

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 1 November 2026

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

Links

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Executive Summary

- **Sun Herald** (page 1) reports research into IVF outcomes in Australia found that women whose treatments failed were affected by loss of income and poor mental health.
- **Sun Herald** (page 8) reports a Senate inquiry into postpartum care has heard testimony about a crisis in perinatal mental health services, with suicide being a leading cause of maternal death in Australia.
- **Sunday Times** (page 8) reports that the share of West Australian GP practices fully bulk-billing has more than doubled in the past year, while nationally the number has risen from 2300 to over 4000,

Minister for Health Mark Butler crediting the government's incentive program. *Also reported by: Canberra Times*

- **Sunday Mail Adelaide** (page 9) reports that the SA government will spend at least $58.1 million to refit the Bragg Centre, originally constructed for the southern hemisphere's first proton therapy unit, to house SA Health operations.
- **Sunday Mail Adelaide** (page 11) reports that a young adult is in critical condition in an Adelaide hospital with invasive meningococcal disease serotype B. *Also reported by: News24, News.com.au, ABC Online, Nine.com.au, 7News.com.au, Yahoo! News, MSN Australia*
- **Sunday Mail Adelaide** (page 13) reports that SA Health is undertaking a statewide review of regional birthing services struggling with workforce shortages.

Minister Butler

SA taxpayers pay $58m for office 'fit-out'

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Andrew Hough, Page 9

EXCLUSIVE PRETTY IN PINK ESCAPE LIFTOUT Taxpayers will spend tens of millions of dollars upgrading the state's most expensive building for hundreds of public servants to use shared workspaces, an official report reveals, amid calls for an inquiry into a cancer bunker scandal. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is considering where the country's first proton unit will be based, as he investigates Adelaide and Melbourne.

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Also reported by: *Adelaide Now, Herald Sun, The Courier Mail, The Mercury, Northern Territory News, Daily Telegraph Australia*

GP bulk-bill rates more than double in WA

Sunday Times, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Hannah Cross, Page 8

The number of GPs in WA fully bulk billing services has more than doubled in 12 months. [...] "Australian patients are paying less for their GP visits, with one in two general practices across the nation now committed to bulk billing all patients," Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said.

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Also reported by: *West Australian*

Incentives drive sharp rise in GP bulk-billing rates

Canberra Times, Internet, 01 Nov 2026, Abe Maddison

An extra 1700 GP practices across Australia are bulk-billing following the introduction of a federal incentive program. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said for doctors and practice managers, bulk billing was an attractive option for the first time in years.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Central Western Daily, Daily Liberal, Illawarra Mercury, Newcastle Herald, Northern Daily Leader, Ballarat Courier, Bendigo Advertiser, The Senior, Daily Mail UK*

Aged care system mired in backlogs and shortages

Canberra Times, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Abe Maddison

Landmark legislation that enshrined the rights of older Australians is not delivering adequate care, with demand for aged care places a growing crisis the government is failing to address, the sector warns. [...] In September, Health Minister Mark Butler rejected calls for more aged care funding from state and territory counterparts, who said funding 5000 extra aged care beds annually fell short of what was needed.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *The Border Mail*, *Central Western Daily*, *Daily Liberal*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Newcastle Herald*, *Northern Daily Leader*, *Ballarat Courier*, *Bendigo Advertiser*, *Warrnambool Standard*, *Yahoo! News Australia*, *Sunday Examiner*

Don't just blame the oil prices. Here's the real failure we need to look at

Canberra Times, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Michael Stutchbury

If it comes home, next week's odds-on Melbourne Cup Day interest rate rise will only partly be caused by the Middle East oil crisis and higher petrol prices. [...] The pressure showed up in Health Minister Mark Butler's pre-budget announcement for substantial cuts to the NDIS roll.

Continue reading

The early verdict on Labor's $8.5b bulk-billing plan

7News.com.au, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Josh Martin

An early verdict is in on the Albanese Government's 2025 election commitment to invest $8.5 billion to see the number of bulk billed GP practices grow to 4800 by 2030. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler says the figures show Labor is well ahead of its goal.

Continue reading

Does Labor have a looming election problem?

Health Services Daily, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Cate Swannell

Most one-year-olds have learned the meaning of the word "no". The new aged care system, which turns one tomorrow, is still working on that. How many times since 1 November 2025 have the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, aged care minister Sam Rae and federal health minister Mark Butler been told no?

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Anne Webster Criticises Government Aged Care Rollout

News24, Saturday First Edition, TV, 31 Oct 2026, Jaynie Seal

In an interview with Shadow Regional Health and Communications Minister Anne Webster, she criticised the Albanese government over its management of aged care following a report by Families for Aged Care Equity and Support. Webster has criticised delays in the rollout of the Support at Home package, saying older Australians are waiting at least 10 months to receive services after assessment. She blamed Aged Care Minister Sam Rae and Health and Health Minister Mark Butler for the delays.

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Minister Rae

Does Labor have a looming election problem?

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Assistant Minister McBride

Insurance issues

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 4

A petition signed by almost 6,000 Australians is calling on the federal government to intervene in a growing dispute over professional indemnity insurance arrangements for endorsed midwives attending homebirths. [...] When pressed on the issue, Assistant Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Minister Emma McBride said any governmental response would need to balance women's choice with safety and professional protections.

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Assistant Minister White

Who to trust

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 10

Australians are being encouraged to become more confident navigating health information under a new national framework aimed at tackling one of the less visible drivers of poor health outcomes: health literacy. [...] Assistant Minister for Health and Ageing Rebecca White said improving health literacy was becoming increasingly important as Australians are more and more likely to encounter growing volumes of health information online.

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Pelvic pain clinic's school program encourages students to seek support

ABC Online, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Brooke Chandler

It took Amy Harper about 20 years to be surgically diagnosed with endometriosis. [...] Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White said Milton's model of care was unique among federally funded pelvic pain clinics.

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The two-in-one test that could transform women's health

7News.com.au, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Jennifer Bechwati

Australian researchers are developing a potential two-in-one test, allowing women to get their heart checked during a routine breast scan. [...] Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White says she'll consider next steps.

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Dual Screening Test Backed by Rebecca White

Channel 7, Seven News (Weekend), TV, 31 Oct 2026, Michael Usher & Angie Asimus

Australian researchers are developing a dual test enabling women to check for heart disease during routine breast screening. Professor Clare Arnott from The George Institute for Global Health used AI to analyse approximately 50,000 mammograms to assess heart risks. Assistant Minister for Women Rebecca White noted the process requires no extra clinical information and stated she will consider next steps.

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Expanded PBS Listing for Cystic Fibrosis Drug

Channel 9, Nine News (Saturday), TV, 31 Oct 2026, Peter Hitchener

From 1 November, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing of cystic fibrosis medication Trikafta will expand to offer a granular form for children aged 6 to 11. Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White said patients need accessible medications to live good lives as life expectancy increases. The change lowers monthly costs from $20,000 to $25.

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Department

Mum blames DES for daughter's death

Sunday Examiner, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Lauren Richardson, Page 5

Jean Brooks* "will always believe" that a medication she took while pregnant led to her daughter dying at 28. [...] In a letter from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing in August, it said women with a history of exposure to DES should speak to their GP for advice, particularly if there is additional risk of breast cancer in the family.

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Watchdog urges human touch to veto aged care decisions

Dubbo Photo News, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Andrew Brown, Page 7

An algorithm determining levels of aged care support should be changed to allow for humans to override its decisions, a damning report has found. The Commonwealth Ombudsman said the federal health department's assessment system for aged care services had led to unfair outcomes for residents and undermined public confidence in the system.

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Does Labor have a looming election problem?

Health Services Daily, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Cate Swannell

Most one-year-olds have learned the meaning of the word “no”. The new aged care system, which turns one tomorrow, is still working on that. How many times since 1 November 2025 have the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, aged care minister Sam Rae and federal health minister Mark Butler been told no?

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Ageing and Aged Care

The human cost of our ailing system

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Julie Cross, Page 26

A year after the Albanese government promised to fix aged care, older Australians find themselves trapped in an ongoing horror show. The new Aged Care Act was promised to be a "once in a generation" reform, meant to make the system fairer and more sustainable by increasing co-contributions.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Mail Adelaide*, *Sunday Herald Sun*, *Sunday Territorian*, *Sunday Tasmanian*

Care beyond repair

Sunday Territorian, Editorials, 01 Nov 2026, Page 20

There is something deeply wrong with an aged care system in which more than 106,000 older Australians were waiting for home care funding at the end of June, while $1.4bn allocated across aged care programs went unspent. These are not people waiting for a luxury.

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Too many older Australians still not getting the aged care they need

The Australian, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Tom Symondson

Last November, after years of wrangling and a tumultuous passage through federal parliament, Australia finally rose to the challenge thrown down by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety when it made the rights of older people the guiding light of the new Aged Care Act. But among all the praise for reforms aimed at improving the lives of older people, one stark truth was left largely unsaid.

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Disability and Carers

No relevant coverage.

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Primary Care

Revealed: High price for women from failed IVF

Sun Herald, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 1

Australian women who emerge from IVF childless face their own perverse version of the ''motherhood penalty'', losing thousands in income and declining mental health, but without the baby they desperately wanted. An analysis of more than 121,000 women has exposed the hidden price of just trying to conceive, with implications for would-be mothers, fertility policy, workplaces and the IVF sector.

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Also reported by: ***Sunday Age***

Carroll pledges to double dentistry

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Shannon Deery, Page 27

Ben Carroll has pledged to double his free dental care plan if re-elected, boosting to 20 the number of clinics to be opened across the state. The expanded scheme would see 14 clinics opened in Melbourne and six in regional Victoria from July 2027.

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Population Health

Much needed

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 20

Australia's dementia population is expected to exceed one million within 35 years, yet new research suggests many people living with the disease and their families continue to face barriers to diagnosis, support and social inclusion. Released during Dementia Action Week and on World Alzheimer's Day, new findings from Dementia Australia (DA) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) paint a picture of growing awareness of dementia, but persistent challenges remain in relation to understanding, service navigation and stigma.

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Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Esperance record highest rates of on-time elective surgeries in WA

Kalgoorlie Miner, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Rosa Griffith

New data has revealed Kalgoorlie and Esperance health campuses are ranked the highest across WA for elective surgeries completed within clinically recommended timeframes, at a rate of 97.6 per cent and 96.7 per cent, respectively. The analysis was released last week by Compare the Market AU, using data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare from the 2024-25 financial year.

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Also reported by: ***West Australian***

'Kickstart' gift helps Victorian man escape homelessness

ABC Online, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Brianna Morris-Grant

By the time he met Dorothy Maafu, Jake Dell'Aquila had been sleeping in a tent on a Melbourne beach for months. [...] Almost 289,000 people were being assisted by specialist homelessness services in 2024-2025, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

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Young Adelaide adult fighting for life with meningococcal B disease

News24 Australia, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Harriet Thornton

A young person from Adelaide is on life support after being diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease identified as serogroup B. [...] Invasive meningococcal disease is a rare but very serious bacterial infection caused by Neisseria meningitidis, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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Chronic Conditions and Screening

'Strengthen support'

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 19

The federal government will invest $46.5 million to expand the McGrath Foundation Cancer Care Nurse program to include dedicated prostate cancer nurses, responding to growing demand for support services as increasing numbers of Australian men are diagnosed with the disease. The funding, covering the period f rom 2027-28 to 2031-32, will support 60.5 full-time equivalent prostate cancer nursing positions in health and hospital services across the country.

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Former Wallaby's urgent warning about inherited cancer

Canberra Times, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Sarah Spina-Matthews

A former Wallabies star hopes opening up about his family's extensive history of cancer will help push others to take preventative measures. Australian international rugby union player Joe Roff was a winger and fullback for the national team from 1995 to 2004, helping the Wallabies win the 1999 Rugby World Cup.

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Also reported by: *West Australian*, *Daily Mail UK*, *The Senior*

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

PTSD drives inquiry into maternal care

Sun Herald, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Brittany Busch, Page 8

Bethany Luna-Riley did everything she could to prepare for the birth of her first child. She attended all the courses, researched online, listened to podcasts and peppered midwives with questions to avoid being blindsided by labour.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*

Inside a family's life after shock anorexia diagnosis

Sunday Territorian, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Lottie Hood, Page 7

As proud mum Charmaine was watching her 12-year-old daughter perform on stage for a Top End dance competition, her parental pride turned to confusion and worry. Watching her daughter's movements, she realised her bones were looking a lot sharper against her skin and she seemed to be physically struggling to make it through the routine one she had managed with ease only a few months before.

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Eating issues at crisis point

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Page 22

Australasia has the highest rates of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa in the world. The eating disorders accounted for 946.4 cases per 100,000 people in 2023, University of Queensland scientists say.

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Also reported by: ***Sunday Territorian***

Debrief dilemma

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Kelly Haynes, Page 12

For some women, the birth of their baby is one of the happiest days of their lives. Others remember it as a frightening, overwhelming or deeply distressing experience.

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Dozens of inquests reveal failures in mental health care behind prison walls

ABC Online, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Joanna McCarthy

Tracy Mackander thought the coronial inquest into her son Bailey's death in custody would bring real change. It only brought more heartache. An ABC investigation can reveal a prison system that is failing the most vulnerable.

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Bunnings shelves Halloween straitjackets after mental health group criticism

ABC Online, Internet, 31 Oct 2026

Bunnings has removed a straitjacket costume from its online marketplace as mental health advocates urge retailers to stop selling Halloween outfits that portray people with mental illness as "insane". The costume, listed on Bunnings Marketplace, was a straitjacket with arm ties and the words "Property of the county mental institution — approach with caution!" printed on the back.

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Calls for Long-Term Psychiatric Beds in Australia

2GB, Weekends, AM Radio, 31 Oct 2026, Luke Grant

Interview with psychiatrist Dr. Tanveer Ahmed about calls for more long-term psychiatric beds in Australia following a 40% decline since 1990. Ahmed stated that individuals with severe mental illness frequently cycle between homelessness and hospital. He argued that structured, extended hospital stays are necessary to support unwell patients and maintain public safety.

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Immunisation

NSW Health admits 20,000 Year 12 students not given ‘informed consent' in mass Covid vaccination

NEWS.com.au, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Frank Chung

NSW Health authorities quietly admitted that more than 20,000 western Sydney high school students who attended a mass Covid vaccination hub in late 2021 so they could sit the HSC were not provided adequate information about the potential risks "to allow informed consent to occur". The apology and admission, however, was not communicated to the public, but rather in a private response to a father who had opposed his two teenage daughters getting the vaccine, news.com.au can now reveal.

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Also reported by: *Daily Telegraph Australia*, *Adelaide Now*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Mercury*, *Northern Territory News*

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Health Systems Strategies

'Smaller impact'

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Yuting Zhang, Page 16

The controversy surrounding the federal government's plan to scrap extra private health insurance rebates for the over-65s continues. Not everyone agrees on the impact of the higher premiums, whether that's the number of people set to cancel their cover or the impact on the public health system.

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Health Economics & Research

Cancer therapy boost

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Page 22

A more effective and better-tolerated treatment for chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) could improve quality of life for people living with the disease. A new study led by Adelaide University and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute has provided the first direct evidence a breakthrough targeted therapy can rapidly and consistently suppress the molecular signals that drive CML.

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DNA clues to disease

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Page 14

Australian researchers have analysed more than five million immune cells to uncover thousands of genetic clues that could help explain why people develop diseases and point to new ways to treat them. University of NSW academics Joseph Powell, Daniel MacArthur and Hope Tanudisastro identified 1500 genes potentially linked to 16 diseases, including cancers, auto-immune conditions and neurological disorders.

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Action required

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 18

Australian clinical research nurses are calling for greater workforce investment after the release of the National Health and Medical Research Strategy 2026-2036, arguing that the country's research ambitions cannot be achieved without stronger support for the workforce responsible for delivering clinical research and trials. The Strategy, developed through extensive national consultation, outlines a 10-year vision for a research system that improves health outcomes, accelerates innovation and strengthens the translation of discoveries into healthcare policy and practice.

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Sax Institute Launches 18 and Up Study

ABC, Weekend Breakfast, TV, 31 Oct 2026, Lorna Dunkley & Johanna Nicholson

Interview with Dr. Martin McNamara, CEO of the Sax Institute, about the launch of the 18 and Up study tracking younger Australians' health. McNamara stated the multigenerational research aims to recruit 100,000 family members of existing 45 and up participants over the long term. It will examine drivers behind worsening mental health and early-onset cancers.

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First Nations Health

No relevant coverage.

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Public Hospital and Health Reform

Election pledges yet to remedy 'gaps' in health care

Canberra Times, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Allanah Sciberras

Samantha Jade is all too familiar with the glaring gaps in Victoria's health system. Growing up in regional Hamilton, in an electorate that has never voted red, she knows firsthand about the challenges involved, from poor roads negotiated by emergency vehicles to underfunded care facilities.

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Also reported by: *West Australian*, *Daily Mail UK*, *Yahoo! News Australia*, *The Senior*

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Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

No relevant coverage.

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Health Workforce

Birth services scrutiny

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Brad Crouch, Page 13

Regional birthing services face a major overhaul as the government deals with workforce shortages which have closed or temporarily halted rural services in recent years. A statewide review of regional birthing services is now under way "examining opportunities to strengthen maternity care and build a sustainable workforce" amid ongoing nationwide challenges in recruiting and retaining midwifery and obstetric staff.

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Also reported by: *Adelaide Now*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Mercury*, *Northern Territory News*

'Some positives' as nurses weigh pay offer

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Sue Bailey, Page 4

The nurses' union says there are "some positives" in the latest wages and conditions package offered by the Tasmanian government but there are still matters for further negotiation. The government has provided wage offers to nurses and midwives, firefighters, medical practitioners, education facility attendants and correctional officers.

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Also reported by: *The Mercury*, *The Courier Mail*, *Northern Territory News*, *Adelaide Now*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*

Career clarity

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 1

Australia's nurses are calling for stronger career support and clearer pathways into leadership and specialist roles, with a new Australian College of Nursing (ACN) report warning that career uncertainty is contributing to burnout, disengagement and retention risks. The report, Nursing Pathways: Making Career Paths Clearer, draws on consultation with nearly 800 nurses from across Australia and comes amid projections that the country could face a shortage of almost 80,000 nurses by 2035.

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Number guarantee

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 11

NSW Health will begin recruiting 950 additional nurses as part of the next stage of the state's Safe Staffing Levels reform, extending minimum nurse-to-patient ratios to more than 360 general and specialty wards across 70 hospitals. The expansion follows the rollout of staffing ratios in 81 emergency departments, where more than 990 nurses have already been recruited.

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Technology Assessment and Access

No relevant coverage.

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Medicare Benefits and Digital Health

Medicare breach

Nursing Review, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Stefanie Schultz, Page 8

Australia is launching a taskforce to counter "emerging cyber threats" from artificial intelligence after a rogue OpenAI agent hacked into Medicare data, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said. Mr Marles said the taskforce would be led by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, giving the Prime Minister direct visibility.

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Benefits Integrity

No relevant coverage.

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Australian CDC

Meningococcal case 'critical'

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Dasha Havrilenko, Page 11

A young adult is in a critical condition on life support in a metropolitan Adelaide hospital after being diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease. The case has been identified as serogroup B meningococcal disease.

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Also reported by: *news.com.au*, *abc.net.au*, *nine.com.au*, *7News.com.au*, *Yahoo! News Australia*, *MSN Australia*

Enduring scars of killer disease

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 25

Jazmyn Parkyn was diagnosed with meningococcal B more than a decade ago but continues to endure debilitating symptoms to this day. [...] Her advice comes as a young adult was on Saturday in a critical condition in an Adelaide hospital with meningococcal B.

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Flesh-eating Buruli ulcer cases are rising in Victoria and NSW. Here's how to protect yourself

ABC Online, Internet, 31 Oct 2026, Belinda Smith

It starts as a small, painless lump on the skin that is easy to ignore. But under the seemingly innocuous lump, flesh-eating bacteria are burrowing through fat and muscle.

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Therapeutic Goods Administration

No relevant coverage.

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Office of Drug Control

Cannabis use on the rise

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 01 Nov 2026, Page 33

Australian researchers have raised concerns about a rise in the number of Australians aged under 25 with prescriptions for medicinal cannabis products. University of Melbourne researchers collected data on 52,419 approvals for people aged 25 and under since 2016 and say prescriptions have increased over time.

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Food Standards

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