



# TODAY'S NEWS

Saturday, 18th April 2026

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Weekend Australian](#)** (page 1) reports Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler and the Federal Government are considering reforms to the National Disability Insurance Scheme to achieve a 5 per cent annual growth target. Former disability minister Bill Shorten stated that the NDIS must remain a sustainable resource for those with acute disabilities and noted that cost increases should be attributed to fraudulent activity rather than participants.
- **[The Saturday Paper](#)** (page 7) reports Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler and Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Jenny McAllister emphasize that proposed reforms aim to ensure the NDIS is a sustainable and fair system that provides consistent support plans for all participants.
- **[The Weekend Australian](#)** (page 3) reports the Federal Government has activated the National Incident Centre to monitor threats to the supply of essential medical equipment and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme caused by the international oil crisis and regional conflict in the Middle East.
- **[The West Australian](#)** (page 2) reports research from the University of Sydney indicates that young Australians are increasingly likely to transition from illegal flavoured vapes to cigarettes due to high nicotine dependence and the lower cost of illicit tobacco.

- **The AFR Weekend** (page 5) reports the federal policy to reduce funding for hospital-acquired complications has resulted in a 25 per cent reduction in patient risks for conditions such as ulcers and infections. Productivity Commission research indicates that the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority may consider expanding the list of complications subject to these financial penalties to further reduce preventable harm and healthcare costs.
- **The Saturday Paper** (page 11) reports the CSIRO has informed a parliamentary committee that a \$372 million refurbishment of the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness is significantly overdue, citing age-related infrastructure failures and non-compliance with modern research standards.

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## MINISTER BUTLER

### Don't 'tear down' NDIS, says Shorten

Weekend Australian, General News, 18/04/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 1

Labor must not "tear down" the NDIS as it seeks to rein in the \$50bn-a-year scheme, the party's former leader and disability minister Bill Shorten says, urging blame for blowouts to be laid squarely at the feet of "shonks, fraudsters and criminals".[...] Mr Shorten's intervention follows NDIS and Health Minister Mark Butler declaring that in order to reach the 5 per cent growth target, the government needed to introduce significant reforms in one of two areas: eligibility or the size of individual plan budgets.

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

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### We can't afford to drive to doctor

Daily Telegraph, General News, 18/04/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 5

Patients are skipping vital medical tests while doctors are warning they will have to suspend visits to homes and aged care villages as the fuel crisis hammers the health system. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said he was "closely monitoring impacts of fuel availability on health service access".

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### 'They want us dead?

The Saturday Paper, General News, 18/04/2026, Georgia Cranko, Page 7

As the federal budget looms, the discussions targeting the National Disability Insurance Scheme have already started and I find myself holding my breath. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler now calls it "the only port in the storm".

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

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### Opposition deputy Jane Hume calls for government to establish national dashboard to monitor Australia's fuel supply

7News.com.au, Other, 17/04/2026, Aimee Edwards

The Opposition has accused the government of sending mixed messages about Australia's fuel crisis as questions continue about how a major refinery fire in Victoria will impact the nation's supply. [...] Speaking on Sunrise, Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged the incident had already affected the refinery's ability to produce petrol and aviation gasoline, describing it as "an event that couldn't have happened at a worse time for Australia".

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### Government advisory group recommends delaying NDIS 'robo-planning' changes

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Nas Campanella & Evan Young

The federal government has been urged by its own National Disability Insurance Scheme advisory group to delay the July rollout of a controversial new way of determining support plans for participants. [...] The system is part of a suite of changes introduced by the Albanese government aimed at slowing

the growth of the \$50 billion NDIS, and ahead of a speech next week where minister Mark Butler is expected to outline further cost-cutting measures.

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

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## Controversial dental scheme leaves Australians toothless and stripped of retirement savings

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 17/04/2026, Sarah Sharples

Peter Hazell no longer has teeth and he's also \$83,000 worse off for it. [...] Many politicians have also been contacted including the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Federal Health Minister Mark Butler but patients said it has all been a "dead end".

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

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## What looking at the Modified Monash Model tells us about bulk billing incentives

Medical Forum, Other, 17/04/2026

A recent report from healthcare directory Cleanbill broke down bulk billing and gap fees by how rural a practice was located, based on Modified Monash Model (MM1–7) classification. [...] The report was released as Health Minister Mark Butler celebrated a milestone in his push towards having 90% of GP clinics to be fully bulk billing by 2030.

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## Coalition warns fee transparency bill 'not ready'

The Medical Republic, Other, 17/04/2026, Holly Payne & Cate Swannell

Despite the opposition health spokesperson's allergic reaction to legislation being built "on the fly", the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs has recommended that the Health Legislation Amendment (Improving Choice and Transparency for Private Health Consumers) Bill be passed by the upper house. [...] While the proposed legislation has been presented as a response to rising hospital-based private specialist fees, Health Minister Mark Butler has specifically said that GP fees could be an eventual target.

[Read More](#)

## Mark Riley: Bogus providers milk NDIS system but some parents of autistic kids are even worse

West Australian, Other, 17/04/2026, Mark-Riley

Julia Gillard was reduced to tears 13 years ago as she presented the legislation funding the National Disability Insurance Scheme to the House of Representatives. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said recently that one in every 10 Australian six-year-old is now on the NDIS.

[Read More](#)

## NBN Coffs Harbour, NBN News, 17/04/2026, Gavin Morris & Natasha Beyersdorf

Member for Lyne Alison Penfold and health advocates are calling on the Federal Government to fund an urgent care clinic in Taree in the May budget. Federal Minister for Health Mark Butler has said such clinics are incredibly popular and are continuing to deliver Medicare urgent care clinics during the Albanese Government's second term.

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## Curtin FM, 15:00 News, 17/04/2026

The NDIS Reform Advisory Committee has recommended that the rollout of a new planning system to determine support plans for NDIS participants be delayed. Health Minister Mark Butler is set to outline cost-cutting measures to the \$50b scheme next week.

## MINISTER MCALLISTER

### 'They want us dead?'

The Saturday Paper, General News, 18/04/2026, Georgia Cranko, Page 7

As the federal budget looms, the discussions targeting the National Disability Insurance Scheme have already started and I find myself holding my breath. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler now calls it "the only port in the storm".

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

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### Government advisory group recommends delaying NDIS 'robot-planning' changes

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Nas Campanella & Evan Young

The federal government has been urged by its own National Disability Insurance Scheme advisory group to delay the July rollout of a controversial new way of determining support plans for participants. [...] The system is part of a suite of changes introduced by the Albanese government aimed at slowing the growth of the \$50 billion NDIS, and ahead of a speech next week where minister Mark Butler is expected to outline further cost-cutting measures.

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

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### ABC Radio Melbourne, 19:00 News, 17/04/2026

The Federal Government's NDIS Advisory Group is urging it to delay its controversial new funding and support system by three months. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said the Government respects the Reform Advisory Committee's role and will consider the advice it provides.

Similar coverage reported by: [ABC Sunshine Coast \(Sunshine Coast\)](#), [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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### ABC Radio Sydney, 21:00 News, 17/04/2026

The Federal Government has been urged by the NDIS Advisory Group to delay the rollout of a controversial new system to allocate funding and support plans to participants by three months. The NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said the government respects the Reform Advisory Committee's role and will consider the advice it provides.

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## MINISTER RAE

### Funding to fast-track new aged care beds

South Coast Register, General News, 18/04/2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 5

The Shoalhaven will share in \$115 million in federal funding intended to deliver new aged care beds quickly, as the region continues to grapple with a critical shortage. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae has now announced that the Illawarra Shoalhaven, along with the Hunter, Adelaide and Perth, will have access to the latest round of the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program.

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### Aged care inquiry

Government News, Other, 17/04/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The use of an algorithm tool for aged care assessments is being investigated by the Commonwealth Ombudsman in response to hundreds of complaints. [...] The tool – which was introduced in July 2024 and made mandatory in November 2025 – has been questioned extensively by senators, and in March an open letter addressed to Minister for Aged Care Sam Rae was signed by 21 federal politicians calling for the restoration of human oversight on aged care needs assessments.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

### Move for Coffs mental health hub

Coffs Coast News of the Area, General News, 17/04/2026, Leigh Watson, Page 5

Now in its second year of operation, the Coffs Harbour Medicare Mental Health Centre is moving to a larger, purpose-built facility, reflecting strong community demand for the free service. [...] Ms Schubert acknowledged the support of both Healthy North Coast and the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride, who visited the new centre last week.

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### ABC Far North, 07:30 News, 17/04/2026

A youth mental health service in Cairns is set to be expanded as part of federal funding for headspace. Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride says this will mean more staff as well as increased wraparound services to support young people.

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

### Boost to centre helps kids with hearing loss

Hobart Mercury, General News, 18/04/2026, Molly Appleton, Page 2

On Friday, The Shepherd Centre officially opened its newly renovated centre, an advanced facility that enables life-changing early intervention services across Tasmania. [...] Federal Labor Minister Julie Collins and Assistant Health and Aged Care Minister Rebecca White were at the official opening.

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## SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

### No afterthought: Men's health at the fore

Geelong Times, General News, 17/04/2026, Tahlia Sinclair, Page 25

Men's health has been the talk of the region as the first special envoy wraps up a Corangamite tour. Federal politician Dan Repacholi was appointed Australia's first Special Envoy for Men's Health in 2025 and is not afraid to have the big discussions.

Also reported by: [Bellarine Times \(Bellarine\)](#).

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### Pharmacy, advertising and political clout

The Medical Republic, Other, 18/04/2026, Louise Stone

I've been thinking about NSW Health's recent announcement regarding pharmacist prescribing of the contraceptive pill, and it's made me think. [...] I can see how a branded uterus could easily be used to

advertise a contraception service, with Dan Repacholi clearly demonstrating the correct site for the insertion of a Mirena.

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## DEPARTMENT

### **Medical supplies emergency fear**

Weekend Australian, General News, 18/04/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 3

The federal government has instituted emergency procedures to actively monitor threats to supplies of hospital and medical equipment caused by the international oil crisis, activating its National Incident Centre for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic to manage the crisis. [...] The federal Health Department confirmed it is "actively monitoring" health goods supply in the wake of the Middle East conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

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

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### **Australia on the verge of an aged care AI boom but experts warn of high risks**

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Luke Cooper

Australia is verging on an AI boom within aged care that could improve the quality of life of older people, some experts say. [...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing says AI is already being used in health care settings to improve diagnoses, treatment and the operation of services for people.

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### **IHACPA updates residential pricing framework**

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 17/04/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority has this week released the latest Pricing Framework for Australian Residential Aged Care Services. [...] While IHACPA acknowledged the importance of classification refinement to support the AN-ACC funding model in its consultation paper, it noted that the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is responsible for the classification structure and assessment tools.

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### **Patients shown specialists' fees before GP referral under health dept vision**

Australian Doctor, Other, 17/04/2026, Jamie Thannoo

The fees of individual specialists could be listed in practice software to allow GPs to guide patients through costs prior to writing a referral. The idea has been flagged by the federal Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to a parliamentary inquiry examining legislation underpinning major revamp of the Medical Costs Finder website.

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### **"In a flash": AI companions coming to aged care to combat loneliness**

OverSixty, Other, 17/04/2026, Damien Pelletier

Artificial intelligence is edging closer to everyday use in Australian aged care and retirement living, with industry voices predicting a rapid expansion in robot companions, behaviour monitoring tools and pain management apps. [...] As her office stated at the time: "The focus is on preserving choice and leveraging technology to make in-person and face-to-face services more accessible and efficient," with the Department of Health and Aged Care reviewing research, guidance and safety controls.

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## Medicinal cannabis crackdowns are actually working

The Medical Republic, Other, 17/04/2026, Holly Payne

The volume of medicinal cannabis units sold in Australia decreased by almost 30% after AHPRA and the TGA signalled that they would be taking a firmer stance on any dodgy actors, according to new data released under freedom of information laws. [...] According to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing data, medicinal cannabis sales peaked in the second half of 2024 at 3.72 million units and plateaued at 3.70 million in the first half of 2025 before dropping to 2.65 million units in the second half of 2025.

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## Reluctant pharmacists and confused GPs big barriers to 60-day dispensing

The Medical Republic, Other, 17/04/2026, Helen Tobler

The uptake of 60-day dispensing has been far slower than expected, with only one in five antihypertensive medications dispensed under the new 60-day supply policy that's been in place since late 2023. [...] She said the results of the study echoed a separate analysis by the Grattan Institute that found only 21% of all eligible prescriptions had 60-day prescribing in the first 14 months of the policy – less than half of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's projected uptake of 45%.

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## Coalition warns fee transparency bill 'not ready'

The Medical Republic, Other, 17/04/2026, Holly Payne & Cate Swannell

Despite the opposition health spokesperson's allergic reaction to legislation being built "on the fly", the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs has recommended that the Health Legislation Amendment (Improving Choice and Transparency for Private Health Consumers) Bill be passed by the upper house. [...] While the proposed legislation has been presented as a response to rising hospital-based private specialist fees, Health Minister Mark Butler has specifically said that GP fees could be an eventual target.

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## 2GB, Breakfast, 17/04/2026, James Willis

Willis says Opposition Leader Angus Taylor has been slammed for saying that people should learn basic English if they want to be a permanent resident in Australia. He states the Federal Government pays for translation services across multiple departments, including the Department of Health Disability and Ageing.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Rail, roads, sure. But what has \$1 trillion debt done for us?

The Saturday Age, General News, 18/04/2026, Shane Wright, Page 34

The energised crowd was clapping loudly. It was November 2007 and Kevin Rudd was making his pitch to the nation's voters to elect him prime minister in a fortnight's time. [...] Spending on people with disabilities which includes the NDIS and income support for those with disabilities has climbed almost 600 per cent since 2007.

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

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### Australia's largest rollout of humanoid companion robots signals new era in aged care

HelloCare, Other, 17/04/2026, Fiona Tomarchio & Jakob Neeland

A major new deployment of humanoid companion robots across Victorian aged care homes is being

hailed as a significant step forward in tackling loneliness and supporting overstretched care staff. Melbourne-based Andromeda Robotics, in partnership with not-for-profit provider mecwacare, has completed what it describes as the largest rollout of empathetic humanoid companion robots in Australian aged care.

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## **A preventable tragedy? Questions mount after hospital killing**

HelloCare, Other, 17/04/2026, Jakob Neeland

A man who violently attacked an elderly woman inside a Sydney hospital has been found not criminally responsible, reigniting difficult questions about how Australia manages mental illness, patient safety and the protection of older people in care settings. [...] For the aged care sector, the incident raises troubling questions about how vulnerable older Australians are protected in acute care settings.

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## DISABILITY AND CARERS

### **Strengthen NDIS, make it sustainable, but don't trash it**

Weekend Australian, General News, 18/04/2026, Bill Shorten, Page 15

In the last months of my time as a cabinet minister, I sat down at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Allambie Heights, in Sydney's northern beaches, with a group of young Australians living with cerebral palsy. They were all National Disability Insurance Scheme participants.

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

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### **Pru Goward is wrong about teals and the NDIS**

Australian Financial Review, Other, 17/04/2026, Zali Steggall & Monique Ryan

Each federal budget brings the same recurring fiction: that every line item dictated by the treasurer is an act of necessity rather than choice.

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### **We need to flip the script on NDIS incentivising disabilities**

Australian Financial Review, Other, 17/04/2026, Josh Szeps

So the National Disability Insurance Scheme is not untouchable, after all. After years of insisting it's just peachy (perfectly sustainable, nothing to see here!)

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### **Court hears woman allegedly broke elderly man's nose and tied him to chair**

Cairns Post, Other, 17/04/2026, Mia Ludwig

A woman who allegedly broke an elderly man's nose and tied him to a chair by his ankles, striking his shins with a bar, claimed she has been "framed" in her bail application hearing. [...] "The first motivation (for accusing Summerhayes) was to escape accountability for her actions after she assaulted me because I told her I would report her to the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency)," she said.

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## PRIMARY CARE

### **Tasmanians need reform that strengthens general practice and keeps care connected instead of stunts**

When politicians publish lists of GP clinics to score points, like the bulk-billing clinic register promoted by federal MP Julie Collins in The Collins Connection (April 2026), they're not helping patients; they're shifting blame. The AMA has warned that the cracks in our health system are now impossible to ignore.

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## **Defend Treaty, save VicHealth, centre health and stop the racism: calls to action for Victorian election**

Croakey, Other, 17/04/2026, Marie McInerney

The Victorian state election is more than seven months away, but already temperatures are rising, with concerns being raised about the likelihood of racist, divisive campaigning. [...] Meanwhile, many in the Victorian health sector are hoping the appointment of a new Health Minister, Harriet Shing, may prove a boost for efforts to save VicHealth as an independent, statutory body rather than folding its operations and budget into the Department of Health.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### **Criminal gangs 'to supply all smokes by 2030'**

Weekend Australian, General News, 18/04/2026, Sarah Ison, Page 9

The supply of all tobacco and nicotine products in Australia will almost exclusively be provided by organised crime by 2030 without immediate policy reform, Labor has been warned, as the government faces ratcheting pressure to reduce the tobacco excise ahead of the May budget. Australia's \$5bn tobacco black market has exploded in recent years thanks to an excise of about \$28 per \$50 pack of cigarettes, compared to illegal products that sell for less than \$20.

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### **Well holy smokes that sure backfired**

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 18/04/2026, Stephen Johnson, Page 2

Smoking rates among young people are expected to soar this year as they turn to illegal vapes for recreational purposes, only to later get hooked on cigarettes, a leading health researcher says. While smoking rates differ widely between rich, big city postcodes and regional areas, vaping rates are in the single digits regardless of where people live, updated Australian Bureau of Statistics figures revealed this week.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Nightly \(None\)](#).

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### **Sessions seek to keep up the STI fight**

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 18/04/2026, Alistair Finlay, Page 2

A leading expert in the field of sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, has lauded the Sunraysia region's efforts in controlling the harmful diseases. Professor Jane Tomnay, head of the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health, said more than 10 years of programs run by a range of services have sought to drive down instances of STIs in the local community.

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### **IGA rivals Aldi's fast checkout scanning with major move**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 17/04/2026, Sharon Hunt

Getting in and out of the supermarket checkout as quickly as possible might be a priority for some customers - but not all. [...] Recent studies from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have uncovered that up to two in five Australians experience loneliness at least some of the time.

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## From non-interference to protective intervention: A Qur'anic perspective

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Halim Rane

Religion is frequently invoked by political leaders seeking to justify positions on war, sovereignty, social order and moral authority. [...] According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, one in four women and one in fourteen men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15.

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## ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 17/04/2026, Sonya Feldhoff & Jules Schiller

Feldhoff notes the Police Federation of Australia has joined the Border Force in calling for a cut to the excise on tobacco. She says the difference between the price of legal and illicit cigarettes is so great.

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## ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, 17/04/2026, Tracey Strong

Interview with Quit Tasmania Director Abby Smith. Smith defends tobacco taxation as a highly successful public health tool, citing decades of economic research that proves price sensitivity reduces demand and prevents youth uptake. She highlights that Tasmania has recently fallen behind other states in addressing the illicit trade, but notes the passage of a Public Health Amendment Bill in the lower house on April 16, 2026, which aims to introduce higher penalties and closure orders.

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## CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

### Dementia drug brain boost is a bust

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/04/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 19

The new dementia drugs hailed as a breakthrough offer little to no real-life improvements to patients, a major review suggests, sparking debate and challenging decades of work. The development of drugs that remove amyloid beta protein in the brain was celebrated as a milestone and considered the first disease-modifying treatments for Alzheimer's.

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### Growing the wrong weigh

Newcastle Herald, General News, 18/04/2026, Sage Swinton, Page 1

More than one-third of the Hunter is estimated to be overweight and another third is obese, according to newly released health statistics. Localised estimates\* from the 2022 National Health Survey were released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics this week, which showed more than 80 per cent of people in some areas of the Hunter were not meeting physical activity guidelines.

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### Crushed by chandelier

Weekend Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 18/04/2026, Chelsea Bunting, Page 1

Travis Surch was at the top of his high-flying career when he was crushed by a chandelier. [...] Mr Surch has undergone 36 surgeries since then, and is now fundraising for crucial overseas stem cell treatment.

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### FNQ melio threat very real

Weekend Post, General News, 18/04/2026, Molly Frew, Page 5

Lorrae Godfrey nearly died when melioidosis she contracted for the third time entered her brain, sparking an urgent mission to warn others about the deadly tropical disease. Ms Godfrey, 57, was

discharged from Cairns Hospital last week following a melioidosis infection in her brain which caused seizures, hallucinations and an inability to speak.

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## Breastscreen truck to roll into Menindee

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 18/04/2026, Emily McInerney, Page 19

BreastScreen NSW will be in the Far West next month with the mobile screening van stopping at Menindee on Tuesday 5 May and Wednesday 6 May. BreastScreen NSW provides free breast screening to all women over 40 to support the early detection of breast cancer.

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## Prostate cancer groups offer support

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Toby Hemmings

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian men, with nearly 30-thousand new cases detected last year. But despite the high survival rates, men diagnosed with the cancer often struggle with the emotional toll of the disease and treatments that can impact their masculinity.

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# MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

## Psychologists choose gender activism over the evidence

Weekend Australian, General News, 18/04/2026, Claire Lehmann, Page 24

As an undergraduate psychology student in the early 2000s, I remember hearing jokes about "physics envy" the insecurity that research psychologists sometimes felt about the robustness of their science. To compensate for this insecurity, we were put through the wringer on statistics and research design.

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

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## My job doesn't take mental health seriously

The Saturday Age, Business News, 18/04/2026, Jonathan Rivett, Page 7

I have been thinking a lot about mental health at work and, although I love my workplace and don't want to be too harsh, I think their efforts to address this problem are insufficient. They make a big thing of R U OK Day, but apart from a nicely worded email from our chief executive, it doesn't seem to amount to much.

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## The ancient ritual easing vets' trauma

The Nightly, General News, 17/04/2026, Adam Shand, Page 32

The white navy dress uniform lay crumpled on the hotel room floor, as if the owner had dissolved into nothingness, leaving only the uniform and his medals. [...] A Stanford University study published in July 2024 found that military veterans with traumatic brain injuries treated with ibogaine, one of 13 alkaloids in the bark of the iboga root, experienced dramatic improvements in depression, anxiety, and cognitive function.

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

## ABC Radio Darwin , Breakfast, 17/04/2026, Jess Ong

New research has found social media use is not only impacting children and teenagers, but is leading to poorer mental health among adults. It comes four months after the Australian Government banned children under 16 from using social media. It has linked problematic usage of social media with poor mental health, increased loneliness and driving traditional gender roles and expectations.

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## ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 17/04/2026, Kathryn Robinson

Interview with Big Anxiety Research Centre Director Jill Bennett. Robinson notes the University of New South Wales has developed AI Companions for students feeling lonely or isolated. Bennett describes the development of digital AI companions named Tom and Mia, which are specifically tailored for Chinese international students.

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## IMMUNISATION

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

### Hospital risk drops 25pc when funds endangered

AFR Weekend, General News, 18/04/2026, Lucy Dean, Page 5

Productivity Commission research shows patients are 25 per cent less likely to develop conditions like ulcers and infections in hospitals where funding was cut if the complications were acquired in those institutions.

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

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Funding to support improved cancer outcomes for diverse communities in New South Wales

National Indigenous Times, Other, 17/04/2026, Jarred Cross

Funding is targeting language barriers, information accessibility and research to improve cancer outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and First Nations people. The New South Wales Government has committed \$770,000 towards the Australian Centre for Cancer Equity (AcCE), a collaborative research partnership addressing cancer disparities working in early prevention to access to care and clinical trials.

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## PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

### Code Yellow for NT hospitals

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/04/2026, Camden Smith, Page 7

NTHealth has declared a Code Yellow at Royal Darwin and Palmerston Regional hospitals due to high

demand and capacity challenges. A statement released just before 1pm on Friday said Royal Darwin Hospital currently had a high number of "very sick" patients requiring acute care and treatment, and there had been a surge in the number of people presenting to ED.

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

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Doctor sues sues over 'witch hunt'

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 18/04/2026, Jill Poulsen, Page 1

A Townsville doctor dismissed for alleged time sheet fraud has taken on his former employer in court for unfair dismissal. A highly awarded paediatric intensive care doctor's career was blown apart by claims of time-sheet fraud just hours after learning his wife had a life-threatening illness, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission has heard.

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### Junior doctors being 'cheated' out of study leave, says union

Australian Doctor, Other, 17/04/2026, Rachel Carter

Junior doctors are being "cheated out" of study leave and instead having to use accrued days off, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation has alleged. The issue was "widespread" across NSW, but in one extreme example, the union said junior doctors at Liverpool Hospital reported being told they could not access study leave because they had too many accrued days off.

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### GPs urge more team care

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 17/04/2026

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is calling for \$425.5 million to remove the current cap on subsidy payments under the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP), to help boost employment of pharmacists, nurses and allied health staff in general practice settings. In its 2026-27 pre-budget submission, the peak body stated the current cap unnecessarily limits the amount of support general practices can access to provide multidisciplinary care to patients.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### New PBS listing for lung cancer

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 17/04/2026

Australians diagnosed with ROS1-positive non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) now have subsidised access to a new targeted treatment, Augtyro (reprotrectinib, BMS Australia), through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). ROS1-positive NSCLC is a rare subset affecting only 1-2% of NSCLC patients, and compared to others with NSCLC people with ROS1 rearrangements, are younger and more likely to have never smoked.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

### **Sandipan Dhar inquest: Coroner finds toddler's death at Joondalup Health Campus was preventable**

West Australian, Other, 17/04/2026, Hannah Cross

The death of a toddler at one of Perth's busiest emergency departments was preventable and "more than a missed opportunity", a coroner has found. The inquest findings into the death of 21-month-old Sandipan Dhar from an undetected blood cancer were released on Friday, more than two years after the little boy's death on March 24, 2024.

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### **BreastScreen SA did not get ethics approval or consent before study which involved needle biopsies, ombudsman finds**

ABC Online, Other, 17/04/2026, Stephanie Richards

South Australia's public breast cancer screening service conducted research without ethics approval or consent from almost 100 patients, prompting the service to "unreservedly" apologise. BreastScreen SA conducted the research between September 2020 and September 2021, with the study involving 99 women who participated in repeat needle biopsies, three months after benign lumps were found on their mammograms.

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### **ABC News, ABC Nightly News, 17/04/2026, Yvonne Yong**

The ABC can reveal South Australia's public breast cancer screening service used patient information to conduct research without ethics approval. Almost 100 women who accessed the service also had their information used for the research without their consent.

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## AUSTRALIAN CDC

### **Damage control**

The Saturday Paper, General News, 18/04/2026, Martin McKenzie-Murray, Page 11

It's a frontline service, runs 24/7 and contains specimens of some of the world's most dangerous infectious diseases, including Ebola. It's the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness and, despite its sensitivity, uniqueness and accomplishments, it's quite likely you've never heard of it before.

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### **3AW, Mornings, 17/04/2026, Tom Elliott**

Interview with infectious diseases expert Professor Paul Griffin. Griffin warns that while a 90% vaccination rate among children sounds high, it is insufficient to maintain herd immunity, which requires a 95% threshold. He notes that vaccine fatigue and a reduced perception of risk post-COVID-19 have contributed to this decline, increasing the danger of local transmission when cases are imported from overseas.

## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### **Alarm over weight-loss drug**

The West Australian (Saturday edition), General News, 18/04/2026, Page 13

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has issued a warning over an experimental drug that has been compared to the weight loss drugs Ozempic and Wegovy. Ratastrutide is known to target three hormone pathways instead of one or two, with individuals losing more than 20 per cent of their body weight in less than a year in control trials.

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### **'Dangerous'. 'Untested'. But when a mum-of-three with chronic back pain tried a controversial peptide, she noticed changes she could not explain... Now, doctors reveal the risk behind the hype**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/04/2026, Rebel Wylie

Before she had children, Monique Hyde says she never really had issues with her body. [...] ' Those concerns reflect the position of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which issued a safety advisory on April 13 warning about the import, advertising and supply of unapproved peptides, including BPC-157.

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### **Syndicate smashed in \$2 million steroids, peptides bust**

West Australian, Other, 17/04/2026, Callum Godde

Two men and a woman have been charged after authorities uncovered a bounty of steroids and peptides worth more than \$2 million. The bust, announced on Friday by the Australian Border Force and Therapeutic Goods Administration, was set in motion in August following the interception 640 vials of performance and image enhancing drugs from air cargo shipments.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#)

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### **Artri Ajo King tablets 'should not be taken': TGA**

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 17/04/2026

Consumers are being urged not to take an imported product labelled Artri Ajo King tablets, after testing found undeclared medicines diclofenac and dexamethasone. In a safety advisory issued on Thursday (16 April 2026), the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) warned that both diclofenac and dexamethasone are prescription-only medicines

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### **Afraid of needles? A Nasal Flu Vaccine is now available for children in Australia**

SBS, Other, 17/04/2026

According to a 2024 report, more than 2,300 children in Australia are hospitalised each year due to influenza, with nearly half under five years old, including cases requiring ICU care and some deaths. This year, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved a nasal flu vaccine to protect children in Australia but the question remains, is it free?

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### **Will retatrutide help me lose weight or look 'shredded'?**

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 17/04/2026, Lauren Ball & Timothy Piatkowski

Injectable peptides are generating a lot of buzz online. [...] Earlier this week, Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration specifically warned about the dangers of importing and using unapproved

peptide products, both for consumers and suppliers.

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