



TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 21st May 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
| [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Disability and Carers](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Population Health](#) | [Chronic Conditions and Screening](#) |
[Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Immunisation](#) | [Health Systems Strategies](#)
| [Health Economics & Research](#) | [First Nations Health](#)
| [Public Hospital and Health Reform](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
| [Medicare Benefits and Digital Health](#) | [Benefits Integrity](#) | [Australian CDC](#) |
[Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) | [Office of Drug Control](#) | [Food Standards](#)
| [AICIS](#)

LINKS

[Click here to view full print articles in this report](#)

[Click here to view front pages of today's newspapers](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The West Australian \(page 3\)](#)** reports that the ongoing diphtheria outbreak reached 226 cases across WA, the NT, Queensland and South Australia, prompting Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to urge Australians to get vaccinated, and Health Minister Mark Butler to warn of pressure being put on the Northern Territory's hospital systems. Minister Butler said that the government was working on a vaccination-focused support package.
- **[The Australian \(page 1\)](#)** reports that the proportion of students classified as having a disability in Australian schools has increased from 19.9 per cent in 2019 to 27 per cent last year, with a significant rise in socioemotional disorders like ADHD and autism.
- **[The Australian Financial Review \(page 8\)](#)** reports that despite efforts to curb NDIS spending, the federal government is expected to increase total disability spending to \$98 billion this year, with a significant portion allocated to pensions and carer payments.
- **[The Herald Sun \(page 1\)](#)** reports that Victoria's critical surgery waitlist has risen above 68,000, an increase of over 4000 in just three months, as new data suggests broader pressures across the state's hospital system.
- **[The Courier Mail \(page 4\)](#)** reports that Queensland's new Mater Hospital in Springfield will not provide abortion services or voluntary assisted dying, despite the public partnership receiving \$638 million in government funding.

- [The Canberra Times \(page 5\)](#) reports that the ACT government will fund 32 new paramedic roles to address staffing shortages, as well as investing in the modernisation of emergency services vehicles and communication systems.
- [The Australian \(page 8\)](#) reports that the director-general of the World Health Organisation said that he was "deeply concerned" by the "scale and speed" of an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has passed 500 confirmed cases and 134 deaths.

MINISTER BUTLER

Albanese mourns girl as he launches attack on NT government

Age, General News, 21/05/2026, Brittany Busch & Nick Newling, Page 8

Anthony Albanese has taken a swipe at the Northern Territory's Country Liberal Party for systemic failures of care in Indigenous communities after visiting the family of Kumanjayi Little Baby in Alice Springs. [...] "It is a very, very concerning outbreak," Health Minister Mark Butler told ABC News.

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

Disease outbreak spreads

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2026, Alexandra Feiam, Page 16

Diphtheria has spread from the Northern Territory into Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, in what has been described as the worst outbreak in years. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler told ABC Radio National that federal authorities were waiting for the Northern Territory government's investigation into the death but said "there's no question that this is serious".

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [OverSixty \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [The Medical Republic \(Online\)](#), [Allergy and Respiratory Republic \(Online\)](#), [The New Daily \(Online\)](#), [WEB OZ Arab Media \(Online\)](#).

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

Rare disease spreads in WA

West Australian, General News, 21/05/2026, Aaron Bunch, Page 3

Case numbers rise in worst diphtheria outbreak for decades WA is at the epicentre of the nation's worst diphtheria outbreak in decades, prompting calls from the Prime Minister for at-risk people to get vaccinated. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the current outbreak was about 30 times greater than the average number of diphtheria cases recorded nationally over the past five years.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Tasmanian Examiner \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Western Advocate \(Bathurst\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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

Reforms raise concerns

Pakenham News, General News, 21/05/2026, Jensy Callimootoo, Page 4

Single mum from Casey, Maya Pinn has been a full time caretaker for her son Lloyd for the last eight years, now she's worried the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reforms may introduce more rigid red tapes to its assessments a process that already takes weeks. [...] The key aim for the overhauls is to return the scheme to its "original intent", with Mark Butler, Minister for Health and Aging, arguing that it was "growing too fast".

Also reported by: [Cranbourne Star News \(Melbourne\)](#), [Berwick Star News \(Melbourne\)](#).

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

Hotly anticipated Budget delivers little for rural areas

Riverine Grazier, General News, 20/05/2026, Tertia Butcher, Page 1

Treasurer Jim Chalmers unveiled his fifth budget last week, promising that housing for younger Australians would be the centrepiece. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler announced \$15 billion would be

cut from the NDIS over the next four years to clamp down on ballooning costs and prevent it from becoming "an ATM for shonks, grifters, fraudsters and crooks".

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

Growing concern as diphtheria spreads

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 20/05/2026, Page 2

Experts are becoming increasingly concerned as the Northern Territory diphtheria outbreak affecting mostly First Nations peoples spreads further afield, pointing to vaccination and boosters as the best protection against severe disease. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said on ABC Radio National yesterday that the Government is "very concerned about it", and is working closely with the NT Government, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the Aboriginal Medical Service for the NT to lift vaccination rates.

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

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

CDC keeping an eye on Ebola

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 20/05/2026, Page 3

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda to be a 'public health emergency of international concern', but does not currently meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said yesterday that the Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) has been working with the WHO to monitor the situation, and the chief health officers of the states, territories and the Commonwealth have met to consider the CDC's work.

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

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

Federal government prepares diphtheria support package after more than 220 cases reported

ABC Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Stephanie Dalzell

Federal and state governments have mobilised to address the largest outbreak of diphtheria in recent memory, with the Commonwealth preparing a support package to bolster vaccination rates for a disease once considered almost eradicated. [...] Federal health minister Mark Butler said the numbers were "very concerning."

[Read More](#)

Support package on its way as biggest diphtheria outbreak on record spreads

SBS, Other, 20/05/2026, Cameron Gooley

Health Minister Mark Butler says he is finalising details on a support package to promote diphtheria vaccination in affected areas. The nation's Health Minister Mark Butler says a diphtheria outbreak spreading across remote parts of the country is the biggest on record, and has pledged vaccine and staffing support for the Northern Territory to bring it under control.

[Read More](#)

Minister takes on Hunter GPs in government push to increase bulk-billing

Camden Haven Courier, Other, 20/05/2026, Matthew Kelly

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler makes no apologies for disrupting the Hunter's GP market as part of a push to drive up Medicare bulk-billing rates. The government will spend \$25.3 million over three years to establish six fully bulk-billing GP clinics across the Hunter and Central Coast, which have some of the lowest bulk-billing rates in the country.

Also reported by: [Singleton Argus \(Online\)](#), [Muswellbrook Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Hantavirus cruise evacuees secure flight to Australia

Six passengers from a cruise ship at the centre of a deadly hantavirus outbreak will soon return to Australia, after the government confirmed a flight has been secured for the evacuees. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had secured a suitable aircraft and crew to transport the group, due to land in the Netherlands at 4pm Sydney time and then take off about 90 minutes later.

[Read More](#)

More bulk-billing GP clinics slated for Hunter region

Newcastle Weekly, Other, 20/05/2026, Rod Thompson

In a major healthcare boost for the region, six new bulk-billing general practices (GPs) are slated for the Hunter and Central Coast. [...] "There is a cultural issue in GPs in this region," federal Health Minister Mark Butler said.

[Read More](#)

Medical centres: Big beneficiaries from 2026's federal budget?

realestate.com.au, Other, 20/05/2026, Harrison Astbury

This year's budget shook up the property industry, with key changes in negative gearing and capital gains taxes, but rising stronger and mightier than ever is the medical sector – according to experts. [...] Before health minister Mark Butler announced a shakeup of the NDIS prior to the budget, it was expected to support more than 900,000 participants by 2030.

[Read More](#)

Legislation deep-dive: Access and planning

Team Dsc, Other, 20/05/2026

There's a lot going on in the new NDIS Bill (understatement). [...] Last week, NDIS Minister Mark Butler tabled amendments to the NDIS Act in parliament that, if passed, would fundamentally alter the NDIS as we know it.

[Read More](#)

Butler in hot seat over Central Coast bulk billing

The Medical Republic, Other, 20/05/2026

Local GPs and the national practice owner association say the federal government's \$25 million investment in building new clinics is a tacit admission that bulk billing alone cannot sustain a clinic. Speaking to Paul Culliver on ABC radio Newcastle on Tuesday, Mr Butler could not rule out that the six new bulk billing clinics that the government had committed to funding would not poach GPs from existing practices.

[Read More](#)

Australia flags tougher travel restrictions as Ebola outbreak escalates in Africa

traveltalkmedia.com.au, Other, 20/05/2026

Australia is considering tightening travel restrictions as health authorities monitor a growing Ebola outbreak spreading across parts of Central Africa, with experts warning the crisis could worsen rapidly if not contained. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the government was reassessing travel guidance for Uganda and surrounding regions.

[Read More](#)

'Most ageist in Australian history': SA's elderly respond to federal budget

WEB InDaily SA, Other, 20/05/2026

A new survey from SA's peak body for people aged over 50 claims the federal budget leaves the elderly "forgotten". [...] Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler announced cuts to the Howard-era private health subsidy introduced in 2004, saying he recognised the reforms may be "an unwelcome change for many older Australians".

Home care price caps delayed as government introduces new protections

Your Life Choices, Other, 20/05/2026, Abegail Abrugar

The promise sounded simple: cap what home care providers can charge. [...] Health minister Mark Butler pointed to the National Disability Insurance Scheme as an example, where capped pricing was said to have encouraged providers to charge at the maximum rate.

[Read More](#)

Proposed private health rebate cut: Will it really have 'almost no impact'?

Your Life Choices, Other, 20/05/2026, Abegail Abrugar

If you're over 65 with private health cover, you've likely felt a jolt reading the budget fine print. [...] Health minister Mark Butler acknowledged the changes were 'unwelcome' but argued age alone shouldn't determine rebate levels.

[Read More](#)

ABC News, ABC News Tonight, 20/05/2026

A diphtheria outbreak has spread across Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia, with over 200 cases reported, one suspected death, and approximately 25 per cent of cases requiring hospitalisation. Indigenous communities in Central Australia have been hit the hardest, with vaccination shortages and overcrowded housing contributing. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is working with his state counterparts on an emergency support package that includes more vaccines and a larger workforce, with a focus on containment strategies rather than COVID-style lockdowns.

Similar coverage reported by: [Channel 10 \(Perth\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Perth\)](#), [SBS \(Sydney\)](#), [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#).

[Play Now](#)

NBN Central Coast, NBN News, 20/05/2026, Gavin Morris & Natasha Beyersdorf

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler paid a visit to Wyoming Medical Centre on the Central Coast and announced more than \$25 million in funding for up to six new bulk-billing GP clinics across the Hunter and Central Coast, where bulk-billing rates are roughly half the state average. The initiative, which is supported by Federal Member for Robertson Gordon Reid and Federal Member for Dorell Emma McBride, will be implemented through a Primary Health Network competitive tender process and comes after restrictions on recruiting overseas trained doctors were lifted, with local GPs expressing differing views on bulk billing viability.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Central Coast, Breakfast, 20/05/2026, Scott Levi

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Compere mentions that Butler is promoting two bulk billing clinics set for the Central Coast, where said clinics are expected to be funded \$25m. Butler points out that the clinics will be opened around the middle of 2027. He adds that they don't know where the clinics will be set up yet, as there will be a competitive process conducted by the Primary Health Network for the region.

[Play Now](#)

Triple M Central Coast, Breakfast, 20/05/2026, Paddy Gerrard & Maz Compton

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Butler points out that he's currently in Gosford, promoting their two committed bulk-billing clinics on the Central Coast. He states that they are focusing on major investments in the health sector, particularly in bulk-billing, in this part of NSW, where the bulk-billing dial just hasn't shifted despite some pretty huge investments over the last few years.

[Play Now](#)

2SM, Mornings, 20/05/2026, Chris Smith

Interview with Health Minister Mark Butler. Compere says health officials are sounding the alarm for decades, with cases rising across multiple states of Diphtheria. Butler points out that the latest numbers he has obtained overnight are that there are 220 cases. He states that about 60% of them are in the NT, where there is currently an outbreak of Diphtheria.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER MCALLISTER

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER RAE

Albanese Government cracks down on home aged care pricing

Weekly Times, General News, 20/05/2026, Page 8

The Albanese Labor Government is strengthening consumer protections within the Support at Home program through a new package designed to guard older Australians against unfair prices. [...] "Older Australians and their families told us they need stronger protections against rogue market prices when it comes to Support at Home," Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, Sam Rae, said in a statement.

Also reported by: [Aged Care Guide \(Online\)](#), [The Indian Sun \(Online\)](#).

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

Price caps deferred until more evidence gathered

Community Care Review, Other, 20/05/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

The government has announced price caps for the Support at Home program will be deferred until more evidence is gathered and it has greater confidence in the stability of the market. [...] Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae said the government has listened to, and is acting on, feedback from older Australians and their families about the need for stronger protections "against rogue market prices when it comes to Support at Home."

[Read More](#)

Stolen Generations survivors exempt from aged care means testing after long campaign by Elders

Indigenous News Australia, Other, 20/05/2026, Dean Foley

Stolen Generations redress payments will be exempt from aged care means testing under a federal budget reform announced this week – ending what advocates have called a "discriminatory" practice that effectively forced survivors to pay back the state with their own compensation money. [...]

Independent Senator Lidia Thorpe, a Gunnai Gunditjmarra and Djab Wurrung woman, said she had raised the issue with Aged Care Minister Sam Rae as well as making a budget submission and having the cost modelled by the Parliamentary Budget Office.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Today , 20/05/2026, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Panel discussion with Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Ted O'Brien, about Australians asking PM Anthony Albanese to rethink his capital gains tax changes. Rae points out that they need to get a better tax balance between people who earn their income by working and those who earn their income from their assets. He adds that there's \$3.8b additional investment for new business through this budget.

[Play Now](#)

Sky News Live, Newsday, 20/05/2026, Kieran Gilbert

Sky News reports that aged care provider Uniting Agewell has pledged to refund clients after overcharging concerns were raised in relation to home care packages and Commonwealth Home Support Program services, including disputed management fees and higher-than-service-cost deductions, with Aged Care Minister Sam Rae stating legislation requires reasonable pricing and announcing price caps from July. The report also highlights system pressures and service access issues in regional areas, including difficulties navigating the My Aged Care portal and service shortages, with 103,527 people awaiting assessment or upgrade and 94,963 people assessed but still awaiting packages, alongside a government commitment to add 32,000 Support at Home places in the next financial year.

Continues on: [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#), [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#), [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#), [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#).

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

Council news

The Kuranda Paper, General News, 01/05/2026, Cr Amy Braes, Page 6

At our recent Household Composting Workshop in Kuranda, the conversation moved from worm farms and compost bins to broader questions about waste, recycling and how we manage resources over the long term. [...] In addition to the new Cairns North Urgent Care Clinic, which I am sure you have all heard about, I was proud to host Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride MP this month and we opened the brand new Cairns Medicare Mental Health Centre.

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

[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

'We feed you all, but we die younger': rural services suffer, metros expand

The Land Australia, Other, 20/05/2026, Jason Gregory

Regional Australians are being forced to accept poorer health outcomes, weaker services and a tax system stacked against them, independent MP Rebekha Sharkie has declared, warning parliament "we feed you all, but we die younger". [...] Labor MP Rebecca White, who was raised on a farm in Tasmania, rejected the claims, pointing to expanded bulk-billing access, increased rural GP training places and investment in aged care and study hubs.

Also reported by: [Stock & Land \(Online\)](#), [Stock Journal Australia \(Online\)](#), [FarmOnline \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

Ebola no threat here?

Travel Daily, General News, 20/05/2026, Page 6

The US has put in place temporary travel restrictions and screening measures to prevent the spread of an Ebola outbreak originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and South Sudan in Africa. [...] According to Australia's Federal Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Australia has firm border protections in place.

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

What works and how to make it work

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/05/2026, Natasha Egan & Katarina Lloyd Jones

The aged care sector has an implementation problem, rather than an ideas problem, Positive Ageing Summit delegates have heard on Wednesday. [...] Australia's chief allied health officer Anita Hobson-Powell will deliver a national health update.

[Read More](#)

Country music star pushes First Nations seniors vaccinations message

Australian Seniors News, Other, 20/05/2026

Country music icon, Troy Cassar-Daley, is urging older First Nations Australians to 'Get Ready' and get vaccinated ahead of winter. As part of a new Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing campaign, Troy is encouraging First Nations Australians aged 50 years and over, to have a yarn with their doctor or health worker about which winter vaccines are right for them before winter hits.

[Read More](#)

Troy Cassar-Daley backs winter vaccine campaign for mob

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), Other, 20/05/2026, Joseph Guenzler

Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung country music icon Troy Cassar-Daley is urging First Nations people to get vaccinated before winter, as flu, COVID-19 and RSV cases rise across Australia. The campaign, run by the Australian Government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, encourages First Nations Australians aged 50 and over to speak with their doctor or health worker about which winter vaccines are right for them.

[Read More](#)

Australia experiencing 'worst diphtheria outbreak in decades'

The Medical Republic, Other, 20/05/2026

Experts are calling for increased vaccination efforts as case numbers reach unprecedented heights. [...] Information about which diphtheria vaccines are covered under the National Immunisation Program is available on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

System is under strain, say home care providers

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/05/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Providers report financial viability and the growing complexity of the SaH funding model as barriers in the reform transition, the Enkindle Consulting provider outlook survey shows. It has been six months since the new Aged Care Act came into effect, and part one of Enkindle Consulting's latest survey shows providers feel the reforms are not yet delivering on the outcomes envisaged by the royal commission.

Also reported by: [Community Care Review \(Online\)](#)

[Read More](#)

Providers need to solve their problems before asking for more funding

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/05/2026, Natasha Egan

It's difficult to advocate for an increase in the care management cap if providers fail to claim the 10 per

cent available, says Tom Symondson. Innovating and getting systems and culture right is what providers must do as part of their responsibility to meet government in the middle, says Ageing Australia chief executive officer Tom Symondson.

[Read More](#)

Aged care laws are forcing open dementia unit doors – and here is what's happening

HelloCare, Other, 20/05/2026, Jakob Neeland

For the past 40 years, the general consensus in the Australian aged care sector was that memory support units existed for a reason. They house aged care residents with the most complex needs, people whose dementia has progressed to a point where their behaviour can pose a risk to their own health and wellbeing, and to those around them.

[Read More](#)

Australians wait 12 months for aged care – and the budget funding won't fix that

HelloCare, Other, 20/05/2026, Jakob Neeland

Imagine your elderly mother needs help to get out of bed, shower and manage her medications – and then waiting more than a year for that support to arrive. According to a federal government report released this week, that is no longer a worst-case scenario.

[Read More](#)

Understanding memory support: a guide to dementia care in Shepparton aged care facilities

Shepparton News Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Annie Barrow

A diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's disease marks a profound and often overwhelming turning point for any family. In Shepparton and the broader Goulburn Valley, the rising prevalence of cognitive decline among the local ageing population has necessitated a significant shift in how residential facilities approach care.

[Read More](#)

'Worse off': how new retirement village laws may end up crippling some

The Senior, Other, 20/05/2026, Carla Mascarenhas

Retirement village reforms designed to better protect residents could financially cripple some villages, one operator warns. The new legislation in Victoria, which came into effect in May, is the biggest change to the Retirement Villages Act 1986 since it was first made.

[Read More](#)

Juniper opens 11 modular staff homes in outback town in WA

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/05/2026, Caroline Egan

The Not For Profit aged care operator has opened new staff accommodation in Fitzroy Crossing, 2,500km north of Perth. [...] The project was funded through the Federal Government's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Services Program.

[Read More](#)

Support at Home operators offering client packages for free: survey

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/05/2026, Caroline Egan

Part 2 of Enkindle Consulting's survey of 300 Support at Home providers included revelations larger operators are offering clients 'no contribution' packages. The practice creates an uneven playing field, which disadvantages smaller operators.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Disability spending to hit \$100b despite NDIS cuts

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/05/2026, Michael Smith, Page 8

The Albanese government will increase total spending on disability to \$98 billion this year despite efforts to slow the runaway growth of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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

Eight disabled kids per classroom

The Australian, General News, 21/05/2026, Natasha Bitá, Page 1

Eight students in a typical classroom are now deemed to be disabled, as new education data exposes a surge in socioemotional disorders, including mental illness, since the Covid pandemic. The proportion of students classified as having a disability has jumped from 19.9 per cent in 2019, the year before the lockdowns and school closures, to 27 per cent last year.

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

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

NDIS carer's 264 charges

The Australian, General News, 21/05/2026, Paul Garvey, Page 3

A 70-year-old carer accused of defrauding an intellectually disabled person out of tens of thousands of dollars of NDIS funding says he will plead not guilty to the 264 charges against him. Marie Jacques Robert Allier, from Morley, appeared in Perth Magistrates Court on Wednesday after police accused him of repeatedly using the debit card of his alleged victim to fund hundreds of personal purchases, including holidays, massages and alcohol.

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

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

Firm in \$5m fall follows NDIS ban

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2026, Sarah Perillo, Page 13

The Melbourne business of a director permanently banned from the NDIS has collapsed with \$5.46m of debt and a trail of loans to himself and related entities now under investigation. The company, Prime Physio Group, trading under the name Alpha Support Group, ran a physiotherapy business in Fraser Rise and Deanside, in Melbourne's west, since 2019.

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

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

Fears new crackdown will punish public schools as government claws back disability funding

Adelaide Now, Other, 20/05/2026, Rebecca Borg

The Albanese government has announced it will claw back \$472m from school disability funding amid claims wealthy private schools are exploiting loopholes. But not all are on board with the plan.

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

[Read More](#)

Laws stopping NDIS wrongdoing from being called out

Canberra Times, Other, 21/05/2026, Tess Ikonomou

A lack of whistleblower protections is being blamed for stopping people coming forward to report wrongdoing within the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Human Rights Law Centre's Whistleblower Project will urge the federal government to enact stronger protections for people calling out misconduct within the scheme.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

ABC NewsRadio, Drive, 20/05/2026, Dijana Damjanovic

Interview with Professor Helen Dickinson, Professor of Public Service Research at UNSW. Dickinson discusses proposed NDIS funding cuts to social and community participation supports, noting that around 28–30 per cent of people with Down syndrome, visual impairment, and psychosocial disability have funding allocated in this area. She says the cuts are intended to save money because this support is seen as less directly linked to immediate health and safety, but argues that reforms to payment systems, regulation, and service quality would be a better alternative than reducing participant budgets.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

Labor has broken our sacred promise to vets

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/05/2026, Michael McCormack, Page 12

For a paltry few thousand dollars, Labor's broken promises Budget could have at least provided the father of fallen Victoria Cross hero Cameron Baird with travel money to enable him to visit RSLs, schools and talk to veterans about his brave son. [...] From July 2027, veterans' access to allied health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) will be capped at \$5000 a year.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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

'One of the best decisions I ever made'

Western Advocate, General News, 21/05/2026, Elizabeth Anderson, Page 5

Delivering babies in the back of an aeroplane and transporting a cabin full of injured footy players is all in a day's work for Karen Barlow. The senior flight nurse with the Royal Flying Doctor Service has spent nearly three decades in the sky, providing critical care to regional Australia.

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

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

Mother forced to miss vital pregnancy scan as Far North imaging crisis worsens

Northern Territory News, Other, 20/05/2026, Emma Cam

A Kuranda mother was forced to skip a vital 12-week pregnancy scan due to severe booking delays and high out-of-pocket costs, as Far North Queensland's women's imaging crisis worsens. Shannon Clarke, a 36-year-old pathology worker, began searching weeks in advance but was unable to secure an appointment.

[Read More](#)

Aussies are divided over AI in healthcare - but 40 per cent of GPs are already using it

9News, Other, 20/05/2026, Maddison Skipper

Australians are divided over the use of AI tools in medical settings as they become increasingly common in GP appointments and offices. About 40 per cent of Aussie GPs are already using AI to take notes and thousands will soon have access to a new medical search tool powered by AI.

[Read More](#)

Role of DAA error in man's death examined

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/05/2026, Megan Haggan

An inquest into the death of an Adelaide man is currently underway, after he took medication intended for another person.

[Read More](#)

'Almost didn't survive': the fraught path to parenthood

Ballarat Courier, Other, 20/05/2026, Stephanie Gardiner

A rural mother missed her toddler son's first words while she was away from home for weeks of fertility treatment. Another woman whose symptoms were dismissed before she suffered a life-threatening ruptured ectopic pregnancy narrowly survived the emergency trip from her rural home to a regional hospital.

Also reported by: [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

How does your LGA stack up when it comes to health outcomes?

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 20/05/2026, Tom Plevy

New health data has shown that, again, New England has higher health risks and worse health outcomes than the NSW average. Data from the Primary Health Network of Hunter New England and the Central Coast has shown that New Englanders have more health risk factors, cancer, chronic disease, and worse mental health issues than the state average.

[Read More](#)

Channel 10, 10 News, 20/05/2026, Natalie Forrest

The Joondalup Health Campus expansion in Perth's northern suburbs is complete, with two new wards with 60 medical and surgical beds as part of a total of 160 beds, jointly funded by the state and federal governments at more than \$300 million, with WA Health Minister Meredith Hammat and Federal Member for Moore Tom French confirming the openings and the first patients arriving. Health Infrastructure Minister John Carey stated that the WA Government is investing \$5.5 billion in hospital construction and upgrades across Western Australia, with approximately 900 beds in the works, as well as a recently opened urgent care clinic, with the new wards expected to be fully operational by next week.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Today , 20/05/2026, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Interview with Dr Michael Wright, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Compere says there's an increasing number of GPs who are turning to AI to lighten their workload and perhaps assist in diagnosis. Wright says AI is having huge changes, particularly for GPs and what they can do currently is have AI record conversations so the consultation that they're having with the patient and what the AI will do, will follow a certain format.

[Play Now](#)

Radio National, Life Matters, 20/05/2026, Hilary Harper & Beverley Wang

The Australian Medical Association has issued an urgent warning that a cross-border diphtheria outbreak must serve as a stark reminder that "forgotten" diseases can violently re-emerge if community immunity slips. AMA National President Dr Danielle McMullen emphasised that Australia has not witnessed a sustained diphtheria cluster of this magnitude for decades.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Industry call for alcohol taxes to be shaken up

Canberra Times, General News, 21/05/2026, Callum Godde, Page 8

Industry figures have called for Australia's alcohol taxes to be shaken up as a father warns of the danger posed by methanol-tainted booze. Peak bodies are pushing for an urgent review of alcohol tax settings after researchers found almost one in three bottle shops visited across Victoria, NSW and Queensland contained suspected illicit alcohol products.

Also reported by: [Central Western Daily \(Orange\)](#), [Daily Advertiser \(Wagga Wagga\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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

Partner assault behind admissions

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/05/2026, Page 9

Almost nine in 10 hospitalisations in Australia involving treatment for assault by a partner were for females in 2023-24. The rate of hospitalisations where the perpetrator was a spouse or domestic partner was 7.3 times as high for females (37 per 100,000) as males (5.1 per 100,000), according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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

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

'A big eye opener'

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 21/05/2026, Heath Forsyth, Page 1

Claire Brett sits relaxing in her lounge room. [...] She is calling for dedicated funding and national care standards for women experiencing miscarriage and early pregnancy loss.

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

Third attempt to change SA's abortion laws since 2024 to go before state parliament

ABC Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Thomas Kelsall

South Australia's parliament is set to debate restrictions on late-term abortion for the third time in less than two years. Anti-abortion campaigners are hopeful the newly-elected upper house, comprised of three new One Nation members, will pass the legislation.

[Read More](#)

'It makes me feel slightly unwell to say it': Dr Nick Coatsworth calls for cuts to taxes on cigarettes

Australian Doctor, Other, 20/05/2026

Dr Nick Coatsworth divides opinion — certainly in the medical community. [...] For a trained respiratory physician to question one of the key public health mechanisms in a country where smoking-related diseases caused roughly 1.28 million deaths over the last 60 years, seems controversial.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Darwin , Morning Show, 20/05/2026, Lara Stimpson

Interview with Professor Becky Freeman, Chief Investigator of the Generation Vape Project and a researcher at the University of Sydney. Freeman discusses Cancer Council NSW research on illicit tobacco and vaping, stating that young people are more likely to purchase illegal products than legal ones, with around 80 per cent of tobacco bought by 18- to 24-year-olds being illegal. She says lowering tobacco excise would not address the issue and argues that public health measures such as supply chain control, hard-hitting campaigns, and quit support are needed instead.

[Play Now](#)

2GB, Mornings, 20/05/2026, Mark Levy

Interview with Larissa Lockery*, mother of six-week-old daughter Shelby*, who was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis after a newborn heel prick test, discusses the condition and its impact, including early diagnosis at Westmead Hospital and the immediate need for ongoing treatment regimens. She also emphasises daily care demands, lifelong treatment requirements, and awareness efforts through the CF Together website and Unite65, as well as the availability of Medicare-funded carrier screening, which was introduced during her pregnancy.

[Play Now](#)

FIVEAA, Afternoons, 20/05/2026, Stacy Lee

Interview with Christine Morris, Senior Manager of Prevention at Cancer Council SA. Morris discusses smoking rates in Australia, reporting a decline to 7.5 per cent in 2025 from 10–10.5 per cent in 2020 as part of long-term tobacco control efforts. She says smoking data is based on whether people smoke rather than on where tobacco is sourced and notes about 1400 tobacco-related deaths each year in South Australia.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Arrow readies for MND battle

The Australian, Sport, 21/05/2026, Brent Read & Travis Meyn, Page 24

South Sydney and Queensland forward Jai Arrow is preparing for the fight of his life. Motor neurone disease rarely yields, but it's hard to believe the illness has encountered many opponents quite like Arrow.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#)

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

NRL's Arrow must quit following MND diagnosis

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/05/2026, Chris Barrett, Page 3

Jai Arrow reached the heights of the rugby league world with determination and courage that compensated for what he lacked in physique and sheer natural ability. He will need all those qualities for the fight of his life.

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

Kylie reveals second cancer scare in doco

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/05/2026, Nell Geraets & Kayla Olaya, Page 14

Kylie Minogue has revealed she was diagnosed with breast cancer for a second time in 2021 and has encouraged everyone to undergo regular check-ups after her condition was picked up following a routine screening. The announcement was tied to the end of the third part of her documentary, Kylie, which lands on Netflix today.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#)

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

Ken is thankful he's here to tell the tale

Daily Advertiser, General News, 21/05/2026, Jac Marshall, Page 3

A Wagga man has an urgent message for the public weeks after surviving a stroke. Eighty-year-old Wagga resident Kenneth Morrow is speaking out as part of Stroke Awareness Month, which runs throughout May.

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

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

Motor neurone disease explained: What is 'The Beast'?

The Australian, Other, 20/05/2026, Steve Robson

Jai Arrow's sudden retirement after announcing at an emotional press conference that he had been diagnosed with motor neurone disease, once again pits a star sportsman against a relentless and debilitating condition. Arrow, 30, is at the beginning of his fight against the disease.

[Read More](#)

'Beyond the limit of detection': Why breast cancer comes back

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/05/2026, Sarah Berry

For five years, Kylie Minogue kept her second cancer diagnosis to herself. But her situation is far from uncommon – up to 30 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer experience a relapse.

[Read More](#)

For young people like Madison, cancer costs more than their health

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/05/2026, Courtney Kruk

Brisbane university student Madison Purkis was just 19 years old when she began to experience bouts of severe back pain. "There'd be a flare-up, and it would be pushing on my spine quite heavily," she explains.

[Read More](#)

'There's nothing that can be done': the medical myth he had to bust

Canberra Times, Other, 20/05/2026, Ray Athwal

Nathan D'Cunha's first lesson about dementia did not happen in a lecture theatre, but through watching his grandmother's health decline in a relatively short amount of time. Shortly after his grandmother died, his mother started to show similar symptoms.

[Read More](#)

Vic court orders 15yo to undergo bone marrow transplant after girl and mum refuse lifesaving cancer treatment

West Australian, Other, 20/05/2026, Peta Rasdien

A 15-year-old girl has been ordered to undergo lifesaving cancer treatment against her wishes after the hospital recommending the therapy took her to court. The girl, referred to as JJ in a written judgment, was diagnosed with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in 2022 and went into remission after chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatment at the Royal Children's Hospital in Victoria.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Special training for youth mental health

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/05/2026, Ruby Kraner-Tucci, Page 11

Australia is the first in the world to launch a youth psychiatry training program to target mental health's "missing middle" - those aged 12-25 who are falling through the cracks because they have specific care needs. The program is a huge shift in medical practice, which has traditionally split care between children aged up to 18 and adults aged 18 and older.

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

Caring soul's legacy lives on

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/05/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 1

Kahi Simon would always go out of his way to help others, until he died by suicide at the tender age of 20. "He would cry about their misfortune. He felt like he had to help people," his mum Kelly Kay said.

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

Lessons in panic – teachers and therapists accused of fuelling chronic climate change anxiety in Australian students

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/05/2026, Mary Papadakis

Psychologists have been accused of mistreating climate-related anxiety in young people by ignoring evidence-based practices in favour of damaging ideologically driven approaches. The claim by the Institute of Public Affairs comes as the conservative think tank calls for an end to climate education in primary schools and doubles down on its calls for the removal of the sustainability cross-curriculum priority.

IMMUNISATION

Vaccine excuse doctor banned

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 7

A Victorian doctor who handed out hundreds of Covid vaccine and mask exemptions has been banned from medicine for five years. VCAT cancelled former Colac GP Dr Denes Borsos's medical registration late last week, finding his actions during Victoria's pandemic restrictions amounted to professional misconduct.

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

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

Concerns at diphtheria spread

Northern Territory News, General News, 21/05/2026, Gary Shipway, Page 6

Concerns continue to mount over the Northern Territory's deadly diphtheria outbreak which has also spread into Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia. Vaccination remains the strongest protection against the preventable disease, and the Australian Medical Association is now urging Australians to check that they and their families are up to date with their vaccinations as the diphtheria cases grow.

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

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

WA records almost 40pc of nation's diphtheria

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 21/05/2026, Claire Sadler, Page 3

WA is at the centre of Australia's worst diphtheria outbreak on record, with the State recording more than 80 cases of the potentially deadly bacterial infection so far this year. WA accounts for almost 40 per cent or 82 of the 221 cases recorded nationwide, prompting an urgent warning from the country's peak medical body to get vaccinated.

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

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

Diphtheria: health workers told to check immunisation status

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/05/2026, Megan Haggan

A person is believed to have died from diphtheria in the Northern Territory, while the disease has now spread interstate to Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia.

[Read More](#)

Qld expands free FluMist to U18s

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/05/2026

The Queensland Government has expanded the needle-free influenza vaccination program for those aged six to under 18 who struggle with needles. This builds on the 2026 Queensland free flu vaccination program and the FluMist nasal spray flu immunisation program, which currently provides free needle-free influenza vaccines for children aged two.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Today , 20/05/2026, Karl Stefanovic & Sarah Abo

Queenslanders will be able to access free influenza vaccinations at the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) this August as part of a highly coordinated public health push. The return of a dedicated exhibition footprint follows community backlash after Queensland Health opted not to operate its traditional vaccination tent during the previous season.

ABC NewsRadio, Breakfast, 20/05/2026, Sarah Morris

Medical experts are calling for an immediate, large-scale mobilisation of immunisation resources as Australia battles its worst outbreak of diphtheria in decades. The highly contagious bacterial resurgence has resulted in 223 cases across four jurisdictions, prompting the Australian Centre for Disease Control to sound the alarm about widening community immunity gaps.

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

[Play Now](#)

FIVEAA, Mornings, 20/05/2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with AMA National President Dr Danielle McMullen. McMullen discusses diphtheria, describing a current outbreak in Australia that has affected remote communities in the Northern Territory as well as parts of Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia, and pointing out that it can cause skin and respiratory illness spread through sores or droplets. She says that vaccination coverage in children has dropped from above 95 to 90 per cent or lower in some areas, with booster immunisations every ten years and declining rates raising the risk of future outbreaks.

[Play Now](#)[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Healthscope to open its books to rival consortium

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 21/05/2026, Michael Smith, Page 17

Healthscope has agreed to open its books to a consortium of property landlords and private hospital operators, including Calvary Health Care and Pacific Equity Partners, looking to make a rival \$400 million offer for Australia's second-largest hospital [...]

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

Private health insurance is not worth it let's start again

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/05/2026, Jenna Price, Page 22

I ran straight into a plate glass sliding door maybe 12 years ago. [...] Let's shut down private health. Pour all the money we now send to save the failing private health funds into Medicare - and in the meantime, save the health of our nation.

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

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

Formal complaint from ex-boss led to investigation into The Hobart Clinic's corporate governance

ABC Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Paddy Manning

The board of non-profit The Hobart Clinic has been cleared of allegations of poor corporate governance by a state government review, the ABC understands. Concerns remain about psychiatrist staffing levels and a potential new operating partner, Aurora Healthcare.

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

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Move it to cut death risk

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2026, Page 11

People should aim for 10 hours of exercise every week to get the greatest heart benefits, according to

a study. NHS guidelines recommend 2 hours per week, but experts said "every move counts" and people should do up to four times more to significantly cut their risk of a heart attack.

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

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

Researcher tackling big questions about horrible disease

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/05/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 10

A university of Newcastle researcher is targeting the genetic origins of Australia's leading cause of brain cancer deaths in children. Dr Ryan Duchatel will receive \$675,000 in Cancer Institute NSW funds to examine big questions about diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG).

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

Heartbeat survey: here's what thousands of you have said so far about your life

Canberra Times, Other, 20/05/2026

More than 70 per cent of participants in the survey reckon their community is a great place to live. And nine out of 10 people in the regions say that shopping locally and supporting local businesses increasingly important in making them feel part of their local community.

Also reported by: [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#)

[Read More](#)

Immunotherapy could be used to treat depression, early trial suggests

The Guardian, Other, 21/05/2026, Tobi Thomas

Immunotherapy could be used to treat depression among patients who have not responded to conventional antidepressants, according to the results of an early clinical trial. Researchers at the University of Bristol investigated whether tocilizumab, an anti-inflammatory drug commonly used for immune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, could improve symptoms of difficult-to-treat depression.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Almost 20 years after the NT intervention, governments are making the same mistakes – and failing Aboriginal children

The Guardian, Other, 20/05/2026, Marcia Langton & Fiona Stanley

The Northern Territory government's response to the tragic death of Kumanjayi Little Baby in Alice Springs is deeply alarming. The weight of evidence is unambiguous: supportive services for the health and wellbeing of mothers, carers and children are what best ensure the safety, healthy growth and socialisation of Aboriginal children.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Shock wait gain

Herald Sun, General News, 21/05/2026, Shannon Deery, Page 1

Victoria's surgery waitlist has ballooned by more than 4000 in just three months, prompting warnings of a return to Covid-era levels. With the state's struggling health system set to be central to November's election campaign, the most recent quarterly Victorian Agency for Health Information data showed critical surgery waitlists had ballooned to more than 68,000 in the three months to March - a staggering 4103 more than the previous quarter.

New hospital not for all services

Courier Mail, General News, 21/05/2026, Taylah Fellows, Page 4

More than \$630m in taxpayer money has been poured into the state's newest public hospital partnership, but women seeking abortion services will be referred elsewhere by Catholic healthcare provider Mater. The \$1bn Mater Hospitala nine-storey, 186-bed hospital in Springfield includes a 24/7 emergency department, intensive care unit, surgical services and maternity ward.

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

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

[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Doctors' college fight goes to Supreme Court

The Australian, General News, 21/05/2026, Penny Timms, Page 6

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians is asking the Supreme Court of NSW to unscramble its mess and allow it to delay an annual general meeting planned for next week when key new appointments are due for endorsement. The board last year set the date of the AGM for May 29 but the college says it is now unable to happen due to instability that has rocked the institution amid conflict over who is running it.

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

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

Funding for more paramedic roles, firefighter college

Canberra Times, General News, 21/05/2026, Bageshri Savyasachi, Page 5

The ACT government says it will fund new full-time paramedic roles after a review last year revealed a desperate need for 83 more paramedics to ease pressure on the ambulance service. The funding for additional paramedics includes 32 new roles, comprising 20 paramedics, six intensive care paramedics, and six operational support positions including ambulance educators, senior ambulance managers, a clinical simulation technician and more staff in the communications centre.

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

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

Australians say nurses and midwives are remembered most for how they made us feel

Your Life Choices, Other, 20/05/2026, Abegail Abrugar

Think back to your last hospital stay. Chances are, the moment that stays with you isn't the diagnosis or the discharge papers. [...] A YouGov survey of 1,070 Australian adults, commissioned by Nurses & Midwives Health (NMH), found that nearly nine in ten Australians carry a vivid, lasting memory of a nurse or midwife.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2026, Peter Overton

The NSW Government has announced mandatory nurse-to-patient staffing ratios for public hospital general, surgical, and specialist wards, beginning at Liverpool Hospital with a ratio of 1:4 during the day and 1:7 at night. Premier Chris Minns and Health Minister Ryan Park say the reform includes a billion-

dollar investment and the recruitment of 900 additional nurses, with another 1000 planned, while the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association expresses relief at the changes.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Canberra Live, 20/05/2026, Leon Delaney

Interview with ACT Chief Ambulance Officer David Dutton. Dutton says funding for 32 additional ACT Ambulance Service positions, including 26 frontline paramedics, will help address station closures, overtime, and leave pressures identified in a roster review. He says the review identified a need for 83 FTE to run the roster optimally, with the new positions forming part of a broader multi-year workforce strategy.

[Play Now](#)

2CC, Canberra Live, 20/05/2026, Leon Delaney

Interview with Tom Fischer, legal officer at the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation. Fischer says doctors in Canberra hospitals want a pay increase that keeps up with inflation, arguing that the ACT Government's 3 per cent annual offer falls short of reported inflation of around 4.2 per cent and is affecting doctor retention. He also says that pay negotiations are linked to conditions such as fatigue management and rostering, with Delaney noting ACT Health Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith's assertion that there is no additional budget capacity.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2026, Michael Thomson

Seven-year-old Jesse Callaghan has been granted compassionate access to a monthly \$25,000 injection, Dupixent, for severe eczema at the Children's Hospital at Westmead, as the treatment is currently PBS-listed only for children over 12, leading to calls for an expanded PBS listing. Associate Professor Li-Chuen Wong reported that research involving 103 children up to 18 years demonstrated significant improvement, with nearly half achieving near-complete remission, and the findings have been submitted to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee for discussion in July.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

The RACGP takes a stance on telehealth-only prescribing

Medical Forum, Other, 20/05/2026

Prescribing medications outside of an in-person appointment or phone call with a GP is "unsafe" and should not be allowed, the RACGP has warned. The College has released a position statement on telehealth-only services warning they do not provide the same quality of care that practitioners who also offer the option of in-person appointments do.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Dodgy Botox injector cops ban

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/05/2026, Tia Clarkson-Pascoe, Page 17

A non-registered Sydney Botox practitioner has been banned from practising after one of her patients

spent five days in intensive care following a procedure. Huirong Zhou (also known as Katrina Zhou) holds qualifications in remedial massage, beauty therapy and laser hair reduction and owns the Rui Mei Beauty Salon at Burwood in Sydney's inner west.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#).

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

[Back to Top](#)

AUSTRALIAN CDC

IS rebels impede efforts to stem Ebola

The Australian, International News, 21/05/2026, Nicholas Bariyo, Page 8

Health officials are rushing to contain a deadly Ebola outbreak in what is already one of the most dangerous corners of the world. In the two days since the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a global emergency, confirmed cases have passed 500, with at least 134 deaths, one of the largest recorded Ebola epidemics in the region, according to Congo's health ministry.

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

Ebola spreads at speed

Herald Sun, International News, 21/05/2026, Page 24

The World Health Organization said it fears the "scale and speed" of an Ebola outbreak that has killed more than 130 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo could be far worse than first thought. As residents awaited medical supplies in the DRC's conflict-torn east, aid group Doctors Without Borders tried to send the sick to local hospitals, but was told: "We are full of suspected cases.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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

Death toll tops 130 in rapid Ebola outbreak

West Australian, International News, 21/05/2026, Page 37

The head of the World Health Organisation has expressed concern over the "scale and speed" of an outbreak of a rare type of Ebola known as Bundibugyo in eastern Congo, where authorities report 134 deaths and more than 500 suspected cases. The virus spread undetected for weeks after the first known death as authorities tested for a more common type of Ebola and came up negative, health experts and aid workers said on Tuesday.

Also reported by: [Daily Liberal \(Dubbo\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Canberra\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Ballarat\)](#).

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

Diphtheria is spreading in Australia and so is misinformation about the disease

ABC Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Lucy Carter

A diphtheria outbreak has spread to multiple states and territories in Australia, with one death in the Northern Territory so far likely caused by the disease. The highly contagious bacterial infection was once a major cause of childhood deaths, before widespread vaccination programs in the 1930s dramatically reduced cases in Australia.

[Read More](#)

Why is there no vaccine for this Ebola outbreak?

ABC Online, Other, 20/05/2026, Jacinta Bowler

Health authorities are trying to contain an Ebola outbreak in Africa, but a lack of resources and no approved vaccine for the strain are hampering efforts. The outbreak — with more than 130 people

dead in the Democratic Republic of Congo — is already the third largest in more than a decade.

[Read More](#)

Vaccine to tackle Ebola outbreak will take six to nine months, says WHO

The Guardian, Other, 20/05/2026, Kat Lay

Doses of the "most promising" potential vaccine against the Bundibugyo virus that is causing an Ebola outbreak in central Africa will not be available for six to nine months, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday, as the number of suspected cases rose to 600. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the WHO, told a press briefing on the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, that there had been 139 deaths, with numbers expected to rise.

[Read More](#)

Ebola expert says 'not impossible' virus infects Australians

NEWS.com.au, Other, 20/05/2026, Adrian Zorzut

An Ebola expert has warned it's "not impossible" that deadly virus could begin infecting Australians. Professor Glenn Marsh from the CSIRO said though there was "little chance" of that happening, he couldn't rule it out.

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

[Read More](#)

Ebola, hantavirus show world's risk preparedness lagging: pandemic expert

NEWS.com.au, Other, 20/05/2026

The deadly hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks show that while the response to declared public health crises has improved, awareness of pandemic risks still lags, a leading pandemic expert warned Tuesday. Over six years after the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 pandemic, global efforts to revamp public health crisis response have improved the reaction to the hantavirus and Ebola outbreaks, said Helen Clark, a former New Zealand prime minister and the co-chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Congo's Ebola responders decry lack of medicine, masks, motorbikes

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 21/05/2026, Erikas Mwisi & Clement Bonnerot

First responders fighting Democratic Republic of Congo's 17th Ebola outbreak say even basic supplies are scarce - from pain medicine, to motorbikes for contact tracing and face masks - complicating efforts to turn the tide on the disease. The rare Bundibugyo strain of Ebola circulated for weeks undetected in Congo's remote northeast before the first samples tested positive last week.

[Read More](#)

ABC, 7:30, 20/05/2026, Sarah Ferguson

Interview with NT Chief Health Minister Dr Paul Burgess. Burgess discusses Australia's diphtheria outbreak, which began with an apparent imported case in Queensland in 2022 and spread to the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia, as well as improved detection through public health and clinician alerts. He identifies vaccine hesitancy, misinformation, and overcrowded housing in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities as key factors influencing transmission and vaccination, noting that the state and territory governments, as well as the Commonwealth, have responded to the outbreak with antibiotic treatment and vaccination campaigns.

Interview continues on: [ABC \(Melbourne\)](#).

[Play Now](#)

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 20/05/2026, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with NT Chief Health Minister Dr Paul Burgess. Burgess explains that diphtheria is a rare

bacterial infection in Australia, with 155 cases reported in the Northern Territory since 1 January 2025, 44 of which were respiratory, primarily in Aboriginal communities. He says vaccination and antibiotics are still essential for controlling the outbreak, with falling immunisation rates and overcrowded housing identified as sources of transmission in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, and South Australia.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Darwin , Drive, 20/05/2026, Adam Steer

Interview with NT Chief Health Minister Dr Paul Burgess. Burgess discusses diphtheria booster recommendations during a Northern Territory outbreak, stating that Aboriginal residents should get a booster every five years, while the general public should get one every ten years. He reports 155 cases between 1 January 2025 and 20 May 2026, including 44 respiratory and 111 cutaneous cases, and confirms one death under investigation, while noting that there is currently no diphtheria vaccine shortage in Australia.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Hobart, Afternoons, 20/05/2026, Joel Rheinberger

Interview with Dr Mark Veitch, Tasmanian Director of Public Health. Veitch discusses how Ebola spreads from animal hosts such as fruit bats, monkeys, apes, and antelopes, with transmission occurring through close contact with infected bodily fluids. He also discusses a diphtheria outbreak in northern Australia, primarily in remote Northern Territory communities, highlighting the low risk to Tasmania and emphasising the importance of vaccination and booster shots.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Emyria opens first Victoria Empax clinic

The Australian, Other, 21/05/2026

Emyria, a clinical services company operating within regulated healthcare settings, has opened its first Victorian-based Empax clinic and started patient treatments. [...] One trained psychiatrist has already received Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)-approved authorised prescriber (AP) status.

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

[Read More](#)

Will AI help to fast-track TGA meds approvals?

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 20/05/2026, Kate Cowling

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has been using artificial intelligence (AI) to assess medicines already approved by an overseas regulator, last week's Federal Budget papers said.

[Read More](#)

Made in Australia: ASX healthcare plays tipped to gain from China crackdown

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/05/2026, Nadine Mcgrath

China's reported crackdown on falsely marketed imported supplements could favour ASX companies with verified Australian-made products. [...] "Where appropriate they're all registered with the TGA and they are also all manufactured under GMP with our contract manufacturers in Australia, which we've always believed has been a big selling point for us in China."

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Almost 1m unlawful therapeutic goods seized

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has taken part in a coordinated global action targeting the illegal trade of illicit and counterfeit therapeutic goods, which resulted in over 260 arrests and the dismantling of more than 60 criminal groups involved in the illicit pharmaceutical trade. Over the course of a fortnight, authorities across 90 countries cooperated to detect and seize almost six million units of unapproved and counterfeit pharmaceuticals worth an estimated \$20.7 million.

[Read More](#)

'A very difficult beast to cover': TGA addresses GPs' role in peptide boom

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/05/2026, Michelle Wisbey

Amid an escalation in illegal imports, the watchdog sat down with newsGP to discuss the alarming trend, the laws, and how GPs can remain compliant. [...] In response, Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Chief Medical Adviser Professor Robyn Langham sat down with newsGP to discuss current laws and what GPs can do, whether they are an importer or seeing impacted patients.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9, Nine News, 20/05/2026, Michael Thomson

Concerns have been raised about the sunscreen ingredients homosalate and methylbenzylidene camphor (4-MBC). Associate Professor Yousuf Mohammed from the University of Queensland points out that the EU limits homosalate to 7 per cent, while Australia allows up to 15 per cent in some products, including those for children. TGA has advised that homosalate should only be used by adults on the face and hands and is currently reviewing 4-MBC, with a decision expected in July. Meanwhile, the Cancer Council advocates for the use of sunscreen to prevent skin cancer, and industry discussions about previous SPF testing controversies continue.

[Play Now](#)

[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

FOOD STANDARDS

Food recall: Global Seafood Distributors Seafood Marinara Mix pulled from shelves after 'foreign matter' found

West Australian, Other, 20/05/2026, Chloe Maher

A seafood product has been urgently pulled from supermarket shelves across Australia after the discovery of 'foreign matter' prompted the food safety watchdog to issue a recall notice. [...] "Consumers should not eat this product," the recall alert from Food Standards Australia and New Zealand warned.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

AICIS

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

Prepared by ISENTIA

Subject to copyright. For internal use only.

See [Copyright Terms of Use](#)

