

Saturday, 17th 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

LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Sunraysia Daily** (page 15) reports the National Rural Health Alliance has documented a widening 9.23 billion dollar health expenditure gap between rural and urban Australians, calling on governments to implement block and blended funding to address the disparity. Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler highlighted the Federal Government's investments into bulk billing as integral to driving doctors and nurses to rural areas and strengthening Medicare.
- **The Mandarin** (online) reports the Federal Government has announced a formal review of the automated decision-making tool known as the Independent Assessment Tool, which assesses aged care funding support needs. Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae stated that the review will build on previous work and respond to feedback that while changes have made improvements, the assessment systems are not always getting it right.
- **The Saturday Paper** (page 10) reports that following a request from the Department of Health to streamline training, the Psychology Board of Australia has proposed a single five-year undergraduate pathway to register psychologists, a move opposed by industry stakeholders due to concerns over patient safety, lowered clinical standards, and workforce readiness.
- **The Hobart Mercury** (page 4) reports that the Federal Government is currently rolling out Thriving Kids and confirming there will be no changes to access or eligibility for the NDIS until 2028. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister stated that early support for children makes a world of difference.

- **The Macleay Argus** (page 3) reports the Federal Government has decided to redirect funding for specialist prostate cancer nursing services from the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia to the McGrath Foundation under a single national all-cancer model starting July 2027. Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi stated that specialist prostate cancer nurses will continue providing care to patients under the new national model rather than being replaced by general cancer nurses. *Also reported by: Northern Daily Leader*
- **ABC Online** reports due to regional service and workforce shortages, the South Australian government announced that skilled midwives will be able to train to perform forensic examinations, a change the state government hopes will alleviate the long drives rural victims must currently make to access the procedures in the aftermath of a sexual assault.
- **The Courier Mail** (page 1) reports the family of a man who died after waiting over two for an ambulance just minutes from a major hospital is calling for a thorough investigation into the delayed emergency response. *Also reported by: The Courier Mail*
- **The Adelaide Advertiser** (page 3) reports an urgent warning and calls to reject anti-vaccination rhetoric have been issued in South Australia after influenza cases rose to 1544 in a week, bringing the state total of flu-related deaths to 11 this year.
- **Pharmacy Daily** (online) reports the TGA has opened public consultation on a proposal to strengthen the labelling and warning statements for products containing vitamin B6 to reduce excessive intake and minimise potential nerve damage risks.

MINISTER BUTLER

Pancreatic cancer almost stole Dee's life ... a new drug has changed everything

Weekend Australian, General News, 17/10/2026, Steve Robson, Page 5

Two years ago Dee Ozolins hit rock bottom. Aged 46, she had endured one of the biggest surgical operations it is possible to have, followed by six months of maximum-dose chemotherapy. [...] A review has been undertaken recently with a report provided to Health Minister Mark Butler.

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Cracks in the Labor ranks

Weekend Australian, General News, 17/10/2026, Dennis Shanahan, Page 18

The sense of Labor's invincibility based on the sweeping 2024 election that delivered 94 ALP MPs to the House of Representatives is gone. [...] This fact, already clear from the swath of budget backdowns forced in the past few months, was dramatically demonstrated on Wednesday when non-Labor senators, including the Greens, rejected Mark Butler's $3bn health cost-cutting proposal to reduce the private health insurance rebate for older Australians.

Also reported by: The Australian (Online)

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Another budget backflip looms

Canberra Times, General News, 17/10/2026, Michelle Grattan, Page 46

The ins and outs of some of the seemingly endless fights over the Albanese government's budget measures are often arcane or difficult for many people to easily understand. [...] For Butler, seen as one of the frontrunners to eventually succeed Anthony Albanese, it will be another benchmark of his ability to land a deal -- providing clues on how well he will handle the complexities ahead in his job of reforming the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Also reported by: ABC Online (Online), Canberra Times (Online), The New Daily (Online)

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Entire cabinet deserves to go

Courier Mail, General News, 17/10/2026, Kylie Lang, Page 65

The Prime Minister shouldn't just sack Anika Wells, he should get rid of the entire cabinet, including

himself. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler was caught out this week trying to rip off pensioners to pay for the bungled aged-care system.

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Health gap widens

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 17/10/2026, Lochlainn Heley, Page 15

National Rural Health Alliance has reported that the health expenditure gap between rural and urban Australians has widened to $9.23 billion, with rural residents now receiving $1218 less health funding on average. [...] When asked about the funding gap, Minister for Health and Aging Mark Butler said focusing investments into bulk billing have be integral to driving doctors and nurses to rural areas.

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'Dummy spit': Butler's unhealthy reaction to defeat

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 17/10/2026, Nathan Schmidt & Paige Fryer, Page 26

Health Minister Mark Butler has been dubbed a "two-year-old having a dummy spit" for trying to force through a controversial Bill proposing $3bn in private health insurance cuts to over 65s. The Private Health Insurance Amendment (Modernising the Private Health Insurance Rebate) Bill 2026 was effectively defeated in the Senate on Wednesday.

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Specialist fees regulation is a quagmire as doctors take lead

The Australian, General News, 16/10/2026, Natasha Robinson

Soon if you visit a medical specialist, you may notice a fact sheet plastered on the wall. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has taken on specialists over egregious fee-setting and stated that nothing is off the table in potential direct regulation.

Read More

Labor could lose half its savings under private health compromise with Greens

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/10/2026, Natassia Chrysanthos

Labor could be forced to forfeit up to $1.6 billion in budget spending that had been earmarked for aged care to land a compromise deal on its contentious private health insurance changes. The Greens doubled down on their rejection of Health Minister Mark Butler's bill on Thursday, saying they would not pass laws scrapping the Howard-era private health insurance bonuses for over-65s unless pensioners were ringfenced from the changes.

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Mark Butler defends Labor's health insurance rebate changes as govt faces pressure to negotiate with Greens

West Australian, General News, 16/10/2026, Chloe Maher

Mark Butler has defended Labor’s health insurance rebate changes for older Australians as the government faces pressure to negotiate with the Greens to pass the failed legislation. Labor will need to find common ground with the Greens or risk another parliamentary setback after its health insurance rebate bill failed to progress, with the government seeking to remove a long-standing aged-based subsidy for pensioners.

Also reported by: Thenightly.com.au (Online)

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‘Attacking old people': Jane Hume slams Labor's private health rebate cuts, warns of added pressure to public hospitals

7News.com.au, General News, 16/10/2026, Aimee Edwards

Deputy Opposition Leader Jane Hume has accused Labor of making pensioners pay for its spending, as it moves ahead with plans to cut an additional private health insurance rebate for older Australians. [...] "The states will end up picking up the tab for Mark Butler's savings in his portfolio, and it's Australians eventually that are going to pay the price, not just those pensioners that are going to have

to lose their private health insurance, but all taxpayers who are going to end up funding more for public hospitals."

Also reported by: *News24 Australia (Online)*

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How to lose a good reform

Croakey, General News, 16/10/2026, Luke Slawomirski

On Channel 7's Sunrise program this morning, host Natalie Barr referred to "the Government's failed legislation to scrap private health rebates for over-65s". Mark Butler, Minister for Health, Disability and Ageing, soon corrected this error, which appears to have been widely repeated about the Government's private health insurance reforms.

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One in six older Aussies may cancel health cover: report

Insurance Business Australia, General News, 17/10/2026, Jonalyn Cueto

More than one in six Australians aged 61 and over say they might cancel private health insurance if the federal government's planned rebate cut for older members goes ahead, according to new iSelect research. [...] At the base income tier, the rebate for those aged 65 to 69 would fall from 28.139% to 24.118%, and for those 70 and over from 32.158% to 24.118%, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, 16/10/2026, Patricia Karvelas

Panel Discussion with former Liberal candidate and adviser Kristy McSweeney and former Deputy Chief of Staff to Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews Jessie McCrone. McSweeney says the Federal Government's plan to cut private health insurance rebates for older Australians is not getting through the Senate. She states that it's because private health insurance is a messy state of affairs, but Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is still battling to reintroduce Labor's legislative agenda.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 16/10/2026, Monique Wright & Matt Shirvington

Panel Discussion with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler and Deputy Opposition Leader Jane Hume, on the Federal Government reintroducing a bill that aims to scrap private health insurance rebates for older Australians. Butler maintains there is no proposal to scrap any rebates, and he also states that the vast bulk of Australians on $50,000 to $90,000 would continue to have about a quarter of their private health insurance bill paid for by the Federal Government, and that a small top-up introduced by former PM John Howard for Australians over 65 would only be removed. He says he reintroduced the bill, which was shut down by the Coalition and the Greens, because he wanted to have a debate in the Senate.

Also reported by: *Channel 7 (Sydney)*, *Channel 7 (Sydney)*, *Channel 7 (Sydney)*

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Seven Cairns, Seven Local News, 16/10/2026, Joanne Desmond & Nathan Spurling

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is pushing forward with the Federal Government's bid to cut the private health insurance rebate for older Australians, despite the bill being blocked in Parliament this week. He says the cuts would provide 5000 more aged care beds beds, but AMA Queensland President Erica Gannon says more beds should not come at the expense of seniors.

Also reported by: *Seven Toowoomba (Toowoomba)*

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Triple M Newcastle, 11:00 News, 16/10/2026

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is pushing ahead with an attempt to have private health rebates reduced for Australians over 65. He says it was blocked by the Coalition and the Greens without a

proper debate.

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2GB, Mornings, 16/10/2026, Mark Levy

Levy says Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has been dubbed a 'two-year-old having a dummy spit' for trying to force through a controversial bill proposing $3 billion in cuts to private health insurance for Australians over 65. He states that the bill would only lead to more pressure on the state health systems and hospitals.

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ABC NewsRadio, Drive, 16/10/2026, Patricia Karvelas

Panel Discussion with former Liberal candidate and adviser Kristy McSweeney and former Deputy Chief of Staff to Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews Jessie McCrone. McSweeney says the Federal Government's plan to cut the private health insurance rebates for older Australians is not getting through the Senate. She states that it's because private health insurance is a messy state of affairs, but Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is still battling to reintroduce Labor's legislative agenda.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Statewide Mornings, 16/10/2026, Rory Mcclaren

Interview with The Guardian political reporter Krishani Dhanji. Dhanji says Federal Health Minister Mark Butler reintroduced the Federal Government's bill to reduce the private health insurance rebates for older Australians after it was thrown out of the Senate by the Greens and the Coalition yesterday. She notes that Butler criticised the Greens and the Coalition for discharging the bill.

Also reported by: ABC Broken Hill (Broken Hill)

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

New support rollout aids Tassie's kids

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/10/2026, Rob Inglis, Page 4

Young children living with autism or developmental delays will be able to receive vital new support through a federally funded program, as the state government partners with Playgroup Tasmania and disability support provider St Giles to deliver assistance at the local level. [...] In launching Thriving Kids earlier this month, National Disability Insurance Scheme Minister Jenny McAllister said giving early support to children who needed it made "a world of difference".

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MINISTER RAE

Review announced into flawed aged care algorithm

The Mandarin, General News, 16/10/2026, Julian Bajkowski

The Albanese government has announced a formal review of the heavily criticised automated decision-making tool known as the Independent Assessment Tool (IAT). [...] As complaints over the automation continue to mount, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae said that the "review will build on that work and respond to feedback that while these changes have made improvements, the assessment systems are not always getting it right."

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Govt's IAT fix comes with an expiry date

The Weekly Source, General News, 16/10/2026, Caroline Egan

Australia's Parliament has backed an IAT assessment escalation pathway alongside a permanent First Nations Commissioner and changes for Council providers. [...] Minister Sam Rae has urged providers contemplating a home care exit to reconsider.

Read More

Government orders review of controversial aged-care assessment system

Starts at 60, General News, 16/10/2026

Older Australians who believe their home-care needs have been underestimated are being urged to speak up as the Federal Government orders an independent review of its controversial assessment system. [...] Aged Care Minister Sam Rae announced the independent, clinically informed review on Thursday, saying it would examine how the system classifies people's needs and prioritises support.

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ABC NewsRadio, Mornings, 16/10/2026, Caroline Winter

The Federal Government has admitted the algorithms it's introduced to assess the support given to elderly Australians living at home are not always getting it right. Aged Care Minister Sam Rae says they have always said that, throughout the generational reform process, they would listen to older people, workers, and providers, and they would make whatever changes necessary to get the best outcomes for older people.

Also reported by: ABC Radio Canberra (Canberra), 2SM (Sydney)

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Radio National, Breakfast, 16/10/2026, Sally Sara

Interview with Nationals Senator Bridget McKenzie. Sara says the Federal Government announced an independent review of the aged prioritisation assessment mechanisms yesterday, with Aged Care Minister Sam Rae stating that the review will respond to feedback that the assessment systems are not always getting it right. McKenzie says she's been really frustrated by the Federal Government's hollow words, and she does not trust the Labor Party when it comes to caring for older Australians.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

ABC Radio Darwin , 06:00 News, 16/10/2026

The Federal Government says recruitment is underway for a free mental health service in Alice Springs. Assistant Minister for Mental Health Emma McBride says the Alice Springs Centre will open by mid-December.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

No relevant coverage

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

Dean's fears for federal funding loss

Macleay Argus, General News, 17/10/2026, Lucas Holmes, Page 3

Kempsey resident Dean Irvine said there will be a detrimental impact on cancer patients if a decision by the federal government goes ahead. [...] Federal government Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi told ACM that prostate cancer patients would continue to be cared for by specialist prostate cancer nurses under the new arrangements.

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DEPARTMENT

Lowering the bar for psychologists

The Saturday Paper, General News, 17/10/2026, Trevor Steward, Page 10

A proposed overhaul of training for Australian psychologists is close to being finalised that would make this country among the least rigorous in the qualifications required to become a practitioner. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing said the government "acknowledges the range of views and concerns raised by stakeholders" and that "the Board's final recommendations will be considered by Health Ministers on whether to endorse the reforms".

Also reported by: The Saturday Paper (Online)

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Free planning sessions for older residents

Wimmera Mail Times, General News, 15/10/2026, Page 2

Hindmarsh Shire Council has partnered with Seniors Rights Victoria and the Federal Government to deliver free 'Planning Ahead' sessions covering enduring powers of attorney, medical treatment decision-making and advance care planning. [...] Liz Martin will attend on behalf of the Aged Care Division of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to provide information about the Aged Care Act.

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Community Expo sees great engagement

Camperdown Chronicle, General News, 16/10/2026, Page 8

The Community Expo held last week saw a strong crowd learning more about services available in the district, including in the Camperdown region. [...] A number of presentations by stallholders were made throughout the day, including from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Seniors Rights Victoria, Carers Victoria, Ambulance Victoria and the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

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Allergy help

Hamilton Spectator, General News, 16/10/2026, Page 20

For rural and remote Australians specialist allergy advice can mean hours on the road, time away from work or school, and travel and accommodation costs. [...] allergy assist is an initiative of the National Allergy Council, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and delivered in partnership with ACRRM.

Also reported by: Portland Observer (Portland)

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Time-tiered reforms ‘too important' for lacklustre consultation

The Medical Republic, General News, 16/10/2026, Holly Payne

Any Medicare reforms must address the level B "distortion" in time-tiered rebates and reinvest funding from items that get cut, the AMA says – while also delivering a firm warning to the department on its recent consultation tactics. [...] The association also took shots at the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's recent consultation efforts.

Read More

Alliance of Industry Associations: Concerns regarding inadequate consultation for complex legislative and regulatory reform

ausbanking.org.au, General News, 16/10/2026, Brendan Alder

We write on behalf of the undersigned Alliance of Industry Associations to raise a growing concern about government's inadequate consultation on recent complex legislative and regulatory reforms. [...] Government has shown that considerably longer timeframes are readily achievable when it chooses to apply them. To illustrate: ...a 41-business day consultation run by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing/OGTR on the commercial supply of a genetically modified vaccine for chickens.

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One in six older Aussies may cancel health cover: report

Insurance Business Australia, General News, 17/10/2026, Jonalyn Cueto

More than one in six Australians aged 61 and over say they might cancel private health insurance if the federal government's planned rebate cut for older members goes ahead, according to new iSelect research. [...] At the base income tier, the rebate for those aged 65 to 69 would fall from 28.139% to 24.118%, and for those 70 and over from 32.158% to 24.118%, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Don't blame the boomers

The Saturday Age, Good Weekend Magazine, 17/10/2026, Greg Callaghan, Page 1

It's a generation both envied and maligned. But there's another side to their story. [...] For Anne Drane, a property manager for a real estate agency in south-western Sydney's Liverpool, working three days a week is necessary to cover soaring private health insurance premiums and medical costs for a lung condition.

Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney)

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Aged care facility for Numbulwar

Northern Territory News, General News, 17/10/2026, Fia Walsh, Page 7

A remote Arnhem Land community is celebrating a new aged care facility helping older residents to stay connected to family and country. Roper Gulf Regional Council will mark the official opening of the Numbulwar Aged Care Facility on October 29.

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Chezzi Denyer on dementia's cruel toll

Central Western Daily, General News, 17/10/2026, Amy Rees, Page 35

Dementia is the leading cause of death in Australia, but there's still so much about the multifaceted disease that's unknown-- including a cure. While Dementia Action Week has come and gone, the need for better awareness, more research and more treatments never fades for those living with or caring for someone with the disease.

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Is HRT associated with dementia risk after surgical menopause?

Medicine Today, General News, 16/10/2026, Melanie Hinze

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) use may be associated with a lower risk of dementia among women who experienced surgical menopause, but not with a significantly lower risk of all-cause dementia after natural menopause, an observational study published in Alzheimer's & Dementia suggests.

Read More

Blood-based biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease: use in primary care

Medicine Today, General News, 16/10/2026, Andrew Huynh

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is the most common cause of dementia, accounting for 60 to 70% of dementia cases. AD mainly affects older adults (aged >65 years), with women affected slightly more often than men.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 16/10/2026, Leon Compton

Interview with Advocacy Tasmania Deputy CEO Lisa Woods. Compton says the ABC has been reporting on contracts that are offered to people living in aged care, and it's been revealed that some things that are part of basic services are being added as extras, such as watching TV. Woods says the Federal Government has introduced the Higher Everyday Living Fee as part of last year's reforms, and from their client's experience, she notes that it's a revenue-raising measure.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

Paying stallholders arrive to find disability expo cancelled

Herald Sun, Edition Changes, 17/10/2026, Julie Cross, Page 7

A national disability exhibition organiser who took thousands of dollars in payments from stallholders never even finalised booking the venue, it can be revealed. River Night, behind Developing Australian Communities, has run a series of successful expos, boasting on his website that he is behind "the largest events for the disability and NDIS sector ever seen in Australia's history".

Also reported by: The Courier Mail (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), The Mercury (Online)

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Anxious carers' burden

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/10/2026, Page 4

While doctors fight to save the lives of cancer patients in intensive care, family members, partners and friends are often left carrying a heavy burden of their own. Flinders University research revealed widespread anxiety, depression, exhaustion and declining wellbeing among those supporting a loved one through a critical illness.

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'We're too old to do all that:' caring takes its toll without crucial support

Ballarat Courier, General News, 16/10/2026, Nick Powell

At a young age, Craig was diagnosed with an extremely rare form of cerebellar ataxia (SCA19), causing involuntary leg kicks, severe balance issues, frequent falls and cognitive impairment. [...] When the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was introduced, Mr and Mrs Alpen seized an opportunity to transition Craig into supported accommodation with a housing provider.

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PRIMARY CARE

PET Scan update welcome for men with prostate cancer

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 17/10/2026, Kevin Anderson, Page 17

Tamworth's Positron Emmission Tomography (PET) scanner has now been upgraded to allow local patients to access diagnostic prostate and Neuroscience imaging in our hometown. The PET scanner

is an essential piece of medical equipment that is used by doctors to diagnose a variety of conditions such as cancers, heart conditions and brain conditions.

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Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital handed $66m funding boost to support new beds

ABC Online, General News, 16/10/2026, Antonia O'Flaherty

The Victorian government has committed an extra $66 million to staff 20 new beds at Victoria's leading children's hospital after a funding stand-off threatened to leave them sitting empty. [...] A letter from an emergency department manager sent to staff at the time said the state government had rejected a funding request for staff to operate the new beds, and lamented that the hospital had battled under-resourcing for years.

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The ‘greedy doctor' debate is obscuring a bigger specialist access crisis

Australian Doctor, General News, 16/10/2026, Bella Rough & Paul Smith

Maybe it is because a genuine fix demands so much that the political focus on access to specialist care has been vacuum-packed into one issue: those charging excessive fees. [...] "People are telling us they are waiting three, four, five years to be seen in a public hospital clinic — it is unacceptable," says Dr Monique Ryan, a paediatric neurologist turned politician who is deputy chair of the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability.

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Polypharmacy in Australia

Medicine Today, General News, 16/10/2026

About 1.9 million Australians (7% of the population) experienced polypharmacy in 2025, regularly receiving five or more medicines, according to a new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report. Of these, 219,000 (11%) experienced hyperpolypharmacy, receiving 10 or more medicines.

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State government fund delivers $4m upgrade at Seymour Health

Shepparton News Online, General News, 16/10/2026

A $4 million upgrade at Seymour Health has been delivered, modernising the local hospital's Central Sterile Services Department. The upgrade includes a dedicated infection-control area, helping to protect patients and staff and support safer care for everyone undergoing surgery, along with new storage areas for medical equipment and other essential hospital supplies.

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One Nation proposes $2,000 baby subsidy in Victoria but says it won’t touch state abortion laws

The Guardian, General News, 16/10/2026, Benita Kolovos

One Nation has proposed a $2,000 baby bonus for new parents in Victoria – a day after the Labor and Liberal parties both agreed to cover out-of-pocket costs for abortion care. The deputy leader of One Nation in Victoria, Colleen Harkin, announced the plan on Friday to remove out-of-pocket costs for pregnant women in the public healthcare system and a $2,000 subsidy for those accessing private maternity care.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Marketing over biology: the myth of the 'menopause cliff' exposed

The Saturday Age, General News, 17/10/2026, Sarah Berry, Page 18

I feel it coming. The slow transition towards the day it -- my period, that is -- eventually stops. [...] The population average from the lab tests of more than 1 million women revealed a "physiological cliff" at the final menstrual period -- including hormone, skeletal, liver, kidney and lipid systems -- the study's authors wrote.

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Expert says Human Rights Act not a legal barrier to crackdown

Canberra Times, General News, 17/10/2026, Jasper Lindell, Page 5

Human rights law does not stand in the way of a crackdown on illegal tobacco retailers but it is important to get the rules right to avoid the risk of tougher penalties being challenged, a legal expert says. [...] The state, which brought in tough penalties on illegal tobacco sellers late last year, has won praise from the federal government and public health experts for disrupting the tobacco black market.

Also reported by: Canberra Times (Canberra), Canberra Times (Online)

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

'It means everything': How Melbourne scientists are fighting to save Poppy's sight

The Saturday Age, General News, 17/10/2026, Henrietta Cook, Page 10

When Poppy Stevens was just a few months old, she received a devastating diagnosis. After failing her newborn hearing test, genetic testing confirmed the little girl had Usher syndrome, which meant she might also lose her vision.

Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online)

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Obese link to cancer

Courier Mail, General News, 17/10/2026, Page 5

About 5300 cancer cases in Australia each year are linked to excess body weight. Obesity is connected to 13 cancer types, yet public awareness of these links remains low, Cancer Council Australia says.

Also reported by: Hobart Mercury (Hobart)

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Finding defuses cancer

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/10/2026, Page 6

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre scientists in Australia have developed a way to precisely target the "unique molecular fingerprint" created when two genes become abnormally fused together, a discovery that could lead to a new way to treat a wide array of cancers. Dr Mohamad Fareh explains that gene fusions are present in about 20 per cent of all cancers and they act as "bona fide oncogenic drivers" for 16.5 per cent of all cancers.

Also reported by: Herald Sun (Melbourne), Courier Mail (Brisbane), Hobart Mercury (Hobart)

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Cancer-killing cell find

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/10/2026, Page 27

An Australian study has found a previously overlooked type of immune cell can recognise and kill small-cell lung cancer, revealing a new immune pathway for fighting the deadliest form of the disease. The study found gamma delta T cells could detect and attack these lung cancers, even when the disease hid itself from the immune system overcoming a major treatment challenge.

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Urgent call for plasma donors

Herald Sun, General News, 17/10/2026, Jackson Robb, Page 29

Australians are being called on to help end the plasma shortage in the country, with cancer patients in remissions urging people to attend donation centres so they can "have seminormal lives". The demand for plasma continues to grow as it can treat immune deficiency in people who develop cancer and those in remission continue, both of which continue to rise across the country.

Also reported by: *Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide)*

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Act now or we risk losing lives

Herald Sun, General News, 17/10/2026, David Ashley, Page 73

Victoria's election campaign been animated with claims certain political leaders wish to "Americanise" Victoria's healthcare system. The clear implication being that no right-minded person would want our system to be anything like the USA.

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Landmark Victorian study seeks $38.9m to stop chronic diseases before they start

NEWS.com.au, General News, 16/10/2026

Australia is spending just 2 per cent of its clinical research funding on preventing diseases, including dementia — with a landmark health study urging governments to reframe the fight against chronic ill health. Generation Victoria, known as GenV, is tracking 50,000 children and 75,000 parents in a bid to help researchers uncover how conditions like dementia, cancer and heart disease might be prevented before they take hold.

Also reported by: *Adelaide Now (Online)*, *Northern Territory News (Online)*

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Know your body, spot changes and get them checked out says Cancer Council WA

West Australian, General News, 16/10/2026, Claire Middleton

October is breast cancer awareness month, and the Cancer Council WA is urging everyone to get to know their bodies so they can spot any symptoms or changes. Lavinya Vasudevan, the Great Southern regional cancer prevention co-ordinator, said it was important for everyone to recognise the symptoms, adding that while breast cancer was most prevalent in women, it can also affect men.

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Prostate cancer detection: what's changed in the new guidelines?

Medicine Today, General News, 16/10/2026, Jeremy Grummet

Much has happened in the past decade: a global pandemic, the artificial intelligence revolution and a reality TV star elected as US President – twice! [...] Australian guidelines on the early detection of prostate cancer were overdue for an update – and finally, they have arrived.

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Channel 9, Nine News, 16/10/2026, Peter Overton

BreastScreen, Australia's breast cancer screening program, which provides free mammograms, has been a lifesaver, and it relies on the use of 2D mammograms, but more evidence has come to light on the benefits of using 3D technology, formerly known as digital breast tomosynthesis. Experts hope that modernising the BreastScreen program will boost the number of women who take part, which sits at 52%, short of the 70% target.

Also reported by: *Channel 9 (Melbourne)*, *Channel 9 (Melbourne)*, *Channel 9 (Adelaide)*, *Channel 9 (Brisbane)*, *Channel 9 (Brisbane)*, *Channel 9 (Perth)*

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Doctors back gender ban

Hobart Mercury, General News, 17/10/2026, Sue Bailey, Page 1

A ban on conversion practices will "protect vulnerable Tasmanians and save lives", according to a letter signed by more than 50 healthcare providers sent to state MPs. "An individual's sexual orientation or gender identity is a natural and healthy part of who they are, and nota pathology that should or can be treated as a fault, dysfunction, or disease," they wrote.

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Mental health and wellbeing initiative visits Kalgoorlie-Boulder this week

West Australian, General News, 16/10/2026, Rosa Griffith

An important mental health initiative is visiting Kalgoorlie-Boulder this week, checking in with locals and offering wellbeing management skills through mindfulness, conversations, first-aid training and a community barbecue. [...] He said the free mental health first-aid course being delivered this weekend was an important service and had been quickly booked out by Kalgoorlie-Boulder residents, showing a clear need for it.

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IMMUNISATION

Anti-vax prompts spike in flu cases

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/10/2026, Evangeline Polymeneas, Page 3

Anti-vaccine sentiment has prompted an urgent warning as South Australia's flu cases skyrocket. The latest data shows cases rose from 917 in the week ending September 20 to 1325 the following week and then to 1544 last week.

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

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Australians were getting this vaccine for free. Now they could pay up to $180

SBS, General News, 16/10/2026, Arielle Richards

Australians could now pay anywhere up to $180 for a COVID-19 vaccination, depending on which pharmacy they attend, with one retailer telling SBS News it was unlikely to stock it at all. On 1 October, the COVID-19 vaccine was moved into the routine National Immunisation Program (NIP) schedule, replacing the standalone National COVID-19 Vaccine Program established during the pandemic that offered free jabs.

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A dengue vaccine is now available for travellers. Here's what you need to know

Yahoo! News Australia, General News, 16/10/2026, Cameron Webb, Katie Anders & Sarah McGuinness

Some of the most popular travel destinations for Australians are also places where dengue is common. Prevention has traditionally relied on avoiding mosquito bites. But with the dengue vaccine Qdenga now available in Australia , travellers have another way to protect themselves.

Read More

Channel 9, Nine News, 16/10/2026, Brenton Ragless

Authorities are again urging South Australians to get vaccinated after a late surge of flu cases. Around 1100 cases were recorded last week alone, with 103 people currently hospitalised.

Also reported by: Channel 10 (Adelaide), Channel 7 (Adelaide)

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Darwin mums welcome new laws forcing private hospitals to provide maternity care

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/10/2026, Fia Walsh

Local mums have welcomed laws to ensure any private hospital in the Northern Territory provides full maternity services, but say the devil will be in the detail as the plan rolls out. [...] Provider Healthscope cited challenges including local skills shortages and a more than 50 per cent drop in birthrates at Darwin Private Hospital over a decade, falling from nearly 700 births in 2013 to fewer than 300 births in 2024.

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

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Meet the man with no pulse, who carries his heart on his hip

Herald Sun, Weekend, 17/10/2026, Samantha Landy, Page 10

Every day, Arnout Nolten slings a nondescript black bag over his shoulder and across his body, resting it on his hip. [...] Arnout is one of just 314 patients to have received a VAD (left or right) in Australia since 2015, according to Medicare data.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

‘Borders on the immoral': Why Catholic Church is in the firing line over this small Redfern building

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 16/10/2026, Bevan Shields

Australia's most senior Indigenous leaders have issued an urgent moral plea to the Archbishop of Sydney, warning the Catholic Church risks looking greedy and out of touch unless it steps in to help secure the future of a groundbreaking Redfern health service. "Father of reconciliation" Patrick Dodson, academic Marcia Langton and former federal minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney rallied behind the Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) Redfern after the Herald revealed church officials were standing in the way of a much-needed expansion.

Read More

$1 million bequest supports First Nations medical students

National Indigenous Times, General News, 16/10/2026, Jackson Clark

A $1 million bequest from two sisters is helping First Nations medical students at Charles Darwin University pursue studies without added financial pressure. Alison Jackson and Nancy Kingsland left money to the university to support remote health programs, with a portion of the donation being used to provide scholarships for medical students.

Read More

Pormpuraaw opens new $35.4m health centre with dedicated cultural mourning space

Northern Territory News, General News, 16/10/2026, Samuel Davis

A western Cape York community has celebrated the opening of its new $35.4m health facility, which was designed in consultation with traditional owners to reflect its cultural practices. [...] "A standout feature of the redevelopment is the creation of a culturally responsive mourning and viewing area," Mr O'Rourke said.

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

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Why was he left to die

Courier Mail, General News, 17/10/2026, Kate Kyriacou & Jon Mendelsohn, Page 1

The devastated family of Nick Bradford, who died alone in his home two and a half hours after he called for an ambulance, are demanding a thorough investigation and say he died "desperate for help" that arrived too late. His family want to know what led to the delay, questioning whether ramping or hospital bed shortages were to blame.

Also reported by: Courier Mail (Brisbane)

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Jack's ordeal belies Premier's hospital boast

Herald Sun, General News, 17/10/2026, Euan Kennedy & Ryan Bourke, Page 6

A mother has slammed Premier Ben Carroll for "letting down" sick Victorian kids after her son's open heart surgery was cancelled last minute due to a lack of beds at the Royal Children's Hospital. On Friday morning, seven-year-old Jack was in a hospital gown, chest sterilised, numbing cream on his hands, and awaiting anaesthesia before being told his bed was no longer available due to an overnight emergency.

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

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Helen Sargent's family welcomes independent review into Royal Adelaide Hospital corridor care

ABC Online, General News, 16/10/2026, Matthew Ward Agius

The family of a patient who died after being left in a hospital corridor has welcomed the South Australian government's call for an independent, external review into her death. [...] This week, the Ambulance Employees Association (AEA) SA branch also released its formal position on ramping, labelling it "preventable, dangerous and unacceptable".

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Coroner finds Melbourne girl, 8, could have been saved after hospital missed critical warnings

The Courier Mail, General News, 16/10/2026, David Hannant

A girl who died in a busy emergency department at the age of just eight “could have been saved” with swifter intervention, a coroner has ruled. [...] A coroner has found that signs she was deteriorating went missed by the junior doctor who was leading her care – adding her death could have been prevented.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Red tape encroaching on mums' choice

Northern Daily Leader, General News, 17/10/2026, Samantha Newsam, Page 4

Ever since she started thinking about having children, Elischia Kennedy wanted to give birth in the comfort of her own home. [...] Under proposed changes to professional indemnity insurance requirements for private midwives, the region's only private practising midwife could be forced to cease providing homebirth services and likely close her doors.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Family forced to drive three hours for 'vital' testing after daughter's rape

ABC Online, General News, 16/10/2026, Emma Pedler & Sam Bradbrook

A mother who drove three hours with her daughter to undertake vital forensic testing after she was raped is calling for better access to services in regional areas. [...] The SA government announced in September skilled midwives would be able to undertake training to conduct forensic examinations.

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GPs sought for Alzheimer's disease study

Medicine Today, General News, 16/10/2026

The Australian Dementia Network (ADNeT) is recruiting GPs in Newcastle, Melbourne and Adelaide for a study exploring GP attitudes towards diagnosing dementia and mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and using blood-based biomarkers (p-tau217) to improve diagnosis and management of early-stage Alzheimer's disease and MCI. Participating GPs will gain experience administering the blood test and interpreting results.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

No relevant coverage

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Bring on $1m lawsuit

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 17/10/2026, Sean Fewster, Page 18

The $1m lawsuit accusing an ailing Adelaide nurse of conspiring with a UK celebrity cosmetician is "getting vexatious" and must go to trial immediately, a court has heard. [...] Ms Piro alleges she was

investigated and deregistered by AHPRA after using the filler on a client, and that she was herself scarred after Ms Dennis administered it to her.

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

No relevant coverage

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

TGA seeks feedback on B6

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 16/10/2026

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has opened a public consultation on its proposal to strengthen the labelling of products containing vitamin B6. This includes stronger warning statements around the potential risks of nerve damage from excessive vitamin B6 intake, and clearer labelling that indicates the presence and amount of vitamin.

Read More

ABC Radio Perth, Statewide Mornings, 16/10/2026, Nadia Mitsopoulos

Interview with Therapeutic Goods Administration Chief Medical Advisor Professor Robyn Langham. Langham says the TGA is asking manufacturers, sponsors, and supermarkets to recall their products and medicines containing andrographis because it was removed from the list of permissible ingredients for low-risk listed medicines. She states that a mandatory recall will be conducted by the end of October.

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

No relevant coverage

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FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

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AICIS

3M sheds light on defence to Commonwealth lawsuit over PFAS contamination

ABC Online, General News, 16/10/2026, Xanthe Gregory & Joanna Woodburn

US chemical giant 3M has shed light on its planned "attack" on the federal government's $2 billion lawsuit, which alleges the company withheld evidence that its firefighting products were toxic to humans and the environment. [...] Citing 310 internal company documents, the federal government's

lawyers allege 3M falsely made assurances the product was safe despite having studies that proved variants of PFAS were toxic to animals, could cause birth defects and harmed the environment.

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