


Monday, 12th October 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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Australian** (page 1) reports that modelling by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing forecasts 78,000 older Australians could drop private health insurance by 2029–30 under proposed rebate cuts, compared with the government's cited figure of 44,000. Health Minister Mark Butler faces Coalition criticism amid concerns about increased pressure on public hospitals.
- The **Age** (page 1) reports Victoria's Coalition faces an estimated $880 million funding shortfall in its plan to deliver 25,000 additional elective surgeries in private hospitals over four years.
- The **Sydney Morning Herald** (page 2) reports UNSW researchers have used AI to identify 24 promising cancer drug combinations, validated in preclinical studies at Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.
- The **Hobart Mercury** (page 3) reports more than 97,000 Tasmanians are awaiting medical treatment, with rising demand and delayed hospital discharges contributing to growing waiting lists.

- The **Herald Sun** (page 3) reports Swinburne University research found that briefly standing every 25 minutes can restore muscle activity reduced by prolonged sitting, potentially lowering associated health risks.
- **The Australian** (page 4) reports that the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is considering caps on specialist medical fees to improve healthcare affordability, amid opposition from the medical profession. Health Minister Mark Butler said “all options are on the table” to address excessive fees, with departmental consultations closing on October 16.
- The **Herald Sun** (page 5) reports the Australian Council on Smoking and Health has ranked Victoria and Tasmania as the weakest states in tackling illicit tobacco, citing delayed reforms and inadequate enforcement. *Also reported by: Daily Telegraph, West Australian*
- **The Nightly** (online) reports concerns about federal government data security, including claims that Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme data is stored in spreadsheets. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing said its published files “do not contain patient-level records or any information that could identify individual patients, prescribers or pharmacies”.
- **ABC Online** reports the closure of Darwin's 400-bed YiSSA accommodation facility could disrupt healthcare access for hundreds of Aboriginal patients, with residents being directed to a replacement site 100 kilometres away.

## MINISTER BUTLER

### Health rebate cut impact 'set to soar'

The Australian, General News, 12/10/2026, Greg Brown, Page 1

Health Minister Mark Butler's own department has forecast the number of older Australians dumping health insurance under Labor's rebate cut will be nearly double the figure the government regularly quotes by the end of the decade. Analysis from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing shows the widely claimed government figure that only 44,000 Australians would dump private health insurance under the policy would blow out to 78,000 just a year later.

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### Capped fees for specialists move step closer

The Australian, General News, 12/10/2026, Stephen Lunn and Penny Timms, Page 4

The Albanese government is moving closer to imposing price caps on medical specialists in a bid to stop patients being charged excessive fees, a leading health economist says. [...] The hot-button political issue of specialist fees, a particular concern of federal Health Minister Mark Butler, is fast coming to a head, with talks wrapping up this month on both a parliamentary inquiry into specialist affordability and access, and a separate Health Department investigation into excessive specialist fees.

*Also reported by: The Australian (Online)*

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### Voters wise up to painful cost of Labor spendathon

The Australian, Editorials, 12/10/2026, Page 10

Displaying an economic understanding that might surprise Anthony Albanese and Jim Chalmers, voters have wised up to the need to cut government spending to bring inflation and rising interest rates under control. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler's department forecasts the number of older Australians dumping health insurance under Labor's rebate cut will be 78,000 by the end of the decade nearly double the 44, ,000 number quoted by the government.

*Also reported by: The Australian (Online)*

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### Report card is painfully grim for Jim

Daily Telegraph, General News, 12/10/2026, Jade Gailberger, Page 10

It's been five months since Treasurer Jim Chalmers handed down his fourth federal budget. It was full of controversial changes and has sparked a number of backflips in the months since. [...] Health

Minister Mark Butler remains steadfast that changes to the tobacco excise are not required, pointing to its increased investment in enforcement measures.

*Also reported by: Herald Sun (Melbourne), Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide), Courier Mail (Brisbane), Herald Sun (Melbourne), Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide)*

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### Prominent gender doctors ‘breaking law by treating children without both parents' consent'

The Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Rachel Baxendale

Australian gender clinicians are treating gender distressed children without the consent of both parents, leaving themselves open to litigation, according to one of the nation’s foremost family law experts. [...] The CASC chairman turned to Health Minister Mark Butler’s decision late last year to ask the National Health and Medical Research Council to review the national standards of care for treatment of trans and gender diverse children, and develop new guidelines.

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### Grandmother's eye swells shut after little-known illness strikes while gardening: 'Thought I'd been bitten'

Yahoo! News Australia, General News, 11/10/2026, Preston Potts

An Aussie gardener was going about her day when a nasty ailment began spreading across her face, leaving her eye swollen shut. [...] Minister for Health Mark Butler has urged eligible Australians to protect themselves against the illness by getting vaccinated.

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## MINISTER MCALLISTER

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## MINISTER RAE

### Report card is painfully grim for Jim

Daily Telegraph, General News, 12/10/2026, Jade Gailberger, Page 10

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*Also reported by: Herald Sun (Melbourne), Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide), Courier Mail (Brisbane), Herald Sun (Melbourne), Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide)*

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## ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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## DEPARTMENT

### Health rebate cut impact 'set to soar'

The Australian, General News, 12/10/2026, Greg Brown, Page 1

Health Minister Mark Butler's own department has forecast the number of older Australians dumping health insurance under Labor's rebate cut will be nearly double the figure the government regularly quotes by the end of the decade. Analysis from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing shows the widely claimed government figure that only 44,000 Australians would dump private health insurance under the policy would blow out to 78,000 just a year later.

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*Also reported by: The Australian (Online)*

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### Dying for a bed

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 12/10/2026, Daniel Shirkie, Page 1

A heartbroken family forced to grapple with the aged care system as their beloved grandmother lay dying have said the system needs urgent fixes to prevent others from suffering. [...] A spokesman for the federal government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing pointed to substantial investments made by the government during the most recent budget.

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### ‘I make spare parts for people — a nose, ear or eye': The face makers moulding new lives for cancer patients

Australian Doctor, General News, 11/10/2026

Sophie Fleming is a clinical anaplastologist. [...] AusDoc asked the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing why there has never been a comparable national scheme for facial prostheses and whether, in light of the KPMG report, they are considering establishing one.

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### The Issue Podcast: Tech expert questions how Canberra is handling data on the budget, health and MP travel

Thenightly.com.au, General News, 11/10/2026

A software engineer and academic, who once worked as a public servant, warns Canberra’s mismanagement of Australia’s data is a “national scandal”. [...] The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing says it “publishes aggregate PBS claims data”, and that “these files do not contain patient-level records or any information that could identify individual patients, prescribers or pharmacies”.

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## AGEING AND AGED CARE

### Sleepless nights can age your brain

Australian Financial Review, General News, 12/10/2026, Kathleen Felton, Page 33

It's not unusual to be a little forgetful or have trouble concentrating as you get older. But writing off those symptoms as ''normal'' signs of ageing could mean missing another possible cause: obstructive sleep apnoea.

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### Nurse's six-year drug use

Courier Mail, General News, 12/10/2026, Vanda Carson, Page 11

A Queensland aged care nurse who self-prescribed large volumes of high-risk pain medications over six years, then avoided compulsory drug testing, has been banned from working in her profession. Details of her professional misconduct were revealed in a decision handed down by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal deputy president Dearne Firth.

*Also reported by: Northern Territory News (Online), Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), The Mercury (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Gold Coast Bulletin (Online), Geelong Advertiser (Online), Townsville Bulletin (Online), Cairns Post (Online), Geelong Advertiser (Geelong), Cairns Post (Cairns), Gold Coast Bulletin (Gold Coast), Toowoomba Chronicle (Toowoomba), Townsville Bulletin (Townsville)*

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### Streaming push threatens free TV

Central Western Daily, General News, 12/10/2026, Anna Houlahan, Page 11

Free-to-air television has been a news and entertainment staple in Australia for 70 years but a new push towards internet streaming could leave millions of viewers paying extra costs or missing out altogether [...] Council on the Ageing Australia chief executive Patricia Sparrow echoed these concerns, saying that 57 per cent of older Australians feel left behind by rising living costs.

*Also reported by: Western Advocate (Bathurst), Daily Liberal (Dubbo), Canberra Times (Canberra), Border Mail (Albury-Wodonga), Burnie Advocate (Burnie)*

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### ‘You lose your childhood': The hidden burden carried by 40,000 young WA carers

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/10/2026, Holly Thompson

Sara Qalandari took on the role of a carer for her family when she was just 10 years old after they migrated to Western Australia as refugees. [...] Carers Australia released its national Carers Wellbeing Survey on Monday which showed an increase in the number of young carers, aged 12 to 25, who felt they’d lost their childhood – up to 65 per cent from 54 per cent last year

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### Dementia advocate Jim Rogers on what matters most when life doesn't go to plan

Daily Telegraph Australia, General News, 11/10/2026, Rachel Sharp

The magnetic former property developer turned podcast host, author and dementia advocate, on what matters most when life doesn’t go to plan. [...] My neurologist sent me to Dementia Australia and I did a six-week course with people who were cognitively impaired or in the early stages of Alzheimer’s.

*Also reported by: Adelaide Now (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), NEWS.com.au (Online)*

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## DISABILITY AND CARERS

### Disability support expands

Cairns Post, General News, 12/10/2026, Molly Frew, Page 2

Remote communities across Cape York are getting more disability support in a sweeping expansion of a national program. The National Disability Insurance Agency is expanding its Remote Community Connector program to include eight remote Far North Queensland communities to make disability support more accessible, localised and culturally safe.

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### West Aussies living in poverty increasing as 15 per cent live below breadline

West Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Joe Spagnolo

A new report has laid bare the growing divide in WA between those reaping the benefits of a rich resource State and those left behind — with more than 450,000 West Australians now living in poverty. [...] The 12-year-old has a serious health condition that requires regular visits to Perth for care, and the little help she gets from NDIS does not cover her medical expenses.

*Also reported by: Kalgoorlie Miner (Online)*

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## PRIMARY CARE

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## POPULATION HEALTH

### Victoria a laggard in war on tobacco

Herald Sun, General News, 12/10/2026, Matt Johnston, Page 5

Victoria has been described as a "weak link" and is trailing behind all other mainland states when it comes to tackling illegal tobacco. The Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) has released a new update of its "national illicit tobacco ladder", which ranks how different jurisdictions have responded to the growing crime and health threat.

*Also reported by: Courier Mail (Brisbane)*

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### WA falls behind in tobacco crackdown

West Australian, General News, 12/10/2026, Oliver Lane, Page 7

Delays in advancing a second tranche of legislation to crack down on illicit tobacco by the Cook Government has left WA overtaken by other States on tackling the industry. Australian Council on Smoking and Health chief executive Laura Hunter gave the warning as her organisation released its Illicit Tobacco Ladder, ranking WA fourth out of the eight States and Territories on the issue.

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### Creating a state of happy little campers

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 12/10/2026, Charlie Dadds, Page 9

At least 14,000 students across 137 South Australian public schools will have access to free camps as part of a world-leading initiative to get kids off screens. The state government has unveiled details of it s planned rollout of its Kids Off Screens initiative and the first 60 schools to receive free Year 7 school camps will be advised this week, launching next year to support more than 4000 students.

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### Women beg inquiry for real change

Launceston Examiner, General News, 12/10/2026, Emily Woods, Page 3

"As soon as my baby was born, it felt like I was no longer viewed as needing care. I felt unimportant."

*Also reported by: Ballarat Courier (Online), Daily Mail UK (Online), The Senior (Online), Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser (Online), West Australian (Online), Canberra Times (Online), Illawarra Mercury (Online), Kalgoorlie Miner (Online), Border Mail (Albury-Wodonga), Newcastle Herald (Newcastle), Illawarra Mercury (Wollongong)*

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### Lab testing reveals toxic heavy metals and carcinogens inside Australia's black market cigarettes

Daily Telegraph Australia, General News, 11/10/2026, Remy Varga

Black market smokers are inhaling a toxic cocktail of pesticides and heavy metals, including a known cancer causing chemical, as well as dangerously high levels of nicotine with every puff. Independent testing commissioned by this masthead discovered more than 20 dangerous chemicals inside the illegal cigarettes including mercury, copper and cadmium; as well as pesticides including fungicides, insecticides and herbicides.

*Also reported by: Northern Territory News (Online), Townsville Bulletin (Online), Gold Coast Bulletin (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Mercury (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Cairns Post (Online), Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), The Mercury (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Courier Mail (Online)*

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## CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

### 'Every patient matters': AI fast-track can fight cancer

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/10/2026, Sally Rawsthorne, Page 2

Personalised medication, drugs to combat the rarest of cancers, knowledge of our individual cell interactions and even pre-empting disease in the body one Sydney lab is working on all of these possibilities and more, thanks to the advent of artificial intelligence. "I've become very interested in how we can leverage AI to save lives and improve the patient outcomes," said Professor Fatemeh Vafaee, deputy director of the University of NSW's AI institute and a professor in the school of biotechnology and biomolecular sciences.

*Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online), Age (Melbourne)*

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### Give police fire teams cancer cover as well

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 12/10/2026, Page 20

The Sydney Morning Herald Firefighters in NSW are automatically covered if they develop cancers. Not so members of NSW Police, who investigate fires.

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### Sydney mother drains superannuation to fight stage four ovarian cancer

Daily Telegraph Australia, General News, 11/10/2026, Danielle Gusmaroli

When Vanja Wilson catches her two young daughters playing, a quiet fear takes hold. She remembers the afternoon she came home after being diagnosed with stage four ovarian cancer and looked at Misha, six, and Mila, 10.

*Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), The Mercury (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), Townsville Bulletin (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Adelaide Now (Online)*

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### Push for $84m lifeline to save Australian women and girls from ovarian cancer

The Mercury, General News, 11/10/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell

They are the women fighting for more time – and the scientists fighting to give it to them. Together, they are calling on the Albanese government to close the funding gap that could help determine whether more than 14,000 Australian women lose their lives to ovarian cancer in the next decade.

*Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), Townsville Bulletin (Online), Gold Coast Bulletin (Online), The Mercury (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Adelaide Now (Online)*

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### Leona felt healthy before her fingers started feeling weird at 32. It was the first devastating sign she had MND like NRL star and family friend Jai Arrow - and cases just keep rising

Daily Mail UK, General News, 11/10/2026, Shania O'Brien

Leona Lolohea was working in retail when she began having trouble gripping things with her hands. The Gold Coast mum assumed she had carpal tunnel syndrome but the weakness persisted, gradually spreading into her arms and legs until she struggled to lift her hands above her shoulders or walk without support.

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## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

### I've worked in mental health for decades and I think AI could save some young people

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/10/2026, Ian Hickie, Page 23

I've worked clinically in mental health and suicide prevention for the better part of four decades. And I now believe the emergence of generative AI could be the most positive opportunity to ever emerge in the field.

*Also reported by: Age (Melbourne), Sydney Morning Herald (Online)*

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### Taking care of each other

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 12/10/2026, Zoe Waters, Page 16

Last month, my family and I joined around 300 members of our local community for the Suicide Prevention and Awareness Network Walk, hosted by SPAN and Hope Bereavement Geelong. It was a beautiful Sunday morning.

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### NSW funds $200,000 Charlotte's Wish anti-bullying pilot to protect vulnerable students

Daily Telegraph Australia, General News, 11/10/2026, Linda Silmalis

Born from tragedy, a $200,000 NSW Government-funded scholarship program aims to reach vulnerable students before bullying escalates into a mental health crisis. NSW students struggling with bullying and mental health challenges will receive extra support under a Minns Government-funded pilot program delivered by Charlotte's Wish and other organisations.

*Also reported by: Northern Territory News (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Cairns Post (Online)*

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### Mental health peak body urges AI guardrails as Australians turn to digital support

The Mercury, General News, 11/10/2026, Bridget Clarke

An increasing number of people are turning to generative AI for mental health support, prompting calls for stronger regulations by Tasmania's peak mental health body. Conducted out of a sample group of 5000 adults, Beyond Blue's latest Australian Mental Health and Wellbeing survey found one in six Australians had used generative AI for mental health support and advice in the past year.

*Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Townsville Bulletin (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), Geelong Advertiser (Online), The Courier Mail (Online)*

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### Broome students gain life-saving skills through Zero2Hero roadshow

West Australian, General News, 09/10/2026, Phoebe Solon

Twenty students at Broome Senior High School have completed training through a Zero2Hero roadshow in the Kimberley, gaining skills to support friends who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. The students completed the safeTALK training last week, becoming certified suicide alert helpers, equipped to recognise when someone may be thinking about taking their own life and connecting them with appropriate support.

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### More than a ride: taxi company where the driver drinks coffee with the passenger

Canberra Times, General News, 11/10/2026, Juetong Liu

For 84-year-old Christine, taxis are essential to her life - but not just any taxi. [...] Care Taxi not only helps older people but also people with mental health difficulties like schizophrenia and severe anxiety.

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## IMMUNISATION

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## HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

### The effective altruist who gave up his kidney and 10 per cent of his income for life

ABC Online, General News, 11/10/2026, Jackson Worthington and David Marchese

Early on a Tuesday morning, Hu Pennington found himself being prepped for surgery that he had hesitated to tell his family about. [...] Between 2022 and 2025, only 15 people altruistically donated a kidney through the Australian and New Zealand Kidney Exchange program, according to Donate Life.

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## HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

### A smaller, lonelier world with a restricted licence in your 80s

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 12/10/2026, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 16

When Lyn Taylor moved to a restricted driver's licence in July, limiting her to driving within 15 kilometres of her home in inner Sydney, her world shrunk. [...] Older Australians with dementia or mild cognitive impairment want more support from healthcare professionals not just family when it comes to this transition, a new qualitative study from Flinders University found.

*Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online)*

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## Get off your bums, people

Herald Sun, General News, 12/10/2026, Sarah Booth, Page 3

Briefly standing up after 25 minutes boosts muscle activity while sitting, helping office workers and others unable to avoid long periods at a desk to reduce its poor health impacts. That's the theory posited by world-first Melbourne research, which analysed more than 7000 episodes of sitting and found muscle activity in our thighs reaches "virtually undetectable" levels within half an hour.

*Also reported by:* *Geelong Advertiser (Geelong)*, *Adelaide Now (Online)*, *Northern Territory News (Online)*, *Townsville Bulletin (Online)*, *The Mercury (Online)*, *The Courier Mail (Online)*, *Hobart Mercury (Hobart)*, *Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)*, *Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)*, *Daily Telegraph Australia (Online)*

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## IV lines research to boost the flow

Courier Mail, General News, 12/10/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 12

Dangerous complications with central intravenous lines used in cancer treatments, dialysis and intensive care units are to be investigated in a new Queensland clinical trial in the hope of creating new guidelines for doctors and nurses. Led by The University of Queensland, the IVCare trial will examine central venous access devices (CVADs) in a bid to lessen infections and blood clots.

*Also reported by:* *Townsville Bulletin (Townsville)*

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## New drug to soothe chemotherapy agony

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 12/10/2026, Kate Uren, Page 7

A medical breakthrough by Adelaide researchers that offers lifesaving hope to people with advanced, aggressive cancers has passed a major milestone and is ready for human trials. Professor Shudong Wang and a team from Adelaide University have created a drug, AU2-94, that slows cancer growth and protects healthy, blood-forming cells during chemotherapy.

*Also reported by:* *Geelong Advertiser (Geelong)*, *Gold Coast Bulletin (Gold Coast)*

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## Hearing loss and what can be done about it: an expert's guide

The Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Jaime Leigh

“My father insists he hears perfectly well. [...] The Melbourne COCHLEA study followed 101 adults, average age 73, for 4½ years after cochlear implantation, and compared them with 100 older adults living in the community.

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## More than 80 per cent of Australians aren't getting enough fibre, study shows

West Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, David Hannant

From an explosion of snack bars and supplements, to even appearing on menu screens at Macca’s, protein is rapidly turning into an Aussie obsession. [...] Figures highlighted by the charity Doctors For Nutrients (DFN) have shown that the country’s obsession with protein seems to be paying off — with 98.5 per cent of Australians already getting enough protein in their diet.

*Also reported by:* *Yahoo! News Australia (Online)*, *Kalgoorlie Miner (Online)*

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## 2GB, Healthy Living, 11/10/2026, Tanveer Ahmed

Interview with Florey Institute neuroscientist and research leader Dr Samantha Barton. Ahmed says multiple sclerosis affects almost three million people worldwide, and he notes that Florey Institute and Monash University researchers have developed tiny three-dimensional models of human nervous system tissue to study how the damage occurs and how it might be repaired. Barton states that the invention of 'mini brains' has revolutionised neuroscience because it lets researchers study in depth the cellular networking and communication happening inside the brain, something that is difficult to do in someone living with MS or MND.

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## FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

### Culturally safe maternity care on offer

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 12/10/2026, Carla Hancock, Page 3

Midwives Yas Diaz-Martinez and Jasmin Sloan are set to be the faces of a regional Victorian-first initiative at Bendigo Health. Dhelkuk Dangatuk Baring - which means Healthy New Journey - is designed to offer culturally safe maternity care for First Nations women and families across the Loddon Mallee.

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### 720km hike fights the legacy of trauma

Central Western Daily, General News, 12/10/2026, Dane Wilson, Page 5

It was 27 years ago when Chris Mason's life was saved by imprisoned men society deemed "not fit" to live freely - he says he owes it to those men to complete an extraordinary 723-kilometre walk. [...] Mr Mason's march, the Long Walk Home, raises awareness for Indigenous mental health issues and a loss of culture.

*Also reported by: Western Advocate (Bathurst), Daily Liberal (Dubbo)*

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### 'What will happen to the children?': Safety fears after closure of Darwin shelter YiSSA

ABC Online, General News, 11/10/2026, Felicity James

Yvonne Dunn fears it will be women and children left most at risk, as Darwin's largest short-stay accommodation facility is forced to close this weekend with no city-based replacement. [...] The move has also cut residents off from Darwin's Aboriginal health service, Danila Dilba.

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## PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

### Wilson plan for surgery would leave $880m hole

Age, General News, 12/10/2026, Chip Le Grand, Page 1

Jess Wilson's promise to pay for a headline-grabbing health policy by winding up a state-owned investment company has punched an $880 million hole in the Coalition's election costings and created a headache likely to dog the opposition leader through to polling day. Under Wilson's SurgerySooner pledge, a Coalition government would use public funds to pay for an additional 25,000 elective surgeries in private hospitals over the next four years at no cost to patients.

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### LNP ramps up ambo wait spin

Courier Mail, General News, 12/10/2026, Paul Brescia, Page 12

Premier David Crisafulli has claimed ambulance ramping is at its best result in five years, despite being worse than just one month ago. "The last round of figures are the best in five years," Mr Crisafulli claimed.

*Also reported by: The Mercury (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Cairns Post (Online)*

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### Health 'breaking point'

Hobart Mercury, General News, 12/10/2026, Sue Bailey, Page 3

Labor says nearly one in six Tasmanians are waiting for medical treatment, but the government attributes the delays to increased demand and people failing to attend appointments at outpatient clinics. Labor health spokeswoman Sarah Lovell said more than 97,000 Tasmanians were waiting for care across outpatient, elective surgery and oral health lists, up about 10 per cent in a year.

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### Sick system must be fixed

Hobart Mercury, Editorials, 12/10/2026, Page 12

There are few things more frustrating than being told you need medical treatment...and then being told to wait. Labor says more than 97,000 Tasmanians are now waiting across outpatient, elective surgery and oral health lists, an increase of about 10 per cent in a year.

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### Staff numbers slide over mould scandal

Newcastle Herald, General News, 12/10/2026, Page 1

The Calvary Mater hospital's public-private partnership is on the brink of collapse, as the mould scandal that risked patients' lives comes to a critical point. Amanda Cohn, who chaired the Mater mould and maintenance inquiry, said the failure of the public-private partnership was a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to return it to public hands.

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### Groceries, health and firies: pre-election vote pitch heating up

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 12/10/2026, Nick Wilson, Page 4

State-funded supermarkets, cutting-edge cancer treatment and a new fleet of fire trucks round out the latest competing pledges ahead of a tightly contested state election. [...] Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre would host the country's first proton beam therapy service, a highly targeted form of radiation treatment.

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### How Shane's botched eye surgery exposes Victoria's record $254 million hospital payout crisis

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/10/2026, Henrietta Cook

Compensation payouts for patients harmed in Victorian public hospitals have more than quadrupled over the past decade, soaring to a record $254 million last financial year as childbirth injuries take a heavy toll. New figures obtained by The Age under Freedom of Information laws reveal that the state government’s insurer has spent more than $1.1 billion on settlements for injured public hospital patients and their relatives since 2015/16.

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## CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

### ‘Circuit-breaker needed': Union demands Premier Jeremy Rockliff intervene in nurse dispute

The Mercury, General News, 11/10/2026, Sue Bailey

As further industrial action looms, the health union has written to the Premier asking him to intervene in the public sector nurses dispute. [...] Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation secretary Emily Shepherd said more industrial action would be held on Monday at the Repat Hospital and nurses would highlight working double shifts

*Also reported by:* *Northern Territory News (Online)*, *Daily Telegraph Australia (Online)*, *Adelaide Now (Online)*, *Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)*, *The Courier Mail (Online)*, *Cairns Post (Online)*

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## HEALTH WORKFORCE

### Paramedics win top stroke care award

Northern Territory News, General News, 12/10/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 7

Ambulance staff across the Top End have achieved what only two other teams in Australia have by achieving the highest award in stroke care. St John NT staff working in the Top End have received international recognition for the quality of stroke care the service provides through the 2026 World Stroke Organization (WSO) EMS Angels Awards.

*Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), The Mercury (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Geelong Advertiser (Online)*

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### Coalition plan to slash bridging visas requires massive detention expansion, would cost ‘billions', Tony Burke says

The Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Nathan Schmidt

Angus Taylor has struck back at Labor over accusations the Coalition has “declared war on skilled migrations”. [...] “Australia absolutely has shortages in aged care, in health, with doctors, with nurses in construction,” he said.

*Also reported by: Adelaide Now (Online), The Mercury (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), NEWS.com.au (Online), West Australian (Online), Cairns Post (Cairns), Gold Coast Bulletin (Gold Coast), Toowoomba Chronicle (Toowoomba), Townsville Bulletin (Townsville)*

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### Australia immigration: Angus Taylor hits back at Burke's ‘nonsense' claims as Labor labels plan ‘war'

West Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Chloe Maher

Opposition leader Angus Taylor has defended the Coalition’s sweeping migration overhaul, arguing Australia needs fewer arrivals, a higher number of skilled workers and tougher standards on immigration. [...] But Mr Taylor hit back at Burke’s “nonsense” claims, saying transition arrangements would protect health and aged-care workers for a period, with employers eventually expected to recruit through alternative skilled visa pathways.

*Also reported by: Kalgoorlie Miner (Online)*

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## TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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## MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

### Workplace AI ' treats people like barcodes with a pulse'

Sydney Morning Herald, Business News, 12/10/2026, David Swan, Page 24

Journalists swarmed OpenAI's Jason Kwon as he walked into NSW parliament on Tuesday. [...] Assistant minister Andrew Charlton said on Thursday the Medicare incident would shape the national AI standards the government has promised to legislate.

*Also reported by: Age (Melbourne)*

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## BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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## AUSTRALIAN CDC

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## THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

### Politicians pass the buck as dangerous midnight nang crisis sweeps across Australia

The Courier Mail, General News, 11/10/2026, Rebecca Borg

Two men sit in a parked car under the cover of darkness, taking turns inhaling a mysterious gas from balloons. [...] Instead, the department is leaving it up to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to implement change.

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## OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

### Kiwi ‘mystical shaman' reportedly behind collapsed fund now charging $5k+ to join upcoming Uluru trip

Northern Territory News, General News, 11/10/2026, Gera Kazakov

A Kiwi “mystical shaman” flagged by his country’s financial watchdog ahead of his investment scheme collapsing – reportedly leaving investors thousands out of pocket – has announced a new venture: a “vault mission” in the NT, which costs upwards of $5000. [...] Ibogaine is a schedule four prescription only medicine under the 2018 federal Poisons Standard, however, iboga is not currently listed in the Act.

*Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), The Courier Mail (Online), Adelaide Now (Online)*

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## FOOD STANDARDS

### Food recall: Nissin Salt and Sesame Oil Noodles Aburasoba 82g pulled from shelves over undeclared allergen

West Australian, General News, 11/10/2026, Chloe Maher

Australia’s food safety watchdog has issued an urgent recall on a brand of instant noodles being sold in grocery stores across Victoria. [...] Food Standards Australia and New Zealand warned consumers with a milk allergy who purchased the noodles to avoid eating the product.

*Also reported by: Kalgoorlie Miner (Online)*

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