



TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 2nd April 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](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian \(page 8\)](#)** reports that the Federal Government has passed a new genetics and life insurance bill that will prevent discrimination through denying cover, increasing the cost of premiums, or putting conditions on cover based on genetic testing.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 10\)](#)** reports that the Trump administration has said it has serious concerns about the "unfair" Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) in an escalation of US trade grievances against Australia, listing it in the The United States Trade Representative's annual report as one of the trade "barriers" with Australia.
- **[The Age \(page 15\)](#)** reports that as research has revealed that childhood vaccinations rates are continuing, with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler saying the government was spending \$600 million to supply 31 vaccines covering 18 preventable diseases through the National Immunisation Program.
- **[Hobart Mercury \(page 11\)](#)** reports that almost half of Australians have never switched health insurers missing out on savings of up to \$1387 a year.
- **[The Age \(page 26\)](#)** leads widespread coverage reporting Anthropic has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Federal Government to collaborate on AI safety, share economic data, and support research. Treasurer Jim Chalmers said the government wants to ensure

growing AI and data centre investment "comes with obligations, including natural resource management, water obviously, energy, and a whole range of relevant factors".

- **The Sydney Morning Herald (page 14)** reports that dedicated unit will be established at Westmead Hospital's emergency department to manage aggressive and high-risk patients amid rising incidents of violence in hospitals. Health Minister Ryan Park and Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson said the unit forms part of broader measures to improve safety for staff and patients, including increased security and specialised care environments.

MINISTER BUTLER

New laws passed, now's the time to begin mass testing

The Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, Jane Tiller, Page 8

The government's genetics and life insurance bill, which passed through parliament on Wednesday, will ensure discrimination through denying cover, increasing the cost of premiums, or putting conditions on cover, will now be confined to history, where it should be. [...] To Health Minister Mark Butler: now that we have laws protecting Australians against life insurance discrimination, it is time to invest in population-wide DNA screening for disease prevention in adults.

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

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US slams Australia's quotas for streaming, PBS in list of trade grievances

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/04/2026, Michael Koziol, Page 10

The Trump administration has serious concerns about the Albanese government's new local content rules for streaming platforms and the "unfair" Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), in an escalation of US trade grievances against Australia. The United States Trade Representative's annual report, released on Tuesday (US time), adds several items to the list of trade "barriers" with Australia, chiefly concerning government interventions in the market that would largely impact American tech companies. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has previously said the government wants Australians to pay less for medicine.

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

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'Crisis point': 80,000 children left unprotected as vaccines fall again

Age, General News, 02/04/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 15

Childhood vaccination coverage has fallen for the fifth year in a row, leaving tens of thousands of children unprotected against a resurgence in preventable diseases, including measles and whooping cough. The trend has alarmed experts who warn Australia has not seen worse vaccination coverage for more than a decade. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said government was spending \$600 million to supply 31 vaccines covering 18 preventable diseases through the National Immunisation Program.

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

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April 1 no joke when it comes to private health cost rises

West Australian, Other, 01/04/2026, Stephen Johnson

April Fool's Day is certainly no joke when it comes to private health insurance. Average private health care premiums are rising by 4.4 per cent on April 1, up from a 3.7 per cent increase that came into effect this time last year. [...] This follows a decision from Health Minister Mark Butler made on February 17, nine days before the US air strikes on Iran pushed up fuel prices, where he argued a bigger average increase in premiums was justified to reflect "increasing wage bills and securing the viability of private hospitals".

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Thenightly.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Augusta-Margaret River Times \(Online\)](#),

Insurer loyalty costs us big

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/04/2026, Blair Jackson, Page 11

Almost half of Australians have never switched health insurers, new research shows, as premiums were hiked on average 4.4 per cent on Wednesday. Canstar analysis shows switching from the average to the cheapest gold hospital cover can save \$1387 a year. [...] Announcing the approval of all price increases in February, Health Minister Mark Butler said the government asked insurers to "resubmit their premium requests multiple times".

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Free dental clinic helps Adelaide residents access care in cost-of-living crisis

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

Dental care often takes the back seat for vulnerable people who are struggling with the cost of living. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said it was unable to "bring dental into Medicare" in the immediate future, but in October dedicated nearly \$4 million to five oral health research projects.

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Why your household could be hit by a bill hike trifecta this month

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

Millions of Australian households will be hit with a trifecta of price hikes this month, with increases to health insurance premiums, energy bills and mortgage repayments taking effect from today. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said insurers were sent back to the drawing board "multiple" times before the hike was approved, reflecting the rising cost of healthcare.

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Medical colleges set national standards on ethical billing, fee transparency

Insight, Other, 01/04/2026

The nation's 16 specialist medical colleges have set new national standards on ethical billing and fee transparency after specialist care was delayed for more than 800,000 Australians last year. [...] CPMC chair Associate Professor Kerin Fielding, a practising orthopaedic surgeon who has served the Wagga Wagga community for more than 30 years, and the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ms Rebecca White launched the framework at a two-day summit at Parliament House in March 2026.

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Health insurance, electricity bills, fuel: All the major money changes happening on April 1

MSN Australia, Other, 01/04/2026, Tamika Seeto

Aussies will be hit with a raft of price hikes and money changes from today. Increases to health insurance premiums, energy bills and mortgage repayments will all come into effect this month. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the increase reflected the rising costs of providing medical and hospitality services, which rose by 5 per cent last financial year.

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Aussie households set for a triple-whammy bill price hike from today

MSN Australia, Other, 01/04/2026, Maddison Leach

Australians are set for a triple-whammy of price hikes across health insurance premiums, energy bills and mortgage repayments starting from today. The average cost of private health insurance is set to [...] Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler said it reflected the rising costs of providing medical and hospital services, increasing wage bills and securing the viability of private hospitals.

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Medicare now offering free mental health support

OverSixty, Other, 01/04/2026, Damien Pelletier

Australians can now access a free early mental health support service through a new federal government initiative, with the first stage of the Medicare Mental Health Check In program offering no cost mental health therapy. The program is designed to work like a GP check-up, giving people guided support through sessions delivered by phone or video call to help manage anxiety, low mood and everyday challenges, with the goal of preventing symptoms from escalating. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said early intervention could ease pressure on the broader system.

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Seven novel drugs hit the PBS

Pharma In Focus, Other, 01/04/2026

Seven novel drugs have been added to the PBS as of today, with BMS pulling off two wins. BMS's JAK inhibitor Inrebic has been listed for the treatment of adults diagnosed with intermediate-2 or high-risk primary myelofibrosis, post polycythaemia vera myelofibrosis, or post-essential thrombocythemia myelofibrosis who are JAK inhibitor naïve or post ruxolitinib or another JAK inhibitor. [...] "Instead of paying \$5,000 for every script for this treatment, again, they'll pay no more than \$25," Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, told Question Time in Parliament last week Tiffany Walker

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Wegovy approved to treat severe fatty liver disease

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

Experts say the TGA's provisional approval of the new indication could help slow disease progression, alongside other early intervention strategies. A GP expert says the new approval is a much-needed start 'for supporting earlier diagnosis and early intervention. [...] Earlier this week, Federal Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler said 'there is no doubt that GLP-1s have the ability to reshape our approach to chronic disease'.

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What impact will new Medicare telehealth therapy have?

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

Patients can access the free Government telehealth service with no GP referral – but there are queries about how it will work. A telehealth therapy for 'emerging mental illness' is now available through the new Medicare Mental Health Check-In. [...] Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler called it 'a major milestone' in the reform of mental health services, saying the type of service has been recommended by inquiries and experts 'for years'.

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Applause at healthcare summit exposes growing funding tension

The Medical Republic, Other, 01/04/2026, Caitlin Wright

A call to confront the 'elephant in the room' on NDIS funding drew spontaneous applause from healthcare leaders, exposing deep tensions over who the system is really serving. When a room of healthcare leaders breaks into spontaneous applause during the Australian Financial Review Healthcare Summit, it's a sign something deeper is simmering beneath the surface. [...] Earlier in the morning, federal health minister Mark Butler admitted the scheme was off track.

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Free mental telehealth sessions now up for grabs

The Medical Republic, Other, 01/04/2026, Helen Tobler

The Medicare Mental Health Check In is now live, and the service will be expanded to include self-paced online therapy at the end of May. Free mental health therapy is now available through the federal government's Medicare Mental Health Check In, which will be expanded to include self-guided sessions in two months. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler said a "missing piece of the mental health jigsaw puzzle in Australia" was a support service for mild to moderate and temporary distress.

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Free Medicare Mental Health Check In and therapy now available online

WEB Hearing Practitioner Australia, Other, 01/04/2026, Helen Carter

Free mental health therapy supported by trained practitioners is now available through the Medicare Mental Health Check In, giving people access to early mental health support. Like a 'check-up' for mental health, the Medicare Mental Health Check In aims to help prevent symptoms from escalating and frees up specialist services for those who need them most. [...] Minister for Health and Ageing, Disability and the NDIS, Mr Mark Butler said the start of guided therapy delivered by Medicare Mental Health Check In was "a major milestone in reform of mental health services in Australia".

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ABC, ABC News , 01/04/2026, Briana Shepherd

News 80,000 Australian children aged five and under aren't up to date with their vaccinations. It's a trend that's worsened every year since 2020.

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ABC, ABC News , 01/04/2026, Briana Shepherd

News The Prime Minister has delivered a rare address to the nation amid the crisis in the Middle East, urging Australians to start conserving fuel if they can. The war, now well into its fifth week, is sending shockwaves around the globe, disrupting oil supplies, sending petrol and diesel prices soaring.

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ABC News, ABC Late News , 01/04/2026

News The war is sending shockwaves around the globe, disrupting oil supplies and sending petrol and diesel prices soaring. Anthony Albertisi sought to reassure Australians while warning the months ahead may not be easy.

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ABC News, ABC Nightly News, 01/04/2026, Yvonne Yong

News More than 80,000 Australian children aged five and under aren't up to date with their vaccinations. It's a trend that's worsened every year since 2020.

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ABC News, ABC Nightly News, 01/04/2026, Yvonne Yong

News Good evening, Yvonne Yong with ABC News coming to you from the land of the Wurundjeri people. The Prime Minister has delivered a rare address to the nation amid the crisis in the Middle East, urging Australians to start conserving fuel if they can.

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ABC News, The World, 01/04/2026, Girish Sawlani

News It's a trend that's worsened every year since 2020. Experts worry the low rates will lead to more severe illness and deaths from preventable diseases.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 01/04/2026, Catherine Murphy and James Glenday

Interview with Federal Cabinet Minister Mark Butler, about US President Donald Trump's comments that allies should go get their own oil if they are worried about high fuel prices. Butler points out that there's only one reason why the Strait of Hormuz is closed, and that's because of the conflict being waged between the US, Israel, and Iran. He adds that they are confident about the future of AUKUS and Trump's administration more broadly, as Congress has made clearer its commitments to that important security partnership between the US and Australia.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 01/04/2026, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

A wave of cost-of-living increases has taken effect today, April 1, 2026, headlined by the expiration of the Federal Government's energy bill rebates and a 4.41% hike in private health insurance premiums. Health Minister Mark Butler defended the shift, stating that moving away from temporary subsidies toward "sustainable" structural reforms in Medicare and the PBS is necessary for the budget.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 01/04/2026, Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington

Interview with Minister for Health Mark Butler, about US President Donald Trump asking other countries to get fuel for themselves. Butler admits that they need the Strait of Hormuz to be opened to get fuel, as 20% of the world's oil supply is currently being locked up there due to the conflict that Trump is waging against Iran. He states that they are hopeful that the war in the Strait would de-escalate as Australia or any other country in Asia are not the one that are stirring conflict there.

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Channel 9, Today , 01/04/2026, Karl Stefanovic and Sarah Abo

Panel discussion with Minister for Health Mark Butler and Nationals leader Matt Canavan, about the fuel excise cut that will take effect from today. Butler says that an average tank will be \$19 cheaper than it otherwise would have been. He admits that prices will continue to jump because 20% of the global oil has been locked up behind the Strait of Hormuz.

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ABC Sunshine Coast, Breakfast, 01/04/2026, Tim Wong-See

Health Minister Mark Butler is ramping up public education efforts as new data confirms a five-year decline in Australian childhood vaccination rates. With coverage for two-year-olds falling below the critical 90% threshold for the first time in a decade, the government is expanding the Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign to rebuild public trust and combat a surge in online misinformation that has driven national immunisation levels well below the 95% herd immunity target.

Also reported by: [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#), [Radio National \(Canberra\)](#).

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JOY 94.9 FM, 09:00 News, 01/04/2026

The Federal Government has launched the Medicare Mental Health Check-in, a new bulk-billed service offering free, early-intervention support for Australians dealing with anxiety and everyday stress. Health Minister Mark Butler told the ABC he expects 150,000 people annually to utilise the 20-minute "mental health physicals," which aim to provide immediate guidance and reduce the growing burden on specialised psychological services.

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ABC NewsRadio, Drive, 01/04/2026, Dijana Damjanovic

Interview with Elizabeth Devaney, Consumers Health Forum. Damjanovic says Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler has said the approved private health insurance premium increase of 4.41% reflected the rising costs of providing medical and hospital services, increasing wage bills and securing the viability of private hospitals. Devaney reports that one in three Australians are unsure if they can afford healthcare in the event of serious illness due to rising costs and opaque insurance policies. She states the complexity of the policy 'jungle' is leading to widespread consumer frustration and confusion.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, 01/04/2026, Steve Austin

Interview with Private Healthcare Australia CEO Dr Rachel David. Austin notes private health insurance premiums will rise on average 4.41% this year. David says the increase is a strictly regulated process requiring sign-off from Health Minister Mark Butler to ensure fund viability. She notes that while health inflation is currently at 5%, the increase is necessary to cover rising costs in private hospitals for wages, power, and food.

MINISTER MCALLISTER

Salt 106.5, The Morning Wake-up with Jordana, 01/04/2026, Nathan 'Nato' Sauer

NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister has announced a significant crackdown on rogue operators, with banned providers now facing up to five years in prison if they continue to deliver services under the scheme. These criminal penalties are part of a broader suite of NDIS integrity reforms designed to eliminate "phoenixing" and protect vulnerable participants from providers who have been formally barred for fraud, safety breaches, or poor conduct.

Also reported by: [Artsound FM \(Canberra\)](#).

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MINISTER RAE

Aged care fail

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 35

Weekend papers across the nation exposed the problems that the new aged care reforms are causing for vulnerable elderly Australians trying to remain in their own homes with services to maintain their comfort and a sense of wellbeing. Many are now having to choose between a meal delivered or having a shower. [...] The Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, Sam Rae, has been inundated with complaints.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Cessnock Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#).

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More aged care beds

The Local Paper - Eastern Suburbs, General News, 01/04/2026, Page 49

Ageing Australia welcomes the Federal Government's latest commitment to build more aged care beds. The additional investment is another step towards increasing capacity in the aged care sector, as demand spirals. Mark Butler, Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing, and Sam Rae, the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, have announced \$115m through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program.

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Funding welcome

The Local Paper - Lilydale and Yarra Valley Expres, General News, 01/04/2026, Page 53

The Older Persons Advocacy Network welcomes the Federal Government's investment of an additional \$115 million through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program, to deliver more aged care beds in select hotspots. [...] Mark Butler, Minister for Health, Disability, and Ageing, and Sam Rae, the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, have announced \$115m through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program.

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Older Australians need support

CQ Today, General News, 01/04/2026, Michelle Landry, Page 13

Judging by the calls to my electorate offices in Rockhampton and Sarina as well as those who have spoken to me at markets and mobile offices it is clear that the Albanese Labor Government has failed and continues to fail older Australians. Last week I joined with my Coalition colleagues and others from right across the Parliament to write a letter to the Albanese Government demanding action on its flawed assessment algorithm that is overriding clinical judgement on seniors' needs, as well as rising

administrative costs and rationed care. [...] The Labor Minister for Aged Care and Seniors is The Hon Sam Rae, and he has been completely missing in action, and it is clear he has no plan to fix these problems.

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“Worse off”: Why Australia's aged care reforms are facing backlash

The Australian Women's Weekly, Other, 01/04/2026, Melody Teh

Is the new aged care system failing older Australians? More than 100 federal politicians from across the political spectrum are calling on the government to urgently fix Australia's aged care system, warning it is leaving some older Australians worse off. [...] In a rare show of unity, politicians from the Liberal, National, Greens and crossbench have written to Minister for Ageing and Seniors Sam Rae, outlining what they describe as serious and immediate problems.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

No relevant coverage

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

Medical colleges set national standards on ethical billing, fee transparency

Insight, Other, 01/04/2026

The nation's 16 specialist medical colleges have set new national standards on ethical billing and fee transparency after specialist care was delayed for more than 800,000 Australians last year. [...] CPMC chair Associate Professor Kerin Fielding, a practising orthopaedic surgeon who has served the Wagga Wagga community for more than 30 years, and the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ms Rebecca White launched the framework at a two-day summit at Parliament House in March 2026.

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Australia records 10% annual drop in live organ donations

The Limbic, Other, 01/04/2026, Geir O Rourke

Australia's living organ donation rate has fallen 35% since the Organ and Tissue Authority was established 17 years ago, with advocates warning a new national strategy to reverse the trend remains unfunded. New data from the OTA shows 230 living donors came forward in 2025, a 9% drop on the year before, leaving more than 1,500 Australians waiting more than five years for a kidney transplant. [...] Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Rebecca White said increasing living donation was a key goal of the new national organ donation, retrieval and transplantation strategy, but did not respond to questions about whether it would receive funding in the upcoming federal budget.

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

No relevant coverage

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DEPARTMENT

Endometriosis S clinic improving health outcomes

Latrobe Valley Express, General News, 01/04/2026, Page 9

A new Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinic (EPPC) is now open in Gippsland. The clinic is a joint venture between Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN) and Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS). [...] The clinic is funded by the federal government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and delivered by Latrobe Community Health Service.

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Perinatal mental health challenges for regional families

Naracoorte Community News, General News, 01/04/2026, Triple, Page 6

Professor Alina Morawska, director of The University of Queensland's Parenting and Family Support Centre and Triple P for Baby co-author, said an estimated 1 in every 5 women and 1 in 10 fathers or non-birth partners experience anxiety, depression, or both during pregnancy and/or following birth. "A lack of access to specialist perinatal mental health care in rural and remote settings, ongoing weather events, financial strain, and social isolation can further compound the challenges faced by new parents and carers in regional and remote areas. [...] Delivery of the Triple P Positive Parenting Program to parents and carers of children in Australia is supported by funding from the Australian government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Parenting Education and Support Program.

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Shire president vows jobs safe with new care provider

Narrogin Observer, General News, 02/04/2026, Hannah Whitehead, Page 9

Narrogin's shire president has moved to allay the job security fears of regional homecare ancillary workers, who have expressed concern they will be dropped in the shire's transition to an external national provider. Leigh Ballard confirmed Silverchain, which has been approved to take over the shire-run Narrogin Regional Homecare service, would keep on ancillary workers. [...] The transition period will take effect after Department of Health, Disability and Ageing approval.

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Coordination needed to futureproof care economy

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 01/04/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Technology has an important role to play in addressing challenges in the care economy, but solutions must be co-designed, Care Economy CRC CEO Carmela Sergi tells AAA. Australia's population is ageing but workforce shortages, long waitlists to access home care, residential aged care bed shortages and a complex regulatory landscape have made it difficult for the sector to keep up with demand. [...] In particular, she said she was looking forward to seeing Department of Health, Disability and Ageing chief digital information officer Fay Flevaras speak and attending the panel on building a connected aged care system.

[Read More](#)

Mahler & Tchaikovsky with Sergei Nakariakov (Relaxed Performance)

Beat Magazine, Other, 01/04/2026, Jessica Butterworth

This performance is filled to the brim with musical highlights, but it's likely that your eyes darted straight to the word flugelhorn. [...] The MSO's relaxed performances receive funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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Community members appointed to guide national Autism strategy

Freedom2Live, Other, 01/04/2026, Heidi Bain

The Federal Government has appointed a dedicated group of community members to serve as a reference group for the National Autism Strategy. This initiative is designed to ensure autistic people feel safe, included, and empowered to thrive by establishing a framework to improve long-term outcomes across the country. [...] The community reference group consists of six people from the autistic community, two autistic individuals from the research and professional sector, and 6 officials

from relevant Commonwealth agencies, including a co-chair from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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Government revises physical activity guide to '24-hour movement'

Freedom2Live, Other, 01/04/2026, Heidi Bain

In 1999, the Government launched physical activity guidelines for Australians, providing benchmark times for the minimum amount of cardiovascular (aerobic fitness) and muscle strengthening activity required for good health. In 2014, the guidelines were rebranded as the Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines to bring awareness to the health risks associated with sedentary lifestyles and prolonged sitting. [...] Also, the Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has formally incorporated sleep into the advice.

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Medical colleges set national standards on ethical billing, fee transparency

Insight, Other, 01/04/2026

The nation's 16 specialist medical colleges have set new national standards on ethical billing and fee transparency after specialist care was delayed for more than 800,000 Australians last year. [...] CPMC chair Associate Professor Kerin Fielding, a practising orthopaedic surgeon who has served the Wagga Wagga community for more than 30 years, and the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ms Rebecca White launched the framework at a two-day summit at Parliament House in March 2026.

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Andrew Denton urges federal government to remove barriers blocking fair access to VAD

Medianet, Other, 01/04/2026

Over 100 stakeholders attended the 2026 State of VAD Report release, which found Commonwealth policies are hindering fair access [...] These include: • The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has a national Palliative Care Strategy which does not reference VAD .

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Report calls for telehealth reform in voluntary assisted dying

Pulse+IT, Other, 01/04/2026, Heather Fletcher

Restrictions on the use of telehealth and electronic communications are continuing to limit access to voluntary assisted dying (VAD), particularly for patients in rural and remote areas, a new report has found. The 2026 State of VAD Voluntary Assisted Dying in Australia and New Zealand report by Go Gentle Australia, identifies the Commonwealth Criminal Code as a key structural barrier, prohibiting the use of electronic communications in VAD care. [...] These include: • The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has a national Palliative Care Strategy which does not reference VAD.

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Just one in three patients have heard of MyMedicare

The Medical Republic, Other, 01/04/2026

The ambitious voluntary patient enrolment scheme appears to have stalled. Despite its promise to fundamentally change the way patients access care, two in three Medicare-card-holding Australians still have no idea what MyMedicare is, data from the 2025 National Consumer Sentiment Survey report shows. [...] MyMedicare was launched in October 2023 and fits into the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's larger plan to move general practice care beyond fee-for-service.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Drive, 01/04/2026, Nikolai Beilharz

Interview with Go Gentle founder Andrew Denton. Denton discusses how the Commonwealth Criminal Code currently prohibits doctors from using telehealth or digital services to discuss voluntary assisted

dying with patients. He notes the Department of Health Disability and Ageing has a national palliative care strategy, but it does not reference VAD, and there is no alternative strategy that does.

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ABC Radio Melbourne, Mornings , 01/04/2026, Raf Epstein

Interview with Services Australia General Manager Hank Jongen. Jongen says their call wait times currently have remained steady, despite having to divert staff for the provision of emergency support. He explains that the administration of aged care packages falls within the responsibility of the Department of Health Disability and Ageing, and the job of Services Australia is simply to assess one's income to work out how much they will need to pay.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 01/04/2026, Thomas Oriti

Interview with Dr Martin Laverty, Aruma Disability Services. Laverty discusses the impact of the fuel crisis on the disability sector. He mentions their constructive discussions with the National Disability Insurance Agency the Department of Health Disability and Ageing in recent days and he is optimistic about that NDIS providers will be considered essential services.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Supported carers work when and where they want

Australian Financial Review, Features, 02/04/2026, Sian Powell, Page 11

Health services startup Five Good Friends offers a wide range of technology-enabled in-home services for elderly an...

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Southern Cross Care underpaid workers \$11.7m: Fair Work

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 02/04/2026, Eliza Barr

An aged care and retirement living provider underpaid more than 5500 staff millions of dollars, uncovered when the NSW and ACT company self-audited in 2023. Southern Cross Care, a not-for-profit aged care, home care and retirement living provider, has rectified the vast majority of underpayments, including interest and superannuation, to all employees it can find after a self-audit revealed the issue in 2023, which it self-reported.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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A \$1387 mistake Aussies make

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/04/2026, Blair Jackson, Page 15

Almost half of Australians have never switched health insurers, research shows, as premiums rose on average 4.4 per cent on Wednesday. Canstar analysis shows switching from the average to the cheapest gold hospital cover can save \$1387 a year.

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Elderly man accused of killing fellow care home resident allowed to remain in care as case progresses

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

A magistrate has ruled an 84-year-old man with dementia accused of the manslaughter of a fellow care home resident can remain in care at the facility without bail as the case progresses.

Man, 84, accused of aged care killing released back to same facility

NEWS.com.au, Other, 01/04/2026, Kate Stephenson

An elderly man accused of killing a fellow resident will be released back to the aged care home where his alleged victim died.

[Read More](#)

Three bids for Estia Health, but Bain leans toward relisting

The Weekly Source, Other, 01/04/2026, Caroline Egan

Just over two years after acquiring Estia Health for \$838 million, Bain Capital has reportedly received bids of up to \$2.7 billion for the aged care operator. Opal HealthCare, Australia's largest aged care operator, has offered about \$2.4 billion for 100% of Estia, according to The Australian Financial Review.

[Read More](#)

Aged care workers forgo shifts due to soaring petrol prices

The Weekly Source, Other, 01/04/2026, Caroline Egan

The peak body for aged care providers has welcomed the Government's decisions to cut the fuel excise by 26 cents a litre and remove road user charges – but said more support is needed. The fuel crisis caused by the war in the Middle East sent the average retail petrol price to \$253.

[Read More](#)

Sector “sleepwalking into the future”: Tom Symondson at 2026 LEADERS SUMMIT

The Weekly Source, Other, 01/04/2026, Caroline Egan

Designed three decades ago, Australia's aged care sector must now confront a new set of challenges, according to the CEO of Ageing Australia. Following on from presentations by St Vincent's Health Australia CEO Chris Blake and CBA Chief Economist Luke Yeaman on Day 1 of the LEADERS SUMMIT, Tom Symondson said the 2025 reforms have delivered certainty for the sector, but not created a better future for ageing Australians.

[Read More](#)

IRT moves forward with intergenerational retirement community

The Weekly Source, Other, 01/04/2026, Ian Horswill

The Illawarra-based Not For Profit has lodged a State Significant Development Application with the NSW Government for its site in Moruya, a town 305km south of central Sydney. As The Weekly SOURCE reported in January, the plans include a large-scale precinct combining retirement living, residential aged care, onsite worker accommodation and community facilities.

[Read More](#)

Care minute penalties from 1 April could force bed closures

The Weekly Source, Other, 01/04/2026, Caroline Egan

Two peak bodies are warning more aged care beds could close as a result of financial penalties being introduced this week. From 1 April 2026, non-specialised aged care homes operating in metro areas will face reductions in their AN-ACC funding if they fail to meet mandatory care minute targets

[Read More](#)[Back to Top](#)

DISABILITY AND CARERS

Meals on Wheels, TransitCare smashed by high fuel costs, need government support

General motorists are paying more and more for petrol but there are even dire impacts on other Queenslanders. Queensland charities are being pushed to the brink by high fuel prices, including a transit service now paying \$45,000 more every month.

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

[Read More](#)

Gym buddy or dance partner

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/04/2026, Jacinta Round, Page 20

The entrepreneur behind a "tag along companion service", offers his services, from a dance partner to gym buddy, for \$100 per hour.

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

Regulators failed to act on warnings about Perth NDIS operator

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 01/04/2026, Carla Hildebrandt

Regulators were warned twice about an NDIS-linked operator now embroiled in liquidations, litigation and claims of missing money, with Home Affairs refusing to say what it did the first time it was made aware of the situation, and ASIC declining to act on the second warning.

[Read More](#)

Australian schools are getting \$5bn a year in disability funding – search the list and get expert tips on accessing support for your child

Northern Territory News, Other, 01/04/2026

Nearly one in three students are now classed as disabled, reaping billions of dollars in extra funding for schools. See how much top private schools get and how your child can access more support.

[Read More](#)

Telethon: How Down Syndrome WA helped 'besties' Madeleine and Daisy find friendship for life

West Australian, Other, 01/04/2026, Jay Hanna

Madeleine and Daisy don't like it if you refer to them simply as friends.

[Read More](#)

Hannah's House helping provide care for little Honey, who has an ultra-rare disease, and respite for family

West Australian, Other, 01/04/2026, Claire Sadler

Honey Goebel was born with cardiofaciocutaneous (CFC) syndrome, which only affects around 400 people worldwide. Credit: Ian Munro The West Australian Many children like to carry something around with them — a beloved blankie, a favourite toy or an ever-present pacifier.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, A Current Affair, 01/04/2026, Allison Langdon

Plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr Justin Perrin has said surgery in Australia costs more than overseas due to insurance, hospital fees and aftercare. Perrin has said the Medicare rebates do not reflect those prices.

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PRIMARY CARE

Healthscope landlords propose break-up of private hospital giant

Age, Business News, 02/04/2026, Colin Kruger, Page 24

Healthscope's landlords and a consortium of hospital operators have proposed to break up Australia's second-largest private hospital operator after landlords failed to reach a deal with receivers over proposed rent reductions. Under the proposal sent to receivers yesterday by Canadian landlord Northwest Healthcare and ASX-listed HMC Capital, 16 of the company's remaining 28 hospitals would be operated by not-for-profit firm Calvary Health Care.

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

Mackay Private Hospital closing in June

Courier Mail, General News, 02/04/2026, Paul Brescia, Page 18

A private hospital in Mackay is closing its doors in June, pulling 30 beds out of the city and pushing more patients into the crippled public system. Aurora Healthcare's Mackay Private Hospital will not renew its lease from June 16 at Mount Pleasant, citing "rising operating and maintenance costs".

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

South-west residents pleased with device

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 02/04/2026, William Stanley, Page 4

The Koroit community will be feeling safer thanks to the installation of a life-saving device. Paramedic Tara Boyce and Moyne Shire mayor Jordan Lockett were present last week to unveil a new automated external defibrillator (AED), which is a heart-starting device used in cardiac arrest cases.

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

Hopes nurse practitioners will ease burden on regional GPs amid health care crisis

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

A government pilot program is providing free nurse practitioner appointments at a clinic in Mount Gambier.

[Read More](#)

Qld's hospitals tackle health of patients and planet in emission reduction efforts

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

A focus on environmental sustainability by Queensland's public healthcare system has birthed innovative programs aimed to reduce the sectors carbon emissions.

[Read More](#)

Regional Australians disappointed by Vodafone ad claiming 'nothing's out here'

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

A new ad campaign by telco Vodafone says "nothing's out here" in remote Australia, sparking outrage from regional and rural community members.

[Read More](#)

Does this graph answer 40 years of political wrangling over who stuffed Medicare?

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/04/2026, Antony Scholefield

So, who is to blame for the slow erosion of patients' GP Medicare rebates compared with the actual cost of living — and has it now been fixed? The following graph was compiled by Professor Stephen Duckett, the former director of the Grattan Institute's health program

[Read More](#)

Is a patient backlash brewing against GPs who use AI scribes?

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/04/2026, Carmel Sparke

'People realised the scribe was being used when it had never been discussed,' says Consumers Health Forum CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny. The patient consent process for AI scribes is patchy and

frequently inadequate, with some GP practices relying solely on waiting-room signs, a patient group says.

[Read More](#)

Fuel shortages pose emerging risks for pharmacy

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 01/04/2026, Jorgia Burke

As fuel costs climb and shortages loom, community pharmacies are facing mounting uncertainty on supply chains, workforce mobility, and equitable patient access. Fuel shortages and escalating petrol costs are emerging as a significant disruptor for Australian workforces – including pharmacists, with exposure to the downstream impacts potentially affecting medicines delivery, patient access to care and workforce logistics.

[Read More](#)

Nurses push to run urgent care clinics

Medical Forum, Other, 01/04/2026

Nurses have issued a call to run urgent care clinics in a bid to plug staffing gaps, but GP leaders have spoken against the proposal. The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) has called on the federal government to revise guidelines to allow nurse practitioners to lead care independently in the clinics, however the head of the RACGP told Medical Forum the Medicare UCC model should always involve a GP.

[Read More](#)

Optimising MHR viewing platforms

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 01/04/2026

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has collaborated with the Australian Digital Health Agency to develop a new guide on improving user experience in My Health Record (MHR) viewing platforms in time-critical settings. The Usability Guidance for Optimising My Health Record Viewing Platforms in Acute Care provides practical recommendations for health services and software vendors to improve interface design and navigation.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, A Current Affair, 01/04/2026, Allison Langdon

Monique Jeremiah is trolling her old NDIS clients online and leaking their private information. Advocates say she should not be allowed near anyone with a disability.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Why stigma, not bans, is best way to curb smartphone addiction

The Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, James Marriott, Page 13

The success of the indoor smoking ban, writer Will Storr has argued, was less to reduce passive smoking than to force smokers to repeatedly ostracise themselves from their friends over the course of an evening in the pub. By sending smokers outside, the ban nudged them towards the "periphery of their social networks".

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

The game changer drug to beat meth

West Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, Hannah Cross, Page 16

A common antidepressant could be the key to treating methamphetamine addiction, a landmark Australian research trial has found. The clinical trial, of 339 adults with moderate to severe methamphetamine use disorder, found those who took the antidepressant mirtazapine over a 12week period reduced their risk of drug use by almost 10 per cent.

New Tasmanian study links walkable towns to major community health boost

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 01/04/2026, Duncan Abey

New Tasmanian research has revealed a link between connected footpath networks and community health, with residents living in "walkable" regional towns found to exercise more than an hour extra each week.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Shayna Jack dives in to take on young risky drinking

Canberra Times, Other, 01/04/2026, Nick Wilson

When Olympic swimmer Shayna Jack was accused of a doping violation, it felt as if her world was falling apart. The Brisbane-born athlete, then 20, was sent home from the 2019 world championships in South Korea for failing an out-of-competition drug test. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the share of young women drinking to risky levels increased from 35 per cent to 40 per cent between 2019 and 2022/23.

[Read More](#)

Guest editorial: Our duty of care extends beyond death

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (hereafter 'death certificate') is an important medicolegal document; however, many medical practitioners receive little formal training regarding its completion. It is important for legal reasons, for statistical and public health purposes and for family members of the deceased.

[Read More](#)

Medication abortion in South Australia: A missed opportunity in general practice

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

Nationally, legislative changes and regulatory reform support increased access to medication abortion within community and primary care settings. General practitioners (GPs) are well placed to provide this care, but the extent to which this is occurring remains unclear; here we seek to explore the experiences of consumers who accessed abortion care in South Australia between June 2023 and March 2024.

[Read More](#)

The menopause consultation

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

The menopausal transition is a time of hormonal chaos. Many women will present to their general practitioner (GP) seeking help and advice.

[Read More](#)

Demystifying menopausal hormone therapy prescribing

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026, Karen Magraith

Menopause and perimenopause are associated with vasomotor symptoms and other symptoms that can affect quality of life. Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) improves menopausal symptoms and reduces the risk of osteoporosis and fracture.

[Read More](#)

2GB, Breakfast, 01/04/2026, Ben Fordham

A landmark University of NSW study has concluded that nicotine-based e-cigarettes are likely to cause lung and oral cancer. The comprehensive review of global evidence found "unequivocal" signs of DNA damage and pre-cancerous cellular changes in vapers, independent of tobacco use. Researchers

warned that while long-term population data will take decades to fully quantify, the biological evidence is strong enough to warrant immediate regulatory action to prevent a repeat of the historical delay in recognising the harms of smoking.

[Play Now](#)

3AW, Mornings, 01/04/2026, Tom Elliott

Interview with University of Melbourne endocrinologist and Emeritus Professor Joseph Proietto. Proietto argues that the PBS should subsidise medications such as Ozempic and Mounjaro to support long-term weight maintenance, as hormonal changes make it difficult for patients to sustain weight loss naturally. While prices have decreased, with Ozempic pens now costing approximately \$145 per month, the Professor notes that the current high costs for higher-dose treatments like Mounjaro remain a significant barrier for the federal budget and consumers.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Life insurers banned from genetic test discrimination

The Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, James Dowling, Page 8

Life insurers have been banned from discriminating against customers based on genetic screening information, after a long-promised bill was passed into law and heralded as lifesaving. Genetic tests show an individual's probability of developing certain diseases, based on their genes, and how heritable those genes are.

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Skin cancer prevention

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 7

Ahead of the Easter long weekend, the Cancer Council is urging Australians to protect their skin from dangerous UV rays to prevent future skin cancers. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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Kids' cancer defences

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 9

Researchers have mapped a deadly childhood cancer, showing it uses "shields" and "bodyguards" to protect itself, paving the way for new treatments. University of Queensland researchers used cutting-edge technology to map the biology of neuroblastoma a cancer that typically develops in children under the age of 5 finding a hidden "shield" the tumours use as protection.

Also reported by: [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#).

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'You've been warned' – New study links vaping to cancer

2GB, Other, 01/04/2026, Ben Fordham

New research has revealed vaping is "likely" to cause cancer. A group of Australian scientists have just completed the most comprehensive analysis of existing evidence.

[Read More](#)

The pharmacy guild's uterus stunt shows everything that's wrong with pharmacist prescribing

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/04/2026, Louise Stone

Doctors' concerns about misdiagnoses and missed diagnoses have failed to slow the pharmacist

prescribing juggernaut, with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia continuing to fight for pharmacists to provide GP-level care in a retail setting. Here, prominent GP and academic Professor Louise Stone gives her arguments against the guild's plan and explains why GPs have struggled to make their case to politicians based on patient safety.

[Read More](#)

Vaping likely causes cancer: Australian review

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/04/2026, Kate Cowling

An Australian team of researchers, including pharmacists, say a review of published studies shows e-cigarettes or nicotine vapes are likely to cause two types of cancer.

[Read More](#)

Women's pain: pelvic pain and primary dysmenorrhoea

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 01/04/2026

Pharmacists are often "the first port of call" for women with pelvic pain. Knowing the relevant medicines, red flags and when to refer are top of the list on how to help Pelvic pain in women is common and pharmacists have an important role to play in supporting this patient group, according to a leading

[Read More](#)

National Pain Alliance launched

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 01/04/2026

Organisations and stakeholders representing patients living with chronic pain have launched a National Pain Alliance, with the aim of establishing pain as a national priority within Australia's health, disability and ageing reform agendas. Led by Chronic Pain Australia, founding members of the Alliance also include Endometriosis Australia, MS Australia, Arthritis Australia, Wounds Australia, Musculoskeletal Health Australia and Haleon Australia.

[Read More](#)

National Pain Alliance launches to address chronic pain gap

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 01/04/2026

A new National Pain Alliance has been launched this week at Parliament House, aiming to elevate chronic pain as a national health priority and improve health outcomes of Australians living with the condition. Supported by organisations including Haleon Australia, the Alliance brings together "a range of organisations representing Australians living with chronic pain" to address the chronic pain policy gaps.

[Read More](#)

2GB, Drive, 01/04/2026, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Go Gentle Australia founder Andrew Denton. Denton reports that an outdated Commonwealth Criminal Code currently prohibits doctors from using telehealth or digital services to discuss voluntary assisted dying with patients. He argues that the piece of legislation causes unnecessary pain and logistical trauma for terminally ill Australians who are forced to travel hundreds of kilometres for multiple eligibility assessments.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Wellbeing days, fundraising help build happy team

Australian Financial Review, Features, 02/04/2026, Sarah Petty, Page 15

Dedicated wellbeing days and direct engagement in the firm's foundation are two ways that construction comp...

This town has removed kids' phone anxiety

Australian Financial Review, General News, 02/04/2026, Sally Mcgrane, Page 44

When no one else your age has a screen in their pocket, it's easy to do without.

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One in five maternal deaths after giving birth are preventable

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/04/2026, Bronte Gossling, Page 14

A world-first analysis from a team of Australian researchers has found one in five maternal deaths in the five years following childbirth are preventable. Suicide has long been accepted as a leading cause of maternal death in Australia but experts have warned previously reported statistics did not reflect the full extent of the issue.

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

State budget must make sure a lifeline is there for Tasmanians when they need it

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/04/2026, Kristie Johnston, Page 18

When things start to go wrong, one phone call can make a huge difference, writes Kristie Johnston Tasmania has a mental health problem with thousands of Tasmanians struggling with the cost of living, housing stress, isolation, loneliness and uncertainty.

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

Healthy \$1m boost for safety and accessibility upgrades

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 02/04/2026, David Chapman, Page 6

Bendigo Community Health Services will receive \$1 million for a range of safety and accessibility upgrades. Bendigo was one of 32 services to share in \$20 million of state government funding.

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'Real sense of excitement' at Perth ADHD symposium

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

GPs, paediatricians and politicians joined together at the RACGP event to share knowledge in a new era for ADHD treatment. The RACGP ADHD symposium in Western Australia proved to be a 'really positive event'.

[Read More](#)

'Sticky Topics' don't have to be tricky

Shepparton News Online, Other, 01/04/2026

Knowing how and when to start conversations about mental health and suicide can be tricky. But with the launch of 'Sticky Topics', the Deniliquin Mental Health Awareness Group is aiming to make it easier.

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IMMUNISATION

Diseases on rise as vaccination rate falls

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/04/2026, Angus Thomson, Page 7

Childhood vaccination coverage has fallen for the fifth year in a row, leaving tens of thousands of children unprotected against a resurgence in preventable diseases, including measles and whooping cough. The trend has alarmed experts who warn Australia has not seen worse vaccination coverage for more than a decade.

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

Child vax rates dive

Daily Telegraph, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 2

Shocking new vaccination data has revealed more than 80,000 children have missed an immunisation jab, with the rate on the decline for a fifth year in a row. The data from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) reveals the number of one-year-old children up to date with their vaccinations was at its lowest in 12 years.

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Flu jab 'protects for years'

Herald Sun, General News, 02/04/2026, Robyn Riley, Page 15

Getting the flu jab "future proofs" against strains of the virus that emerge decades later, world-first research from the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity has found.

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

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

Why 50 should change the way we face the flu

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/04/2026, Paul Van Buynder, Page 11

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

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#).

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Shock jab figures show kids missing out

West Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 16

Shocking new vaccination data has revealed that more than 80,000 children skipped their immunisation jab, with the rate on the decline for a fifth year in a row. Professor Kristine Macartney, the director of the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, said the rate was "opening up a chance that they could have one of these terrible diseases that's otherwise completely preventable".

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80,000 kids aged five and under behind on vaccinations

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026, Billy Cooper

New immunisation data shows childhood vaccination coverage declined for the fifth year in a row in 2025. More than 80,000 Australian children aged five and under were not fully up to date with their vaccinations.

[Read More](#)

Doctors warn of decades-long ripple effect with 80,000 children not fully vaccinated

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/04/2026, Antony Scholefield

Only 90.5% of children are now fully vaccinated at 12 months, down from 94.8% five years ago, new data show. Full vaccine coverage at five years has also fallen to 92.5%, according to preliminary data from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) Annual Immunisation Coverage Report 2025

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Federal government signs AI safety deal with Anthropic

Age, Business News, 02/04/2026, David Swan, Page 26

Anthropic, the artificial intelligence giant locked in a legal war with the Trump administration over military use of its technology, has signed a formal AI safety pact with the Albanese government. Signed when chief executive Dario Amodei met Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra on Wednesday, the document commits Anthropic to sharing research on emerging model capabilities and risks with Australia's AI Safety Institute, participating in joint safety evaluations and collaborating with Australian academic institutions.

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Federal government strikes major deal with US-based AI giant Anthropic for research, investments

Adelaide Now, Other, 01/04/2026, Angie Raphael

A US-based artificial intelligence company is bringing its technology to Australian researchers after the federal government signed a huge deal. Donald Trump is threatening to destroy Iran's energy infrastructure if no deal to end the war is agreed upon soon.

[Read More](#)

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Binar Futures: Basketball proving critical link in positive health outcomes for Aboriginal kids

West Australian, Other, 01/04/2026, Brooke Rolfe

By simply showing up to a basketball tournament, thousands of Aboriginal children have accessed free health checks they might not have otherwise sought out.

[Read More](#)

Internal memos show NT government warned of 'significant risks' in watch houses

ABC Online, Other, 01/04/2026

Internal documents seen by the ABC show executives from the NT Department of Corrections were warned of "significant" health and safety risks inside police watch houses during the height of the territory's prison crisis.

[Read More](#)

Researchers urge cultural safety focus in Indigenous mental health communication

National Indigenous Times, Other, 01/04/2026, Dechlan Brennan

A new study has found more careful communication by healthcare professionals could help address the significant gap in mental health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Focus on staff lifts fundraising 30pc

Australian Financial Review, Features, 02/04/2026, Sian Powell, Page 9

Not-for-profit a hospitals charity has implemented a careers program based on teamwork and development, writes Sian Powell.

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

Special unit to tackle violence in hospital ED

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/04/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 14

Westmead Hospital's emergency department will soon have a dedicated unit for aggressive and extremely agitated patients to keep staff and other patients safe as NSW hospitals grapple with escalating levels of violence. The Minns government announced construction will begin in August on the secure, six-bed unit within Westmead's ED, which recorded a 31 per cent increase in patients with mental health and behavioural issues over the past five years.

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Sunshine Coast's endED opens Tiny Home Recovery Village for eating disorders

Cairns Post, Other, 01/04/2026, Jorina Maureschat

A Sunshine Coast organisation which helps people with eating disorders has opened Australia's very first "village" for clients recovering from intensive treatment. Australia's first village of tiny homes aimed at support eating disorder recovery will open its doors on the Sunshine Coast.

[Read More](#)

Lake Imaging accused of 'wage theft' as Geelong staff walk out 'every day'

Northern Territory News, Other, 01/04/2026, Zoe De Koning

Medical imaging staff have threatened strike action as daily walkouts plague a major Geelong provider, with workers claiming 'wage theft' and ignored safety concerns. Staff are walking out "every day" from a major Geelong medical imaging provider amid claims of unpaid work, ignored safety concerns, and management inflexibility that has pushed experienced workers to threaten strike action.

[Read More](#)

New hospital chief's stance sparks immediate backlash from campaign group

The Border Mail, Other, 01/04/2026, Anthony Bunn

Better Border Health's Stan Stavros aboard the train to Victoria's Parliament House last year to protest against hospital plans for Albury. He now wants to meet Andrew Way to discuss future hospital needs.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Doctors' college 'breaches laws over bullying'

The Australian, General News, 02/04/2026, Penny Timms, Page 10

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians has been told it is in breach of workplace health and safety laws, with SafeWork NSW ordering the college to improve how it protects staff and volunteers

against bullying."The current system does not adequately manage the risk of harmful behaviour from all workers and all volunteers within the operations of the board," the notice from SafeWork NSW says.

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Changes to AFL training 'crucial'

The Australian, Sport, 02/04/2026, Jay Clark, Page 28

One of the country's top concussion experts says the AFL must reduce contact training hours immediately, in the wake of the game's insurance crisis.

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Fake nurse's new charges dropped

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 02/04/2026, Emily Walker, Page 9

A Nerang woman accused of using fake qualifications to secure a job as a nurse at an elite Gold Coast school has had two extra charges thrown out after the court forgot to grant bail for those charges.

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

'Choked, spat on, threatened with a knife': Nurses report worsening patient violence

Australian Doctor, Other, 01/04/2026, Ciara Seccombe

A survey has found 88% of nurses and midwives have experienced or witnessed occupational violence in the past six months. Violence against nurses has worsened over six years, a survey suggests, with one in 25 nurses reporting having been choked at work.

[Read More](#)

Medical students swap lectures for country life and practices through the Wheatbelt Medical Immersion Program

Kalbarrie Miner, Other, 01/04/2026

More than 200 medical students swapped the city lecture theatres for life in the country earlier this month, submerging themselves in country communities through the Wheatbelt Medical Immersion Program. The program is run in partnership with the University of Notre Dame and Curtin University, and is designed to give students a firsthand understanding of rural living and health care, encouraging careers in regional areas.

[Read More](#)

Record number of future GPs start training in Victoria

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 01/04/2026

More than 360 doctors have begun their training in the state, with 30% choosing to train in rural and regional locations. This year, 1772 doctors nationally are beginning the AGPT Program with the RACGP.

[Read More](#)

'Unacceptable': town left without full obstetric coverage after doctor banned

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 01/04/2026

Snowy Valleys mayor Julia Ham says it's critical that Tumut Hospital has full obstetrician coverage.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

US takes aim at Australia's PBS, tech regulation

Australian Financial Review, International News, 02/04/2026, Page 15

Donald Trump's top trade tsar claims Australia's unfair drug pricing practices are undermining US innovation, warns Labor's tax transparency push will harm big companies and has raised the alarm about the unjust treatment of US tech g...

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

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US left fuming over Australian content rules, PBS 'barriers'

Age, General News, 02/04/2026, Michael Koziol, Page 11

The Trump administration has outlined serious concerns about the Albanese government's new local content rules for streaming platforms and the "unfair" Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, in an escalation of US trade grievances against Australia. The United States Trade Representative's annual report, released on Tuesday evening (US time), adds several items to the list of trade "barriers" with Australia, chiefly concerning government interventions in the market that would impact American tech companies.

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Help for rare condition

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 02/04/2026, Page 6

Medicine Australians living with hereditary angioedema (HAE) now have more affordable access to a life-changing preventive treatment after Andembry's listing on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. HAE is a rare, chronic and debilitating genetic disease.

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

US gripes over Aussie TV, social media and drug rules

Canberra Times, Other, 01/04/2026

White House officials have blasted Australia's local content quotas for streaming services as narrow and outdated as part of the Trump administration's latest trade salvo. The United States has also criticised laws banning children under 16 from social media, Australia's pharmaceutical benefits scheme, and the government's rules around meat imports and news operations.

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Common antidepressant mirtazapine could hold key to treating meth addiction

Kalgoorlie Miner, Other, 02/04/2026, Hannah-Cross

A common antidepressant could be the key to treating methamphetamine addiction, a landmark Australian research trial has found. The clinical trial, of 339 adults with moderate to severe methamphetamine use disorder, found those who took the antidepressant mirtazapine over a 12-week period reduced their risk of drug use by almost 10 per cent. [...] It has a well-established safety profile and is listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, making it considerably more affordable.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, 01/04/2026, Rory McClaren

Interview with Finder.com personal finance expert Sarah Megginson. Megginson reports that health insurance premiums are increasing today, prompting a highly competitive period where insurers are offering incentives like gift cards and free cover to attract churning customers. She clarifies that while hospital cover is required to avoid the Medicare Levy Surcharge for tax reasons, extras cover is a separate, optional component that consumers should review for actual value and usage.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Health department alert: two more new measles cases confirmed in the Illawarra

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 01/04/2026

Two more people in the Illawarra have contracted measles, after coming into contact with someone else at a local site who had the disease. This comes after last week, who had the disease and who had visited multiple sites across the Illawarra.

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2GB, Afternoons, 01/04/2026, Michael McLaren

Interview with New South Wales Health Director of Communicable Diseases Dr Christine Selvey. Selvey expresses concern that childhood vaccination coverage has dropped below 90% for the first time in 12 years. She notes that while family cost-of-living pressures and access issues contribute to delays, maintaining a 95% immunity level is critical to prevent the transmission of highly infectious diseases like measles.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Drug's shot in the arm

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/04/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 12

A game-changing approach to the most common drug allergy penicillin is set to improve patient care, slash healthcare costs and reduce antibiotic-resistant superbugs on a global scale.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 01/04/2026, Angela Cox and Mark Ferguson

The TGA has approved the first medication to treat serious fatty liver disease. Wegovy will now also be used to combat the condition, which could help hundreds of thousands of Australians.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Hotel fined over food poisoning at conference

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/04/2026, Simon McCarthy, Page 6

A luxury Central Coast hotel has been fined after 76 people fell ill with food poisoning symptoms after a conference, with 40 of them infected with salmonella. The NSW Food Authority charged the 4.5-star Crowne Plaza Terrigal Pacific hotel with several hygiene offences stemming from the conference incident in December 2022.

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

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