



TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 31st March 2026

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[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian \(page 6\)](#)** reports that AI systems in the National Disability Insurance Agency regularly accept false or fraudulent information from NDIS claims, with a new invoicing tool replacing AI systems with structured data validation to be launched today. This comes as Health Minister Mark Butler looks to reduce the number of annual appointments for NDIS participants to bring the scheme's growth within the 5 per cent target.
- The **[Australian Financial Review \(page 1\)](#)** reports that NDIS Minister Mark Butler has said that the Federal Government is considering tightening the NDIS eligibility requirements for autism patients and will review funding amounts, as it attempts to limit spending growth to the targeted 5 per cent per year.
- The **[Australian Financial Review \(page 11\)](#)** reports that Bupa's Australian chief executive Nick Stone has said that one in 10 of its customers have reduced their policies in the last two years. Health Minister Mark Butler has supported a 4.4 per cent increase in private health insurance premiums, which will come into effect on Wednesday.
- The **[Daily Telegraph \(page 15\)](#)** reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has called for changes to reporting rules after the Australian Border Force did not inform the AHPRA of physiotherapist Hugh Melchior's CSAM possession charges, with Mr Melchior remaining on the public register of health practitioners for nearly a year.

- The [ABC \(online\)](#) reports that the Yerrabi Health hub is set to close after it unsuccessfully appealed for funding assistance from both the ACT and Federal Governments. A Federal Government spokesperson encouraged Yerrabi Health to apply for a grant under the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Indigenous Australians' Health Programme, set to open in the 2026-27 financial year.
- [The Age \(page 1\)](#) reports that a University of NSW-led scientific review into vaping has found that e-cigarettes are likely to cause lung and oral cancer, coming as one in five 16- to 24-year-olds regularly vape. *Also reported by: [The Australian](#)*
- The [Adelaide Advertiser \(page 1\)](#) reports that the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital has launched investigations into three neurosurgery cases, coming as Khloey Djawas seeks legal action against the hospital after her eleven-year-old son received an acquired brain injury during a brain tumour removal. *Also reported by: [Northern Territory News](#)*
- The [Sydney Morning Herald \(page 3\)](#) reports that a Go Gentle-compiled national report on VAD access has found that religious healthcare institutions and a lack of registered VAD practitioners were current barriers to access. *Also reported by: [The Age](#), [Courier Mail](#) and [West Australian](#)*
- The [Daily Telegraph \(page 7\)](#) reports that opposition aged care spokeswoman Anne Ruston, joined by other independents and Greens MP Penny Allman-Payne, has called for the Federal Government to address issues in its aged-care reforms, which came into effect in November last year.

MINISTER BUTLER

NDIS must get back on track

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/03/2026, Luke Kinsella, Page 1

The Albanese government is considering reducing the number of people eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme or cutting the funding participants get as it tries to rein in a program that Health Minister Mark Butler concedes...

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

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

The rescue is falling short

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/03/2026, Jennifer Hewett, Page 1

The National Disability Insurance Scheme was supposed to be one of Australia's proudest public policy achievements. Instead, it risks becoming one of the country's significant public policy failures.

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

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

Bupa warns of exodus from private cover

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/03/2026, Michael Smith, Page 11

The local chief executive of Bupa says almost one in 10 of the insurance giant's 4.4 million customers have cut back on their policies in the past two years as pressure on family budgets grows.

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

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

At \$50b, NDIS funding is the elephant in the room

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 31/03/2026, Page 24

The unexpected moment at The Australian Financial Review's Healthcare Summit came inside the first hour.

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

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NDIS 'Rolls-Royce scheme' meets budget realities

Australian Financial Review, Editorials, 31/03/2026, Page 30

It's a rare feat to puncture the normally measured tenor of the Australian Financial Review Healthcare Summit. But medical expert Nick Coatsworth managed it by saying the quiet part out loud.

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

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AI 'is ticking off false or fraudulent NDIS info'

The Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 6

AI is ticking off false and fraudulent National Disability Insurance Scheme claims that can take months to scrape back and often leave insufficient funding in a participant's plan for legitimate providers to get paid, the government has been warned. As NDIS Minister Mark Butler revealed he was looking at capping the number of annual appointments for participants in order to reduce the growth of the \$50bn a year scheme to 5 per cent, Labor was urged to adopt new technology for NDIS invoicing and payments or risk providers going out of business.

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Pervert physio kept on books

Daily Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2026, Thomas Sargeant, Page 15

A physiotherapist caught with hundreds of child abuse videos remained registered for nearly a year after his arrest as a legal loophole left the regulator in the dark about his crimes. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has called for changes after Hugh Melchior stayed on the books, although he didn't practice.

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

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Yerrabi Yurwang Health Hub closing due to lack of funding, leaving First Nations patients in Canberra in the lurch

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026, James Vyver

Rose is an Aboriginal woman living with a chronic pain condition that prevents her from working. [...] After several months of requests, Yerrabi representatives eventually secured a meeting with federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office in February.

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Health insurers are expanding into GP services. Here's why it could be a threat to Medicare

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026, Alison Branley

In the United States, it is not uncommon to see GP clinics with signs saying, "No Medicaid patients" or, "Insured patients only". [...] Health Minister Mark Butler told the ABC that the government does not support a two-tier system.

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One-in-five Australians regret not taking out private health insurance, new research finds

9News, Other, 30/03/2026, Emily Bennett

One-in-five Australians regret not taking out private health insurance after being stung by an unexpected medical expense. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler approved a 4.41 per cent average premium increase in February, which will come into effect from April 1.

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

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GLP-1s will come to the PBS: but not fast, and not for all ... yet

Health Services Daily, Other, 30/03/2026, Cate Swannell

In a speech to the AFR Healthcare Summit, Mark Butler signalled a 'slow and managed rollout' to manage equity concerns.

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Immunotherapy drug expanded on PBS

Medical Forum, Other, 30/03/2026

An immunotherapy drug is set to be expanded on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for people with certain types of high-risk or advanced cancers. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the move will mean Australian patients can get the treatment they need faster and at an affordable price.

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Butler shocks with PBS funding admissions

MedNews, Other, 30/03/2026, Megan Brodie

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has delivered an eye-opening address.

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Butler feels chill from big pharma

Pharma In Focus, Other, 30/03/2026

Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler has warned fewer medicines may be launched in Australia and global instability is going to influence the government's response to the HTA review, in a wide-ranging keynote to the AFR Healthcare Summit this morning at the Hilton Sydney. "The most seismic developments has been US moves to implement Most Favored Nation pricing policies for prescription medicines in that country," Butler said, noting around half of global pharmaceutical volume passes through the US, generating 70-80 per cent of global profits.

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Blockbuster scores triple PBS win

Pharma In Focus, Other, 30/03/2026

The Federal Government will fund MSD's Keytruda on the PBS for three new indications, in cervical cancer, head and neck cancer, and kidney cancer. [...] "Thousands of patients each year will now have access to the treatment that was previously out of reach for most families," Health Minister Mark Butler said.

[Read More](#)

What's the price of keeping Canberra healthy?

The Medical Republic, Other, 30/03/2026, Euan Kielly

The answer is somewhere around the \$24.3 million mark, which is what the federal government dished out in grant money to save bulk billing practices in the area. [...] "The Australian Government wants all Australians to get the health care they need when they need it, and we're committed to supporting more bulk billing GPs in Canberra," Health minister Mark Butler said.

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GLP-1s will come to the PBS: but not fast, and not for all... yet

The Medical Republic, Other, 30/03/2026, Cate Swannell

Federal health Minister Mark Butler has signalled he favours a cautious, but ultimately open pathway to subsidising the blockbuster GLP-1 obesity drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Speaking at the Australian Financial Review Healthcare Summit this morning, Mr Butler framed GLP-1s as both a transformative health intervention and a major fiscal risk that would require a tightly managed rollout on the PBS.

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ABC News, The Business, 30/03/2026, Kirsten Aiken

Private health insurers like Bupa are expanding into GP clinics, telehealth, and home-based care through vertical integration, a trend that has accelerated since the pandemic. The Australian Medical

Association calls for a new regulator to impose safeguards, which the industry rejects. Health Minister Mark Butler says the government does not support insurers entering general practice but backs complementary services within Medicare rules.

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WIN Bendigo, WIN News, 30/03/2026, Jared Constable

Private health insurance premiums will rise from Wednesday, adding pressure to household budgets and prompting concern from the Australian Medical Association. Health Minister Mark Butler says the government recognises cost pressures but supports the increase to maintain the value of private cover.

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ABC NewsRadio, Mornings, 30/03/2026, Rhiannon Elston

There are growing calls for tighter oversight as private health insurers expand into areas like GP clinics and dental care through vertical integration. Health Minister Mark Butler says insurers cannot enter general practice under current plans, though they can provide complementary services if they stay within Medicare rules.

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ABC Radio Canberra, Drive, 30/03/2026, James Findlay

Interview with Selina Walker, Co-chair of the ACT Reconciliation Council, about the closure of the Yerrabi Yurwang Health Hub. Walker says the loss of the culturally safe, bulk-billed service leaves over 400 patients without accessible holistic care and widens existing health gaps in Canberra's north. She criticises limited support from the federal government, saying outreach to Health Minister Mark Butler failed to secure funding.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

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MINISTER RAE

21 MPs demand action on home care

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 30/03/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Over 20 Opposition and crossbench politicians have called on the government to change Support at Home elements such as classifying showers as clinical care and returning human oversight to assessments. [...] In a joint letter addressed to the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae, federal MPs have asked the government to also: restore human oversight to aged care needs assessments consider whether essential daily activities have been appropriately categorised review the impact of the 10 per cent cap on case management, due to reports of higher service prices.

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Pocock calls for home aged care reforms

canberradaily.com.au, Other, 30/03/2026, Meta Time

Almost half the federal parliament and nearly two-thirds of the Senate have called for urgent reforms to the Support at Home program — government-funded aged care services to help older people stay at home for longer — after complaints from older Australians and their carers. [...] Senator Pocock, Senator Anne Ruston (shadow minister for health and aged care), and Senator Penny Allman-Payne (Greens spokesperson for older people) — supported by the Coalition, the Greens, and the entire

crossbench — wrote a letter to Aged Care Minister Sam Rae MP, seeking to: restore human oversight to aged care assessments so they reflect genuine individual needs, not flawed algorithms.

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2GB, Breakfast, 30/03/2026, Ben Fordham

Compere mentions that more than 100 Federal politicians have come together to slam Labor's aged care reforms. He states that according to Federal Minister Sam Rae, excessive fees should be reported to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, but MPs from the Liberal Party, the Nationals, One Nation and the Greens are saying that Rae needs to fix the system itself.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 30/03/2026, Graeme Goodings

Goodings is joined by News Corp social affairs reporter Julie Cross about aged care reform impacts. Cross says reforms under Aged Care Minister Sam Rae increase costs without price caps, forcing seniors to cut care hours and pay more for basic services. She highlights complaints overload, delayed responses, and cases where fees double, leaving older Australians shocked and worse off despite the reforms.

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DEPARTMENT

Yerrabi Yurwang Health Hub closing due to lack of funding, leaving First Nations patients in Canberra in the lurch

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026, James Vyver

Rose is an Aboriginal woman living with a chronic pain condition that prevents her from working. [...] After several months of requests, Yerrabi representatives eventually secured a meeting with federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office in February.

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Immunotherapy drug expanded on PBS

Medical Forum, Other, 30/03/2026

An immunotherapy drug is set to be expanded on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for people with certain types of high-risk or advanced cancers. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the

move will mean Australian patients can get the treatment they need faster and at an affordable price.

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Seven Wagga Wagga, Seven Local News, 30/03/2026, Nick Hose and Madelaine Collignon

Women's health services expand in regional NSW with the opening of the Nova Endo & Pelvic Pain Clinic in Wagga Wagga, offering specialised care for conditions like endometriosis. The clinic, funded by the Federal Health Department, provides in-house treatment, telehealth, and webinars to support patients who often travel long distances for care.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

People 'dying' on ALP's watch

Daily Telegraph, General News, 31/03/2026, Joseph Olbrycht-Palmer, Page 7

Senators and MPs of all political colours are demanding urgent government action to fix aged-care reforms amid widespread reports they are failing older Australians. The group are warning that "people are dying" on Labor's watch as they wait for desperately needed services, while peak bodies have complained about the reforms since they were introduced in November last year.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Aged care: treat food as medicine

Canberra Times, General News, 31/03/2026, Chris Deed, Page 15

Too many aged care residents are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition and the prevalence of swallowing disorders is growing. We need a radical rethink of the food older Australians are served by aged-care providers.

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Plea over pensioner rate rises

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 31/03/2026, Paul Weston, Page 5

Thousands of pensioners in retirement villages are facing continued rate hikes despite Gold Coast City Council saying reforms will see a fairer system for all retirees. Councillors at a special budget meeting on Monday considered separate petitions from Coomera and Helensvale residents about changes to retirement village rating categories.

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Aged care resident charged over alleged fatal push

Aged Care Insite, Other, 30/03/2026

A man accused of the manslaughter of a fellow aged care resident has been named in court for the first time. Aspley aged care resident Thomas Raymond Pryce, 84, has been charged with the manslaughter of 78-year-old Alan Williams following an alleged altercation in Brisbane's north.

[Read More](#)

DTA, Rabbitohs unite on dementia

Aged Care Insite, Other, 30/03/2026, Stefanie Schultz

New partnership brings dementia education to Aboriginal communities Rates of dementia among First Nations people in remote and rural areas are three to five times higher than in the general population. Dementia Training Australia (DTA) has launched a national partnership with Souths Cares to expand

dementia education across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, responding to an urgent and growing health challenge.

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HELF models need to be strategic, justifiable

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 30/03/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Capecare and fpaca have decided to hold off introducing HELF at all homes, and for providers that do bring it in, it must match room pricing, webinar viewers hear. Regional aged care provider Capecare and not-for-profit provider For Purpose Aged Care have decided not to universally introduce Higher Everyday Living Fee services at their homes.

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Nine in 10 Australians fear aged care costs, exclusive survey reveals

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 30/03/2026, Julie Cross

Nine in 10 Australians are worried about the cost of aged care, an exclusive survey reveals. The poll, conducted by News Corp's Growth Intelligence Centre (GIC), confirmed that in general people think aged care is unaffordable, with more than 90 per cent of the 924 respondents worried about the cost.

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

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More than 100 politicians unite against aged care reforms as pressure mounts on Labor

HelloCare, Other, 30/03/2026, Jakob Neeland

More than 100 federal politicians from across the political spectrum have formed an unusual alliance to challenge the Federal Government's aged care reforms, raising serious concerns about their impact on older Australians. The coalition of MPs and senators, spanning the Liberal and National parties, the Greens, One Nation and the crossbench, has taken the rare step of jointly calling for urgent changes to Labor's new "Support at Home" program.

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Partnership aims to close the gap

Shepparton News Online, Other, 30/03/2026, Lua Ikenasio

A new partnership between Rochester and Elmore District Health Service and Njernda has been formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on National Close the Gap Day. The initiative aims to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities for First Nations people across the organisations' shared catchment areas.

[Read More](#)

Aged care tests early intervention in Australian-first trial

The Weekly Source, Other, 30/03/2026, Lauren Broomham

Warrigal has launched a trial to help aged care providers intervene earlier – before a fall, infection or hospital transfer occurs. The provider, in partnership with Ericom, has begun a 12-month trial of Care Companion at its Goulburn residential aged care home, marking the first time the radar-based monitoring technology has been used in an Australian healthcare setting.

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Sky News Live, Paul Murray Live, 30/03/2026, Paul Murray

Murray argues that Australia's aged care reforms have made care unaffordable and have forced seniors to cut essential services like domestic help, meals, and social support. He says prices have surged under the new system, with examples of extreme overcharging, and claims this is driving widespread political backlash.

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ABC Riverland SA, Breakfast, 30/03/2026, Matt Stephens and Stephanie

Nitschke

Dementia Australia warns that dementia cases will more than double by 2065, making it the leading cause of death in Australia. Executive Director of Services Kaele Stokes highlights major access gaps, especially in regional areas, and calls for stronger health services to support both patients and their families.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

PM holds money hose

The Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Matthew Cranston, Sarah Ison and Thomas Henry, Page 1

The Albanese government has capitulated to political pressure on major new budget spending to deal with the Iran war fuel crisis, agreeing to a \$2.6bn fuel excise cut sugar hit and the removal of road user charges. Labor MPs were "perplexed" by Anthony Albanese's decision to slash the fuel excise, saying they were surprised the government had moved ahead with a plan many of them were against and that the Prime Minister had no long-term fuel policy.

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

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Expect Jim's 'reform' budget to come with some big caveats

The Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Judith Sloan, Page 11

The conflict in the Middle East has thrown the preparation for this year's budget into disarray. Jim Chalmers had been talking it up as the statement that would finally deliver real reform. [...] According to the most recent figures, the fastest growing spending items in the budget include debt servicing, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, hospitals, aged care, childcare and defence

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Paralympic athletes face a 'double whammy' of disability and gender discrimination

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026, Elizabeth Wright

Over 20 years ago, Hannah MacDougall had a stellar swimming career, claiming bronze in the 4x100m relay at the 2004 Paralympics before going on to captain the swim team in Beijing. Despite this success, burnout from inappropriate training regimes led to an early retirement.

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'High reward, high risk': the reality behind Ballarat's SDA investment surge

Ballarat Courier, Other, 30/03/2026, Gwen Liu

The Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) market grew sharply to more than \$600 million, attracting property investors to build, including in Ballarat. The latest report shows total SDA support rose 43 per cent over two years to \$626 million, with 15,925 participants.

[Read More](#)

How will Australia's pharmacy workforce respond to megatrends?

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 30/03/2026, Chloe Hava

A national workforce planning initiative is underway to better understand how the pharmacy profession must evolve to meet changing healthcare needs – and it could soon reshape how pharmacists practise for decades to come. Commissioned by the federal government as part of the Strategic Agreement on Pharmacist Professional Practice, PSA has engaged the University of Queensland's Centre for Business and Economics of Health to lead a whole-of-profession workforce forecast.

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PRIMARY CARE

Call to stop 'handball' on health

Daily Advertiser, General News, 31/03/2026, John Hall, Page 6

Member for Wagga Dr Joe McGirr has taken his GP guarantee to the NSW Parliament with a private member's bill that aims to put the onus on NSW Health to ensure everyone has access to a general practitioner within a reasonable distance. "In our communities, [GPs are] the cornerstone of the health system, the building block, and it's what communities most miss with the current workforce shortages," Dr McGirr said.

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

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Is this why politicians do nothing when GPs say pharmacist prescribing has harmed patients?

Australian Doctor, Other, 30/03/2026

The way medical groups have gathered stories of patient harm has made them hard to prove. GPs have accused prescribing pharmacists of failing to diagnose cancer and a severe kidney infection amid the campaign to stop pharmacists expanding their scope into first-time scripts for the pill.

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What an ED consultant wants GPs to know about referring to emergency

Medical Forum, Other, 30/03/2026, Aleisha Orr

Patients can sometimes become like ping pong balls, being bounced backwards and forwards between GPs and emergency departments. That's the analogy Dr Tracey Bhar, an emergency consultant in at Fiona Stanley Hospital, used to describe the experience of patients referred to EDs.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Vapes are 'likely' to cause cancer

The Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Penny Timms, Page 8

Vaping is "likely" to cause cancer according to Australian scientists who have completed the most comprehensive analysis of existing evidence, triggering warnings that nicotine vapes share "historical parallels" with tobacco and the world can't afford to wait to act. The review is based on a qualitative risk assessment and considers a person's exposure to nicotine vapes, also known as ecigarettes, but it does not examine how much exposure is required.

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

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Vaping is 'likely to cause cancer'

Age, General News, 31/03/2026, Angus Dalton, Page 1

Vaping is likely to cause cancer, a first-of-its-kind scientific review has found, contradicting claims it is safer than smoking and highlighting the urgency of efforts to stop young people becoming addicted. Experts have long warned the chemicals inhaled from vapes are carcinogenic and dangerous to human health, but a definitive link between vaping and cancer has not yet been established.

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

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Women are used to bleeding. Here's how to know if things aren't normal

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 31/03/2026, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 14

Bleeding is a fact of life for most women, as a normal part of the menstrual cycle and not immediate reason to panic. But bleeding can also be a sign that something's wrong. Dr Rebekah Hoffman, chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for NSW and ACT, says it's very common for women to delay seeking help for abnormal or heavy bleeding.

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Fears of mould at Darwin barracks

Northern Territory News, General News, 31/03/2026, Harry Brill, Page 6

The Department of Defence is following up complaints that a Darwin army base has become inundated with black mould, with a spokesperson reassuring troubled military families that the wellbeing of their loved ones is their "highest priority". The NT News can reveal Robertson Barracks is being closely inspected for black mould after a growing number of job requests and allegations of ignored requests came to the attention of senior commanders during this past wet season.

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Weight ups cancer risk

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 31/03/2026, Page 5

Women in middle-to-older age who are overweight/ obese or who drink alcohol are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer. A team including researchers from The University of Sydney investigated lifestyle factors and how they may be linked to breast cancer risk in 12,782 women aged 45-50 at the beginning of the study.

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Vaping is linked to lung and mouth cancer in major study, as experts warn: 'It is NOT safer than smoking'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 31/03/2026, Zoe Hardy

Despite health chiefs across the world saying that e-cigarettes are less damaging to the body than traditional smoking products, Australian researchers have made the strongest link yet between the gadgets and the disease. A team based out of the University of New South Wales in Sydney reviewed all the available literature into the potential harms of vaping that were published between 2017 and 2025.

[Read More](#)

Cancer patient travel costs soar amid fuel crisis

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 30/03/2026, Maryam Sulaiman

Donelle Ryan is sharing her struggle with travelling to Wagga after her husband was given six to 12 months to live, as fuel prices become a burden on top of it all. Mrs Ryan's husband was diagnosed with lung cancer in January 2026 and has had to travel to Wagga for his treatment from Berremangra.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Shortage of VAD doctors limiting the right to die

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 31/03/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 3

A shortage of practitioners, stonewalling religious medical services and a law barring telehealth are preventing some terminally ill patients from accessing voluntary assisted dying (VAD). The latest national report found NSW accounted for almost onethird of Australia's 6621 VAD applications in 2024-25, despite NSW being the last state to legalise the practice, in November 2023.

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'Walk in my shoes for a bit': Cyril's fight to die

Age, General News, 31/03/2026, Henrietta Cook, Page 2

When Cyril Land's voice began to fail, changing overnight into a croaky whisper, his wife, Lee, knew something was wrong. It took another seven months before the Wodonga man received a devastating diagnosis: motor neurone disease. But that was just the first hurdle. Cyril would spend another four months fighting for the right to die on his own terms.

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Not enough doctors for assisted dying

Courier Mail, General News, 31/03/2026, Kate Kyriacou, Page 2

Less than one per cent of Queensland doctors are trained to assess and administer voluntary assisted dying, despite the state having the highest number of people who use it, the annual State of VAD report has revealed. The report, compiled annually by Go Gentle Australia and to be released on Tuesday, found 14,000 people had applied for assisted dying since states first began legalising the process in 2019.

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Lives left in limbo

West Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 15

Robbi Flynn was only 33 when she accessed voluntary assisted dying after a terminal cancer diagnosis but her final weeks in a faith-based public hospital made her ability to have control over her death near impossible. The barriers she faced are one of the key issues highlighted in the latest State of VAD report, compiled by Go Gentle Australia. WA had the second biggest increase in VAD deaths in the country.

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Law quirk hinders rural patients

West Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Page 15

There are increasing calls to end a ban on doctors conducting telehealth consultations about voluntary assisted dying, with advocates saying terminally ill regional patients are dying before they can access in-person care. Commonwealth laws enacted in the 1990s forbid using a carriage servicesuch as phone or the internet to "counsel or incite" suicide, which inadvertently prevents doctors using telehealth to talk to patients about VAD.

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Breakthrough walk for Type 1 diabetes

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 31/03/2026, Denika Anderson, Page 3

A sea of blue swept into Ornamental Lakes on Mildura's riverfront on Sunday as community members gathered to fundraise for Type 1 diabetes research. T1D is a chronic autoimmune condition that can develop at any age, where the pancreas produces little to no insulin by itself, with no current prevention or known cure.

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Families forced overseas for cancer therapy

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 31/03/2026, Tayla Couacaud, Page 6

Queensland families are calling on the government to "do better" and provide urgent access to proton beam therapy for children sick with cancer, who are forced to go overseas for care. The families of a Gold Coast toddler who has a large tumour crushing nerves in her spine, and of a nine-month-old Brisbane boy Danny Bennett, diagnosed with an atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumour (AT/ RT), are among those forking out thousands to head abroad.

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

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Recipe for heart issues

Poor diet remains the leading contributor to heart disease. A team including UNSW researchers team looked at 13 dietary factors, including fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, fibre, seafood, various fatty acids, legumes, red meat, processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, and salt.

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Australian motor neurone disease 'hotspots' identified as deaths jump

The Australian, Other, 30/03/2026, Penny Timms

Researchers who have identified motor neurone disease hotspots want steps to track the condition to help fight its growing prevalence. Deaths from motor neurone disease have tripled in Australia in the past four decades, and scientists have now identified key regional "hotspots" where they say people are more likely to be struck down with the devastating neurological disorder.

Similar coverage reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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The 'horrific' disease hitting regional Aussies hardest

Canberra Times, Other, 30/03/2026, Duncan Murray

Australians in regional areas are far more likely to experience a fatal neurological condition that has soared in prevalence in the past four decades. And exposure to pesticides in agricultural areas could be behind the rise in motor-neurone disease (MND), experts say, with the risk of developing the degenerative condition as much as 40 per cent higher in some parts of the nation.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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MAFS tragedy prompts urgent plea over 'deadliest youth cancer'

NEWS.com.au, Other, 30/03/2026, Naomi Kaplan

Bowel cancer is no longer considered just an "older person's disease" — it's quietly become the deadliest cancer for Australians aged 25 to 54, according to Doctors are urging Aussies to pay close attention to early warning signs, following the heartbreaking death of the reality TV star at just 54.

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

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Channel 9, Nine News, 30/03/2026, Mark Burrows

A Macquarie University study shows deaths from motor neurone disease have more than tripled since the 1980s, rising from 238 in 1986 to 781 in 2023. Rates are higher in regional areas, with researchers pointing to a possible link between farming and increased risk.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Principals cop brunt of class warfare

West Australian, General News, 31/03/2026, Kirsty Lichtenstein, Page 3

Rising violence, extreme workloads and growing rates of depression are pushing WA school principals to throw in the towel, the latest education health and wellbeing survey has revealed. [...] Nationally, severe anxiety rose to 10.3 per cent, up by one per cent on the previous year, while severe depression climbed to 8.2 per cent from 7.2 per cent.

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Violence against school principals almost doubles in 15 years

Canberra Times, General News, 31/03/2026, Allanah Sciberras, Page 11

Principals and school leaders are facing escalating threats, physical violence and bullying, with more than half seriously contemplating leaving their roles. Violence against principals has nearly doubled over the past 15 years, driving a sharp decline in school leaders' health and wellbeing nationwide, according to data from an ongoing Australian Catholic University Survey.

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Nowhere to refer serious patients

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 31/03/2026, Madeleine Bower, Page 4

General practitioners and psychiatrists warn they are struggling to refer serious mental patients into the public health system, leaving thousands of vulnerable people struggling to find care. GPs, who are often the first option for patients with mental illness, say the overwhelmed public system has been increasingly refusing to take referrals of patients that have serious conditions but are not yet in a critical life-threatening condition, with some patients instead left for days on emergency waiting room chairs.

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NSW coroner calls for new gun laws after deaths of Wayne and Noah Smith

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026, Charles Rushforth

The NSW Coroner has recommend new gun laws after an inquest into a murder-suicide in Yamba. [...] The coroner also recommended that gun license applicants with a documented history of suicidal ideation provide a mental health risk assessment from a doctor and a psychologist.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, 10 News, 30/03/2026, Sandra Sully

NSW coroner Teresa O'Sullivan calls for stronger gun licensing laws after investigating a murder-suicide in Yamba, citing severe mental health stressors affecting the father. She recommends tighter firearm reissue checks and allowing GPs to ask patients about gun licences so they can raise safety concerns with police.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, 30/03/2026, Lucy Breaden

Interview with Hobart mother Erin Gavin about finding support for early motherhood challenges through the Gidget Foundation. Gavin says she connected with the foundation after feeling isolated and finds relief through group programs that bring together mums in similar stages. She shares that the experience helps her build connections, learn coping strategies, and improve her mental wellbeing.

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IMMUNISATION

Your immune system begins to change earlier in life than you think so flu shots are key once you turn 50

Hobart Mercury, General News, 31/03/2026, Paul Van Buynder, Page 16

For many Australians, turning 50 doesn't feel like crossing into "older age". Many people feel like they're in the prime of life.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

2SM, Breakfast, 30/03/2026, Tim Webster

Interview with Julian Rait, VP of the Australian Medical Association, about private health insurers entering GP clinics and telehealth. Rait warns that insurers create conflicts of interest by acting as both payer and provider, which can reduce patient choice, affect costs, and influence care pathways. He calls for stronger regulation and a new private health system authority to oversee the sector and protect patients.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Eucalyptus boss says AI can help locals go global

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/03/2026, Paul Smith and Edmund Tadros, Page 11

The co-founder of Eucalyptus says artificial intelligence is making it much easier to expand quickly overseas and could help Australia emerge as a base for successful healthcare start-ups like his own.

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Trial hopes to ease wheeze

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 31/03/2026, Phoebe Griffiths, Page 8

More than 1000 kids have entered a farm-inspired clinical trial to target the leading cause of hospital admissions among preschoolaged children wheezing episodes. The Deakin University study, led by Barwon Health paediatrician Peter Vuillermin is testing whether an oral medication, OM-85, which boosts immunity by delivering a dose of inactive (broken-down) bacteria can be effective in preventing hospital administrations.

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

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Victoria police called to give evidence into Indigenous man's death in custody seek protection from self-incrimination

The Guardian, Other, 30/03/2026

Eleven police officers called to give evidence into the death of an Aboriginal man in custody have sought certificates to protect themselves from self-incrimination. The request from the Victoria police chief commissioner came at the start of a two-week inquest into the death of Noongar man Jeffrey Winmar.

Similar coverage reported by: [SBS \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

ABC, ABC News, 30/03/2026, Greg Jennett

The Yerrabi Yurwang Health Hub in Belconnen is set to close due to a lack of government funding, with its finances running out. The Indigenous health service warns the shutdown will affect hundreds of patients who rely on its culturally safe, bulk-billed care, with future funding uncertain until applications open in July.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Brain doc put on ice

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 31/03/2026, Brad Crouch and Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 1

A neurosurgeon has been removed from "working in a patient-facing role at SA Health" amid investigation into surgery cases, The Advertiser can reveal. Dr Amal Abou-Hamden (pictured) operated on Malekai Croxton, whose case was looked at by two interstate pediatric neurosurgeons for review.

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Coroner slams medics over men's fatalities

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 31/03/2026, Lucy Rutherford, Page 15

A coroner has slammed the treatment of two men who died after repeated visits to the ER, including one who was told by a paramedic he had the "man flu". In his findings, Deputy State Coroner Ian White, who is now a District Court judge, said he found that Hemant Chadha and Sachintha Nandula Battagodage had serious symptoms dismissed or not properly investigated by Adelaide hospitals.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#)

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Hospital sued over Malekai's surgery

Northern Territory News, General News, 31/03/2026, Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 1

When Khloey Djawas brought her little boy to Adelaide's Women's and Children's Hospital from Darwin she was hoping he would be cured after doctors discovered a golf ballsized brain tumour. But one surgery, 10 days after their arrival, left Malekai Croxton, 11, with an acquired brain injury which has prompted Ms Djawas to take legal action against the hospital she trusted to save her son.

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Coroner recommends inclusive language program after dying migrants repeatedly sought help from Adelaide EDs

ABC Online, Other, 30/03/2026

A coroner has recommended the South Australian Ambulance Service (SAAS) consider implementing an inclusive language program after an inquest heard an Indian national was told he was overreacting with the "man flu" in the days before he died of chronic pneumonia. Deputy State Coroner Ian White, now a District Court judge, today handed down his findings after holding an inquest into the deaths of father of two Hemant Chadha, 38, and Sachintha Battagodage, 23, in 2024.

[Read More](#)

Benalla and district ready to support RCH on Good Friday

Shepparton News Online, Other, 30/03/2026, Simon Ruppert

Benalla Fire Brigade members are getting ready for a big day on Good Friday, April 3 as it joins communities across the area to raise funds for the Royal Children's Hospital. Locally, Benalla, Tatong, Devenish, Dookie, Glenrowan and Violet Town will all be digging deep – joining communities across Victoria.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 30/03/2026, Brenton Ragless

A state coroner criticises the treatment of Hemant Chadha and Sachintha Battagodage, who sought medical help before their deaths, prompting calls for changes in ambulance and hospital practices. Recommendations include an inclusive language program for SA Ambulance Service and better documentation, such as adding patient photos to medical records.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

No relevant coverage

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Thresholds to access Low Income Health Care Card and its multiple benefits have changed

West Australian, Other, 30/03/2026

The recent increase in Centrelink payment rates also saw a rise in a number of other important thresholds which could benefit many people not aware of some State and Federal Government concessions. This includes the valuable Low Income Health Care Card and the amount of money you can owe to Centrelink before it will pursue you for overpayment of debts.

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A bigger government, but not a better one

The Mandarin, Other, 30/03/2026, Bernard Keane

Despite federal spending having surged over the past two years, the government's efficiency and capability, and whether taxpayers are getting value for money, have not. The federal government spends too much.

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PBAC accused of 'lack of ambition'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 30/03/2026

Manufacturers of glp-1 medications are stepping up pressure on the federal government to subsidise their products for weight loss Sponsors of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) medications are accusing the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) of not taking obesity seriously, with the body flagging cost as a reason not to subsidise the treatments for weight loss.

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Guild makes pre-budget pitch

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 30/03/2026, Jennifer Jones

Pbs prescribing rights, a freeze on the general co-payment and increases to funding for services on Guild's Budget 2026/27 wish list The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is calling on the federal government to address cost-of-living issues in May's budget by subsidising pharmacist-issued prescriptions under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

[Read More](#)

Closing the Gap PBS scheme boosts uptake

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 30/03/2026

The Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-Payment Program, implemented in 2010, has boosted prescription medication use and reduced out-of-pocket spending among Indigenous Australians, according to research published in JAMA Health Forum. The policy was initially applied to First Nations people with chronic diseases, but was extended to nearly all Indigenous Australians in 2020, and reduced prescription co-payments from \$33.30 to \$5.40 for general patients and no cost for those with concessional status.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Scientist backs weight-loss drugs

Australian Financial Review, General News, 31/03/2026, Myriam Robin, Page 11

Do GLP-1s – the category of weight loss drugs that includes Ozempic and its competitors – make you sad?

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

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Crack NMPA and unlock China – Audeara makes its move

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 30/03/2026, Eddy Sunarto

China's NMPA just became the game everyone has to play Audeara cracks into China with NMPA win Big market big upside for companies, but execution decides [...] It's basically China's version of the FDA in the US or the TGA in Australia – but with its own rules and pace.

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

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Frog poison ceremony leader charged with manslaughter

Canberra Times, Other, 30/03/2026, Tom Wark

A second person has been charged with manslaughter over the death of a man who consumed frog poison and psychedelics at a retreat. [...] It is classified as a Schedule 10 poison by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the highest level of classification, meaning it is completely banned from use.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [7News.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

'Poorly designed' minor drug diversion scheme panned

Canberra Times, Other, 30/03/2026, Alex Mitchell

Less than a quarter of people eligible for a diversion program for minor drug possession incidents are having their matters dealt with outside of court. Crime statistics analysis from NSW, the last Australian

jurisdiction to introduce a drug diversion program, shows nine per cent of nearly 12,000 relevant drug events between February 2024 and March 2025 resulted in a person being diverted from court.

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

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