



# TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 13th April 2026

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Australian Financial Review](#)** (page 1) reports the Federal Government has ruled out means-testing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme while acknowledging that the fifty-five billion dollar program requires reform to address an annual growth rate of ten per cent. Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler noted that savings measures are being discussed to ensure the NDIS remains sustainable as the single largest spending pressure on government finances.
- **[ABC Online](#)** reports the Federal Government intends to transition children under nine with mild to moderate developmental delays and autism from the NDIS to Thriving Kids, though experts and advocates expressed concern that children with moderate needs may be underserved by the new model.
- **[The Guardian](#)** (online) reports the Federal Government has passed reforms to the NDIS Act to strengthen whistleblower protections by allowing anonymous disclosures and extending legal coverage to former employees of disability service providers. While a spokesperson for Minister Jenny McAllister stated these changes provide fundamental protections to report unsafe practices, the Human Rights Law Centre argued that the regime remains inadequate and urged the establishment of a dedicated Whistleblower Protection Authority.
- **[The Age](#)** (page 4) reports the Swanston Centre in Geelong and Barwon Health are facing legal action and several investigations following allegations that a patient was released while in a

state of drug-induced psychosis despite disclosing violent fantasies regarding his neighbour, whose house he later broke into.

- **ABC Online** reports the April Blue Report by Cleanbill indicates that out-of-pocket costs for non-bulk-billed appointments have risen by 13.5 per cent, while regional and remote areas are leading a surge in clinics returning to full bulk-billing models. Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler challenged the accuracy of the data and stated that more than 3,700 practices are now fully bulk-billing following Federal Government incentives, whereas the RACGP attributed the regional bulk-billing increase to funding better reflecting the cost of care.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Albanese rules out means test for NDIS

Australian Financial Review, General News, 13/04/2026, Michael Read, Page 1

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has ruled out means-testing the nation's \$55 billion disability scheme but says the ballooning program will need to change to be sustainable, as he left the door open to tax changes.

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

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### Regional Australia leads GP bulk-billing surge as costs to see doctors continue to rise

ABC Online, Other, 12/04/2026, Tamara Clark

Online GP directory Cleanbill has released its April Blue Report, indicating a higher percentage of regional clinics are switching to a full bulk-billing model than their metropolitan counterparts. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Cleanbill data was not a reliable analysis of bulk-billing.

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### The children feared to be at highest risk of missing out under Thriving Kids

ABC Online, Other, 12/04/2026, Nas Campanella & Evan Young

The first phase of the \$4 billion NDIS alternative for kids with "mild to moderate" developmental delays or autism is months away from starting. [...] NDIS Minister Mark Butler did not answer specific questions about whether the government was confident "moderate" children would be properly serviced by Thriving Kids, who would be assessing a child's support requirements and how they would navigate masking, or what the proposed parenting courses will look like.

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### Spoils of Iran war to deliver Chalmers a budget boost

Canberra Times, Other, 13/04/2026, Jacob Shteyman & Grace Crivellaro

The Iran war is set to deliver a \$36 billion windfall for Treasurer Jim Chalmers, but increased spending on cost-of-living measures could derail efforts to get the budget back in black. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has not ruled out introducing means-testing to help rein in one of the biggest strains on the budget: the NDIS.

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

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### Labor making quiet call on NDIS cuts ahead of Jim Chalmers' May budget

Sky News Australia, Other, 12/04/2026, Max Aldred & Andrew Clennell

The government is quietly brushing aside calls to means-test the National Disability Insurance Scheme ahead of next month's budget release. [...] It comes after Health Minister Mark Butler told reporters the government would "have to look at a range of different measures" to achieve their growth reductions targets.

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## Sky News Live, The Jaimee Rogers Show, 12/04/2026, Jaimee Rogers

Interview with Shadow NDIS Minister Melissa McIntosh about NDIS sustainability and reform. McIntosh argues that the scheme's growth is 'out of control' but says savings must prioritise vulnerable Australians, criticising the high number of unregistered providers and pointing to billions lost to fraud. She raises concerns about proposed means testing, noting comments from NDIS Minister Mark Butler and Treasurer Jim Chalmers, saying the lack of detail is causing anxiety for families and risks undermining the NDIS's design as an insurance scheme.

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## Sky News Live, The Jaimee Rogers Show, 12/04/2026, Jaimee Rogers

Rogers discusses the NDIS, citing Health Minister Mark Butler's admission the scheme is 'off track' and highlighting its rapid growth from a \$20 billion projection to more than \$50 billion, with costs forecast to hit \$100 billion by 2034-35. She cites concerns raised by figures including Dr. Nick Coatsworth and Shadow Treasurer Tim Wilson about sustainability, fraud, and the scheme expanding beyond its original purpose, particularly among children and early intervention cases.

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## MINISTER MCALLISTER

### Susan was forced out of a disability support job after speaking out. Are NDIS whistleblower laws still too weak?

The Guardian, Other, 12/04/2026, Christopher Knaus

When Susan\* came across wrongdoing at her disability support provider, she faced a choice. [...] A spokesperson for the NDIS minister, Jenny McAllister, said the recent reforms delivered "fundamental protections" for whistleblowers to safely report concerns about unsafe or unlawful practices.

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## MINISTER RAE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

### Royal Hobart Hospital's Jack jumper venom program gets vital funding boost

WEB Pulse Tasmania, Other, 12/04/2026

A Tasmanian gardener who nearly died after being stung 13 times by Jack jumper ants says he can finally work without fear, after a course of venom treatment proved successful in a clinical trial. [...] Assistant Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Rebecca White said the funding would secure the ongoing supply of the treatment.

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## SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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## DEPARTMENT

### Milestone for ePrescribing

Pulse+IT, Other, 12/04/2026

All 10 electronic National Residential Medication Chart (eNRMC) vendors operating under the transitional arrangement have passed electronic prescribing conformance, signifying a key step in the shift to digital medication management in aged care. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and the Australian Digital Health Agency say the milestone follows several years of collaboration with software vendors to develop safer, more streamlined prescribing systems for residential aged care.

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### ABC News, ABC Evening News (Weekend), 12/04/2026

The Federal Government's upcoming Thriving Kids program, set to roll out in October, will support children under nine with mild to moderate developmental delay or autism, as part of efforts to ease pressure on the NDIS, with some details for jurisdictions uploaded to the Department of Health website. However, experts including Kids Research Institute's David Trembath and autistic advocate Clare Gibellini warn that children with moderate needs could fall through the gaps between the two systems.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Funding doubts may see much-awaited Queanbeyan respite centre sit empty post construction

ABC Online, Other, 12/04/2026, Ruby Thomas

Todd Cuschieri knows first-hand how painful inappropriate respite care can be. Mr Cuschieri's brother, Steven Cuschieri, died in his early 50s of cancer, and was cared for mainly by his parents.

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## DISABILITY AND CARERS

### No-job generation: we're 'unable' to work

The Australian, General News, 13/04/2026, Noah Yim, Page 1

The number of 25 to 34-year-olds who say they are "permanently unable" to work has increased fivefold in the past 20 years, tracking with the global rise of young men "drifting around" and not in school, work, or training, in what one expert says is "one of the most severe social issues we're facing". [...] This milestone data point comes amid concern about overdiagnosis driving a cost blowout in the National Disability Insurance Scheme, largely because of mental health diagnoses, especially among boys.

## NDIS and investor tax breaks in PM's sights

Age, General News, 13/04/2026, Paul Sakkal & James Massola, Page 1

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has declared the government must overhaul the NDIS to maintain its viability and ensure support for the scheme, in an interview where he also signalled that the scrapping of property tax breaks for investors could prove an antidote to the economic populism of One Nation. In some of his strongest comments on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, set up by former Labor prime minister Julia Gillard in 2013, Albanese opened the door to wholesale changes to the initiative in the May budget.

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

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## Getting right support

Hobart Mercury, General News, 13/04/2026, Rob Inglis, Page 9

Katie's care change win Katie Jones was gobsmacked when she learned her disability support workers were not allowed to care for her during a hospital stay, prompting the wheelchair user to team up with a politician friend and doggedly advocate for change. [...] As a result of Ms Jones and Ms Thomas' advocacy, disability support workers are now able to provide concurrent support to their clients during hospital stays limited to nonclinical forms of care as long as approval is obtained from the hospital and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in the case of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants.

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## Hope for delivering cut NDIS supports in schools instead

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 12/04/2026

As the Herald reported last week, slowing the growth of the \$50 million NDIS will be key to the federal government's savings when it delivers its budget next month. A major policy already in train to assist with this is the \$4 billion Thriving Kids program for children with low to moderate needs, such as level one and two autism, the first stage of which will begin in October, three months after originally promised.

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## Building stronger connection to community the focus for support service

Canberra Times, Other, 12/04/2026, Brad Lockyer

Living life with a disability is like living life on a harder difficulty setting than everyone else. Sometimes that difficulty is increased just a little, but for some, it is increased to an impossible level.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Four-year waits and closed wards

Central Western Daily, General News, 13/04/2026, John Hall, Page 1

In Parkes, you can't give birth in your own town. In the Central West, you can wait four years for a paediatrician. While the state and federal governments argue over who pays the bill, mothers like Sharni Tollhurst and Ellie Collett are left to navigate a crumbling system alone.

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### Upgrade complete

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 13/04/2026, Joel Ehsman, Page 5

A new medical imaging department in Wollongong Hospital has been completed, but will take a few months to be up and running. A new MRI and CT scanner, delivered as part of a \$21.9 million upgrade for Wollongong Hospital, has been installed in a purpose-built area across two levels at the hospital.

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## Councillors to vote on 'health hub' proposal

Newcastle Herald, General News, 13/04/2026, Josh Leeson, Page 10

The first step in transforming a Lake Macquarie suburb into the city's first medical precinct is expected to be rubber-stamped tonight. Lake Macquarie councillors at the standing committee meeting will vote to place the draft Gateshead Medical Precinct Planning Proposal and accompanying Development Control Plan Area Plan on public exhibition.

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## State's specialist wait crisis

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 13/04/2026, Taylah Fellows, Page 13

Two-thirds of patients waiting for urgent neurosurgery and urology specialist appointments are waiting longer than medically recommended, as Queensland's outpatient waitlist continues to grow. Latest health data shows a mammoth backlog of 42,923 Queenslanders waiting for orthopaedic appointments followed by 38,391 patients waiting on ear, nose and throat specialists and 34,882 waiting to see an ophthalmologist.

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## Huge demand for council-run women's health clinic in Huon Valley

The Mercury, Other, 12/04/2026, Bridget Clarke

There has been strong uptake of a new monthly women's health clinic in the Huon Valley, as the council works to expand services in the historically under-serviced region. Huon Valley Council Medical Services held its first monthly women's health clinic at Geeveston Medical Centre on March 27.

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

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Doctor's orders; Women's pain real

Sunday Territorian, General News, 12/04/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 12

As a mum and a doctor in women's health, Dr Sarah Mills is well aware how much "normalised" pain can lie behind a woman's smile. Whether it is immobilising period cramps, heavy bleeding or undiagnosed perimenopausal symptoms, these are just some of the health issues generations have been told come with being a woman.

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### Thousands of children are stuck in institutional housing as Australia's adoption rates keep plummeting

9News, Other, 12/04/2026, Maddison Leach

Nearly 5000 children are stuck in institutional housing as Australia's adoption rates continue to plummet. Total adoption numbers have fallen by 41 per cent, according to new data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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## CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

## How we found an answer for Ava

Daily Telegraph, General News, 13/04/2026, Suzan Giuliani, Page 16

Six-year-old Ava Begley is one of just two kids in Australia to be diagnosed with a newly identified genetic condition linked to severe epilepsy, with hopes the discovery will help improved research worldwide. [...] Ava is one of just 84 people known to be living with the newly discovered condition worldwide, while experts estimate that thousands more remain undiagnosed.

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## Diabetes funding underused: Study

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 13/04/2026, Page 7

Australians newly diagnosed with diabetes are significantly underusing Allied Health and other Medicare-funded services, sparking calls for more targeted strategies. Only two thirds of newly diagnosed patients had a management plan with their GP, and less than half (48.5 per cent) claimed at least one Allied Health service within two years of diagnosis, the study found.

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## Australian researchers make breakthrough in childhood cancer genetic testing

7News.com.au, Other, 12/04/2026, Amber Laidler

Australian researchers have made a breakthrough in the hunt for a cure for childhood cancer, identifying crucial changes in a child's DNA that indicate they're more likely to develop the disease. The discovery is now prompting calls for broader genetic testing, with experts warning some cases are being missed entirely under current guidelines.

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## Chronic low back pain in Australia and the importance of targeted rehabilitation

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 13/04/2026, Martjie Venter & Aidan Cashin

Low back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide and Australia is no exception. Around 4 million Australians live with back pain and it is one of the most common reasons people see their GP or physiotherapist.

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## AI screening could predict the risk of breast cancer early

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 13/04/2026, Nance Haxton

An artificial intelligence algorithm used to detect breast cancer in screening scans can predict women's cancer risk over the next four years, Australian research has found. The research published in the Lancet Digital Health journal found that the AI-based risk score, called BRAIx, identified women at high risk of breast cancer more accurately than traditional factors doctors rely on, such as breast density and family history.

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## Improving early diagnosis in juvenile idiopathic arthritis

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 13/04/2026, Jonathan Akikusa

Delayed diagnosis of juvenile idiopathic arthritis remains a significant and preventable cause of harm for Australian children. With many waiting months, some years, for specialist assessment, earlier recognition in primary care is critical to reducing long-term disability and improving outcomes.

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## Cardiovascular disease prevention must start earlier

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 13/04/2026, Rachel Climie, Jonathan Mynard, Sherly Li & Terry Dwyer

The Healthy Start for Young Hearts Alliance brings together experts across public health and clinical care with the aim to prevent cardiovascular disease before it begins. [...] For example, the latest data

from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that 26% of children and adolescents aged two to 14 years were living with overweight/obesity in 2022.

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## Doctors urged to test for iron deficiency missed in thousands of Australians

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 12/04/2026, Ruby Kraner-Tucci

Jo-Anne Jesser was so sick after she gave birth that her doctors were "amazed (she) was still alive". [...] Mrs Jesser's story is not uncommon – it is illustrative of a significant gap in IBD healthcare according to new research, which suggests that tens of thousands of people living with IBD could be undiagnosed as iron deficient.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Health centre let out man who threatened to kill his neighbour

Age, General News, 13/04/2026, Melissa Cunningham, Page 4

A man who was in the grips of methamphetamine psychosis was sent home from a mental health hospital after telling staff about a violent rape fantasy involving his neighbour and then broke into her house within days of being released. The woman has now engaged lawyers after making a complaint about the hospital the Swanston Centre in Geelong in what is the latest in a string of violent and traumatic events involving the Barwon Health facility that have sparked police, WorkSafe and coronial investigations.

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

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### Bosses urged to be ADHD aware

Herald Sun, General News, 13/04/2026, Susie O'Brien, Page 9

A 34-year-old manager with ADHD is calling for other bosses to be more aware and accommodating of neurodivergent workers. [...] An estimated million Australians have ADHD, and 15-20 per cent of the population are believed to be neurodivergent.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#).

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### MBPH receives upgrade funds

Sunraysia Daily, Other, 12/04/2026, Lochlainn Heley

Mildura Base Public Hospital will receive \$442,000 in the latest round of funding from the Victorian Government aimed at supporting hospital infrastructure. The Mildura fund is one of 33 projects in the Mental Health and AOD Capital Renewal Fund, which will supply a total of \$20 million in grants to help improve safety for patients and staff. A Mildura Base Public Hospital spokesperson said the funds will help boost the quality of the facilities.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

### **2GB, Weekends, 12/04/2026, Luke Grant**

Interview with Hudson Institute of Medical Research Dr. Alison West about a new flu treatment using a small peptide drug. West discusses how the treatment, delivered via an inhaler in the first few days of infection, could reduce flu symptoms and help prevent serious secondary bacterial pneumonia, based on preclinical studies. She says further funding and trials are needed before it could move into clinical use and potentially be deployed in hospitals.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### **\$2.3m to help cancer fight**

Cairns Post, General News, 13/04/2026, Emma Cam, Page 2

A new Cancer Care Program has been launched in the remote Far North Queensland community of Yarrabah to support people throughout every stage of the cancer journey. Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service, located about 50km from Cairns, has introduced the program within its Public Health unit, backed by \$2.3m over three years in federal funding through the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### **All-in at emergency**

Northern Territory News, General News, 13/04/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 1

The head of NT Health, Chris Hosking, has called on the community, and patients to be accountable for their behaviour after Emergency Department staff in the midst of trying to save lives were confronted with more violence when a violent group brawl broke out in the patient waiting area. In the midst of trying to save lives, staff at Royal Darwin Hospital were confronted with more violence after an alleged group brawl broke out in the emergency department.

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## A State of shame

West Australian, General News, 13/04/2026, Hannah Cross, Page 10

WA healthcare staff were subject to violence and aggression once every two hours last year. New figures from the Department of Health reveal frontline workers faced more than 4300 instances of physical violence and aggression in 2025 about 12 every day.

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### **More Australians are self-prescribing natural remedies, but are they always safe?**

SBS, Other, 12/04/2026, Mikele Syron

Andrographis, a herbal ingredient commonly found in cold and flu supplements, is under renewed scrutiny after Australia's medicines regulator linked it to life-threatening allergic reactions. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has called for the ingredient to be removed from its list of permitted low-risk substances following ongoing reports of severe reactions, including anaphylaxis.

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## FOOD STANDARDS

## AICIS

### **Couples urged to filter tap water as PFAS chemicals found to harm fertility**

7News.com.au, Other, 12/04/2026, Kimberley Pratt

Couples hoping to start a family are being urged to filter their tap water after dangerous forever chemicals or PFAs (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) were found to reduce fertility. The man-made chemicals, which are often still used in non-stick pans and food packaging, have been detected in drinking water at trace levels across Australia.

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