



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 15th July 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
| [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Disability and Carers](#) | [Primary Care](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Australian** (online) reports that doctors are warning pregnant women that they risk harm to themselves and their babies by challenging medical advice for online trends. Examples include a request to delay clamping of the umbilical cord or refusal to allow administration of an injection called an oxytocic.
- **The Australian** (page 13) reports that a report by the Grattan Institute spotlighted that the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Australia's peak business group for pharmacy owners, is being accused of using shoddy evidence to push public policy positions that benefit its members' businesses. *Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner](#), [Croakey](#)*
- The **West Australian** (online) reports that young people are increasingly being diagnosed with cancers but survival rates are improving, according to the most detailed picture of how the disease affects Australians. Some improvement in cancer outcomes for First Nations people has also been reported in Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data released on Tuesday.
- The **Sydney Morning Herald** (online) reports that respiratory syncytial virus has overtaken influenza as Australia's most common respiratory virus this winter for the first time since national reporting began, prompting renewed calls for older Australians to get vaccinated.
- The **Canberra Times** (online) reports that access to two of Australia's most widely used multiple sclerosis (MS) treatments - Ocrevus (ocrelizumab) and Kesimpta (ofatumumab) - could

be put at risk as the federal government considers altering the prices it pays for the medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

- The **Courier Mail** (online) reports that Australia is being warned it is undoing 100 years of health awareness on the dangers of nicotine as exploding sales of cheap illicit tobacco fuel a surge in smoking. NSW Health Minister Ryan Park is raising the alarm, saying he fears for the "next generation of young people hooked on nicotine".
- **The Age** (page 8) reports that Australian regulators have proposed allowing up to 500 times more residue of a pesticide on some berries, although products containing the "forever chemical" must warn it is suspected of "damaging the unborn child". The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority said changes for pesticide isocycloseram concentration would pose no risk to human health and the berries would be safe for consumers.

MINISTER BUTLER

Bad week for Guild gets worse

The Australian, Business News, 15/07/2026, Will Glasgow and Max Aitchison, Page 13

This week has provided a rare peek behind the curtain of the protectionist racket otherwise known as the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the men and women in white coats are clearly not enjoying the attention. [...] But can we suggest Health Minister Mark Butler gets a second opinion before the white-coat brigade gets any more powers?

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

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Price of MS medication could skyrocket

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 15/07/2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 3

The cost of the medication that Michelle Taylor uses to manage her multiple sclerosis could jump from \$7 a month to more than \$30,000 a year if the federal government decides to stop subsidising it. [...] The company said it was working with Health Minister Mark Butler to maintain the medication's PBS listing.

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Calls for pharmacy reforms

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 14/07/2026, Page 8

Doctors and general practitioners have called for urgent reforms after a report accused the pharmacy sector of putting profit over patients. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler did not directly answer when asked if the Government would consider the recommendations.

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Barrier removed

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 4

The Albanese government has walked back controversial changes to Medicare bulk-billing consent rules following sustained pressure from aged care providers, GPs and crossbench MPs, who warned the reforms would disrupt care for some of Australia's most vulnerable patients. [...] Ageing Australia chief Tom Symondson said the sector had been working urgently with Health, Disability and Ageing Minister Mark Butler to prevent a situation where residents could no longer be bulk-billed because they were unable to physically sign consent forms.

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Research first

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 21

The Federal government has announced \$67.7 million in new research funding to accelerate dementia prevention, improve healthy ageing and support emerging researchers, amid warnings that dementia will affect 850,000 Australians by 2058 without stronger national action. [...] The Albanese government

is investing in the crucial research needed to make a difference in the lives of older Australians at risk," Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae added.

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Why aged care's IAT human override could become the next bottleneck

Hello Leaders Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, Lauren Liao

The Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) has been under fire for a while now , systematically eroding trust and burning out assessors . [...] Health Minister Mark Butler and Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae announce a rapid review of the IAT's prioritisation mechanism.

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MP calls for certainty on PBS listing of MS medications

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 14/07/2026

Independent Federal Member for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan, is calling on the Government to guarantee that treatment for Australians with multiple sclerosis (MS) will not be disrupted, amid ongoing uncertainty over two medicine listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). [...] Last week, Health Minister Mark Butler indicated that he wants both drugs to remain on the PBS, a statement welcomed by Dr Ryan, who says "patients and clinicians deserve to feel secure about their access to vital medicines, regardless of the outcome of pricing negotiations".

[Read More](#)

Disability advocates welcome extension after 'ridiculous and disrespectful' NDIS inquiry

Your Life Choices, Other, 14/07/2026, Evan Young and Nas Campanella

Disability advocates have welcomed a pause to a bill paving the way for the biggest-ever cuts to the NDIS, after a "ridiculous and disrespectful" Senate inquiry into the proposed overhaul of the scheme was given an eight-week extension. [...] Federal minister Mark Butler has previously said a 12-month delay on the NDIS bill would see \$17 billion in savings lost.

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Bendigo bulk billing grows thanks to... politicians?

The Medical Republic, Other, 14/07/2026, Holly Payne

Bulk billing in the regional city is growing at the second-fastest rate in all of Australia. Health minister Mark Butler has stopped by Bendigo, where bulk billing rates have skyrocketed, to publicly thank the people who made it all possible – other politicians, of course.

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New report makes sweeping recommendations for improving value and outcomes from community pharmacies

Croakey, Other, 14/07/2026, Melissa Sweet

Sweeping recommendations aimed at ensuring community pharmacies deliver better care for patients, and better value for taxpayers have been put forward by the Grattan Institute. [...] As of 14 July, the Guild had not published a media statement responding to the report, but a representative was quoted in this ABC report , which also said "Health Minister Mark Butler would not be drawn on whether the Government would consider the report's recommendations".

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ABC, 7:30, 14/07/2026, Sarah Ferguson

Drugs that are used to treat multiple sclerosis, such as Ocrevus and Kesimpta, are currently subsidised by the Federal Government, but a pricing dispute with pharmaceutical companies, including Roche, AstraZeneca and Pfizer, is threatening that funding, and Australians living with the condition could be forced to fork out tens of thousands of dollars to access life-changing medications. Meanwhile, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has clarified that he wants the medications to stay on the PBS, saying they want to ensure that Australians will have access to the world's best medicines.

Similar coverage reported by: [Channel 9 \(Melbourne\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Brisbane\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 9](#)

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WIN Bendigo, WIN News, 14/07/2026, Jared Constable

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler visited GP clinics in Bendigo today to speak about bulk billing. The city had the second highest jump in bulk billing rates in the country, with 21% more GP services being bulk billed compared to October 2023, while the Federal Government states that bulk billings are part of its push to make healthcare more affordable.

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WIN Hobart, WIN News, 14/07/2026, Jared Constable

The Tasmanian Government has declared the next steps to crack down on the illicit tobacco trade, revealing just how much illegal product has been seized over the past 12 months. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has reiterated that the Federal Government is not considering a reduction in the excise for tobacco products.

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ABC Central Victoria, Breakfast, 14/07/2026, Fiona Parker

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Compere asks Butler how concerned he is that older patients are staying longer in hospital beds and are taking up much-needed space from others. Butler says one of the biggest focuses of their government over the last several years has been getting aged care back on track. He admits that the system has been on a bad track over the last few years as seen in the Royal Commission into Aged Care.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

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MINISTER RAE

Research first

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 21

The Federal government has announced \$67.7 million in new research funding to accelerate dementia prevention, improve healthy ageing and support emerging researchers, amid warnings that dementia will affect 850,000 Australians by 2058 without stronger national action. [...] The Albanese government is investing in the crucial research needed to make a difference in the lives of older Australians at risk," Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae added.

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Why aged care's IAT human override could become the next bottleneck

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

The Zap: latest health and aged care news, plus a stack of consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 14/07/2026, Melissa Sweet

National and global health trends, private health insurance reforms, dental tourism, NAIDOC Week, and a push for mandatory Health Star Ratings are among the topics covered this week. Our columnist also suggests the Federal Government could step up investment in supporting communities to be more physically active, given recent news that overweight and obesity is now the leading risk factor contributing to ill health and death in Australia.

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PMOS sufferers push for Ozempic-style drugs to be subsidised on PBS

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 14/07/2026, Bridget Clarke

A woman who has battled a hormonal condition for years finally feels hopeful after being prescribed a GLP-1, but says cost is keeping it out of reach for many women. [...] Federal Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White acknowledged that while many women living with the condition were looking for affordable treatment options, there were currently no plans to list GLP-1 medications for its treatment on the PBS.

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

Illawarra podcast shares simple message that could save thousands of blokes

Region Illawarra, Other, 14/07/2026, Kellie O'Brien

If just 10 per cent more Australian men visited their GP each year, it could save thousands of lives, according to a national leader on the latest episode of Healthier Illawarra Men's Redefining HIM podcast. [...] Featuring Australia's first Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi and Federal Member for Whitlam Carol Berry, the conversation explores why men continue to delay seeking help despite poorer health outcomes than women.

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DEPARTMENT

Price of MS medication could skyrocket

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 15/07/2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 3

The cost of the medication that Michelle Taylor uses to manage her multiple sclerosis could jump from \$7 a month to more than \$30,000 a year if the federal government decides to stop subsidising it. [...] The company said it was working with Health Minister Mark Butler to maintain the medication's PBS listing.

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Boost for youth mental health

Warragul & Drouin Gazette, General News, 14/07/2026, Page 1

A desperate need for youth mental health services in West Gippsland will be met with Federal Government funding for a headspace outreach service. ...] Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN) is working with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and headspace to design and implement a service model that best meets the needs of young people in the Baw Baw local government area.

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Aged care staff units get the go ahead

Yorke Peninsula Country Times - Kadina, General News, 14/07/2026, Page 12

Work is due to start this month on six new residential units for staff of Barunga Village, Port Broughton, with completion expected in March 2027. [...] Ms Carroll said a \$1.66 million grant from the federal Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Aged Care Capital Assistance Program had helped to make the project possible.

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Min-Man stepping up for screening

Plains Producer, General News, 15/07/2026, Page 13

Min-man Sporting Club is stepping up off the field to help raise awareness about the importance of bowel cancer screening, encouraging locals to complete the free, life-saving test. The club is encouraging those in the local community aged 45 to 74 to complete the simple at-home test, which can detect bowel cancer early, often before symptoms appear.

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Chronic disease management plans and subsidised care pathways

Shepparton News Online, Other, 14/07/2026, Annie Barrow

Chronic Disease Management plans structured by general practitioners in Shepparton allow individuals living with long-term medical conditions to access five subsidised allied health consultations per calendar year. Eligible conditions encompass chronic or terminal illnesses present for at least six months, including type 2 diabetes, severe asthma, cardiovascular disease, and musculoskeletal disorders like osteoarthritis.

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The Zap: latest health and aged care news, plus a stack of consultations now open

Croakey, Other, 14/07/2026, Melissa Sweet

National and global health trends, private health insurance reforms, dental tourism, NAIDOC Week, and a push for mandatory Health Star Ratings are among the topics covered this week. Our columnist also suggests the Federal Government could step up investment in supporting communities to be more physically active, given recent news that overweight and obesity is now the leading risk factor contributing to ill health and death in Australia.

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The mental health of immigrant and refugee children and adolescents

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 14/07/2026

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the mental health of children and adolescents. This is part of the broader process of reform of Australian mental health services, which now emphasises mental health promotion, the development of preventive approaches, early detection of mental disorders and early treatment interventions.

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HealthLink integrates national mental health tool

The Medical Republic, Other, 14/07/2026, Amanda Sheppard

Australia's national mental health assessment framework has moved a step closer to routine clinical

practice, with HealthLink launching the first phase of a nationwide rollout that integrates the Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool directly into clinical software used across the primary care sector. [...] Developed in partnership with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, the integration is designed to streamline workflows, improve interoperability and securely capture assessment outcomes within the patient's clinical record.

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HealthLink launches integrated mental health referral tool

Pulse+IT, Other, 14/07/2026

HealthLink, in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, has launched phase one of a nationwide rollout to integrate the Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) for mental health into general practice software.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

'Retain agency'

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 8

Two peak aged care bodies have called for earlier, better-supported advance care planning for people living with dementia, warning that inconsistent practice and weak system support are leaving many without a say in their future health care. In a new joint position statement, Advance Care Planning Australia and Dementia Australia said that advance care planning must become a routine part of dementia diagnosis and care.

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'Badly fragmented'

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 20

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has warned that older Australians in residential aged care are being denied timely coordinated medical care because of deep structural failings in the system. It's urging the federal government to overhaul funding, regulation and digital infrastructure to prevent further harm.

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

'No right time'

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 22

Aged care workers are increasingly expected to guide families through end-of-life discussions, but many feel under-prepared and need training, confidence and organisational support, according to new research out of Flinders University. The study, published in the Australasian Journal on Ageing, examined how aged care staff decide when and how to initiate conversations with families about end-of-life care.

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Support at Home: Intentions undermined by complex reality, residents survey finds

HelloCare, Other, 14/07/2026, Jakob Neeland

Retirement village residents broadly support the aims of the new program but report significant problems with delays, confusion, and access, according to a new national survey. Many older Australians want Support at Home to succeed so they can remain independent in their own homes.

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“Far too little, too late”: Record numbers wait for aged care in SA hospitals

The South Australian Government has expanded its transition care program as a record 445 hospital patients wait for aged care. From mid-July, an additional 10 Care Awaiting Placement beds will become available through Resthaven Incorporated, creating beds for hospital patients waiting for residential aged care.

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ABC Central Victoria, Breakfast, 14/07/2026, Fiona Parker

Interview with National Seniors Australia CEO Chris Grice, about older patients staying longer on hospital beds and are utilising much-needed spaces that could have otherwise been used by other patients. Grice admits that the situation in Bendigo Health in particular, where older Australians are staying longer in hospital beds, are not at all surprising, as they are seeing this right across Australia. He admits that despite the increase in demand for hospital beds, the supply has always been short-handed.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Lap belt 'strangle'

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 15/07/2026, Leah Smith, Page 16

A government carer has blamed staff shortages as the reason a woman with a neurological disease was left unsupervised and suffocated on her wheelchair restraints. On Tuesday, a coronial inquest opened into the death of Christine Wyld, 61, who died in residential care in 2022.

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

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Legal action dropped against Ann Marie Smith's NDIS provider Integrity Care

ABC Online, Other, 14/07/2026, Stephanie Richards

Federal Court proceedings have been dropped against the former company responsible for caring for South Australian woman Ann Marie Smith, who died six years ago in one of the state's most serious cases of criminal neglect. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission withdrew civil proceedings against Ms Smith's former NDIS provider, Integrity Care, on Monday.

[Read More](#)

'I lost a normal childhood': What it's like being a young carer

ABC Online, Other, 14/07/2026, Amy Sheehan.

Kenny Davis and Naomi Bonacci-Rocca were both younger than 10 when their caring responsibilities began at home. They are two of Australia's 391,000 young people under the age of 25 caring for or supporting family members or friends.

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PRIMARY CARE

Health workers reach out to help regions

Cairns Post, General News, 15/07/2026, Catherine Duffy, Page 6

A health program aimed at increasing staff in rural and regional communities has returned to Cairns for its second year. A group of 21 medical, allied health and nursing students took part in the Health

Workforce Queensland's GROW Rural program, a targeted initiative supporting remote and rural health workforce development to build a future workforce for the region.

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'Patients miss out': GPs, doctors call for reform to pharmacies

Launceston Examiner, General News, 14/07/2026, Ethan James, Page 7

Doctors and general practitioners have called for urgent reforms after a report accused the pharmacy sector of putting profit over patients. A review by the Grattan Institute concluded the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, which represents about 70 per cent of community pharmacies, unduly lobbies the federal government.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Northern Daily Leader \(Tamworth\)](#).

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Multimillion-dollar pledge for hospital

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 15/07/2026, Sophia Baker, Page 3

A south-west emergency department and intensive care unit described as having "third-world type facilities" will receive a massive funding boost if the Liberal National coalition wins the state election. The Victorian Liberal and Nationals announced on Monday they would commit \$45 million to works at Hamilton Base Hospital to deliver the redevelopment the Western District Health Service and the community have been demanding for years.

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Soaring demand sees LifeFlight Mount Isa help record number of people

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, talkUrl coralComments

The Mount Isa-based LifeFlight crew recorded a 43 per cent increase in demand for rapid aeromedical care in the past financial year. The service, part of the Queensland Emergency Helicopter Network, helped a record 181 people during 156 missions.

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

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'Treatments are not a luxury': fear as MS meds may get PBS downgrade

Canberra Times, Other, 14/07/2026, Carla Mascarenhas

Access to two of Australia's most widely used multiple sclerosis (MS) treatments could be put at risk as the federal government considers altering the prices it pays for the medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Ocrevus (ocrelizumab) and Kesimpta (ofatumumab) are disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) used to slow the progression of MS and reduce relapses.

Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Bathurst Western Advocate \(Online\)](#).

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Personal Care Workers are professionals. It's time we recognised them as such

HelloCare, Other, 14/07/2026, Jakob Neeland

Imagine an 82-year-old woman living with dementia who has not spoken in weeks. One morning, her usual carer gently brushes her hair, hums her favourite 1960s song, and notices a subtle change in her breathing.

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Prescribing inconsistency creates 'confusion and uncertainty'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 14/07/2026

Adopting a single, universally accepted definition of prescribing across all health professionals including pharmacists would promote consistency, say researchers from the NSW Community Pharmacy Trials. Full scope of practice for community pharmacy could be more successfully realised

with consistently applied, agreed definitions for activities such as prescribing, say pharmacy researchers from across Australia and Europe.

[Read More](#)

The Grattan report: what doctors said

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 14/07/2026, Megan Haggan

Both the RACGP and AMA have welcomed a new report suggesting the pharmacy sector be stripped of ownership, location and discounting regulations. The Institute's latest report, "Future Pharmacy: A better deal for patients and taxpayers," makes recommendations including scrapping the Community Pharmacy Agreements.

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Guild rejects Grattan's claims

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 14/07/2026

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has responded to the Grattan Institute's report Future pharmacy: A better deal for patients and taxpayers (PD 13 Jul), in particular its recommendations around pharmacy locations and ownership, saying the current model ensured Australians had equitable access to medicines and pharmacy services, no matter where.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Doctor warns pregnant women risk harm by challenging medical advice for online trends

The Australian, Other, 14/07/2026, Michael Gannon

While most expectant mothers and their carers have the same goal of a safe birth, there are times when their interests diverge. Pregnant women have the same rights as any other legally competent adult to decline recommended healthcare.

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Warning cheap illegal tobacco is putting 100 years of health progress at risk

The Courier Mail, Other, 15/07/2026, Thomas Sargeant and Josh Hanrahan

Australia is being warned it is undoing 100 years of health awareness on the dangers of nicotine as exploding sales of cheap illicit tobacco fuel a surge in smoking. NSW Health Minister Ryan Park is raising the alarm, saying he fears for the "next generation of young people hooked on nicotine" after latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data showed the nation consumed 40 per cent more nicotine to the end of 2025 compared to 2017.

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

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New study suggests strong link between working from home and increased risk of obesity

Sky News Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, Kate Fowler

A new study has suggested a strong link between working from home and obesity levels. The study, published in June by the Economic Society of Australia, found just a one-hour increase of working from home equated to an rise in both BMI and likelihood of obesity.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Cancer cases near 1m

Hobart Mercury, General News, 15/07/2026, Page 4

Close to one million Australians have been diagnosed with cancer in the last 10 years. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates 969,000 people alive at the end of 2025 had cancer.

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

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High rates of cancer in region: report

Newcastle Herald, General News, 14/07/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 3

Almost 45,000 cancer cases were recorded in the Hunter in a decade, while the region had a higher cancer rate than the state and nation. The data, to be released in an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report today, showed rising cancer cases but a lower death rate from the disease.

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

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'Reduced and improved'

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 6

A copper-delivering drug has been shown to dramatically reduce toxic Alzheimer's proteins and improve memory in laboratory experiments, in what researchers say could open a new pathway for treating the disease. Researchers at Monash University found that the compound, known as Cu(ATSM), helped the brain clear out harmful amyloid-beta the protein that forms sticky plaques in Alzheimer's by repairing a key "waste-removal" pump at the blood-brain barrier.

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One million Aussies have cancer, under-40s rates rise

West Australian, Other, 14/07/2026, Stephanie Gardiner

Young people are increasingly being diagnosed with cancers but survival rates are improving, according to the most detailed picture of how the disease affects Australians. Some improvement in cancer outcomes for First Nations people has also been reported in Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data released on Tuesday.

Also reported by: [7News.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 14/07/2026, Thomas Oriti

New data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows cancer is becoming more commonly diagnosed in people in their 30s and 40s, with bowel and thyroid cancers driving the increase. From 2000 to 2025, the number of people aged between 30 and 49 who were diagnosed with cancer increased from an estimated 121 cases to 135 per 100,000 people.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

No relevant coverage

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IMMUNISATION

Immunity plunges

Childhood vaccine rates are below crucial herd immunity targets for highly infectious diseases like measles in hundreds of Australian communities, including in the Northern Territory, as anti-vaxxer parents swap tips to dodge childcare vaccine rules. No region in the Northern Territory has fully vaccinated 95 per cent of their two-year-olds, the latest government data shows, with all falling short of the key target to prevent outbreaks of highly contagious diseases.

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Rising virus threat spurs winter vaccine plea for WA

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 14/07/2026, Andrew Du

Respiratory syncytial virus has overtaken influenza as Australia's most common respiratory virus this winter for the first time since national reporting began, prompting renewed calls for older Australians to get vaccinated. Health experts are urging eligible West Australians to take advantage of free RSV vaccines as infections continue to climb, warning the virus can lead to serious illness, hospitalisation and even death in older people.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 14/07/2026, Michael Thomson

For the first time, respiratory syncytial virus or RSV has overtaken influenza most common respiratory virus this winter, yet more than one million Aussies eligible remain unprotected. Around 500 people have died from the virus, and as cases climb, health experts are urging West Australians to get vaccinated.

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6PR, Drive, 14/07/2026, Jamie Burnett

Interview with Dr Ramya Raman, GP. Raman says flu vaccines prevent asthma attacks, which sometimes trigger an infection, and people are being urged to get their flu vaccines every year. She also says the WA Government has extended its free flu vaccination program this month, and the age group for the nasal flu vaccine is now expanded.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Pharma marketing equity concerns

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 14/07/2026

Researchers have raised concerns around pharma companies impacting on health and equity among First Nations Australians, by influencing perceptions of body image, medicines policy and prescribing of GLP-1RAs for weight loss. Writing in the MJA, the team noted that pharma companies have boosted their marketing through disease-awareness campaigns, sponsored events.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Ambulance union warns ramping at University Hospital Geelong puts lives at risk

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, Lincoln Holmes

Ambulances faced hours long ramping outside Geelong hospital on Tuesday night, with the union warning the community is at risk as paramedics are "unable to get to emergency patients". Vision captured outside the hospital showed up to 10 ambulances lined up in the ambulance bay and stretching onto Ryrie St as crews waited to transfer patients into the emergency department.

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

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Launceston General Hospital experiencing 'impacted' capacity due to high demand

ABC Online, Other, 14/07/2026

Tasmania's top health official says the Launceston General Hospital is experiencing "impacted" capacity and is urging patients to only attend if it is a medical emergency. "The Launceston General Hospital is currently experiencing high demand for services, particularly patients with acute health needs," Health Secretary Dale Webster said on Tuesday evening.

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Hospital waiting 'far too long' for upgrade gets multi-million dollar pledge

Warrnambool Standard, Other, 14/07/2026, Sophia Baker

A south-west emergency department and intensive care unit described as "third-world type facilities" will receive a massive funding boost if the Liberal National coalition wins the state election. The Victorian Liberal and Nationals announced on Monday July, 13, 2026 they would commit \$45 million to works at Hamilton Base Hospital to deliver the redevelopment the Western District Health Service the local community have been demanding for years.

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2CC, Canberra Live, 14/07/2026, Leon Delaney

Interview with Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation ACT Vice President Associate Professor Dipti Talaulikar, on increasing concerns about occupational violence and aggression in healthcare settings in Canberra, including at the Canberra Hospital. Talaulikar says occupational violence cases, including verbal abuse, intimidation, and physical assaults, have increased to about 2500 since 2021, and it's impacting the well-being of healthcare staff and the quality of patient care. She states that occupational violence is a preventable hazard, and it should not be considered an inevitable consequence of healthcare delivery.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Worker wellbeing

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Karen Walker-Bone, Monica O'Dwyer, Natasha Kinsman, Helen Rawson and Kaori Shimoinaba, Page 16

Australia has a growing need for aged care, with existing services struggling to meet demand. The ageing population is increasing pressure on care services, exacerbated by a reduction in the supply of workers as the proportion of Australians of working age declines. Aged care is delivered formally by paid workers (including residential, respite and home care programs) and informally by unpaid carers (family, friends and volunteers).

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La Pay boost

Aged Care Insite, General News, 01/07/2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 18

Millions of Australian workers received a 4.75 per cent pay rise from July 1, after the Fair Work Commission (FWC) handed down its annual wage review. The decision was welcomed by unions as overdue relief for frontline care workers but criticised by business groups as a potential tipping point for struggling employers.

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NSW launches taskforce to combat rising violence in hospitals

Nursing Review, Other, 14/07/2026

A new taskforce has been established with the sole aim of "eradicating violence" in NSW hospitals and ensuring staff are safe in the wake of an increase in violent incidents at medical facilities across the state. In recent months, violent incidents at NSW hospitals have gained media attention, including the alleged bashing off a NSW Police chief inspector at Auburn Hospital, and the alleged hammer attack of a patient at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Bayside Health pioneers digital healthcare advancements

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 14/07/2026

Three Melbourne hospitals that are part of the Bayside Health network have become the first Oracle Health clients in the Asia-Pacific region to fully deploy a third-party application integrated with the Oracle Health Foundation electronic health record (EHR) via the Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) standards.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Fears death linked to diphtheria

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 15/07/2026, Camden Smith, Page 11

The family of a three-year-old boy who died in a remote Northern Territory community last week believe the cause of his death was diphtheria, with officials now investigating. The NT Coronor is investigating the death of the infant overnight last Thursday in Canteen Creek, about 270km south east of Tennant Creek.

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Diphtheria patient transferred to Sydney hospital from Alice Springs

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, Lottie Hood

Diphtheria is showing few signs of slowing down in the Northern Territory despite joint government efforts to control the national outbreak, with one Tennant Creek resident being transferred to a major Sydney hospital. The outbreak of the previously eliminated infection in the NT has shocked the country, with cases spreading to Western Australia and South Australia.

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

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WHO says it has less than half funding needed to fight Ebola

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 14/07/2026

The World Health Organization has received less than half the funding it needs to fight the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a WHO official said on Tuesday, urging donors not to abandon the country at a critical stage of the epidemic. The global health agency has received about 40% of its \$115 million appeal to tackle the Bundibugyo outbreak, for which there is no proven treatment or vaccine.

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FIVEAA, Mornings, 14/07/2026, Matthew Pantelis

Interview with The Big Duck Boat Tours General Manager Joel Hirsch, on SA recording its fifth confirmed H5 case. Hirsch says it's inevitable that the virus will reach Coorong at some stage, because the virus has been present overseas for many years now. He states that members of the public are being urged to keep an eye on sick or dead birds, but he is hoping that the virus will not impact the tours, and they would still encourage people to visit Coorong.

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

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Illegal peptide use hits hep risk

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 15/07/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 9

Vanity-driven Queenslanders are resorting to shooting up illegal peptides with shared needles and vials prompting a shock warning that it could drive a rise in the transmission of hepatitis that can lead to deadly liver cancer. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration has warned against the influx of dangerous, unapproved products entering the country.

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

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Australia banned vape ads more than two years ago – so why are they still all over social media?

The Guardian, Other, 14/07/2026, Achol Arok

Illegal vape sellers have turned to social media to promote nicotine-filled products, with experts calling

for a crackdown including stronger penalties for the platforms. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) said it was aware of thousands of similar posts, and was taking "strong and sustained" action to remove them.

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As Australia closes in on eliminating one cancer, another is showing up earlier in life

SBS, Other, 14/07/2026, Gabrielle Katanasho

Cervical cancer is vanishing from a generation of Australian women, with a new national data report revealing it's happening one age bracket at a time. [...] The vaccine, Gardasil, was developed from technology pioneered at the University of Queensland, approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in 2006, and funded by the Howard government at a cost of \$632.9 million over four years.

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There's one reason why so many cold and flu tablets don't actually work

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 14/07/2026, Jack Janetzki and Lauren Cortis

You've got the sniffles and your nose is running like a tap. [...] In November 2024, the FDA proposed removing oral phenylephrine from over-the-counter cold and flu tablets In Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is responsible for regulating these medicines.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 14/07/2026, Sarah Gerathy

Interview with University of Sydney Public Health Professor Becky Freeman. Gerathy says it's been over two years since Australia banned all advertising for vapes across all media platforms, including social media, but ads for illegal vape products are still prominent on social media platforms, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration noted that it's aware of the posts and has removed over 8500 vape ads over the last two years. Freeman commends the TGA for taking down thousands of ads since the laws have changed, but she says she is frustrated that social media platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, are not feeling the consequences of breaking the law, and they should be held accountable.

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AICIS

Experts slam plan for berry 'forever' chemicals

Age, General News, 15/07/2026, Carrie Fellner, Page 8

Australian regulators have proposed allowing up to 500 times more residue of a controversial pesticide on some berries, although products containing the so-called "forever chemical" must warn it is

suspected of "damaging the unborn child". The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) said changes for pesticide isocycloseram would pose no risk to human health and berries would be safe for consumers because exposure levels would be well below those capable of causing harm.

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