, Abby Walter and Emma Sudano

A "respected" Melbourne NDIS service provider and mother of three who "shattered" and "up-ended" the lives of clients when she fraudulently stole almost \$300,000 from the agency has been jailed. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said Kantara was the 24th person convicted for crimes committed against the NDIS since the federal government established the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce in November 2022.

[Read More](#)

ABC NewsRadio, Drive, 20/03/2026, Laura Tchilinguirian

Victorian woman Mumthaj Begam Kantara is facing three years in prison for roting the NDIS for nearly \$300,000. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister says department is cracking down on dodgy providers.

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MINISTER RAE

Profit dressed up as choice

The Saturday Paper, Editorials, 21/03/2026, Page 16

As a first, small indignity, the television can be taken out of the room if a special fee is not paid. [...] The aged care minister, Sam Rae, expressed predictable outrage.

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

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From the Editor

Stawell Times News, General News, 20/03/2026, Craig Wilson, Page 11

Living in the country has huge benefits for most of us but it also comes with some disadvantages. [...] The Aged Care Minister, Sam Rae, has described the latest cutbacks as "disgusting sidestepping".

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2BS, Live and Local, 20/03/2026, Damian de Montemas

Interview with Member for Calare Andrew Gee. Gee says he Leanne Wright from Blaney Meals on Wheels and Minister for Aged Care Sam Rae met last week to raise Wright's concerns about the

impact of the federal changes to their service. He is optimistic that Rae understood the gravity of the situation.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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DEPARTMENT

Is our health system prepared for this unprecedented disruption to global oil supplies?

Croakey, Other, 20/03/2026, Melissa Sweet

Warning that conflict in the Middle East has created "the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market", the International Energy Agency has today issued recommendations for how households, businesses and governments can respond by reducing demand. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has said current fuel shipments are continuing to arrive as scheduled, but warned that conditions beyond mid-April remain uncertain.

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The Health Wrap: fixing emergency departments, workforce matters, gutting science, dancing for success – and love is in the air

Croakey, Other, 20/03/2026, Melissa Sweet

Solutions to the ongoing crisis in emergency departments, the importance of a trusted, safe medication management service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, and the possibilities of dance for science communications are among topics covered in The Health Wrap this week. [...] On the webpage headed Progress in Implementing the National Medical Workforce Strategy 2021–2031, there is only a document on Analysis of Locum Use on the Medical Workforce and a statement that the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) is implementing several Australian Government–led actions in the strategy.

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Health insurance is a luxury. It shouldn't be

Health Services Daily, Other, 20/03/2026, Cate Swannell

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Movers & Shakers: Grattan research team reunited in APS

The Mandarin, Other, 20/03/2026, Dan Holmes

[...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has promoted Emma Hallam-Willcock and Chang Shen to assistant secretary.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Aussie providers well-placed to be world leaders

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/03/2026, Natasha Egan

The recent International Federation on Ageing meeting highlighted the opportunity for Australia to play a leadership role on the global stage, says Ageing Australia Tom Symondson. Australian Ageing Agenda spoke to Ageing Australia chief executive officer Tom Symondson on 6 March, the day after a midnight board meeting with the International Federation on Ageing.

[Read More](#)

Monash researchers launch tool to curb medication harm in aged care

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 20/03/2026, Natalie Dragon

The first national consensus list of high-risk medicines in Australian residential aged care has been developed, along with a tool for clinicians to help reduce preventable harm. Monash University researchers, together with a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals and medication safety experts, have identified 15 high-risk medications or medication classes that require specialised monitoring in aged care settings.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Serial predator lands \$220k NDIS package

Weekend Australian, General News, 21/03/2026, Christine Middap, Page 9

A highly dangerous serial sex predator involved in the brutal 1980s abduction, rape and murder of Janine Balding has been approved for a \$220,000 NDIS package that includes four hours of daily help with social and community participation. A NSW Supreme Court judgment published on Thursday revealed the 12-month NDIS plan was approved on June 11 last year at least the second round of funding Wilmot has received.

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

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People's rights must not be diminished as a budget expense

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 21/03/2026, Jo Russell, Page 16

Yep, it's been another "uplifting" week in the drama series that is the disability sector. This week's exciting episode featured an article in the Australian Financial Review, with a headline claiming that people with a disability are apparently bleeding the economy dry by, wait for it, going for a walk, seeing a movie or getting a haircut.

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PRIMARY CARE

Providing dignity in death

Central Western Daily, General News, 21/03/2026, Nick McGrath, Page 1

It has been 11 years since a group of determined locals sat in a community meeting in 2015 and decided that good enough was no longer acceptable for the dying in Orange. On Monday, as the morning sun hit the expansive glass of the new inpatient palliative care unit at Orange Health Service, that decade-long "push" finally found its peace.

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'Less effective': could a change in how doctors are paid impact patients?

Warrnambool Standard, Other, 20/03/2026, Sophia Baker

Changes to how doctors are paid for their services have sparked fears of longer wait times in regions already struggling to recruit specialists. Hospitals across the south-west are increasingly switching to a salary model for paying specialists rather than on a fee-for-service basis as they seek greater budget certainty.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 20/03/2026, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

A record-breaking \$1.67m by Wharf4Ward was raised to support young cancer patients who are forced to travel a long way from home to access medical care. It helps to cover the costs of their travel and accommodation.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Home's where health is

Courier Mail, General News, 21/03/2026, Courtney Snowden, Page 32

Queensland home buyers are taking the wellness trend beyond saunas and home gyms, demanding healthy homes that offer low-tox living. Exclusive PropTrack data reveals more buyers are looking for properties that reduce exposure to synthetic chemicals and toxins and are willing to pay a premium for them.

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Women's health an issue for everyone

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 21/03/2026, Jodie Hill, Page 11

In the world of women's health, when we talk about sexual and reproductive health, many people think of having babies, breast cancer, or perhaps menopause. In reality, sexual and reproductive health is lifelong and stretches from a girl's first period through to older age, and it quietly shapes the health, wellbeing and productivity of individuals and our entire community.

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The Australian Plus benefits How weight loss jabs are driving shifts in plastic surgery

The Australian, Other, 20/03/2026, Penny Timms

It's a look unscientifically dubbed "Ozempic face"; a gaunt, hollow-cheeked appearance caused by rapid weight loss. The haggard visage first noted among Hollywood celebrities has now crossed into everyday society as GLP-1 inhibitor medications such as Ozempic, Wegovy, and Mounjaro become more widespread.

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DTA, Souths Cares partner for dementia awareness

Community Care Review, Other, 20/03/2026

Dementia Training Australia and Souths Cares are coming together to help First Nations communities better understand and recognise the early signs of dementia. Rates of dementia among First Nations people in remote and rural communities are three to five times higher than in the general population and are among the highest in the world, data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows.

[Read More](#)

3AW, Mornings, 20/03/2026, Tom Elliott

Interview with Assistant Minister Julian Hill. Hill states that while Australia has one of the lowest adult smoking rates in the world, the country faces a "perfect storm" of cheap global production and organised crime syndicates. He argues against lowering tobacco excise, maintaining that high prices remain the most effective lever to curb consumption and prevent a new generation of Australians from becoming addicted to nicotine.

Continuing interview on: [3AW \(Melbourne\)](#).

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Fat chance for Alzheimer's

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/03/2026, Page 34

The diabetes and weight-loss drug semaglutide is not effective at slowing Alzheimer's disease, according to a trial involving patients with mild Alzheimer's. Early-stage research and animal studies had suggested this type of drug might slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

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The race to read minds

Herald Sun, General News, 21/03/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 1

A cutting-edge brain implant that lets people control their phone with just their thoughts is being trialled in Melbourne MND patients. The breakthrough technology, originally developed in Victoria, puts Australia at the forefront of a field that pioneers hope could transform the lives of people living with paralysis.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#).

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Drug not for Alzheimer's

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/03/2026, Page 7

The diabetes and weight-loss drug semaglutide is not effective at slowing the progression of Alzheimer's disease, according to a large clinical trial involving patients with mild Alzheimer's. Early-stage research and animal studies had suggested that this type of drug might slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

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Renewed bowel screening push

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/03/2026, Allan Murphy, Page 11

Fewer than half of all eligible Mildura residents are taking up the offer of a free bowel cancer screening test. Residents aged 50 to 74 are automatically sent the test through the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program every two years, yet most are opting not to undertake the potentially life-saving procedure.

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Study finds 'significant barriers' for GPs offering voluntary assisted dying

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/03/2026, Courtney Kruk

Queensland doctors need more education and financial incentives to offer voluntary assisted dying, a new study has found, with researchers highlighting "significant" barriers preventing GPs from taking up the scheme. Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology interviewed 12 GPs from across the state a year after voluntary assisted dying (VAD) laws came into effect in 2023.

[Read More](#)

Northern Territory to introduce VAD laws which gag doctors from raising it

Northern Territory News, Other, 20/03/2026, Fia Walsh

The Northern Territory is set to introduce voluntary assisted dying legislation by the middle of the year which would impose a timeline on eligibility and gag doctors from raising it as an option with their patients. Once the first place in the world to legalise voluntary assisted dying (VAD), the NT is now the only jurisdiction in Australia without the end of life choice.

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

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New McGrath model of care strengthens equity of Australian cancer care

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 20/03/2026, Natalie Dragon

The McGrath Foundation recently announced the launch of the McGrath Model of Care reflecting its increased scope of care for all cancers as of January 2025. Designed to strengthen and standardise cancer nursing across Australia, the McGrath Foundation's new McGrath Model of Care expands beyond breast cancer care to support people and their families experiencing any solid cancer type.

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'A great response': Warrnambool drug trials deliver results for cancer patients

Warrnambool Standard, Other, 20/03/2026, Katrina Lovell

Big steps are being taken in Warrnambool to improve the outcomes for people diagnosed with myeloma - an incurable blood cancer. Drug trials are underway in Warrnambool which are bringing hope to myeloma patients, some of whom will step out along the city's foreshore on Sunday, March 29, 2026 for the My Greatest Walk fundraiser.

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Channel 9, A Current Affair, 20/03/2026, Deborah Knight

Despite two Senate inquiries, the Federal Government still maintains the Lyme disease does not in Australia. Chronic diseases expert Associate Professor Bernard Yan says the policy becomes a hurdle for some of the clinicians and some patients to get the care that they deserve.

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4BC, Afternoons, 20/03/2026, Carla Bignasca

Interview with science communicator Dr Karl Konkovitch. Konkovitch explains that researchers have developed a chemical that successfully reverses Alzheimer's symptoms in older mice and prevents the disease in younger ones. He suggests that human trials are likely to commence within the next two to three years, with a potential consumer product available in a decade.

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Three-year wait for abuse support

The Saturday Paper, General News, 21/03/2026, Karen Barlow, Page 12

A child dealing with family violence in Tasmania may become an adult before they get access to specialist support and counselling. Their wait time for support, due to funding and workforce challenges, is three years.

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Scientists in bid to catch up as people use AI for therapy

The Saturday Age, General News, 21/03/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 15

Australian researchers will spend the next two years building an AI model capable of providing safe and effective mental health support to young people, amid growing concerns existing chatbots are fuelling delusions and isolating the most vulnerable. An increasing number of young people are turning to generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT for companionship, reassurance, and mental health advice.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 20/03/2026, Rory McClaren

Interview with Royal Australian College of GPs in South Australia Chair Dr Sian Goodson. Goodson reports that a rollout of specially trained GPs has begun to allow for local ADHD assessment and treatment. While the program is in its early stages, he says that a workshop with 100 GPs has demonstrated a strong foundation of expertise aimed at reducing the long wait times and high costs typically associated with specialist-only diagnoses.

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IMMUNISATION

JEV vax expanded

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/03/2026

A free Japanese encephalitis virus vaccine is now available to people aged from two months who live or work in an expanded range of LGAs in NSW. It is also recommended for people who live in any part of NSW and are involved with piggeries, work directly with mosquitoes, or visit affected areas for outdoor recreation (camping, fishing, hiking etc).

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

New smart dressing could heal and monitor wounds

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 20/03/2026, Natalie Dragon

Australian researchers have unlocked the possibility of creating smart wound dressings that enable real-time monitoring while also delivering healing agents. Chronic wounds cause significant burdens on healthcare systems due to the complexities of continuous and changing care required.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Maggie Beer brings aged care nutrition project to outback renal health hub

ABC Online, Other, 20/03/2026

Australian culinary icon Maggie Beer is in Alice Springs training workers at an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation that provides dialysis and aged care for people with kidney failure. Her work at Purple House is part of her foundation's effort to transform food and menus in aged care homes across Australia.

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Rural doctor missed vital call in Indigenous death

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 21/03/2026

The family of a woman who died in an under-equipped rural clinic say her death is an example of the health inequities still experienced by Indigenous Australians. Warrimay woman Eve Brown died of shock on July 2, 2021, after an undiagnosed spleen rupture at Lightning Ridge Multi-Purpose Centre in northwest NSW.

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

[Read More](#)

ABC, Late Night ABC News, 19/03/2026, Michael Tetlow

The latest update on Closing the Gap targets reveals that the percentage of Indigenous babies born at a healthy birth weight has not improved since 2017. To address these disparities, the Federal Government has awarded \$44m to community-led initiatives such as Waminda, which emphasise birthing on country as a way to improve health outcomes for mothers and infants.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Self cervix deliveries

Courier Mail, Edition Changes - Metro, 21/03/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

Queensland women and babies would be the "guinea pigs" in a new, experimental maternity model that would allow birthing in maternity units without an obstetrician, pediatrician or anaesthetist on site. The Courier-Mail understands the state government is preparing to reopen the Biloela maternity unit as a Level Two facility, meaning there would be no full-time obstetrician or anaesthetist rostered on in case of birth emergencies.

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Listen to experts on maternity plan

Courier Mail, Editorials, 21/03/2026, Page 66

It is one thing to make an election promise but it is quite another to make a fundamentally bad decision just so you don't break that promise. And that is the situation the Queensland government finds itself in when it comes to maternity services in this state.

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Hospitals' prolonged Code Yellows

Northern Territory News, General News, 21/03/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 7

The president of the Australian Medical Association NT says the union "welcomes" a prolonged Code Yellow being called to better support staff as Cyclone Narelle looms. Code Yellows have been called at

Alice Springs, Darwin and Palmerston hospitals this week with the NT Health boss warning more severe weather could see the alert in place for a "prolonged" period.

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Banner day for base campaign

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 21/03/2026, Lochlainn Heley, Page 1

Campaigners for the Mildura Base Public Hospital's redevelopment have made a statement on the steps of the Victorian Parliament Building calling on the State Government to move forward with halted plans. Core members of the Build the Base Campaign met at the State Parliament on Thursday morning to lay out a large nine by seven meter banner on its steps, painted with the group's call to action.

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Hospital funds its own fix after state puts plans on hold

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 21/03/2026, Sophia Baker, Page 2

A south-west emergency department which has been described as failing "basic human rights" has funded its own interim solution after the state government put full upgrade plans on hold. Western District Health Service, which runs the Hamilton Base Hospital, has allocated existing funds to deliver an interim upgrade to its emergency department which has been waiting more than three decades for an update, prompting former doctors, patients, MPs and the nurses' union to raise concerns about its condition.

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Critical equipment failure

Weekend Post, General News, 21/03/2026, Emma Cam, Page 5

A nurses' union has revealed reports of equipment failures or unavailability during emergencies at a Far North Queensland hospital, warning that failing to maintain hospital equipment could be a matter of life or death. The Nurses Professional Association of Queensland said members reported two incidents at Cairns Hospital in the past two months where critical medical and safety equipment failed or was unavailable during emergencies.

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Osborne Park Hospital expansion prompts questions on women's safety

Medical Forum, Other, 20/03/2026

An artist's impression of the new maternity building to be built at Osborne Park Hospital. As construction gets underway on the Osborne Park Hospital expansion serious concerns have been raised about the safety of people giving birth there.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 20/03/2026, Michael Thomson

More Perth patients will receive a liver transplant thanks to a machine giving new life to organs that would otherwise have been ruled out. The machine installed at one of our biggest hospitals becoming a catalyst of hope for many.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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Doctors' college wants its own board axed

Weekend Australian, General News, 21/03/2026, Penny Timms, Page 8

The internal warfare at the besieged Royal Australasian College of Physicians has taken a dramatic turn, with the charity regulator asked to step in and "suspend" the college's directors, just hours before voting is to open to consider ousting its president. The college has faced a year of internal turmoil and accusations and denials of bullying and poor behaviour.

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

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Medical body asks the charity watchdog to end dysfunction

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/03/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 8

One of Australia's largest medical colleges asked the charities watchdog to dissolve its board just hours before members were due to begin voting on whether to oust the body's sitting president. In a letter to more than 32,000 members of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians yesterday, honorary treasurer Dr Nicholas Buckmaster said its board could no longer operate effectively after months of dysfunction and infighting between directors and executives.

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

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Rockingham hospital surgeons get \$689,000 back pay after payroll error

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 21/03/2026, Jessica Evensen, Page 9

Doctors at one of the State's biggest healthcare providers were underpaid a combined total of nearly \$700,000 over "several years" because they were being paid under the wrong agreement, it has been revealed. Several general surgeons at Rockingham General Hospital, which is run by South Metropolitan Health Service, have received \$698,000 in back pay including higher rates and entitlements after they were incorrectly paid under the main WA Health Agreement.

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Councillor is standing by her comments

Border Mail, General News, 21/03/2026, Hana Humboldt, Page 5

A Border councillor has raised questions of "procedural fairness" regarding her treatment under a code of conduct investigation. Albury deputy mayor Jess Kellahan has become the focus of an investigation for a possible breach of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW based on comments about sacked surgeon John Stuchbery from September 2025.

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Health staff bearing the brunt of anger

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 21/03/2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 3

Nurses working in the Illawarra Shoalhaven are confronted with verbal abuse, threats, or physical violence every day, a problem their union says is becoming only more common. Sarah Morton, a Wollongong Hospital nurse working in the emergency department and maternity, said staff saw a lot of people who were frustrated, drug-affected, or mentally or physically unwell, which led to aggression and, commonly, threats of harm.

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'Inconsistent with psychological safety': nurses join docs in hospital stance

The Border Mail, Other, 20/03/2026, Anthony Bunn

Nurses have added their voice to staff culture concerns at Albury hospital, with 200 members endorsing recent votes of no confidence from doctors in the management of the treatment hub. The hospital's NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association branch delegate Kim Cole read a prepared statement to the media on Friday, March 20, following on from the no-confidence votes made by

members of the Border Medical Association and Albury Wodonga Health Senior Medical Staff Association on March 11.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Ferrari pharmacist revs up a \$5m rort

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/03/2026, Shannon Tonkin, Page 8

So-called "Ferrari pharmacist" Ben Huynh has confessed to fleecing taxpayers of \$5.1m by systemically rorting the federal government's subsidised medication scheme. [...] Huynh has admitted pocketing \$5.1m in taxpayer funds by generating an astonishing 19,105 false claims under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme between July 2014 and October 2023.

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

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Mum fights for answers

Courier Mail, General News, 21/03/2026, Carlie Walker, Page 19

A gravely ill 27-year-old tried to invoke Ryan's Rule and had been taken off antibiotics despite suspected sepsis in the lead up to his hospital death. These are just some of the revelations grieving Hervey Bay mother Carol Spiteri was confronted with after she paid Queensland Health \$65 for access to documents relating to her son William's care from the time he was admitted to Gladstone Hospital to when he was transferred to Brisbane's Wesley Hospital two weeks later.

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Epworth releases details into hospital review following endometriosis allegations

ABC Online, Other, 20/03/2026

A South Australian health commissioner will lead the review of clinical governance at Epworth Hospital after allegations a top gynaecologist performed unnecessary operations to remove endometriosis. Epworth HealthCare today revealed it has appointed a panel of experts for the review, which was launched after Four Corners revealed allegations Dr Simon Gordon allegedly performed operations when pathology reports showed little or no endometriosis.

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Coroner finds paramedic failures in death of Phillip Mark Walton in custody

ABC Online, Other, 20/03/2026, Claire Simmonds

A coroner has referred the actions of two paramedics, who treated a man who died in custody, for review by health authorities. Deputy State Coroner Kasey Pearce said the paramedic examination of Phillip Mark Walton in Casino Police Station lasted just 45 seconds and the patient was not touched to check vital signs.

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A Double Bay psychologist says she was being ruined by vexatious complaints

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 20/03/2026, Lucy Manly

I'm clearly not the only one captivated by the addictive saga of Double Bay psychologist Jenna Jones. [...] One psychologist, who asked not to be named, said the 40-year-old's public online posts had raised alarm bells and prompted them to lodge anonymous submissions with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Why measles is circulating undetected in Sydney

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/03/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 14

Measles is circulating undetected in some Sydney communities, with several mystery infections emerging among people who had no contact with confirmed cases or international hotspots. In a fresh twist to Sydney's rising measles risk, the highly contagious virus has been detected in three people whose infections could not be traced to known exposure sites and who had not recently travelled overseas.

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

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Radio National, Breakfast, 20/03/2026, Sally Sara

Radio National Science Editor Jonathan Webb reports that a highly transmissible influenza strain known as 'Super K' has been circulating in Australia throughout the summer. Experts confirm that the 2026 flu vaccine, available from April, should protect against this variant and now includes a funded nasal spray option for children in several states.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Aussies warned not to panic as medicine shortages, price hikes caused by war in Iran loom

9News, Other, 20/03/2026, Maddison Leach

Australians are already struggling to fill up their cars as petrol prices surge due to the war in Iran, and there are fears the cost of filling a prescription could spike next. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) monitors medicine shortages and has, in the past, fast-tracked alternative medicines during critical shortages.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Medicinal cannabis helped ex-cop cope

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/03/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 6

A former Hunter police officer says medicinal cannabis has successfully treated the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) he developed from attending many fatal road crashes. Bilal Cassim urged the

Minns government to amend road laws to enable a medicinal cannabis exemption for drivers who are not impaired.

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