



TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 20th July 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
[Assistant Minister White](#) | [Special Envoy Repacholi](#) | [Department](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [**Courier Mail**](#) (page 1) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has said that the Federal Government's vape reforms were "making a difference" on reducing the number of young Australians vaping, but said that there was still more work to be done.
- [**The Australian**](#) (page 2) reports some medications for Crohn's disease are unavailable in the Australian market due to disputes surrounding PBS pricing. Health Minister Mark Butler said that the PBS must be updated to succeed in the current era, but that it must do so while still guaranteeing patients "affordable, reliable access to medicines". *Also reported by:* [**Sydney Morning Herald**](#)
- The [**Sydney Morning Herald**](#) (page 1) reports that new recommendations from the World Health Organisation suggest that up to 45 per cent of dementia risk could be prevented or delayed through reducing exposure to risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol use, not exercising and high-blood pressure.
- The [**Sydney Morning Herald**](#) (page 1) reports that Labor will debate allowing voluntary assisted dying through telehealth services at its national conference this week.
- [**Northern Territory News**](#) (page 1) reports that it is expected that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will announce a \$10 million funding deal to restore maternity services at Royal Darwin Hospital.

- **The Age** (page 1) reports that the Omnipod 5 insulin pump is associated with 429 adverse event reports lodged with the Therapeutic Goods Administration.
- The **Adelaide Advertiser** (page 3) reports that Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide has reported a 86 per cent increase in Code Black alerts from 2022 to 2025.
- **The ABC** (online) reports that independent testing has found that a bottle of Dirty George vodka contained 500 milligrams of tert-butyl alcohol per litre, a result the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's Michala Kowalski described as "quite terrifying".
- **The ABC** (online) reports that the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and Food Standards Australia New Zealand has found that a 500-fold increase in the amount of the pesticide isocycloseram used on berries was "safe for all consumers".

MINISTER BUTLER

Crohn's victims denied access to life-changing drugs

The Australian, General News, 20/07/2026, Penny Timms, Page 2

For weeks Kelly Exner was convinced she was dying. With severe abdominal pain and frequent trips to the bathroom, she could barely function and experienced sudden weight loss that doctors couldn't explain. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler wrote in The Australian that access to innovative and affordable medicines is fundamental to our system, but so too is balance.

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Life-changing drugs out of reach as PBS red tape stalls access

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 20/07/2026, Natassia Chrysanthos, Page 4

Just a quarter of new medicines launched globally in the past decade have been subsidised in Australia, putting life-changing treatments out of reach for patients, in a situation that pharmaceutical companies warn is becoming untenable. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler commissioned a Health Technology Assessment review of these processes in 2022.

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

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Minister fuming over vapes

Courier Mail, General News, 20/07/2026, Remy Varga, Page 1

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has admitted more work needs to be done on vaping after an investigation by The Courier-Mail found some illegal devices pack the nicotine hit of more than 600 cigarettes. Independent testing commissioned by The CourierMail found vapes are full of highly addictive nicotine and chemicals that have unknown health effects.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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When Pauline Hanson and Tommy Robinson met, hatred was a given. More disturbing was the spectacle

The Guardian, Other, 19/07/2026

Pauline Hanson's podcast with Tommy Robinson was dispiriting in unexpected ways. Racism was a given: more deflating was the recognition of its entertainment value. [...] "It's baseless," said the NDIS minister, Mark Butler, when asked to respond.

[Read More](#)

A spike in RSV cases, brain cancer research and menopausal fog

Illawarra Mercury, Other, 19/07/2026, Natalie Croxon

Between its many health professionals, its hospitals, and the research coming out of the University of Wollongong, the Illawarra is rarely short on health news. [...] In good news for people with multiple

sclerosis, the federal Health Minister Mark Butler has announced that two commonly used medications will remain on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Diverse aged care workforce is something worth celebrating

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/07/2026, Darren Birbeck, Page 30

One of the greatest challenges facing the aged care sector is attracting a skilled workforce to meet the rapidly growing demand for services. The diversity of people working in the sector is quite extraordinary.

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Labor launches promised \$100m taxpayer-funded aged care loan scheme

Negotiations have started with eight aged-care providers, taking up the Cook Government's offer of low-interest loans to expand capacity in a bid to ease the squeeze in hospitals. A \$100 million loan scheme was a key promise during last year's State election, but requests for the Commonwealth to contribute have so far fallen on deaf ears, forcing WA Labor to go it alone.

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

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Cost burden hurts people who need help, but there's a fix!

West Australian, Business News, 20/07/2026, Nick Bruining, Page 18

It's easy to accuse the financial advice industry of whingeing loudly to preserve a highly lucrative patch of turf. There's no doubt that for some operators, that's 100 per cent true. Plenty of advisers concentrate their activities on the high net-worth space where percentage-based fees on sizeable portfolios mean big dollars.

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How to beat the home care system

Canberra Times, General News, 20/07/2026, Phoebe Loomes, Page 13

A new survey has revealed many people navigating the government's Support at Home system find it frustrating and difficult to manage, but Ron Brewster is bucking the trend. Based in a Cherrybrook retirement village, Brewster receives government-funded aged care in his home and has found a way to make the system work for him.

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

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How the New Aged Care Act affects the elderly who need respiratory support devices

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 20/07/2026, Benjamin Gerhardy, Lucy Morgan, Julian Han and Devesh Thakkar

Many older Australians have encountered significant difficulties accessing respiratory support devices under the new Support at Home program. Heather* sits across from me in my public hospital clinic, hands folded neatly in her lap. We return, again, to the discussion of her respiratory failure — a condition in which her lungs can no longer adequately remove the carbon dioxide her body produces.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Family searches for answers after fatal medication mistake

Age, General News, 20/07/2026, Cassandra Morgan, Page 16

It was early evening in a group home in Melbourne's inner west when a worker made a tragic mistake. Alex Clack, 48, had asked for his medication just before dinner, as he had hundreds of times. [...] The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission confirmed it was examining Clack's death, but was unable to reveal if the Salvation Army had alerted it to the case.

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

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Federal government to tighten rules around use of AI in departmental decision-making

ABC Online, Other, 19/07/2026, Holly Tregenza

Australia will tighten oversight of artificial intelligence in automated government decision-making and strengthen privacy safeguards as part of a broader push to allay concerns about the technology's risks to community safety. [...] The government has also faced scrutiny over automated elements of the aged

care home support program, as well as a planning tool in the National Disability Insurance Scheme that generates budgets for participants.

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PRIMARY CARE

Scan delays 'putting patients at risk'

Launceston Examiner, General News, 20/07/2026, Benjamin Seeder, Page 1

Experts claim patient care is being placed at risk by chronic delays in medical imaging, with one patient claiming she only received the results of a scan more than two years after she underwent the procedure. Private clinic directors and the top medical lobby group have warned that monthslong waits for MRIs, X-rays and other scans could be fatal for patients in urgent need of surgery, chemotherapy or other treatments.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#).

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Doctors 'not to blame in AI fails'

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 20/07/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 4

Hospitals that embed AI technology into their healthcare systems must take full responsibility for any harms caused with no blame on doctors, warns the state's peak medical body. "Doctors must be able to trust the technology they are using, otherwise they will not adopt it," Australian Medical Association Queensland president Erica Gannon said.

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Patients 'stuck in the middle' as new AMA boss slams health infighting

The Mercury, Other, 19/07/2026, Sue Bailey

Tasmania's health system is in chronic crisis – and the state's new AMA president says patients are paying the price while governments keep pointing fingers at each other. The new president of the AMA in Tasmania wants an end to the blame game between governments over the health crisis saying patients are "stuck in the middle" and staff are stretched beyond capacity.

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

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The week in review

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 19/07/2026

Grattan report ruffles pharmacy feathers, prescribing terms create confusion and CGT's expected impact on sales were among our readers' talking points this week. We began the week with a bombshell report from the Grattan Institute, which has attracted a lot of contention among our readership base (you can have your say on our homepage poll).

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AMA president hopeful on Grattan

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 19/07/2026, Megan Haggan

A candidate for presidency of the AMA says that the Grattan Institute's new report reflects her campaign platform Dr Anchita Karmakar is a lawyer as well as a rural generalist specialist GP and a provider of education and mentorship for pharmacists via MediEdu, of which she is the director.

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Rethinking Australia's approach to clinical governance

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 20/07/2026, Christine Kilpatrick and Anne Duggan

A new National Model for Clinical Governance from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care aims to improve quality of care in acute health services. As clinicians work harder than

ever to deliver the best possible care in hospitals under stress, our ability to provide care is deeply influenced by the organisational systems, processes and culture in which we work.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Fight ageing and prioritise power over strength

Australian Financial Review, General News, 20/07/2026, Page 28

If you lift weights twice or more each week, congratulations.

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Almost half of dementia cases could be prevented

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 20/07/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 1

Avoiding air pollution from fireplaces and vehicle emissions is among a suite of new dementia prevention recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO), which have not endorsed supplements or menopausal hormone therapy to cut the risk of cognitive decline. [...] An estimated 446,500 Australians will have dementia in 2026, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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

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Threat of processed food rises

Hobart Mercury, General News, 20/07/2026, Page 7

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) could be driving a quarter of heart disease cases and deaths, damning new research claims. Foods such as crisps, biscuits and bacon have previously been linked to poor health and diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity and even dementia.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#).

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Deserve better

Northern Territory News, Editorials, 20/07/2026, Page 10

Royal Darwin Hospital's maternity services are desperately in need of an upgrade to raise them to a standard that Territory mums and their bubs deserve. In fact doctors say the issues at RDH extend beyond just the maternity ward, with many calling for the Albanese government to fund a replacement hospital.

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Common disorder reclassified to end years of misdiagnosis

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/07/2026, Karen Grace Prince and Updesh Tanwar

For decades, a condition that affects one in eight women globally had been misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and structurally neglected conditions in modern medicine. Formerly known as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), the condition has recently been rebranded in May to Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS) — a historic name change that finally shifts the focus away from a single pelvic organ and onto a whole-body hormonal and metabolic disorder.

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

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Why is smoking fashionable again after decades of public health success?

NEWS.com.au, Other, 19/07/2026, Rose Hirst

I open Instagram. A silver tray piled high with cigarettes fills my screen, the slim white sticks arranged

as carefully as canapes. The image comes from the May 2026 opening of Australian fashion brand Sir The Label's new store.

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Heated clash erupts between Labor MP Julian Hill and Sky News host Caleb Bond over tobacco consumption data

Sky News Australia, Other, 19/07/2026, Zoe Phillips

A heated clash has erupted between Labor MP Julian Hill and Sky News host Caleb Bond over tobacco consumption figures, after the minister dismissed recent ABS statistics as "not true". [...] However, data released on Friday from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's long-running study into smoking, vaping and drug use declared that past-year use of any nicotine product fell to 15.2 per cent in 2025, "the lowest level recorded".

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Factions set to debate Labor's key policies Labor factions to debate key policies

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 20/07/2026, Paul Sakkal, Page 1

Chief political correspondent Labor will lay the groundwork for a striking set of green energy moves at its national conference this week as the party feuds over a "genocide" motion related to the conflict in Gaza and considers whether to allow voluntary assisted dying through telehealth. Labor MP Jerome Laxale, who is in the Left faction, will support a motion from the party's environmental network to get rid of tax "disincentives to decarbonisation", which refers to the tax credits that have, in part, slowed mining firms' efforts to electrify.

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

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Fresh hope after 'years of torture'

Newcastle Herald, General News, 20/07/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 3

Jonathan Siffleet was 20 metres in the air when his legs gave way. It was September 2022, and he was working to install a sign. "I used to own a sign installation business. I travelled the country doing big installs for companies like Guzman and Gomez and Rebel Sport," the 56-year-old from Edgeworth said.

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Channel 9, Nine News Late, 19/07/2026, Tracy Vo

GLP-1 medications or weight loss drugs like Ozempic and Mounjaro are changing lives, but health experts warn they're only part of the solution as obesity becomes Australia's leading preventable health risk. Experts are now pushing to make exercise a standard part of treatment,.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

New outlook for the old schoolyard

Canberra Times, General News, 20/07/2026, Sarah Lansdown, Page 6

Australian schoolyards can be harsh battlegrounds where boredom and bullying flourish. University of Canberra researchers want to change this and make the schoolyard a place where teenagers can recharge and socialise in the way they feel most comfortable. A team at the university's Health

Research Institute has revealed its Schoolyard Greenprint which it hopes will set a new standard in schoolyard design.

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Helping tradie health

Northern Territory News, General News, 20/07/2026, Ryan Kirley, Page 4

Construction workers in the Northern Territory are facing some of the highest rates of psychological distress and suicidal ideation in Australia. However, a new peerreviewed study found a Queensland-born program is helping turn the tide and give these workers the support they most desperately need.

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IMMUNISATION

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

The device detecting the world's deadliest creature

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 19/07/2026, Angus Dalton

To some it's just annoying, but to others it marks the chilling call of the world's deadliest creature: the buzz of a mosquito. In an effort to slash the extraordinary death toll wreaked by the insects, a University of Wollongong researcher has harnessed a super-efficient, lo-fi form of AI that can discern a disease-carrying mosquito from a harmless one by tuning in to this buzz.

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Pragmatic clinical trials may be more fragile than they appear

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 20/07/2026, Sergey Alexeev

A new study suggests that the harder a clinical trial works to be flexible and realistic, the more its conclusion leans on statistical assumptions. A sophisticated trial design does not automatically make its result more reliable.

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New study links heart attacks to more microplastics in blood

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 19/07/2026

Researchers collaborating from several European universities published their findings in European Heart Journal. They found that people who had suffered a serious heart attack were far more likely to have micro- and nanoplastics in their blood than patients with other forms of heart disease or with normal coronary arteries.

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'I've made a thousand small decisions as a single mum. This one might be the hardest yet.'

Mamamia, Other, 19/07/2026, Brianna Ragel

Everyday, we are hit with information overload, social media that's built to addict us, notifications from a dozen apps, and underneath all of it, the basics — keeping a roof over our heads, keeping everyone fed and watered, some of us doing that for ourselves and our kids at the same time. [...] In Australia, there's no single national law governing any of this. IVF and embryo law is set state by state, sitting on top of national guidelines from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) that clinics must follow to keep their accreditation.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Hospital sees a dramatic rise in emergency alerts

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 20/07/2026, Jacinta Round, Page 3

Freedom of Information documents have exposed a fouryear high in emergency alerts at Adelaide's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. From 2022 to 2025, the number of Code Black alerts, triggered by hospital staff when they feel their own safety or that of others within the building is at risk, rose from 831 to 1542 at the QEH.

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

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Risk of mould is 'managed'

Northern Territory News, General News, 20/07/2026, Fia Walsh, Page 4

NT Health says a years-long mould problem at a Darwin community clinic poses a "manageable risk" to occupants, amid calls for staff and patients to be immediately relocated until the building is cleared. The health department said it had been actively monitoring the mould in parts of Casuarina Plaza, and preliminary reports from an independent assessment in March this year indicated there was no need to evacuate staff at this time.

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Prisoner kept in RDH for 300 days

Northern Territory News, General News, 20/07/2026, Zizi Averill, Page 7

A prisoner spent more than 300 days in the Royal Darwin Hospital under guard in the same ward as acutely vulnerable Territorians, the national torture watchdog report has revealed. The Australian National Preventive Mechanism has released its 2024-25 annual report detailing the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, detailing alleged abuse of Australians in prisons, detention centres, hospital wards and other places of detention.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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Sirens sound over ambo shortage

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/07/2026, Josh Hanrahan, Page 16

A shortage of intensive-care paramedics in Sydney's southwest will prompt senior specialists to take industrial action this week over fears the lack of specially trained staff is putting the community in danger. For the area spanning from Bankstown to south of Bowral there should be four intensive-care ambulances operating, each carrying two specially trained paramedics with the ability to perform life-saving procedures and administer specialist drugs that their general-duties colleagues cannot.

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

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Mum's the word

Northern Territory News, General News, 20/07/2026, Harry Brill, Page 1

Prime Minister to announce \$10 million RDH maternity deal Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is expected to announce a \$10 million agreement today to help fix Royal Darwin Hospital's maternity woes. Speculation was rife about an announcement after RDH staff reported the PM's security detail at the hospital scoping it and the maternity ward out.

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Hopes station will cut response times

Border Mail, General News, 20/07/2026, Chelsea Wilson, Page 5

A brand new ambulance station is hoped to help cut down response times that are among the worst in Victoria. Treasurer Jaclyn Symes had the first look at Beechworth's heritage-style, new ambulance station on Friday.

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JCU opens hub for next gen of health workers

Cairns Post, General News, 20/07/2026, Rosalee Chapman, Page 6

James Cook University has officially opened the Yeinie Building at the Cairns campus to train the next generation of health clinicians to serve the Far North community. The \$67m building, located by Cairns Hospital, was first announced earlier this year.

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

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Frontline workers miss out on VMR

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 20/07/2026, Emma Cam, Page 7

A Queensland paramedic, permanently injured after two decades on the front line, has exposed a profound inequity in the state's Voluntary Medical Retirement scheme, leaving emergency service workers without financial relief available to other public servants. Peter Vinnicombe stopped working as a paramedic three years ago after he was attacked by a patient during a lifethreatening incident while on duty, resulting in a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Theatre's tech upgrade

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 20/07/2026, Lucy Crock, Page 2

A mystery donor has quietly rewritten the map of Australian surgery, funding a cuttingedge robot in a regional city before most capital cities have one. Regional patients no longer need to travel for world-

class surgery, with the da Vinci 5 (dV5) robotic surgical system now at St John of God Geelong Hospital.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Trans debate and a culture of 'fear'

The Australian, General News, 20/07/2026, Rachel Baxendale, Page 1

The founder of the world's leading organisation providing evidence-based therapy to detransitioners and parents of gender-distressed children says she believes there is a "different level of fear and silencing" around the discussion of transgender ideology in Australia compared with other countries. [...] The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency also last week dropped its investigation into Dr Spencer.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

Passenger's wild airport declaration prompts warning to Aussies

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 19/07/2026

This biosecurity threat is one of thousands seized at Australian airports every year. An incoming passenger's unusual item inside their baggage has prompted Australian authorities to remind the nation's millions of annual arrivals of the country's strict biosecurity laws.

[Read More](#)

2GB, Healthy Living, 19/07/2026, Dr Tanveer Ahmed

Interview with infectious disease specialist Dr Clay Golledge. Golledge states that Australia has now a total of 17 confirmed H5N1 cases, citing the strain's potential danger to spread amongst birds, but he also notes that the virus is not easily transmissible to humans. He also says people are urged to contact the Animal Disease Hotline if they encounter sick or dead birds, and have their influenza vaccinations updated.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

'It nearly killed me'

Age, General News, 20/07/2026, Liam Mannix, Page 1

Tye Cummins lay in the dark, gasping for air and unable to move. He was slipping into a lifethreatening, unresponsive state after too much insulin was pumped into his body as he slept. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration tracks these problems in a public database but does not release that data in aggregate, making it impossible for consumers to know which devices are linked to the most reports.

The deadly loophole in Australia's medical device rules

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 19/07/2026, Liam Mannix and Henrietta Cook

he married couple were at home when the emergency call arrived last November. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) states all medical devices approved in Australia are backed by clinical evidence proving they are safe and perform as intended – but it never assessed CellaED's clinical evidence.

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Investigation reveals black market vapes hide dangerously varied nicotine levels

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/07/2026, Remy Varga

The level of nicotine contained in black market vapes varies alarmingly between devices, with a special investigation revealing some contain the equivalent of 625 cigarettes. [...] The VAPO e-cigarette had nicotine levels of 24.63 mg/ml, despite the label marketing the vape as 20 mg/ml, in breach of rules set by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

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Biohacking and anti-aging science are raising hopes of living longer. What's hype and what shows promise?

ABC Online, Other, 19/07/2026, Norman Swan, Mary Fallon, Rachel Carbonell and Lara Sonnenschein

The longevity industry is booming. [...] The peptide market illustrates how parts of the longevity industry can operate in the gaps between the two main health regulators, the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which regulates drugs, supplements and medical devices.

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Channel 9, 60 Minutes, 19/07/2026, Dimity Clancey

Medical devices are changing lives for the better, but every year, there are 150,000 incidences where Australians need hospital help due to the complications they cause. A public servant, who asked not to be identified because he's been forbidden to speak to the media, has stated that the Therapeutic Goods Administration is floundering when it comes to the use of medical devices for Australian patients, claiming the decisions being made by the TGA around medical devices are not evidence-based.

Also reported by: [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Sydney\)](#).

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Tax loophole sparks fears of bootleg booze as cheap vodka floods market

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/07/2026, James O'Doherty

A tax loophole worth up to \$400,000 has flooded pubs, clubs and bottle shops with cut-price spirits that may breach food safety standards. Millions of litres of low quality liquor are flooding into the market via

a tax break allowing producers to sell vodka for as little as \$30 a bottle.

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

[Read More](#)

Store-bought vodka from licensed IGA retailer found to contain key ingredient in paint stripper

ABC Online, Other, 19/07/2026, Thomas Sam

More than a litre of vodka being sold in store for just \$59 might seem like a bargain but what testing undertaken by 7.30 found was that the perceived value was not worth the risk. After purchasing the bottle of Dirty George vodka from a legitimate Melbourne IGA liquor store, we took it to an independent testing lab.

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APVMA says '500-fold' increase of pesticide residues on berries poses no risk to human health

ABC Online, Other, 19/07/2026, Kallee Buchanan and Amelia Bernasconi

When Australian regulators were tasked with assessing the safety of Syngenta's new pesticide isocycloseram in 2021, they were the first in the world to do so. [...] But the APVMA and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) were satisfied treated berries were "safe for all consumers".

[Read More](#)

Artificial sugars in low-calorie drinks could be bad for your gut, study suggests

Daily Mail UK, Other, 19/07/2026, Marti Stelling

Sweeteners found in sugar-free soft drinks could slow the growth of beneficial gut bacteria, a study suggests. Researchers from the University of Cambridge studied how artificial and low-calorie sweeteners affect the bacteria living in the gut, and how these effects change when they are eaten together with caffeine, flavourings or medicines.

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AICIS

PFAS test in six hours

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 20/07/2026, Page 6

For communities worried about PFAS contamination, waiting for test results can mean days of uncertainty. A University of Tasmania trial has used a mobile laboratory equipped with portable liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry technology to test soil and water on site and provide an early indication of PFAS contamination within six hours.

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