



# TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 18th May 2026

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[Sydney Morning Herald page 10](#)** reports that Dr Nick Coatsworth, the deputy chief medical officer during the COVID-19 pandemic, will advocate today for tobacco tax cuts, labelling the multibillion-dollar black market controlled by organised crime a "whole of government policy failure", however Health Minister Mark Butler equated it to "raising the white flag" to organised crime.
- **[News.com.au](#)** reports that the six passengers who are currently undergoing a three-week quarantine in Western Australia following their evacuation from the MC Hondius cruise ship have all returned a negative result to a blood test for the Andes hantavirus. Health Minister Mark Butler last week said the decision to have the passengers placed under strict quarantine was likely the strongest response of any country that is taking passengers back from the ship.
- **[The Age page 1](#)** reports that paramedics say that the use of secret "not welcome lists" to ban aggressive patients by Victorian hospitals is putting paramedics at risk, as Ambulance Victoria seeks access to the lists despite the the state's health department refusing to hand them over.
- **[The Northern Territory News page 22](#)** reports that tradies, social media influencers and cleaning companies are driving a booming market for unregulated injectable peptides that has seen users suffering life-changing infections resulting in skin grafts, including on their face, and finger amputations after injecting grey market peptides.

- [The Australian page 7](#) reports that Australia's first clinical consensus statement on obesity and cardiovascular disease will recommend weight loss drugs be used for more patients, intensifying pressure to subsidise new weight-loss medications through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- [The Age page 18](#) reports that the World Health Organisation yesterday declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a "public health emergency of international concern", however it said that the crisis did not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Medical reformer seeks tobacco tax cut

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 18/05/2026, Chris Vedelago and Annika Smethurst, Page 10

A former national medical adviser has called for tobacco tax cuts, labelling the multibillion-dollar black market controlled by organised crime a "whole of government policy failure". Dr Nick Coatsworth, the deputy chief medical officer during the COVID-19 pandemic, will advocate today for the controversial change before a Senate inquiry into the "tobacco crisis" in Australia. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler equated it to "raising the white flag" to organised crime.

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

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### Taking the NDIS to the next level

Canberra Times, General News, 18/05/2026, Peter Kent, Page 13

The NDIA's top-level goals at this stage are to: control costs and cost growth; reduce and eventually eliminate fraud; protect participant data; protect participants from abuse. THE NDIS is an outstanding Australian initiative. [...] Most of these are bona fide organisations that provide quality services, although Minister Butler, and Minister Shorten before him, have expressed concern over the growing number of fraudulent providers extracting funds from the scheme without delivering service or value.

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### 'Banana republic's' slippery slope

Canberra Times, General News, 18/05/2026, Michael Stutchbury, Page 15

Paul Keating's 'third-rate economy' warning of 40 years ago continues to resonate as his 21st century Labor counterpart, Jim Chalmers, pushes big government and junk policies that will undermine productivity. FORTY years ago this week, ambitious 42-year-old Labor treasurer Paul Keating warned that Australia risked becoming a "banana republic". [...] Such a correction came three weeks before Chalmers' budget when Health Minister Mark Butler confessed that Labor's \$52 billion National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was "broken".

Also reported by: [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#).

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### Our kids our call

Daily Telegraph, General News, 18/05/2026, Josh Hanrahan and Will Paige, Page 1

Parents tell Labor to quit lecturing them & subsidise care in the home Parents and experts slammed a senior Albanese minister's claim that kids should be rushed into childcare to be "better" prepared for school, calling for a new system which would allow subsidies to apply to in-home carers or even family members. [...] The comments of Ms Gallagher followed Health Minister Mark Butler last year drawing criticism for suggesting kids who are being cared for by their grandparents were not receiving the same level of education as those in formal childcare.

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### Labor's not touching the wealthy with health insurance rebate cuts

Mark Butler's aiming to put funds cut from higher private health insurance rebates for the elderly towards aged care. But it's not the wealthy who will pay.

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## Australians quarantining in Perth learn their hantavirus fate

9News, Other, 17/05/2026

Six people stuck in a Perth quarantine centre after a deadly hantavirus outbreak on their cruise ship have discovered they're not infected. The four Australian citizens, one permanent resident and a New Zealand national quarantining for three weeks in Western Australia's Bullsbrook Centre for National Resilience received their blood test results today.

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## East Arnhem Regional Council moves to protect NDIS participants from dodgy providers

Adelaide Now, Other, 17/05/2026, Camden Smith

The leaders of an NT regional council have moved to stop systemic corruption of the NDIS. DIS Minister Mark Butler has been grilled over the Albanese government's "hard reform" of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

*Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#).*

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## Passengers from hantavirus cruise land in Australia

South Coast Register, Other, 17/05/2026, Kat Wong

Four Australian citizens, one permanent resident and one New Zealander, who were evacuated from the MV Hondius cruise ship, landed at RAAF Base Pearce near Perth about 1pm AEST on Friday. [...] All passengers are in good health and showed no symptoms, Health Minister Mark Butler said on Thursday.

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## Returned Australian passengers from hantavirus ship learn test results

NEWS.com.au, Other, 17/05/2026, Alexandra Feiam

The six passengers currently undergoing quarantine in Western Australia have had their hantavirus test results returned. [...] They will spend three weeks in the facility, which Health Minister Mark Butler said was the "strongest" reaction in the world.

*Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Manjimup-Bridgetown Times \(Online\)](#), [Great Southern Herald \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#).*

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## What dealing with Covid-19 taught us about Hantavirus outbreak

West Australian, Other, 17/05/2026, Ike Morris

When news broke of a deadly outbreak of hantavirus on board a cruise ship, the world held its collective breath. [...] "They're going to be put into the strongest quarantine arrangements you'll find anywhere in the world," Health Minister Mark Butler said on Friday.

*Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Weekly Times Now \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Manjimup-Bridgetown Times \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! Lifestyle Australia \(Online\)](#).*

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## Sky News Live, Sunday Agenda, 17/05/2026, Andrew Clennell

Interview with Federal Housing Minister Clare O'Neil. O'Neil says the Federal Government is focused on the NDIS because they want the scheme to be sustainable for the country. She notes Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's comment, in which he stated that the NDIS is the only 'lifeboat in the

ocean' since it was created, and she also adds that they need to make sure that people have the proper support that they need.

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## ABC Radio Adelaide, Sunday Morning, 17/05/2026, Jason Chong

Interview with Beat Bladder Cancer Australia CEO Adam Lynch, on Anna's Walk. Lynch says he founded Beat Bladder Cancer Australia to raise awareness after his wife, Anna, passed away from bladder cancer in 2017. He notes that the event has been conducted across Australia, but they are now organising Anna's Walk in Adelaide, and Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, SA Health Minister Blair Boyer, and the Mayor of Port Adelaide will attend.

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## MINISTER MCALLISTER

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## SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

### Is the male loneliness epidemic real? The answer may surprise you

Brisbane Times, Other, 17/05/2026, Jacqueline Maley

Nsw Liberal leader Kellie Sloane wants us to stop "bagging men" and calling them "toxic". Instead, she says, we should celebrate "healthy masculinity" and "champion top blokes". [...] As Dan Repacholi, the government's special envoy for men's health, tells me: "Where men struggle a bit different to women, is we don't talk about it as well; we are not as open with having those conversations."

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

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## DEPARTMENT

## Australians quarantining in Perth learn their hantavirus fate

9News, Other, 17/05/2026

Six people stuck in a Perth quarantine centre after a deadly hantavirus outbreak on their cruise ship have discovered they're not infected. The four Australian citizens, one permanent resident and a New Zealand national quarantining for three weeks in Western Australia's Bullsbrook Centre for National Resilience received their blood test results today.

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## Budget 2026-27 analysis: urgent care, public dental, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 18/05/2026, Andrzej Rostek

As health policy analyst Charles Maskell-Knight notes a number of important policy decisions for the Health, Disability and Ageing portfolio were announced in the weeks before the Federal Budget, including increased spending on aged care funded by savings in NDIS and private health insurance subsidies, and the permanent establishment of Urgent Care Clinics. [...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing budget pack doesn't mention the savings, nor does Minister Butler's media release .

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## Big tobacco is exploiting fears of the illicit market to unwind health gains, Australian experts warn

The Guardian, Other, 18/05/2026, Tom McIlroy

Big tobacco is exploiting fears of the illicit market to unwind longstanding health policies, leading health campaigners have warned, amid a parliamentary inquiry which took secret evidence from the cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris. [...] Australia's health department guidance suggests Australian public officials, including MPs, should only interact with executives and lobbyists from tobacco manufacturers "when and to the extent strictly necessary" to effectively regulate smoking.

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## Returned Australian passengers from hantavirus ship learn test results

West Australian, Other, 17/05/2026, Alexandra Feiam

The six passengers currently undergoing quarantine in Western Australia have had their hantavirus test results returned. [...] A Department of Health, Disability and Ageing spokesman confirmed the six passengers had undergone a blood test for the Andes virus – all of which have returned a negative result.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Sky News Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#),

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## Calls for more support for mums and bubs to help Australia meet its breastfeeding goals

West Australian, Other, 17/05/2026, Angela Pownall

Australia has failed to meet a target of 50 per cent of all babies being exclusively breastfed until they are six months old, prompting calls for action to lift breastfeeding rates. [...] A spokesman for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing said over the next four years the Australian Government was allocating \$8.9 million to fund the ABA's breastfeeding helpline, and \$6m to the Australian Red Cross to operate donor human milk banks for preterm babies.

Also reported by: [Sound Telegraph \(Online\)](#), [Bunbury Herald \(Online\)](#),

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### WeChat: a canary in the coalmine?

Anthony Albanese and Angus Taylor may be scrambling to win the post-budget social media contest but there is one super app that lit up like a Christmas tree last week and warrants attention. We aren't talking about X, Instagram or even Jim Chalmers' new TikTok channel.

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## Death exposes health failure

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 18/05/2026, Zoe De Koning, Page 1

A coronial investigation into the death of an elderly woman at a Geelong aged care facility has exposed major gaps in the emergency care protocols of the region's public healthcare provider. Cornelia Groot died on April 11 last year from complications of head injuries and a fractured hip sustained during an unwitnessed fall at Wallace Lodge a residential aged care facility at the McKellar Centre in North Geelong.

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

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## Aspiration has changed since the Howard era. This budget is finally catching up

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2026, Gareth Hutchens

The word "aspirational" means something very different in contemporary Australia, compared to what it used to mean. At the turn of the century, during the peak of the Howard era, it described Australians who wanted to put their kids into private school and university, and to build their wealth by getting an investment property or two.

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## DISABILITY AND CARERS

### Miles on thin ice after state poll

The Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 7

Queensland Opposition Leader Steven Miles is on shaky ground after an 8 per cent swing against Labor in a state by-election on Saturday held within days of the federal budget. Labor candidate Luke Richmond a lawyer and Labor Party assistant state secretary squeaked over the line with the help of Greens preferences in the working-class suburban Brisbane seat.

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### Labor vote takes a hit in budget backlash

Age, General News, 18/05/2026, James Massola, Page 1

The federal government's primary vote has slumped 3 percentage points to just 29 per cent after Labor broke a slew of promises on tax policy, but support has flowed to One Nation rather than the Coalition following the release of the pivotal "tough decisions" budget last Tuesday. The government was marked down by voters for breaking election promises not to touch tax breaks for negative gearing or capital gains, with 36 per cent of people saying their view of Labor had been damaged, 31 per cent saying their view had not changed, just 14 per cent saying it had improved and 18 per cent undecided.

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

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### Taking the wheel

Ballarat Courier, General News, 18/05/2026, Nick Powell, Page 1

Single mum Sophie fears her "beautiful, inquisitive kid" might not survive the night. For two years, she has barely slept, staying awake to make sure Malakai is still breathing.

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## Beyond the Kitchen project gives migrant women skills in cooking and beyond

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2026, Lucy Martin

In a takeaway shop in Morley, laughter and chatter fill the air as a group of 20 women chop onions, whisk eggs and pour batter as part of a course aimed at developing their confidence in and out of the kitchen. The women are all from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, and the nine-week course run by the Multicultural Services Centre of WA gives them a safe space to develop friendships and connections, as well as hospitality skills that will set them up for the future.

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## What do governments need to do this time to avoid pre-NDIS mistakes?

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2026

With more than 30 years behind him working in the disability sector, Keith McVilly vividly remembers what life was like prior to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). "State-based services were collapsing under an ever-increasing need to provide services and supports for people with incredibly complex needs.

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## Universal health checks for three-year-olds to begin in November under Federal Budget announcement

Kaloorlie Miner, Other, 17/05/2026, Rhianna Mitchell

All three-year-olds will be eligible for a free health and development check from November through a Federal Budget initiative to improve early intervention. Child advocacy groups have welcomed the Federal Government's decision to reinstate the Medicare Healthy Kids Check, a subsidised GP assessment for three year olds which was axed in 2015.

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

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## The unmet needs of children with rare diseases in rural and remote Australia

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 18/05/2026

Multidisciplinary care for children suffering from Rare Diseases (RD) is critical to ensure appropriate diagnosis and coordinated care.

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## ABC, ABC News (Sunday), 17/05/2026, Jeremy Fernandez

This week's Federal Budget unveiled cuts to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which were the largest savings measure from the Treasury, and with the cost of the scheme blowing out, states and territories are looking to rebuild their own services. However, disability advocates warn that mistakes cannot be repeated.

Also reported by: [ABC \(Sydney\)](#), [ABC News \(Sydney\)](#).

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## PRIMARY CARE

### Hospitals' secret bans put ambos in danger

Age, General News, 18/05/2026, Grant Mearthur and Kieran Rooney, Page 1

Victorian public hospitals are using secret "not welcome lists" to ban aggressive patients in a move that paramedics argue is putting them and patients at risk as they are turned away from emergency departments. Despite Ambulance Victoria making repeated requests for access to the lists so it can

better protect paramedics, streamline care and ensure patient safety, the state's health department has refused to hand them over.

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## Honouring eleanor

Age, General News, 18/05/2026, Cassandra Morgan, Page 1

Eighteen months after speech pathologis eanor Bryant died saving a child from a runaway tanker in a preschool playground her husband Tim and children Charlie and Tully gathered by a tree planted in memory of a 'beautiful woman'

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## Crisis talks

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/05/2026, Gera Kazakov, Page 1

As the Northern Territory health system continues to labour due to a lack of private maternity services, 'crisis talks' are being held between the NT Government and Darwin Private Hospital management to find a solution to the ongoing debacle. It comes as the one-year anniversary of the closure nears.

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## Stuck in outback with a crushed leg

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/05/2026, Gera Kazakov, Page 7

A man says he was "lucky to get out alive" after a rock fall crushed his leg and left him trapped in the remote Top End until he was incredibly rescued. Almost two years after the accident took place, Karl is now sharing his story and thanking those who worked hard to save him and his leg.

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## Firey's hospital ordeal after burns

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 18/05/2026, Euan Kennedy, Page 15

United Firefighters Union members have taken issue with the hospital treatment of the firefighter who suffered life-threatening injuries while stationed at the Corio oil refinery in the days after a major fire at the site. Sources confirmed a female firefighter was monitoring the refinery's alkylation unit, where the blaze erupted on April 15, for hazardous leaks four days after the fire when she was splashed with water containing hydrofluoric acid.

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## John's leaf is not crooked

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 18/05/2026, Zoe Waters, Page 16

There's a quiet corner of University Hospital Geelong that most visitors walk past. A tree, bronze-leafed, permanent, and full of names.

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## Nurse's mission to help sick kids

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 18/05/2026, Erin Blond, Page 5

A clinical nurse educator in pediatrics at St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba has been named a Queensland winner in the prestigious Delta Goodrem Foundation's Nursing Excellence Awards. Put forward by her nurse unit manager Melanie Osborne, Danielle Morgan was recognised alongside nine St Vincent's nurses across Australia for her exceptional contribution to pediatric care, staff education, and service improvement.

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## Brutal ride for healing

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 11

The gruelling Bike 4 Burns charity ride made its way into the Garden City at the weekend, marking an incredible 20year milestone of cycling across Queensland for a vital cause. The peloton rolled into Toowoomba State School on Saturday to rest for the night after conquering some of the longest, most

punishing hills of the entire route from Bundaberg to Brisbane, navigating the steep climb from Maidenwell up the range.

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## Former chief slams state budget snub

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 18/05/2026, Sophia Baker, Page 3

A former hospital CEO says the state government is putting politics ahead of people's lives as an embattled emergency department has again missed out on funding. Western District Health Service's Hamilton Base Hospital did not receive funding in the 2026 state budget despite its more than three-decade wait for an upgrade to its ED, which has prompted former doctors, patients, MPs and the nurses' union to raise concerns about its condition.

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Let the steroid games begin

Australian Financial Review, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 37

The powerful drugs have equally powerful side effects; for one thing, taking high levels of steroids raises the risk of heart disease. Most sporting bodies prohibit performance-enhancing drugs.

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### Tobacco crimes: just 107 jailed in seven years

The Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Mohammad Alfares, Page 3

The commonwealth's top prosecutors have handled just 405 illicit tobacco prosecutions in more than seven years, with only 107 people spending time behind bars, despite a booming black market that has wiped billions from the federal budget. New figures lodged by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions in a submission to the Senate inquiry into Australia's illegal tobacco crisis have revealed a modest enforcement footprint since mid-2018, alongside a striking absence of referrals from health regulators tasked with policing tobacco and vaping laws.

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### \$23m to keep women and girls on the team

Herald Sun, General News, 18/05/2026, Peter Rolfe, Page 11

Generous Australians have dug deep to donate a record amount of money to ensure women and girls continue to make their mark on the sporting field. Despite a cost-of-living crisis, an Australian Sports Foundation report to be released on Monday reveals more than \$22.8m was directed toward women and girls' sport in the past year, an \$11.3m increase.

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### Black market kills off tobacco

Hobart Mercury, General News, 18/05/2026, Ellen Ransley, Page 3

The cigarette black market that has wiped \$3bn from the budget in a year must prompt the federal government to freeze or reduce the tobacco excise and "get serious" about enforcement. At a senate inquiry into the black market on Monday, parliamentarians will be told the status quo is directly impacting 80,000 convenience store workers across the country, and cannot be allowed to continue.

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### Hall-of-Famer Morris clears air on smoking blow-up

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/05/2026, Kathy McCabe, Page 21

Jenny Morris was at the peak of her pop powers in the late 1980s when she launched a one-woman campaign that provoked howls of derision from some Aussie music fans, promoters and venue owners.

It seems shocking, with the benefit of hindsight, that the two-time ARIA Best Female Artist winner ignited such controversy with a polite request for people not to smoke at her shows.

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## Peptide pushing a dirty business

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/05/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 22

Tradies, social media influencers and cleaning companies are among the businesses and people allegedly linked to websites cashing in on the booming market for unregulated injectable peptides. Unapproved peptides have gone mainstream, with ASIC records showing dozens of business names with the word "peptide" in them have been registered in 2026 alone. Social media has also been flooded with praise from influencers and celebrities.

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

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## Illicit smokes stores butt out for 90 days

West Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Jessica Evensen, Page 12

Police Minister Reece Whitby has vowed "we are just getting started" after six vape and tobacco stores were dramatically closed after a blitz using new laws to target illicit sales. The State Government on Sunday revealed it had seized 141,817 illegal cigarettes, 5.2kg of loose tobacco and 613 vapes since raiding several stores across Kalgoorlie, Perth and Bunbury earlier this week.

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## The genetic curse of alcohol addiction

Newcastle Herald, General News, 18/05/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 3

For people having trouble with alcohol addiction, Dr Stephen Jurd has a simple message: "Go to a meeting". Dr Jurd, a retired psychiatrist who specialised in addiction medicine, will speak at an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) event in the Hunter tomorrow.

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## Amputations, heart attacks, days of vomiting: The horror toll of 'backyard' peptides

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 17/05/2026

Victorians are landing in emergency departments after suffering severe side effects linked to illegal peptides, including vomiting, abdominal cramping, and chest pains that mirror heart attacks. Doctors also warn that contaminated peptides are fuelling a surge of serious skin infections which have required skin grafts and even amputations.

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## Malnourished and overtrained, Olympic gymnast didn't have energy for a period

ABC Online, Other, 17/05/2026, Johanna Mcdiarmid

Sat 16 May 2026 at 9:32pm Alexandra Kiroi-Bogatyreva spent years sacrificing her health for a shot at making the Olympics. "I was so driven that injuries didn't stop me," the 24-year-old told ABC Sport.

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## Tax-addicted government can't see through the health industry smoke on cigarette war disaster | David Penberthy

Adelaide Now, Other, 17/05/2026, David Penberthy

There's a yawning chasm between people who smoke and the health geeks trying and failing to tax it to death, writes David Penberthy. Born after 2008?

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## Health groups urge vigilance over big tobacco claims

The Senior, Other, 18/05/2026, William Ton

Health bodies are seeking to unmask a push by the tobacco giants to exploit fears over the illicit cigarette trade and safeguard Australia's smoking policies ahead of a parliamentary inquiry previously marred by secrecy. A coalition of 15 organisations, including the Cancer Council, Heart Foundation, Quit, and Public Health Association of Australia, is calling for strict transparency and protections against industry interference ahead of a Senate committee hearing into the booming illicit tobacco trade on Monday.

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## CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

### 'Gave me my life back': cancer trial results stun docs, patients

The Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 7

A cutting-edge radiotherapy treatment has achieved what is being described as unprecedented results in treating kidney cancer, with the method proving 100 per cent effective in controlling the disease for patients enrolled on an Australian clinical trial, and largely halting cancer recurrence. The radiation method, known as Stereotactic Ablative Body Radiotherapy, is able to deliver very high doses of radiation with precision to the millimetre through robotics, advanced realtime scanning methods and human technical expertise.

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

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### Flexible study a prescription for better doctors

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 18/05/2026, Rachel Rasker, Page 3

Peter Robertson is studying his second year of medicine for a second time. The father of three had to retake a year of his course due to the demands of balancing family life and paying the bills while doing a degree likened to "drinking from a fire hose".

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### The chronic pain sufferers being flagged as 'frequent flyers'

Canberra Times, General News, 18/05/2026, Lanie Tindale, Page 6

Georgia Brady's stomach is permanently covered in a red rash from using a hot water bottle so much. The 30-year-old, who has a pharmacy of strong prescription opiates in her linen cupboard, has spent much of the 18 years since getting her period in the foetal position, or nauseous and faint from pelvic pain.

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### Sarah was fit, healthy and living her dream life - until a terrifying episode led to soul-crushing cancer diagnosis at 23 that doctors never saw coming

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 17/05/2026

A 'fit and healthy' woman has revealed how a terrifying episode of uncontrollable bleeding led to a shock diagnosis of a rare cancer typically seen in women three times her age.

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### 2GB, Healthy Living, 17/05/2026, Dr Ross Walker

Interview with University of New South Wales Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing Co-Director Professor Henry Brodaty. Walker says the Federal Government recently announced a \$200m boost for dementia research in the latest budget, but leading experts warn that the funding falls short of the massive scale required to tackle Australia's leading cause of death. Brodaty notes that over 400,000 Australians live with dementia, and that the Federal Government's boost is great, but he also iterates that they still do

not have a national health prevention program and post-diagnostic care available for people with dementia.

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## 2GB, Healthy Living, 17/05/2026, Dr Ross Walker

Interview with University of Sydney Associate Professor Dr Elie Matar. Walker says Parkinson's Disease is the fastest-growing neurologic condition in the world, affecting 200,000 Australians, and University of Sydney researchers are now investigating how sleep disruption is not just a symptom, but a driver of the disease itself. Matar states that Parkinson's is much more than a movement disorder, and they have found that a sleep problem called REM sleep behaviour disorder could be the earliest warning sign for Parkinson's.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### Contact lenses designed to treat depression as good as drugs

Northern Territory News, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 7

Contact lenses designed to treat depression are just as effective as drugs like Prozac, scientists claim. The lenses deliver mild electrical signals to the brain via the retina, with the aim of stimulating brain regions associated with depression.

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

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### Young carer's dream for normal life again

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 18/05/2026, Euan Kennedy, Page 5

Eight-year-old Mila Reese had to grow up fast while caring for her mother Roxanne after she was diagnosed with breast cancer three years ago.

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### 'Something is working': Why Australia has reached a turning point for youth mental health

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 17/05/2026, Rachel Rasker

When Ley Laupama was a teenager, no one went to the school counsellor. "There was a lot of stigma against it."

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## IMMUNISATION

### \$4m plan to give infants free lifesaving meningococcal B jab

Hobart Mercury, General News, 18/05/2026, bridget clarke, Page 5

The upcoming state budget will fund a new free meningococcal B vaccine program, the government has confirmed. From July 1, infants from six weeks up to two years of age will be able to receive the meningococcal B vaccine for free.

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### 'When's it our turn?': Mum who lost son to deadly infection says NSW is now the outlier on vaccines

9News, Other, 17/05/2026, Emily McPherson

The Victorian government's announcement this week that it will fund free meningococcal B vaccines for

teenagers has been met with conflicted emotions from families who have lost loved ones to the deadly disease. The state will set aside \$9 million to add the B strain to the existing meningococcal A,C,W and Y vaccines available for Year 10 students under the National Immunisation Program.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### **Trachoma successfully eliminated in Australia through Indigenous-led health care**

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 18/05/2026

The World Health Organization (WHO) has validated that Australia is the 30th nation to eliminate Trachoma, a preventable infectious eye disease, which only affected Indigenous communities in Australia. Becca Whitehead Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCHO) achieved elimination status by working with non-Indigenous organisations over decades, to provide culturally safe, holistic health care.

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## PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

### **\$1bn plan to help hospital weather next big storm**

Cairns Post, General News, 18/05/2026, Leena Singh, Page 17

Before the start of every wet season, a large group of our staff carry out a simulation exercise to get us physically and mentally prepared for whatever the storm season throws at us. The exercise usually involves a looming cyclone or flood, and the steps our staff need to go through to protect patients and colleagues, such as ensuring everyone is up to date on all our plans and strategies whenever and wherever disaster strikes.

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### **Regional hospitals under microscope**

Western Advocate, General News, 18/05/2026, Reidun Berntsen, Page 5

A state parliamentary inquiry into health services has revealed scathing evidence of alleged rape threats, bullying and systemic maintenance failures across regional hospitals. While the inquiry is examining health services at the Calvary Mater Hospital in Newcastle, the first hearing on Tuesday, May 12 also highlighted failures at Orange, Bathurst and Bloomfield hospitals - all of which share a common manager in the Downer Group.

Also reported by: [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#).

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Vital reforms are needed for our nurses

Canberra Times, Editorials, 18/05/2026, Page 18

Although International Nurses Day, which coincided with the delivery of the federal budget last Tuesday, was overshadowed by events in Canberra the leaders of the profession used that as an opportunity to call for vital reforms.

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### Vale, hippie GP

Cairns Post, General News, 18/05/2026, Greg McLean, Page 1

The Douglas Shire community will farewell one of its most revered sons later this month when a memorial is held for Dr John Archer who died suddenly last week, aged 75. Dr Archer has been the local GP in Port Douglas for almost 50 years, saving hundreds of lives with his passion for detecting skin cancers and conducting his own pathology tests and treating generations of Douglas Shire locals for all sorts of ailments.

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### Queensland nurse is fired after faking grandfather's death to claim Qantas refund

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 17/05/2026, Burney Wong

A nurse has been fired after being found guilty of faking his grandfather's death to claim a refund on a plane ticket he had purchased for him.

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

### Weight-loss jabs and surgery on doctors' obesity plan

The Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 7

Pressure to subsidise new weight-loss medications through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is set to intensify, with Australia's first clinical consensus statement on obesity and cardiovascular disease recommending the drugs be used for more patients. On Monday, the Heart Foundation is releasing the consensus statement at the World Health Assembly in Geneva with hopes the document will help guide clinicians on how to reduce obesity in people with established heart disease or those who are at a risk of developing it.

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### New medicines 'out of reach' for Australians

The Australian, General News, 18/05/2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 7

Evidence is emerging that Australia is being reconsidered as a destination for a host of new drugs by pharmaceutical companies as Donald Trump's medicines policies prompt "seismic shifts" in global pricing incentives that represent a critical threat to local patients. Medicines Australia is warning that the impact of Trump's Most Favoured Nation policy, which aims to aggressively push down US

medicines prices to match lower prices overseas, is deepening a crisis in Australia's medicines approval and pricing processes, which are seeing increasing numbers of patients denied access to innovative drugs.

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### **Pacific Equity Partners taps banks for Qscan tilt**

The Australian, Business News, 18/05/2026, Page 14

The battle for Queensland diagnostic imaging business Qscan is heating up, with Pacific Equity Partners enlisting Rothschild and Allier Capital as the process narrows to its final stages. DataRoom understands PEP, which this column first flagged as a contender for the \$NZ800m-plus (\$655m) asset, is working alongside Bain Capital and a third party, reportedly an infrastructure group.

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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## AUSTRALIAN CDC

### **Ebola spread declared a global health emergency**

Age, International News, 18/05/2026, Disha Mishra, Page 18

The World Health Organisation yesterday declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a "public health emergency of international concern". The WHO said the outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, did not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency but countries sharing land borders with the DRC were at high risk for spread.

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### **Meanest mozzie lands**

Cairns Post, General News, 18/05/2026, Page 4

Health authorities have detected the world's most invasive mosquito for the first time on the Australian mainland. Six Asian tiger mosquitoes, also known as "barbecue stoppers", were found near Bamaga in Far North Queensland.

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

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### **Ebola outbreak is declared an emergency of 'international concern' as 80 die with hundreds more thought to be infected by virus that has already spread to new countries**

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 18/05/2026

An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda has been declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organisation, after 80 suspected deaths. The WHO said the outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, does not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency but that countries sharing land borders with the DRC are at high risk of further spread.

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## WHO declares international emergency as Ebola outbreak kills nearly 100 in DR Congo

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 18/05/2026

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has confirmed its 17th Ebola outbreak, with at least 80 deaths. [...] Australian health authorities, including the Australian Centre for Disease Control, maintain that the risk of an Ebola outbreak reaching Australia remains very low, with no confirmed cases ever reported on Australian soil.

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

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## ABC, ABC News (Sunday), 17/05/2026, Jeremy Fernandez

The World Health Organization has declared that an Ebola outbreak in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo is a public health emergency of international concern. More than 240 cases of the virus have been reported, and there have been at least 80 deaths.

Similar coverage reported by: [Channel 10 \(Perth\)](#).

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