



TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 21st August 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](#)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Australian Financial Review](#) (page 1) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has released data detailing the number of NDIS participants who had their funding reduced following a plan reassessment during the first three months of 2026.
- [The Australian](#) (page 4) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has announced that funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Program will be extended until 2029, with the Federal Government to explore measures to integrate CHSP with the Support at Home program. *Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald](#), [Courier Mail](#), [ABC Online](#)*
- The [Australian Financial Review](#) (page 1) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has described the results of a trial conducted by Moderna into a potential melanoma vaccine as "incredibly exciting", with the potential vaccine to provide significant health benefits in Australia. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#), [ABC Online](#)*
- [The Guardian](#) (online) reports that NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister has stated that the Federal Government's NDIS reforms are necessary to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the program.
- [News24](#) features an interview with Assistant Mental Health Minister Emma McBride in which she discusses the manner in which the Medicare Mental Health Centre initiative will improve access to mental health care.

- The [**Herald Sun**](#) (page 3) reports that Victorian public hospital doctors have flagged a potential 24-hour statewide strike next month as industrial action aimed at securing improved wages and conditions from the Victorian Government escalates.
- [**The Australian**](#) (page 19) reports that Medibank chief executive, David Koczkar, has contended that healthcare reform is required to reduce an over-reliance on hospitals, with Mr Koczkar calling for increased government investment in preventative care. *Also reported by: [**Australian Financial Review**](#)*
- [**ABC Online**](#) (online) reports that a joint operation featuring operatives from Australia and China has seized a haul of illicit tobacco values at \$92 million which was destined for Australia.
- [**ABC Online**](#) (online) reports that Leora Healthcare chief executive, Esha Oberoi, has stated that proposed reductions to migration numbers could jeopardize the capacity of the aged care sector to maintain necessary workforce levels.

MINISTER BUTLER

How local scientist led a cancer breakthrough

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/08/2026, Michael Smith, Page 1

Georgina Long was in Lisbon when news broke that her decades of work developing therapies to fight skin cancer had hit the jackpot.

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#), [7News.com.au \(Online\)](#), [worldtravelblog.org \(Online\)](#).

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Surge in cuts to NDIS plans after review

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/08/2026, Michael Read, Page 1

Record numbers of participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme are having their funding cut as the federal government moves to rein in the program's ballooning cost.

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Reining in debt requires fortitude, not platitudes

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/08/2026, Phillip Coorey, Page 1

Just over five years ago, the alarm bells first rang regarding the cost of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

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

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Labor's aged-care U-turn to ward off fears of home support chaos

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Stephen Lunn, Page 4

Entry-level aged care for 830,000 older Australians through the Commonwealth Home Support Program won't now be merged with the new Support at Home regime after the government did a U-turn on its original plan to join the two after mid-next year. Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler said CHSP should remain a "standalone program" rather than being subsumed into Support at Home, which provides clinical services and other support to help older people maintain independence, but is experiencing a troubled rollout.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [News24 Australia \(Online\)](#), [Tenterfield Star \(Online\)](#), [Australian Seniors News \(Online\)](#), [Have a Go News \(Online\)](#).

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'Sad development': Alarm raised over puberty blocker subsidy

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Rachel Baxendale, Page 7

Medical experts have called on Health Minister Mark Butler to restrict the listing of hormone blocking medication Triptorelin on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, after trans activist doctors celebrated the recommendation of an unrestricted listing, claiming it would see the drug subsidised for use in

blocking puberty in gender dysphoric children. Following an urgent out-of-session meeting on July 30, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommended the drug be given "unrestricted" status on the PBS, meaning it attracts a taxpayer subsidy "for any therapeutic use".

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

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Telehealth casts cloud of coercion over VAD

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Stephen Lunn, Page 12

Driving to a patient's home to administer the drugs to help them die is when Nick Hummel feels the anxiety rise. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler says telehealth has been used inappropriately in some circumstances.

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Labor's last-minute decision not to merge aged care programs

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/08/2026, Brittany Busch, Page 4

More than 800,000 older Australians will still get Meals on Wheels and other programs at home after Labor abandoned a plan to merge them into its under-pressure aged care system. Health Minister Mark Butler announced a reprieve yesterday for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), the future of which had been in doubt as the government sought to fold it into its overhaul of the Support at Home program.

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

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Home support lifeline

Courier Mail, General News, 21/08/2026, Page 5

The Albanese government will continue to fund critical aged care services for 830,000 older Australians after promising to keep separate two commonwealth-funded programs beyond 2029. Health Minister Mark Butler and Aged Care Minister Sam Rae announced on Thursday the government would extend the Commonwealth Home Support Program to June 2029.

Also reported by: [Tenterfield Star \(Online\)](#), [Australian Seniors News \(Online\)](#), [Have a Go News \(Online\)](#).

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Labor's fighting for survival & there's one man to blame

West Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Mark Riley, Page 13

Despite their sharp ideological differences and more than a touch of personal political enmity, Paul Keating and John Howard were both motivated by the same central doctrine as prime ministers. [...] Now Health Minister Mark Butler, who challenges Chalmers for that mantle, faces the enormous challenge of implementing profound changes and deep cuts to the NDIS before a distressed disability community and a mixture of resistance and unpreparedness from State and Territory colleagues.

Also reported by: [The Nightly \(None\)](#).

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Insurer feels churn as premiums rise

West Australian, Business News, 21/08/2026, Rebecca Le May, Page 32

Medibank Private's boss has blasted "aggressive" health insurance comparison websites pushing "churn" between different providers, saying their chase of lucrative commissions is driving up premiums. [...] Mr Koczkar said he wrote on Thursday about the issue to Health Minister Mark Butler, having previously raised the issue with him personally.

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Two-year extension on home support program for elderly

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/08/2026, Noah Secomb, Page 14

Labor has vowed to keep the first port of call for older Australians entering the aged care system operating, less than a year before it was due to be cut. [...] Merging this program and the more

specialised care scheme into one system was a policy decision from the Morrison government, Health Minister Mark Butler said.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Wollongong\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [MSN Australia \(Online\)](#).

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From the office of Roland Rocchiccioli

Ballarat Times, General News, 21/08/2026, Roland Rocchiccioli, Page 38

Treasury is actively seeking loopholes to shift the cost of healthcare onto the individual, clawing back billions of dollars while completely ignoring the intense financial anxiety it will inflict. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler defended the cuts with political jargon and predictable hubris.

Also reported by: [Bendigo Times \(None\)](#).

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Priority aged care for MND

Tweed Valley Weekly, General News, 20/08/2026, Jo Kennett, Page 29

Older Australians living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) are being given priority access to aged care support under changes announced by the federal government. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said care systems needed to respond to the rapid progression of the disease.

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Rural and regional health matters: 142 doctors speak out over biggest challenges

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Evangeline Polymeneas, Adam Chenery, Evie Dinkelmeyer, Ashleigh Gleeson, Emma Cam, Olivia Shying, Ruby Kraner-Tucci & Taylor Penny

More than 140 rural and regional doctors across Australia have spoken about the biggest health challenges in their communities and what should be done to fix these often shocking shortfalls. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the government was investing more in bulk billing, doctors and nurses for regional and rural areas.

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

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Government extends home support for older Australians amid pressure

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Evelyn Manfield

The Commonwealth program helping older people with shopping, transport and meals on wheels will be extended until 2029, but the government has flagged its intention to make the program permanent beyond that. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the CHSP program would require reform, though, because there was some overlap between it and the Support at Home program.

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

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This was Labor's week to get business done with the Coalition

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, David Speers

In the last term of parliament, Anthony Albanese would often delight in calling Peter Dutton "Captain No", for being "against everything and for nothing". [...] NDIS Minister Mark Butler concedes there's still a "tonne of work" to do in setting up alternative supports.

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Bryn is 16 and has never eaten a meal. His mother's terrified the newly-cut NDIS won't 'step up to keep him alive'

The Guardian, Other, 21/08/2026, Cait Kelly

Bryn Skyes is 16 years old. [...] The changes will give the health and NDIS minister, Mark Butler, the power to reduce funding categories for individuals by up to 99%.

Cheaper cigarettes could kill tobacco black market, experts say

nine.com.au, Other, 20/08/2026, Yashee Sharma

As the Coalition and One Nation battle it out on tobacco excise policy, experts are using the renewed momentum to call for the tax to be slashed to kill the black market. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler told the ABC that the proposal was a "thought bubble" and "cheap headlines".

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

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'Fight like hell': Tailem Bend faces a battle to keep its GP clinic

Murray Bridge News, Other, 20/08/2026, Peri Strathearn

Tailem Bend residents may have to "fight like hell" to keep their community's GP service open, the district's acting mayor has warned. [...] Write to the federal Health and Ageing Minister: That would be Mark Butler, the Member for Hindmarsh in west Adelaide; he will be responsible for granting any exemption that would allow the LHN to operate a GP clinic at Tailem Bend if no commercial provider can be found.

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Butler claims half a million Medicare mental health centre visits

The Medical Republic, Other, 20/08/2026, Holly Payne

Health minister Mark Butler says Medicare Mental Health Centres have now delivered more than 500,000 free walk-in appointments, as the government moves ahead with plans to expand the network footprint to 92 centres. It appeared that patients tended to present multiple times; according to the health ministers, the number of patients seen for free mental health support was "nearly 50,000", while the number of free walk-in appointments totalled 501,579.

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Telehealth for VAD pursued in both houses of Parliament

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/08/2026, Caroline Egan

At Labor's National Conference last month, the party backed a conscience vote on allowing telehealth for Voluntary Assisted Dying. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said, "I'm not convinced that the current telehealth arrangements are particularly well suited to VAD right now", informing parliament Labor would not support Chaney's Bill.

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Four Corners' fallout reveals divide between Government and aged care sector

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/08/2026, Caroline Egan

The Government is standing by its aged care reforms, but the sector is increasingly telling a very different story. [...] In the wake of the program on the national broadcaster, Health Minister Mark Butler was asked about aged care assessments at an NDIS press conference on Tuesday (18 August).

[Read More](#)

Labor resists calls to ditch 'cruel' funding algorithm

CathNews, Other, 20/08/2026, Rebecca Comini

The Albanese Government is standing by its controversial aged care algorithm, ignoring an offer from the Opposition to provide a path through Parliament to immediately fix the assessment process at the centre of hundreds of complaints. [...] Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler said he remained a "strong supporter" of the assessment framework.

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As NDIS overhaul passes, Butler says states have much work to do

CathNews, Other, 20/08/2026, Rebecca Comini

Federal and state governments must urgently start work on setting up new disability systems for older

children, teenagers and adults with lower needs after the Parliament yesterday passed laws that will remove 240,000 people from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Health and Disability Minister Mark Butler said a scheme akin to a "Thriving Teens" program would need to get off the ground within the next 16 months to make sure older children who no longer qualified for the scheme aren't left in the lurch when eligibility changes start in 2028.

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NDIS report warns of care shortfall

Government News, Other, 20/08/2026, Rebecca Benson

Cuts to the NDIS represent 94 million hours' worth of annual paid care that will need to be replaced either by volunteers or family members, says new analysis. [...] When Health Minister Mark Butler announced the cuts earlier this year, he said that the policy would have a "material impact" on participants – "That very much understates the case," said Jericho.

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Bupa's reform push lands in a PHI market under structural stress

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Roxanne Libatique

Australia's private health insurance market is under mounting structural pressure, and the discussion paper Bupa released on August 20 is as much a product of that pressure as a response to it. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler acknowledged that approximately 230,000 Australians living with severe mental illness currently receive no support through either the NDIS or psychosocial support programs, per the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP).

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Medibank's insurance arm barely grew while its clinics surged

Insurance Business Australia, Other, 21/08/2026, Rod Bolivar

Medibank Private Limited's FY26 results contain a detail that matters more to the distribution side of health insurance than the headline profit figures: the country's largest private health insurer cut what it pays aggregators, at the same time as it leans harder into an owned-care ecosystem designed to keep customers from shopping around in the first place. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has said the government has no plans to allow private health insurers to move into general practice services, adding that "any move by insurers into GP services would be a significant change to Medicare and is not being considered," while allowing that insurer investment in "prevention and complementary services" remains acceptable within Medicare's rules.

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Would cutting the tobacco tax actually curb the illegal market, or just cost the economy?

Switzer Daily, Other, 20/08/2026

One Nation leader Pauline Hanson has called for a 75% cut to the tobacco tax and a freeze on any price indexation of the tax for three years. [...] Yesterday, Health Minister Mark Butler said of One Nation's proposal, "Governments aren't usually in the habit of engaging in price competition with organised crimes".

Also reported by: [WEB Newsreel \(Online\)](#)

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Channel 10, 10 News, 20/08/2026, Kate Freebairn

US pharmaceutical giants Merck and Moderna have developed a vaccine that can prevent melanoma from returning or spreading in high-risk patients. The clinical trial was led by 2024 Australian of the Year, Professor Georgina Long. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says this is exciting, particularly for a country that deals with significant melanoma rates.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 20/08/2026, Angela Cox and Mark Ferguson

A world-first cancer vaccine led by 2024 Australian of the Year, Professor Georgina Long, could

transform the treatment of melanoma. The new treatment has passed its final test, proven to be effective in stopping cancer from returning and spreading.

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News24, AM Agenda, 20/08/2026, Trudy McIntosh

Press Conference with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Butler talks about the extension of the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Early Afternoons, 20/08/2026, Jason Chong

SA Opposition leader Ashton Hurn is again calling for a new proton therapy unit for young cancer patients to be built in the state. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has been canvassing other states to deliver the technology after a proposed unit at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute fell years ago.

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2BS, 12:00 News, 20/08/2026

The Federal Government has announced the extension of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) until June 2029. The CHSP will remain separate from the Support at Home Program. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it's important to keep them apart, so the individual needs of aged care residents are met.

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BAY FM, 09:00 Local News, 20/08/2026

The Federal Government is standing by its decision on the controversial aged care algorithm, despite growing calls to reject or fix it. Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler says the government strongly supports the assessment framework, believing it will provide greater consistency and predictability.

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Canberra Conference Unit, Press Conference, 20/08/2026

Press Conference with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Butler talks about a new vaccine that could prevent melanoma. He says it's incredibly exciting news, not just for Australia but for the whole world. He notes that Australia has some of the worst melanoma rates in the world. He says Professor Georgina Long, the former Australian of the Year who has been the lead investigator in the phase 3 clinical trial, will be presenting the results at an international conference.

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER MCALLISTER

Bryn is 16 and has never eaten a meal. His mother's terrified the newly-cut NDIS won't 'step up to keep him alive'

The Guardian, Other, 21/08/2026, Cait Kelly

Bryn Skyes is 16 years old. [...] The changes will give the health and NDIS minister, Mark Butler, the power to reduce funding categories for individuals by up to 99%.

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'Breaks my heart': NDIS participant loses most of his support overnight

Newcastle Herald, Other, 20/08/2026, Dylan Nicholson

A Hunter man with autism, ADHD, depression and anxiety says he was stripped of almost all his NDIS support with no warning. [...] "We do recognise that there is a need to safeguard against risk to

participate in health and safety, particularly for that group of people who require support 24 hours a day," NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said.

Also reported by: [Gloucester Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Dunggg Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER RAE

Home support lifeline

Courier Mail, General News, 21/08/2026, Page 5

The Albanese government will continue to fund critical aged care services for 830,000 older Australians after promising to keep separate two commonwealth-funded programs beyond 2029. Health Minister Mark Butler and Aged Care Minister Sam Rae announced on Thursday the government would extend the Commonwealth Home Support Program to June 2029.

Also reported by: [Tenterfield Star \(Online\)](#), [Australian Seniors News \(Online\)](#), [Have a Go News \(Online\)](#).

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One in three seniors unable to afford help under new aged care rules

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Julie Cross

The housing market slump has left older Australians hundreds of thousands of dollars worse off, as many are forced to sell their homes to cover million-dollar aged care entry fees. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae said the government made changes in the first year by investing \$1 billion to fully cover the cost of personal care services such as showering.

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

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Albanese led the charge against Robodebt. So why are we repeating its mistakes?

Canberra Times, Other, 20/08/2026

One of the first actions the Albanese government undertook was commissioning the Royal Commission into the Robodebt scandal. [...] Despite the clear evidence of systemic failure, Aged Care Minister Sam Rae defended the assessment tool as efficient, accurate, and fair.

[Read More](#)

St Bart's: Work begins on 80-bed aged-care facility to support older people with history of homelessness

Perth Now, Other, 20/08/2026, Sophie Gannon

Work has begun on an 80-bed aged-care facility in the heart of East Perth aimed at supporting older West Australians with a history of homelessness. [...] Federal Aged Care and Seniors Minister Sam Rae said the new facility would help bring more aged care beds online in areas where they are needed the most.

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Government extends home support for older Australians amid pressure

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Evelyn Manfield

The Commonwealth program helping older people with shopping, transport and meals on wheels will be extended until 2029, but the government has flagged its intention to make the program permanent beyond that. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the CHSP program would require reform, though, because there was some overlap between it and the Support at Home program.

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

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Labor extends Commonwealth Home Support Program, used by 830,000 older Australians, until 2029

News24 Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Bianca Mulheron

More than 830,000 older Australians will retain home support services after the federal government extended the program until 2029. [...] Aged Care and Seniors Minister Sam Rae said the extension would give providers certainty and older Australians continuity of care.

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Four Corners' fallout reveals divide between Government and aged care sector

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/08/2026, Caroline Egan

The Government is standing by its aged care reforms, but the sector is increasingly telling a very different story. [...] In the wake of the program on the national broadcaster, Health Minister Mark Butler was asked about aged care assessments at an NDIS press conference on Tuesday (18 August).

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ABC Radio Canberra, 15:00 News, 20/08/2026

The Commonwealth Home Support Program will be extended to 2029. It assists 830,000 seniors with measures to help keep them at home, but it was due to be abolished next year and rolled into the new Support at Home Program. Providers and some local councils had withdrawn services because of the uncertainty around the Support at Home Program's future. Aged Care Minister Sam Rae says they will begin consultation across the sector and with older people to determine what the long-term future of the program looks like.

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2MCE, 13:00 National Radio News, 20/08/2026

The Federal Government has confirmed the Commonwealth Home Support Program will continue for another two years. Aged Care Minister Sam Rae says the extension will help around 1,300 providers to continue to deliver services.

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

News24, Politics Now, 20/08/2026, Tom Connell, Kieran Gilbert, Andrew Clennell, Ashleigh Gillon

Interview with Assistant Mental Health Minister Emma McBride on Medicare Mental Health Centres. McBride says they want Australians who are struggling with their mental health to know that they can walk in at the centres without an appointment or a diagnosis and still be able to receive the support they need.

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[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

Butler claims half a million Medicare mental health centre visits

The Medical Republic, Other, 20/08/2026, Holly Payne

Health minister Mark Butler says Medicare Mental Health Centres have now delivered more than 500,000 free walk-in appointments, as the government moves ahead with plans to expand the network footprint to 92 centres. It appeared that patients tended to present multiple times; according to the health ministers , the number of patients seen for free mental health support was "nearly 50,000", while the number of free walk-in appointments totalled 501,579.

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MBSPRO app bets on My Health Record as its EMR

Health Services Daily, Other, 20/08/2026, Jeremy Knibbs

Software vendor MBSPRO has built a patient-facing app that pulls data straight from My Health Record – pathology, imaging, specialist letters – on to a patient's own device, with an AI layer that translates it into plain English. [...] It means MBSPRO's roadmap lines up neatly with the Australian Digital Health Agency and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's own stated direction – sharing by default, the MyHR modernisation build, the whole "everything flows through the record" architecture we've spent months picking apart.

[Read More](#)

How AI can simplify ACQS compliance for aged care providers

Onya Magazine, Other, 20/08/2026

Since 1 November 2025, Australian aged care providers have operated under the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS), introduced alongside the Aged Care Act 2024. [...] The strengthened Standards were published in final form by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing in August 2025 and took effect on 1 November 2025.

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[Back to Top](#)

AGEING AND AGED CARE

Don't let age care become Robodebt 2.0

Newcastle Herald, General News, 20/08/2026, Page 12

There is a lesson from Robodebt that governments should never forget: when computers make decisions about people's lives, there must always be a human being accountable for the outcome. That is why the growing use of artificial intelligence and algorithms to determine aged care funding should concern everyone.

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Business leaders urge focus on skills not numbers in migration debate

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Nassim Khadem

As political pressure mounts for drastic migration cuts, business leaders warn this could result in critical worker shortages in areas ranging from aged care to construction, urging the public debate to shift away from numbers. While Labor is yet to land on a final position, the most recent federal budget forecasts have the net overseas migration rate (NOM) falling from about 300,000 to 245,000 people this financial year.

[Read More](#)

Can Indonesia help solve aged care's workforce problem?

The Weekly Source, Other, 20/08/2026, Lauren Broomham

Six months ago, the model was untested. Now an Australian aged care provider is preparing to make its second recruitment trip to Jakarta.

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We need to invest, not ration

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/08/2026, Kasy Chambers

Audrey Staniland is 96 years old, blind, and lives alone in the Perth home she has known for 43 years. She wants to stay there.

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Don't put AI in the too hard basket

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/08/2026, Reuben Jacob

There is a lot of serious discussion about embedding artificial intelligence in aged care, but are you any closer to getting it right? To date, AI implementation in aged care has been mixed.

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Feedback sought on dementia-friendly eye care

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 20/08/2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Researchers from Monash University are seeking feedback on a dementia-friendly eyecare pathway they have created for older Australians after they move into residential aged care. The research was funded by the Dementia Australia Research Foundation and hopes to address Standard 3 – how providers tailor care and services to each person – and Standard 5 – providing safe and quality clinical care – in the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards.

[Read More](#)

2GB, Drive, 20/08/2026, Clinton Maynard

Interview with Aged Care Gurus principal Rachel Lane. Maynard says older Australians are cutting back on aged care, specifically in their homes, because they can't afford it. He notes that a new YouGov survey has found that one in three seniors has now reduced or given up support services since new aged care rules came into force. Lane says it's concerning because many seniors are cutting back on allied health despite it being fully subsidised by the government under the Support at Home program because they lack awareness about it.

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[Back to Top](#)

DISABILITY AND CARERS

States, Canberra to go over Covid cliff 'all in debt together'

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Adam Creighton, Page 11

Remember Long Covid? [...] One good example is the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which was meant to have around 300,000 participants, rather than the 780,000 it had as of June.

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Rival parties dancing to PM's tune

This week, the full parliamentary power of the Albanese government was on display. [...] . Meanwhile, the NDIS cuts involve the government correcting the "design flaws" in Labor's own system, and inspire enormous worry in people relying on the scheme.

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

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Senator blasts Hughes comment

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/08/2026, Elise Kaine, Page 3

A Tasmanian senator has blasted comedian and political commentator Dave Hughes, accusing him of blaming disabled people for the state of Australia's economy. The comments came ahead of a sold-out comedy show for Mr Hughes in Launceston on Friday.

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\$5m fraud accused in court

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2026, Lucy Rutherford, Page 18

A National Disability Insurance Agency employee has faced court for the first time, accused of running a \$5m fraud plot with her brother. Olufunke Kuburat Fatungase, 49, faced Adelaide Magistrates Court on Thursday after she allegedly accessed protected participant records without authorisation through her employment.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#).

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News24, The Kenny Report, 20/08/2026, Chris Kenny

Interview with Beltara Care CEO David Gunter on the Labor Government's NDIS reforms. Gunter says the reforms will kick out 200,000 people from the scheme, and the government has no actual plan for them.

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

Lambie reveals personal health woes

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/08/2026, Bridget Clarke, Page 2

Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie has opened up about her health struggles in an emotional plea to the federal government to scrap its controversial plan to cap allied health services funding for veterans. From July 1, 2027, the government will cap allied health services for veterans at \$5000 per year a change it says aims to cut down on unnecessary services.

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

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Minister defends a proposed cap on veterans' healthcare

Canberra Times, General News, 21/08/2026, Tess Ikonomidou & Andrew Brown, Page 5

The veterans' affairs minister has defended a proposed cap on healthcare for ex-ADF members, but admits more needs to be done for women's health in defence ranks. The federal budget, handed down in May, contains a \$5000 annual limit on allied health services, which comes into effect from July 2027.

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E-nough chaos of reckless e-bikers

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2026, James Chung, Page 11

Victorians could soon be swept up in a nationwide push for tougher e-bike laws as momentum builds to

crack down on reckless riders. South Australia is the latest state in the firing line, with the Royal Automobile Association and Australian Medical Association calling for riders to be at least 16 and for police to have more powers to counter illegal e-bikes and e-scooters.

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Veterans deserve a lot better

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/08/2026, Caleb Bond, Page 12

Melons might be flavour of the month, but there's a far bigger scandal in the federal government - one that ought to be receiving far more attention. The Albanese government's miserly attitude towards veterans is unconscionable.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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Minister has treated vets with utter disrespect

West Australian, Letters, 21/08/2026, Michaelia Cash, Page 36

West Australian Federal Labor Minister Matt Keogh is not fit to hold the Veterans' Affairs portfolio. This week, veterans and advocates travelled to Canberra to raise their fears about a \$5000 cap on allied health services that will hit the psychologists, physiotherapists and counsellors keeping former servicemen and women alive.

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Bush families forced to drive hours for care in 'third world' system

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Remy Varga

Bush families are driving hours to receive basic medical care like GP visits and vaccinations, putting their health at risk and prompting accusations rural Australia is being treated like a "third world country". Doctors, nurses and specialists are in high demand but short supply, leaving regional residents to rely on telehealth appointments in the absence of face-to-face practitioners.

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

[Read More](#)

Albany doctor among 64 GPs trained under State Government-funded ADHD GP training program

West Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Jacki Elezovich

New ADHD specialist training, funded by the State Government, is expanding families' access to treatment for the condition, with an Albany doctor already among the list of newly-trained professionals. The State Government's ADHD GP training program was originally a State election commitment in 2025, and has since been developed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in partnership with the Australasian ADHD Professionals Association.

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

[Read More](#)

Lambie makes plea for veterans, Labor and Coalition strike deals

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Courtney Gould

An impassioned Jacqui Lambie struggled to get the words out as she shared details about the medical battle behind her five-month absence from Parliament House. Six months ago, her vagina started to prolapse and three months later, she told the Senate, it took her "bladder with it" and required surgery. Lambie said it was directly linked to her back injuries from her time serving in the army.

[Read More](#)

Cost and social media shaping young Australians' dental choices

SBS, Other, 20/08/2026, Anne Parisianne

New data from the Australian Dental Association (ADA), released during Dental Health Week (3 to 9 August 2026), found that younger Australians are delaying dental care due to cost pressures and

reduced access to support, with three in five saying social media is influencing their cosmetic dental decisions. This year's "My Smile" campaign focused on Australians aged 18 to 25.

[Read More](#)

'Misunderstood the intention': bid to secure GP access defeated in Parliament

Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Other, 20/08/2026, John Hall

Wagga MP Joe McGirr's bid to make GP services more accessible to isolated residents has failed to win enough support in Parliament. The Right to Primary Health Care Bill, an amendment to the Health Services Bill, was defeated 47-38 on Thursday, August 6.

[Read More](#)

Safe and quality use of medicines the focus of new parliamentary friendship group

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 20/08/2026

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), the nation's peak professional body representing Australia's 42,000 pharmacists, has supported the launch of the inaugural Parliamentary Friends of Safe and Quality Use of Medicines event and used the opportunity to call for a stronger national focus on helping Australians use medicines safely, effectively, and appropriately.

[Read More](#)

QUM gets Parliamentary Friends

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/08/2026

A Parliamentary Friends of Safe and Quality Use of Medicines group was launched at an event in Canberra on Tue, with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) taking the opportunity to call for a stronger national focus on helping Australians use medicines safely, effectively and appropriately.

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Albanese stays steady as others shift

Age, General News, 21/08/2026, James Massola, Page 23

Anthony Albanese claimed a trio of policy wins this week, but it's the longer-term pattern shifts under way in the Liberal Party and One Nation that are more significant. [...] Black market tobacco sales are booming, and according to the ABS, account for about 80 per cent of total tobacco sales.

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

\$9.3m police raid row

Northern Territory News, General News, 21/08/2026, Harry Brill, Page 7

NT Police have been accused of trying to steal Border Force's thunder in a \$9.3m money laundering sting, with a lawyer saying his accused client's business was raided only when the feds came looking. [...] He was charged with money laundering, possessing a prohibited import, supplying vaping goods and having unauthorised therapeutic goods.

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

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Illicit tobacco raids on servos

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 21/08/2026, Andreas Nicola, Page 11

Multiple petrol stations in Queensland have been caught selling illicit tobacco after authorities raided almost 50 stores across the state. Australian Border Force and other agencies as part of Operation

Shorthand raided 48 Metro Petroleum Stores seizing 17,770 cigarette sticks, 242g of loose leaf and 31 vapes as part of a nationwide investigation into the alleged supply and disruption of illegal tobacco.

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Strong uptake for life-saver

Shepparton News, General News, 21/08/2026, Hailey Wight & Brynne Timewell, Page 21

"It takes less than a minute for the medication to be dispensed." Quick and easy 24/7 access to life-saving opioid overdose medicine is now available through a dispensing machine at Primary Care Connect in Shepparton.

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Thousands of Aussie women trapped in 'doom loop' as grim new report reveals extent of homelessness crisis

The Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Nathan Schmidt

The number of women and girls seeking help from homelessness services while experiencing family violence and mental health issues soared by six per cent in just two years, new data has revealed, as Australia's peak body combatting the scourge heads to Canberra. [...] A 2024-25 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report found women and children experiencing family and domestic violence were the largest cohort of people accessing specialist homelessness services, with more than 100,000 seeking help each year.

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

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\$100m illegal tobacco haul after tip-off from China

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/08/2026, Riley Walter

Australian and Chinese authorities have confiscated almost \$100 million worth of illicit tobacco in what federal authorities are touting as a major boost for bilateral relations amid Beijing's crackdown on the lucrative illegal cigarette market. Australian Border Force officials, acting on intelligence from Chinese authorities, intercepted more than 100 shipping containers between January and May, 91 of which contained 60 million illegal cigarettes and 60 kilograms of loose-leaf tobacco.

[Read More](#)

'Worse than wasting food in a famine': The empty homes that could help solve Sydney's housing crisis

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/08/2026, Julie Power

With two degrees and a successful career as an award-winning business reporter, Jeanne-Vida Douglas had everything going for her – or so most people assumed. [...] About one-third of people seeking short-term or emergency accommodation could not find any in 2023-2024, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found.

[Read More](#)

Tax-free physio could save millions, ease health issues

Canberra Times, Other, 20/08/2026, Lucinda Garbutt-Young

Health care professionals practising a niche specialty aimed at alleviating chronic conditions are calling for the removal of a tax they say disadvantages their patients, who have descended on Canberra to plead their case. Exercise physiologists visited Parliament House on Thursday with patients and sports scientists, seeking to end their status as the only Medicare-backed allied health profession without GST-free status.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#).

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Support cannot 'disappear' when homeless women housed

West Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Emily Woods

For more than half of her life, Brina Hinton has struggled to find stability in the face of homelessness, poor mental health and drug addiction. The Queensland single mother started living on the streets when she was 16.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Money-laundering probe leads to illicit tobacco bust

West Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Lloyd Jones

The alleged "kingpin" of a major money-laundering racket has been charged after a months-long probe identified more than \$9 million linked to illicit tobacco and vape revenue, police say. A 33-year-old man faces up to 20 years in prison following his arrest in a sting in central Darwin on Wednesday that seized thousands of vapes, almost 17,000 nicotine products and more than \$70,000 in cash.

[Read More](#)

NT Police charge man with money laundering following months-long investigation into illicit tobacco sales

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Tilda Colling

Police have arrested a 33-year-old Darwin man for allegedly laundering millions of dollars through an illegal tobacco business. Northern Territory Police Detective Senior Sergeant Corey Borton said Waqar Ali, who ran a local convenience store, was believed to be the "kingpin" of an operation involving the ordering and sale of illicit tobacco products.

[Read More](#)

China and Australia bust tobacco syndicate as government pushes back on excise calls

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Tom Lowrey

Australian and Chinese authorities have worked together to crack an international syndicate shipping illegal tobacco into Australia. More than 60 people have been arrested in China over their involvement with the syndicate, which the Australian Border Force (ABF) found had shipped more than 90 containers carrying tobacco to Australia between January and May this year.

[Read More](#)

Border Force busts huge illicit tobacco ring in China with 60m cigarettes worth \$92 million heading to Australia

News24 Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Kate Fowler

Australian Border Force (ABF) has helped bust a major illicit tobacco smuggling ring operating out of China, targeting the Australian tobacco black market. Officers have seized over 60 million cigarettes and 60 kilograms of loose-leaf tobacco, worth a combined duty evasion of \$92 million.

[Read More](#)

Why online ad tweaks won't protect older Aussies from late-night pokies

The Senior, Other, 20/08/2026, Anna Houlahan

For thousands of over-50s, a smartphone app isn't the greatest gambling threat, it's the glow of poker machines at the neighbourhood clubs. [...] And gambling losses continued growing, with total gambling expenditure between 2022 and 2023 reaching \$31.5 billion, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported.

[Read More](#)

5 persistent myths about heart health, according to cardiologists

Prevention, Other, 20/08/2026, Tula Karras

Untangling truth from folklore may well help keep your ticker ticking. [...] While CVD is more prevalent with age, the most recent figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that 0.9 per

cent of Australian women aged 18 to 44 and 0.8 per cent of men in the same age range are living with heart, stroke or vascular disease.

[Read More](#)

Parliament to investigate postpartum health

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/08/2026, Jolyon Attwooll

A newly formed Senate Committee has been greeted as an opportunity to reimagine care, with women's experiences of postpartum health set to be brought into the spotlight. Formed this week after a motion by South Australian Labor Senator Marielle Smith, the Senate Select Committee on Women's Health will focus on issues such as fertility, postpartum health care and women's pain.

[Read More](#)

ABC Radio Canberra, Breakfast, 20/08/2026, Ross Solly

Interview with Public Health Association of Australia CEO Terry Slevin. Slevin points out that data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that tobacco policies of recent and previous governments are unsuccessful, but are being hailed as successful. He states that last month's data showed a 5.6% decrease in the number of Australians smoking, but this month's data revealed much higher smoking rates.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Helping hand

Ballarat Courier, General News, 21/08/2026, Michelle Smith, Page 1

Ballarat great-grandmother Wendy Martell was shocked when investigations for heart pain resulted in a lung cancer diagnosis. As a non-smoker with no symptoms, lung cancer had never crossed her mind.

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From barely walking to 20,000 steps a day

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 21/08/2026, Humaira Saeed, Page 3

A multi-disciplinary team of allied health professionals may be able to offer relief or reduce the number of surgeries for people suffering from osteoarthritis. Darling Downs Health introduced an innovative trial program which may reduce the number of patients requiring surgery.

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MLAs brace for debate as CLP backbenchers flood NT government with voluntary assisted dying amendments

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Joseph Hathaway-Wilson

The Northern Territory government is fielding a landslide of amendments to its Rights of the Terminally Ill bill from its own backbenchers, days out from a historic conscience vote on the matter. The bill, introduced by the Country Liberal Party (CLP) last month, would allow some terminally ill people to access voluntary assisted dying (VAD) to end their life, as is legal in all other states and territories.

[Read More](#)

Fat people cannot win, regardless of what we do. And I've had enough

The Guardian, Other, 21/08/2026, Rebecca Shaw

As you might know if you read my columns, see me a mile away, or talk to me for five seconds, I am a card-carrying lifelong member of the Fat Lesbian Club. However, ever since I first laid eyes on the television show Roseanne (very important to me) as a small child, the actor John Goodman has held a special place in my heart.

[Read More](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

'Sixty per cent of kids mistreated'

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Paige Taylor, Page 1

It is not practical nor affordable for Australian governments to remove every neglected or abused child from their families because as many as 62 per cent have been beaten, sexually abused or exposed to forms of harm that could trigger intervention from authorities, according to one of the nation's most accomplished child protection researchers. [...] Domestic violence is one of the documented risk factors for child removal in Australia because a child is psychologically harmed when they see a parent being abused.

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

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'You still have a role to play': How to talk to teenage boys about sex and consent

Age, General News, 21/08/2026, Kimberly Gillan, Page 16

No sooner does it feel like our sons are starting to grasp their times tables than experts say it's time to start weaving consent, sex and pornography into household conversations. With eSafety Commissioner research showing four in 10 surveyed adolescents first encountered pornography before they turned 13, there's a good chance our boys are seeing explicit content far earlier than we realise, and developmental paediatrician Dr Billy Garvey says it could be giving them a dangerous idea of sex and consent.

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Why farmers are undervalued and overstressed

Daily Telegraph, General News, 21/08/2026, Nicole Madigan, Page 14

More than half of Australian farmers have felt depressed and one in seven has experienced thoughts of self-harm or suicide, as financial and environmental pressures take an increasingly heavy toll. The 2026 National Farmer Wellbeing Report, released by farmer-owned dairy co-operative Norco in partnership with the Black Dog Institute, found 54 per cent of farmers had felt depressed or down in the past two years, up from 45 per cent three years ago.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#).

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Parent loss doubles the risk for children

Cairns Post, General News, 21/08/2026, Page 6

Children who experience parental loss are twice as likely to develop a mental health disorder compared with those living with both parents. Curtin University researchers found 21.4 per cent of children who experienced parental loss had a diagnosable mental disorder such as anxiety, depression or ADHD, compared with 10.8 per cent of children who had not experienced parental loss.

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

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Strength of town is a spirit of resilience

Border Mail, General News, 21/08/2026, Chelsea Wilson, Page 8

Meeting people where they are is how a North East community has gone through the worst that life can throw at it and come out the other side. Corryong Spirit, now in its fifth year, has become a beloved event on the Upper Murray calendar presenting an opportunity to reflect on the strength of a community weathered by bushfires and loss.

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Mental health 'stripped away' amid rolling disasters

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 21/08/2026, Stephanie Gardiner, Page 8

Farmer Jane Polson lost more than 100 cattle in a historic flood, just one week before she had a baby. Four years later, her family's dairy operation on the NSW mid-north coast was hit by a more severe flood, which gutted four farmhouses and decimated stock feed.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Eyes on AI in mental health

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2026, Sarah Pye, Page 14

As artificial intelligence use gains traction in mental health care, Deakin University researchers have raised the alarm that there are currently no agreed-upon frameworks in place to regulate or guide its application. The team, from Deakin's Lifespan Institute, has published a position paper in The Lancet Psychiatry journal, examining the ways people experiencing mental health concerns are encountering and using AI.

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Prince Charles Hospital rips out suicide prevention doors after patient deaths, inquest hears

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Paul Brescia

Bathroom doors installed to prevent suicides at the Prince Charles Hospital are being ripped out and replaced with the same style of doors that were in place when two patients took their lives, while nurses have again been left without keys to open them despite the high risk. A coronial inquest has revealed the hospital is still repeating the same shocking failures to visually observe potentially suicidal patients in the bathroom, three years later.

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

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Drug-dealing, makeshift weapons and a 'culture of fear' at Villawood detention centre, report warns

The Guardian, Other, 20/08/2026, Ben Doherty & Christopher Knaus

Drugs are being openly dealt inside Villawood detention centre; makeshift weapons are being manufactured amid intimidation, standover tactics and a "culture of fear"; people are sleeping outside under CCTV cameras for their own safety; and children are being kept from going to school, a scathing report from the independent monitor has found. [...] "There is a high risk that the continued detention of children ... will be detrimental to their mental health, wellbeing and social and emotional development," the NPM report said.

[Read More](#)

Report reveals persistent cracks in fragmented mental health system

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/08/2026, Michelle Wisbey

Despite increased spending and higher service use, a new mental health report card has warned access to care remains uneven, workforce shortages are worsening, and patients continue to face significantly poorer outcomes. Labelling the current landscape a 'complex picture', the National Mental Health Commission's report found that despite service use and investment increasing, significant barriers to care remain.

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[Back to Top](#)

IMMUNISATION

Flu vaccine is still a shot worth taking

Winter has certainly made its presence felt over the past couple of months, with colder nights, rainy days and windy conditions all over the state. And we all know that, unfortunately, this means there are more chances for Tasmanians to come into contact with respiratory illnesses like influenza, Covid and RSV.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Health reform vital to reduce costs: Medibank

The Australian, Business News, 21/08/2026, Joseph Carbone, Page 19

Medibank has called for long-term health reform to keep the cost of health services down, as the cost of living forces more Australians into lower-tier policies. The listed private health insurer reported a 27.5 per cent lift in full-year profits to \$638.7m as Australians continue to prioritise health insurance despite hip-pocket pressure.

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Comparison sites drive up cost of cover: Medibank

Australian Financial Review, Companies and Markets, 21/08/2026, Michael Smith, Page 21

Medibank Private, which is grappling with slowing membership growth, says the commissions being charged by insurance comparison sites through opaque brokerage arrangements are driving up premiums by up to 30 per cent without benefiting consumers.

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

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Go-betweens push up premiums

Australian Financial Review, Letters, 21/08/2026, David Koczkar, Page 31

At a time when household budgets are under sustained pressure, Australians are asking why private health insurance keeps getting more expensive.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

About-face forces unis to police research

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Natasha Bitá, Page 3

Universities will be forced to "manage risks" to national security after the Albanese government caved in to Coalition demands to screen individual academic's foreign research collaborations. [...] She also torpedoed the University of Queensland's taxpayer-funded research with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, involving pain relief using the toxin of a native stinging tree.

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

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Melanoma breakthrough hope

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2026, Andrew Hedgman, Page 7

Australia is at the centre of a major melanoma breakthrough, with 2024 Australian of the Year Professor Georgina Long leading a global trial that could reshape treatment after surgery for people at high risk of the cancer returning. A personalised mRNA therapy from Moderna and Merck, used with the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab, has delivered the first positive result in a late-stage clinical trial for an mRNA cancer treatment.

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#)

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A bloody clever iron jab

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2026, Brad Crouch, Page 23

A single iron injection before open heart surgery can speed recovery and dramatically reduce the need for blood transfusions in many patients, trials on patients including at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre has shown. This can mean less need for a blood transfusion and a better recovery after surgery, the large-scale Australian-led clinical trial found.

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A unique dietary 'fingerprint' in our blood can predict heart disease risk

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/08/2026, Sarah Berry

Everything we eat – the apple, cucumber, overnight oats with chia, yoghurt and peanut butter, raw chocolate, homemade pizza and salad I had yesterday – leaves a metabolic imprint in our bodies. The lipids from fish are different to those found in dairy, meat, fruit and so on.

[Read More](#)

Heart disease injection edges industry closer to cure

West Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Eleanor Wilson

A world-first injection that reverses a genetic form of heart disease could soon provide a treatment alternative to transplants, medication and implantable heart devices. Researchers from Murdoch Children's Research Institute in Melbourne have developed a gene therapy, in what has been billed as a major step towards a cure for genetic cases of cardiomyopathy.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#).

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The simple \$50 hack that could change heart surgery worldwide

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Sarah Booth

The key to smoother heart surgery recovery for tens of thousands of patients is as simple as one basic iron infusion, a landmark trial has shown. The cheap intervention also reduced demand for far more costly blood transfusions, saving hospitals much needed funds and precious blood bags.

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

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'Promising': Cancer vaccine breakthrough

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Heath Parkes-Hupton

Pharmaceutical giant Moderna's share price exploded by more than 170 per cent overnight as investors reacted to its "milestone" trial of a new skin cancer vaccine. US drugmakers Merck and Moderna said on Wednesday an experimental melanoma drug that delivers treatment tailored to a patient's specific tumour prevented the cancer from returning in a large clinical trial.

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

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Lead scientist makes urgent plea for volunteers for world-leading Parkinson's study

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Bridget Clarke

The lead scientist behind a pioneering Parkinson's disease study has issued an urgent plea for participants to help cement Tasmania's standing as a global research leader. Tasmania Parkinson's Project – a University of Tasmania initiative conducting research and community outreach for those affected by the disease – has recently joined the global Parkinson's Genetics Program (GP2).

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

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New drug therapy shown to prevent recurrence of melanoma in study

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026

US pharmaceutical giants Merck and Moderna say an experimental melanoma drug that delivers treatment tailored to a patient's specific tumour has prevented the deadly form of skin cancer from returning in a large clinical trial. Called intismeran autogene, it is based on the same messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) technology behind COVID-19 vaccines.

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If the US can't afford to keep China out, can Australia?

Crikey, Other, 20/08/2026, Wanning Sun

When the Albanese government axed a joint venture between ANU and Shandong University in China on "national security grounds", there was consternation in the university sector. [...] Since its start in 2009, QCAS has focused on environmental science, agricultural biotechnology, food research and food safety, and human health/medical research.

[Read More](#)

ABC News, News Breakfast, 20/08/2026, James Glenday and Emma Rebellato

An experimental vaccine therapy based on technology developed during the COVID-19 pandemic could prevent deadly Melanoma from returning. The clinical mRNA trial revealed that when it's provided alongside an immunotherapy drug, it prevents the cancer from spreading to other organs.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

'Sorry' reminder of systemic failure to protect children

The Australian, General News, 21/08/2026, Jacynta Krakouer, Page 11

The National Apology to the Stolen Generations, delivered by prime minister Kevin Rudd in February 2008, was meant to mark a turning point. It was intended to draw a clear line in the sand against the removal of Aboriginal children under racially discriminatory policies.

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Confidential data obtained under FOI reveals increase in children, teens held in NT police watch houses

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Matt Garrick

The Northern Territory Country Liberal Party (CLP) government's first year in power saw a surge in children and teenagers being taken into custody, an ABC investigation can reveal. Internal NT Police data released via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request shows there were 503 youths taken into custody at NT watch houses between March and September 2025.

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[Back to Top](#)

PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Doctors threaten wider strike

Herald Sun, General News, 21/08/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 3

Public hospital doctors have threatened to hold a 24-hour statewide strike after walking off the job at

some of Melbourne's biggest hospitals on Thursday afternoon. Doctors stopped work for four hours - their first such action in more than 20 years - as part of an ongoing industrial dispute for better pay and safer conditions in their EBA.

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Heat on in quest for burn answers

Courier Mail, General News, 21/08/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 6

A Queensland woman who suffered horrific burns during a routine colonoscopy is at the centre of a political blame game between the health minister and a Labor senator. Senator for Queensland Corinne Mulholland has written several times to Health Minister Tim Nicholls highlighting her serious concerns over the shock injury to Philomena Bell's breast at Maryborough Hospital and calling for an investigation into patient safety.

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

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Scrutiny on crisis centre

Canberra Times, General News, 21/08/2026, Bageshri Savyasachi, Page 1

Canberra's main support service for sexual assault victim-survivors is facing scrutiny following an exodus of former employees who have aired allegations of a patient data lockout, a shift away from frontline care, and a toxic workplace culture. The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC), established in 1976, is a private charity organisation that relies heavily on public money and has recently secured about \$10 million in ACT government funding for the next four years.

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'Caring was destroying me'

Ballarat Courier, General News, 21/08/2026, Michelle Smith, Page 1

A "burnt-out and broken" Ballarat nurse has issued a plea for the state government to fix the city's struggling healthcare system. Former Ballarat Base Hospital emergency department nurse Rebecca* [not her real name] has been "slowly breaking" over the past year because "caring was destroying" her. In a letter to the Victorian government, sent to local MPs, the nurse outlines the reasons why she quit after years of working in the busy ED.

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Kintore based health service CEO shares reality of working in the health in remote NT

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 20/08/2026, Gera Kazakov

Running on a shoestring budget more than 500km from the nearest major town, the chief executive of Pintupi Homelands Health Service says things don't often always go to plan. But Dr Leo Menezes, who's based in right on the NT WA border in Kintore, doesn't want working remote to be categorised as nothing but overcoming challenges on a daily basis.

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

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Showcase connects future GPs with rural practices

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 20/08/2026, Karen Burge

The RACGP has hosted its fourth Rural Showcase, bringing together registrars, rural general practices and health organisations from across New South Wales to highlight the diverse career opportunities in regional Australia. Launched in 2024, the Parramatta-based event connects metro-based and composite registrars with practices in areas of workforce need.

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Code black: Inside Australia's nursing crisis

MOJO News, Other, 18/08/2026, Tobias Little

Approaching the late hours of her night shift, Maddie Hood enters a hospital room with her four male patients. Hood, a recently graduated registered nurse, had no idea the turn her shift was about to take; one that would traumatise her for weeks to come.

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[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

More child abuse charges for nurse

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 21/08/2026, Emily Walker, Page 5

A Gold Coast pediatric mental health nurse accused of stalking and abusing young eating disorder patients has been hit with a further set of serious charges. Robina man Derek George Jackson, 58, appeared before Southport Magistrates Court by video-link on August 13 facing 13 additional charges including seven indecent treatment of a child offences and a further six counts of unlawful stalking, intimidation, harassment or abuse.

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Covert gender activism wags the care watchdog

The Australian, Other, 20/08/2026, Gary Geelhoed

Documents released under Freedom of Information legislation reveal that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency has treated its LGBTIQ+ equity and inclusion strategy not as a workforce diversity exercise but as a regulatory instrument designed to embed “identity-affirming care” into clinical standards. Internal minutes show AHPRA officials stating that if they “get the standards right, and ensure more identity-affirming care, we won’t receive the complaints in the first place”.

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Unregistered doctor charged

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 20/08/2026

A NSW man who treated a patient without disclosing that he was no longer a registered doctor was found guilty on Mon of falsely representing himself a registered medical practitioner, with charges brought by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

AUSTRALIAN CDC

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Long weight for 'truth'

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2026, Maria Bervanakis, Page 14

It's been almost four years since Tim Ramsay collapsed and died in his bathroom, days after he started taking the weight loss drug Saxenda but the family are still searching for answers. [...] The data, obtained exclusively from the medicines regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, showed a further 2829 people were thought to have suffered severe side effects - including nausea, pancreatitis, suicidal thoughts and an eye condition that can cause blindness - after taking the drugs.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Cannabis isn't 'safer' in your 20s and 30s – it's linked to an earlier onset of psychosis

Medicine Today, Other, 20/08/2026, Matthew Large & Carly Stevens

People who use cannabis in their 20s and 30s are developing psychosis years earlier than non-users, according to our new study, published last week in the journal Biological Psychiatry This challenges the idea that delaying cannabis use until your mid-20s – when people believe their brain has finished developing – is a safer option to avoid the risks of psychosis.

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FOOD STANDARDS

A taste of things to come? Push to shake up labelling laws

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 21/08/2026, Annabelle Banfield, Page 8

As a child, mum-of-two Emma Williams' favourite dinner was McDonald's. But now a mum with a backyard full of chickens, she's desperate for her family to avoid packaged foods and is making it her mission to minimise food waste.

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Fish feed giant Skretting fires back over Facebook claims of contamination

ABC Online, Other, 20/08/2026, Paddy Manning

Biosecurity Tasmania has confirmed it is investigating a fish food contamination claim at a major manufacturer after an employee resigned and posted a series of images online. On Friday morning, Matthew Levien, 36, resigned from his position as team leader at Skretting Australia's facility at Cambridge, Hobart, after alerting the production manager about mouldy feed being processed back into pellets.

AICIS

'Potent' toxin found above guidelines in soil at 10 childcare centres

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 20/08/2026, Carrie Fellner

Lead contamination exceeding national thresholds has been discovered in soil at 10 childcare centres across Broken Hill but only four have been cleaned up as authorities leave remediation decisions in the hands of the centres' operators. New sampling data shows the toxic metal, linked to lowered IQ and behavioural difficulties in children, was discovered at nearly 10 times the national health investigation threshold at one of the centres.

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