



TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 23rd March 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
| [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Disability and Carers](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Population Health](#) | [Chronic Conditions and Screening](#) |
[Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Immunisation](#) | [Health Systems Strategies](#)
| [Health Economics & Research](#) | [First Nations Health](#)
| [Public Hospital and Health Reform](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
| [Medicare Benefits and Digital Health](#) | [Benefits Integrity](#) | [Australian CDC](#) |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Adelaide Advertiser](#)** (page 17) reports researchers from the University of Adelaide have developed hair-thin 3D-printed sensors capable of monitoring multiple cancer biomarkers simultaneously at a molecular level, providing medical professionals with precise, real-time data to guide treatment.
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 3) reports on the rollout of Australia's first needle-free influenza vaccine, a nasal spray currently being supplied to clinics and pharmacies for children aged between two and five. Former AMA President Maria Boulton stated that the nasal spray will make immunisation more accessible for children who may be frightened of needles.
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 7) reports new national data commissioned by Suicide Prevention Australia indicates that 90 per cent of workers experience work-related distress, with 22 per cent reporting extreme levels attributed to heavy workloads and burnout.
- **[The Australian](#)** (page 1) reports a senior research fellow at the University of New South Wales Centre for Social Research in Health is hosting a seminar on reimagining menopause as a transition relevant to trans and gender diverse people with ovaries. The research suggests that medical transitions result in physiological experiences similar to clinical menopause and should be integrated into broader healthcare discussions beyond traditional women's health services.

- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 1) reports the global CCO of British American Tobacco has stated that the company may exit the Australian market due to the illicit tobacco trade claiming nearly 75 per cent of the total market share. The executive has called for the Federal Government to reduce the excise on legal tobacco products to reclaim revenue and combat criminal control of the industry.
- **[The Herald Sun](#)** (page 11) reports Monash Health is commencing a phase three clinical trial to evaluate whether a Melbourne-developed cannabis oil can reduce core symptoms of autism spectrum disorder in children.
- **[The Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 3) reports a 3.8 million dollar investment will quadruple the size of The Bubble women's health hub in Launceston, allowing for a tripled workforce including general practitioners, gynaecologists, and allied health care professionals.
- **[The Courier Mail](#)** (page 13) reports Queensland Chief Health Officer Dr Marianne Gale has issued a warning regarding melioidosis following Tropical Cyclone Narelle, noting that 57 cases and three deaths have already been recorded this year.
- **[The Daily Telegraph](#)** (page 10) reports staff at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital reported mould and water damage in a transplant ward one month before a fungal disease outbreak resulted in the deaths of two immunocompromised patients.

MINISTER BUTLER

'Pressures are real': Royal Flying Doctor Service's plan to combat fuel crisis

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 22/03/2026, Harrison Finlay State Political Reporter

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

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER MCALLISTER

NDIS director is jailed after betraying her clients and committing deplorable \$300,000 act: 'Greed'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 22/03/2026, Sarah Brookes

A once-trusted Melbourne NDIS boss who brazenly rorted almost \$300,000 from vulnerable clients has been jailed for three years. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said criminals who target people with disability 'belong in prison,' highlighting ongoing taskforce operations with 660 investigations underway and almost 200 individuals and providers banned from the scheme.

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER RAE

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

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[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

Selling up to fund aged care a pension disaster

West Australian, Business News, 23/03/2026, Nick Bruining, Page 18

It's a tough decision that's often made in a hospital carpark. [...] The problem is, you can't just decide to make the move into aged care.

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Drug not for Alzheimer's

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 23/03/2026, Page 6

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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Aged care giant Southern Cross Care accused of bullying vulnerable residents

The Mercury, Other, 22/03/2026, Sue Bailey

A Tasmanian MP has accused a major aged care provider of bullying and pressuring residents to leave Rosary Gardens, which is set to close in June, and the home has confirmed many residents have already moved out. The daughter of a resident, who did not want to be named, says staff at the New Town aged care home, run by Southern Cross Care, also have been left in limbo over the closure.

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

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Superannuation should be used for aged care, not inherited by next generation, aged care CEO says

The Guardian, Other, 22/03/2026, Tom Mcilroy

Labor should more actively encourage wealthier Australians to spend more of their superannuation on their own care, an industry leader says, to help free up capacity in the struggling system to protect elderly people without means. Tracey Burton, the chief executive of Uniting NSW and ACT, will tell an industry event next week that some wealthier people believe they are entitled to fully publicly funded aged care – even while they maintain large superannuation balances with the intention of leaving the money to their next generation.

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Local response to dementia increase

Sunraysia Daily, Other, 22/03/2026, Denika Anderson

Dementia is now the leading cause of death in the nation with an estimated 446,500 Australians living with disease. Yet, the number of people directly effected by the illness is only expected to increase to more than one million by 2065 without significant intervention.

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[Back to Top](#)

DISABILITY AND CARERS

NDIS worker raped boy while at school

Northern Territory News, General News, 23/03/2026, Harry Brill, Page 7

A senior high school student who groomed and raped a boy several grades below him went on to become an NDIS support worker and help with a local kids organisation, a court has heard. The shocking details came to light earlier this month after a jury found the offender guilty of three counts of sexual intercourse with the victim, two counts of committing an act of gross indecency with a child under 16 and two counts of indecent dealing with a child under 16.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

Helping patients, & doctors

Courier Mail, General News, 23/03/2026, Cate Whalan, Page 21

As a community pharmacist in Townsville, qualified to prescribe medication for everyday and longterm health conditions, I share a deep commitment to supporting my patients' health. For far too long, we were not able to help our patients access health care for straightforward ailments.

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

ACMA sets up booze ads probe

The Australian, Media, 23/03/2026, Danielle Long, Page 20

Alcohol advertising on commercial television is facing stricter regulations with the media watchdog caving to "community concerns" about booze marketing within sports broadcasts. [...] The review comes as per capita alcohol consumption in Australia has fallen to its lowest levels since 2014, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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

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Cig giant to quit Aus

Herald Sun, General News, 23/03/2026, Jon Kaila, Page 1

The global chief corporate officer of British American Tobacco has claimed the company may have no choice but to quit Australia, with the nation on track to become the first developed country to hand over the entire tobacco market to criminals. Kingsley Wheaton said the illicit tobacco wars in Australia were now so bad, that without a personal intervention from the Prime Minister and a drastic reduction in excise, there wouldn't be a legal market for them to operate in within the next three years.

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

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Australia's smoking rates fell for decades. But that's changed – and here's why

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 22/03/2026, Marta Pascual Juanola

As Australia's top thinkers on organised crime gathered in Canberra this week, one topic hijacked the conversation: what to do about Australia's worsening illicit tobacco problem. Experts fear the booming black market trade, which has funnelled billions of dollars into the hands of criminal syndicates, is driving up smoking rates for the first time in decades, reversing years of public health policy that had placed Australia among the countries with the lowest rates in the world.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Splitting hairs to find cancer

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 23/03/2026, Brad Crouch, Page 17

Adelaide University scientists have managed to 3D print a sensor on the end of a hair-thin strand to detect cancer. The gossamer gizmo is capable of taking multiple measurements simultaneously, paving the way to revolutionise the diagnosis and monitoring of diseases, such as cancer.

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Nicholls says VAD fix a fed matter

Courier Mail, General News, 23/03/2026, Rose Innes, Page 9

A critical change to a cruel technicality in legislation for those trying to access voluntary assisted dying (VAD) is "up now to the Commonwealth", according to the state government. A section in the Commonwealth Criminal Code makes it illegal to use the phone or internet to counsel or instruct on suicide and also prevents VAD doctors from conducting remote consultations with patients.

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

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Critical condition

Hobart Mercury, General News, 23/03/2026, Bridget Clarke, Page 1

The cancer treatment service in southern Tasmania, anchored by the Royal Hobart Hospital's oncology unit, has no capacity to manage surges in demand, Australian Medical Association Tasmania president Michael Lumsden-Steel has warned as cancer rates rise. Speaking to the Mercury, Dr Lumsden-Steel said cancer treatment services, like the broader health system, had been significantly underfunded, contributing to mounting pressure within the unit.

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'Gag clause' in VAD laws

Northern Territory News, General News, 23/03/2026, Fia Walsh, Page 3

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 stop doctors from raising it as an option with their patients. After being 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.

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Women with endometriosis claim symptoms are often dismissed or overlooked

Adelaide Now, Other, 22/03/2026, Rhiannon Lewin

A woman suffering from intense pain from deep infiltrating endometriosis was given a bizarre "cure" from a medical practitioner who suggested she try giving birth to relieve symptoms. The gynaecological community has been at the centre of controversy in recent weeks with a Victorian doctor referred to police, accused of performing unnecessary laparoscopies.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Childhood cancer survivors face lifelong health effects after treatment

West Australian, Other, 22/03/2026, Angela Pownall

Climbing through his cubby window, Luca Kitson looks like any five-year-old playing happily outside. [...] More children are surviving cancer now but the toxic treatment they endure leaves most of them facing a lifetime of health problems, and even an early death.

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'Bikini Medicine': time to retire the term in the drive for better overall women's health

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 23/03/2026, Nicholas M Fisk & Caroline de Costa

The term 'bikini medicine' originally highlighted the narrow reproductive focus of women's health research, but has since broadened into a much-needed campaign for equitable inclusion of women across all aspects of health care. [...] Next, reproductive disorders such as gestational diabetes, preterm delivery, stillbirth, PCOS and endometriosis, and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy carry significant long-term cardiometabolic risks including mortality, likely through genetic predisposition across the life course.

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[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

One in five suffers extreme work distress

The Australian, General News, 23/03/2026, Ewin Hannan, Page 7

Nine in 10 workers experience work-related distress, with more than one in five reporting extreme distress, and citing heavy workloads and burnout as leading contributors. New national data commissioned by Suicide Prevention Australia found a significant spike in distress among employees in medium-sized businesses where extreme distress was 30 per cent; distress was also prevalent among millennials and Gen Z workers.

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

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Autism trial cannabis hope

Herald Sun, General News, 23/03/2026, Robyn Riley, Page 11

A major scientific study of children with autism spectrum disorder is set to start its final leg to test if a Melbourne-made cannabis oil reduces core symptoms of the neurological condition. If successful the medicine's developer, Neurotech International, says it would be one of the first approved to treat core symptoms of autism in children globally.

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

Coalition accuses Labor of making suicide prevention a 'side issue'

The Australian, Other, 22/03/2026, Sarah Ison

The opposition has accused Labor of faltering on suicide prevention and making what should be a core responsibility of government nothing more than a "side issue", in the latest move by the Liberals to bring the fight to Anthony Albanese over policy areas typically dominated by his party. After Angus Taylor signalled he would seek to pose a bold alternative to the Prime Minister's vision for childcare and family policy, which he has described as key to his legacy, the Coalition has today launched a new attack on the government over its lack of urgency in curbing the nation's suicide rate.

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We can't accept another century of complacency on suicide

The Australian, Other, 22/03/2026, Henry Pike

Today marks 95 years since one of the most accomplished Australians ever to hold public office took his own life. [...] Yet each year we now lose more than 3000 Australians to suicide.

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Amy lost three pregnancies. No one asked about her mental health

9News, Other, 22/03/2026, Rebecca Masters

Amy Hipwell can't remember anyone sitting her down for a serious conversation about her mental health. In five years, Hipwell and her husband Chris endured a rollercoaster of heartbreak, anxiety, grief and joy, welcoming two healthy children into their family, but also losing three to stillbirth, miscarriage and a rare genetic disorder.

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'I'm a therapist of 20 years. Suddenly, young men are asking me the same question.'

Mamamia, Other, 22/03/2026, Catie Powers

What's worse, having no friends or smoking 15 cigarettes a day? Trick question, they're the same. We've known this since 2023, when the World Health Organisation declared loneliness a "global health threat".

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[Back to Top](#)

IMMUNISATION

New spray keeps the flu at bay for kids

Courier Mail, General News, 23/03/2026, Rose Innes, Page 3

It's been billed as the easier way to get children vaccinated against the flu, even if little Maeve's reaction might say otherwise. FluMist is Australia's first needle-free vaccination and is now being supplied to GP clinics and pharmacies across Queensland for free.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

'Emergency departments in a backpack' to be trialled on remote NT cattle stations

A new trial being rolled out across remote NT cattle stations could be the difference between life and death and all it takes is a fancy new backpack. The Royal Flying Doctor Service SA/NT (RFDS) launched an innovative approach to emergency care for pastoralists across Central Australia and the Barkly on Friday.

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

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Grieving husband urges premier to fix organ donor system after wife's death

The Mercury, Other, 22/03/2026, Jackie Sinnerton

Bec Allen died on the organ transplant wait list. [...] The campaign has been backed by the likes of DonateLife CEO Lucinda Barry, Cystic Fibrosis Australia CEO Jo Armstrong, pioneering transplant surgeons Dr Russell Strong and Professor David McGiffin, Penrith Panthers coach Ivan Cleary and a number of recipient and donor families.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Academic's trans plea: reimagine menopause

The Australian, General News, 23/03/2026, Natasha Bitá, Page 1

A university academic with a thesis on drag culture wants to "reimagine menopause" so women's mid-life medical struggles are made relevant for gender-diverse people. Kerryn Drysdale, a senior research fellow at the University of NSW Centre for Social Research in Health, will host an online seminar to ensure trans people are not left out of the "menopause moment".

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Learning from the 'hidden history' of polio

Newcastle Herald, General News, 23/03/2026, Simon McCarthy, Page 9

Professor Catharine Coleborne, a 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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2GB, Healthy Living, 22/03/2026, Dr Ross Walker & Ned Green

Interview with Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation CEO Robin Penty. A major new study launched by the University of Queensland is looking to change ovarian cancer into a manageable diagnosis by testing a new blood test called OCRF-7. Penty says ovarian cancer is a low-survival cancer, noting that over 1,9000 cases have been recorded in Australia this year.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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[Back to Top](#)

'Nothing was done'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 23/03/2026, James O'Doherty, Page 10

A nurse at Royal Prince Alfred sounded the alarm about mould and "environmental risks" in the hospital's transplant ward a month before an outbreak of fungal disease that killed two patients. NSW Health documents reveal that staff flagged mould and other water damage in the ward in September last year, a month before a "sharp increase" in Invasive Fungal Infections (IFI) linked to aspergillus fungus.

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

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Nurses union claims patients die waiting

Hobart Mercury, General News, 23/03/2026, Nick Clark, Page 4

Tasmania's nursing union claims patients have died at Launceston General Hospital's emergency department after enduring long waits in corridors without proper monitoring equipment. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Union branch secretary Emily Shepherd said a combination of long wait times and inappropriate waiting spaces in the ED contributed to the deaths.

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Nurses take a stand with doctors

Border Mail, General News, 23/03/2026, Anthony Bunn, Page 3

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, 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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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: new guidelines for assessment and diagnosis

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 23/03/2026, Annika Howells

A summary of the new Australian Guidelines for Assessment and Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder has been published in the Medical Journal of Australia. The guidelines were released in May 2025 as an update to the 2016 Guide.

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'These are avoidable': Dozens of babies dead or permanently injured after freebirths

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 22/03/2026, Henrietta Cook

At least 13 babies have died following so-called freebirths in Victoria over the past five years, while a further 11 have suffered potential lifelong brain injuries. [...] It can also be revealed that despite peak medical colleges calling for a crackdown on unregulated birth workers, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia is not proposing any regulatory changes.

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[Back to Top](#)

'Game changer': \$3.8m boost for women's health hub

Hobart Mercury, General News, 23/03/2026, Alison Foletta, Page 3

A \$3.8m investment will triple the workforce of a leading women's health hub in Tasmania. The Bubble was the first of its kind when it opened its door in 2021, and it almost immediately outgrew its small facility.

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[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Cochlear chief warns global uncertainty rife

Australian Financial Review, General News, 23/03/2026, Ronald Mizen, Page 6

The boss of medical device maker Cochlear says global business conditions are the most uncertain he can recall, as business leaders prepare to lobby the Albanese government to unlock up to \$790 billion in new foreign investment.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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[Back to Top](#)

AUSTRALIAN CDC

Deadly disease fears

Courier Mail, General News, 23/03/2026, Madura McCormack & Fia Walsh, Page 13

Queensland's top doctor has warned residents in the rainsoaked Far North to beware of a deadly disease that has already claimed three lives this year, as they clean up in the wake of ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle. [...] Chief health officer Dr Marianne Gale confirmed there had been 57 cases of melioidosis already this year and three people had died.

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

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Alert for mosquito-borne disease at popular camping spots north of Canberra

Canberra Times, Other, 22/03/2026, Lucy Arundell

Areas surrounding the ACT have been put on alert for a potentially deadly disease spread via mosquitoes as the NSW government offers free vaccines. The Yass Valley, which covers Yass, Murrumbateman, the edge of Lake George and the northern ACT border, has recently been identified as a high-risk area for Japanese encephalitis by the NSW government.

Measles exposure warning issued for western Sydney after infectious case visits multiple public locations

The Australian, Other, 22/03/2026, Andrew Hedgman

Health authorities have issued a measles warning across western Sydney and the Blue Mountains after a confirmed case visited multiple public locations while unknowingly infectious, prompting an urgent alert for residents to monitor for symptoms. The Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD) said the case attended several exposure sites across the district and surrounding suburbs after being in contact with another confirmed case earlier this month.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Anti-ageing crowd turns to light masks

Australian Financial Review, General News, 23/03/2026, Sam Irvine, Page 29

The glow-up devices are taking over social media, prompting experts to test whether the results justify the hype.

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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[Back to Top](#)

FOOD STANDARDS

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[Back to Top](#)

AICIS

Chemical WHS standards to add \$200 to household water bills

Australian Financial Review, Other, 22/03/2026, Paul Karp

A federal plan to raise safety standards on workplace exposure to nine chemicals could add up to \$200 a year to every household water bill in NSW because of compliance costs, according to a report by water authorities.

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[Back to Top](#)

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