

Sunday, 18th 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

- **The Sun Herald (page 1)** reports that Sydney's Canterbury Hospital is contacting numerous patients who are overdue for surgery after their referrals were mistakenly sent to an unmonitored email inbox. The Sydney Local Health District apologised for the error, which affected at least 16 urgent and semi-urgent patients.
- **The Sunday Telegraph (page 10)** reports that grieving families are backing a campaign for an $84 million federal investment in ovarian cancer research, noting that survival rates have stagnated for 30 years. Senator David Pocock has written to Health Minister Mark Butler urging for the funding.
- **The Sunday Telegraph (page 18)** reports that small business owners are seeking mental health and financial support in record numbers due to rising costs and regulatory pressures. Calls to the Small Business Debt Helpline increased by 31 per cent in the past year, while demand has also surged for Beyond Blue's coaching program.
- **The Sunday Herald Sun (page 25)** reports that an Adelaide University study has found that 2.3 million older Australians are at increased risk of falls and fractures due to the overlapping

side effects of multiple medications. The research also identified that over 1.2 million are at risk of kidney-related harm from these drug combinations.

- **The Sunday Mail Brisbane (page 1)** reports that a bureaucratic delay in appointing a new operator for the national stem cell register has forced the suspension of new donor testing. This has jeopardised a potential life-saving transplant for a 20-year-old blood cancer patient who had found a rare genetic match.
- **The Sunday Mail Brisbane (page 32)** reports that a 70-year-old Queensland man with terminal lung disease is facing a nine-month waitlist for government-funded portable oxygen, forcing him to pay hundreds of dollars out-of-pocket.
- **ABC Online** reports that the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has launched new clinical guidelines to standardise menopause management. The guidelines provide clear, evidence-based recommendations for clinicians to address inconsistent care and misinformation surrounding treatments.

MINISTER BUTLER

Labor loves a party when taxpayers foot the bill

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 18/10/2026, Peta Credlin, Page 21

Let's make something absolutely crystal clear. There is no such thing as government money. [...] Last week they had a win with the Senate knocking back Labor's cruel plan to cut their private health insurance rebate, only to have Health Minister Mark Butler confirm he was going to keep pursuing the cut anyway.

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

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Why are we letting these women die?

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 18/10/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 10

Heidi D'Elboux had so much life still to live. [...] He also wrote a letter to Health Minister Mark Butler calling for an urgent $70m boost in funding for gynaecological cancers.

Also reported by: Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane), Sunday Herald Sun (Melbourne)

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Payday looming for undervalued Australian workers

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 18/10/2026, Catherine Bouris, Page 8

A big payout is on the cards for workers in industries found to be undervalued. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said the investment would not only retain existing workers, but also make the sector more attractive to future workers, ensuring a stronger workforce in the future.

Also reported by: Sunday Examiner (Launceston)

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News24, Weekend NewsDay, 17/10/2026, Caleb Bond

Interview with Shadow Health and Aged Care Minister Anne Ruston, on the Federal Government's bill aimed at cutting private health insurance rebates for older Australians, which was blocked by the Coalition and crossbenchers. Ruston says the Coalition needs to stay focused on coming up with strong economic policies to drive the economy so they can afford all of the things that Australians rightly expect. Bond states that Federal Health Minister Mark Butler announced that he would reintroduce the same bill, while Ruston notes that Senators, experts, and stakeholders have told the Federal Government that the policy is terrible.

Play Now

ABC Radio Darwin , Saturday Mornings, 17/10/2026, Lyrella Couzens

Couzens is joined by ABC News journalist and presenter Paul Murphy. Couzens says the Federal Government's bill aimed at cutting private health insurance rebates for older Australians has been blocked by the Senate, and Australians claim that it's a win for them. Murphy says Federal Health Minister Mark Butler is intending to reintroduce the bill in its current form, but he also adds that it will get through in one form or another.

Play Now

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MINISTER MCALLISTER

Billions saved through stronger NDIS integrity controls

Eyre Peninsula Advocate, General News, 17/10/2026

Stronger National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) integrity systems put in place by the federal government have delivered $2.1 billion in savings and benefits through stopping non-compliant payments and protecting participant funding from misuse. [...] NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said this was what placing integrity into the design of the NDIS's framework looked like.

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MINISTER RAE

Aged care fees raise concerns over the cost of everyday comforts

Hawkesbury Gazette, General News, 17/10/2026

Hawkesbury families with loved ones in residential aged care have fresh reason to examine their fee agreements, after an ABC investigation revealed charges running into thousands of dollars a year for televisions, hot breakfasts and other everyday comforts. [...] A spokesperson for Aged Care Minister Sam Rae told the ABC that prices must be reasonable and transparent, and that Uniting had been referred to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

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SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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DEPARTMENT

Specialist allergy advice for rural communities

Hamilton Spectator, General News, 17/10/2026

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.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Fall risk in the med mix

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 18/10/2026, Rebecca Whitfield-Baker, Page 25

A complex cocktail of medications is driving high rates of falls and fractures among older Australians, with more than three quarters at risk of overlapping side effects. An Adelaide University study found an estimated 2.3 million older Australians are being dispensed multiple medicines associated with falls and fractures, with more than 1.2 million also receiving combinations linked to kidney-related side effects.

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

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Age-old ED problem

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 5

A new report says Australia's health system is not prepared for the growing number of older patients arriving in emergency departments. In 2023-24, almost nine million people sought care in an ED, according to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

Also reported by: Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide)

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Dementia to double with ageing Aussies

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 30

Thanks to an ageing global population, Australian researchers estimate that by 2050, there will be 24.7 million new dementia cases globally each year, up from 11.4 million. The research involving the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing also found higher rates of dementia in women than men, which the researchers say can't be fully explained by women tending to live longer, suggesting other factors are likely playing a role.

Also reported by: Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide)

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Don't hold your breath

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 18/10/2026, Tayla Couacaud, Page 32

An elderly Queensland man who has just months to live is battling health authorities over being forced to pay hundreds of dollars for portable oxygen tanks. Andrew Holdsworth, 70, was diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis six years ago and was told by doctors he would have a three to sevenyear life span.

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

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

No relevant coverage

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PRIMARY CARE

Councils Concerns Over 'highly Conceptual' plan

Sunday Tasmanian, General News, 18/10/2026, Bridget Clarke, Page 2

Concerns have been raised that the government's plans to develop the St Johns Park Health and Wellbeing precinct lack critical detail and could fall short on healthcare needs as the consultation period draws to a close. The state government plans to transform St Johns Park, in New Town, into a second campus of the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) in a staged development over the next 20 years.

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Delivering choice back to mothers in Territory

Sunday Territorian, General News, 18/10/2026, Steve Edgington, Page 16

Having a baby is one of life's biggest moments. Territory families deserve choice and certainty in how they experience it and the Finocchiaro CLP government is now enshrining the right to have choice in law.

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Little lives. Big love.

Sunday Times, General News, 18/10/2026, Rhianna Mitchell, Page 1

Today, West Australians have a chance to make a difference. And make history.

Also reported by: *Sunday Times (Perth)*, *7News.com.au (Online)*

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POPULATION HEALTH

Green light for banning alcohol

Sunday Territorian, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 6

The Northern Territory government has made alcohol bans in Aboriginal communities permanent, promising never to repeat the lapse in prohibition which led to a peak of violence and crime in Alice Springs. The Liquor Amendment Bill passed parliament this week, expanding police powers to respond to alcohol-related violence, public nuisance, and anti-social behaviour, and extending the maximum length of banned-drinker notices from 14 to 90 days.

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

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Australia has new guidelines for managing menopausal symptoms

ABC Online, General News, 17/10/2026, Lauren Roberts

Hot Flushes. Night sweats. Vaginal dryness. Painful sex. A frequent need to wee. Menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive years and is associated with a range of symptoms that can affect their quality of life.

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ACT must not let human rights law shield illegal tobacco

Canberra Times, General News, 17/10/2026

Readers could be forgiven for having done a double-take at the news that human rights are a consideration when shutting down illegal tobacco shops. But this is the ACT, and a jurisdiction that prides itself on its approach to human rights, and the certain implications need to be taken into account when potentially introducing tougher closure powers to stop shops selling illegal cigarettes.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

We could lead the world to a cure

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 18/10/2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 11

Ovarian cancer is a silent killer but it doesn't have to be and Australia could lead the way for the world in taking a stand against the disease. That's the belief of researchers and advocates, who say the only thing holding back progress against Australia's most lethal gynaecological cancer is inadequate funding.

Also reported by: Sunday Mail Adelaide (Adelaide), Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane)

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Delays in treating juvenile arthritis hurt

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 18/10/2026, Peter Jean, Page 4

When Pia Walker was limping because of a sprained ankle, her little shadow, two year-old Hazel, also began to hobble. Hazel was limping on the same side as her mum, but within days it became obvious that it wasn't part of a game.

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Replacing just 10% of ultra-processed foods with whole foods could drop the bowel cancer rate

The New Daily, General News, 17/10/2026

Replacing 10 per cent of your intake of ultra-processed foods with minimally processed foods is linked with 2 per cent lower incidence of bowel cancer, according to new analysis of data from more than 460,000 US adults. However, our Australian study also found no association between total ultra-processed food intake and bowel cancer incidence.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Owners despair: We've got life with hard Labor

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 18/10/2026, Giuseppe Tauriello and Evelyne Dowsett, Page 18

Small business owners are turning to financial counsellors and mental health services in record numbers as they are smashed by Labor's regulation, tax and policy changes. Calls to the Small Business Debt Helpline, set up in 2020 in the wake of the Black Summer bushfires, increased by 31 per cent in the year to August, with its financial counsellors now fielding more than 40 cases each day more than any other time since its launch.

Also reported by: Sunday Herald Sun (Melbourne), Sunday Mail Brisbane (Brisbane)

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Factors key to teens' mental health

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 19

Supporting young people's mental health may require a broader focus than the traditional "big three" healthy habits of sleep, nutrition and physical activity. A University of the Sunshine Coast study found

adolescents with a greater number of protective lifestyle factors were more likely to report positive wellbeing and lower psychological distress.

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Sleep link to depression

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 24

Researchers have found treating insomnia can also help reduce symptoms of depression. In The University of Western Australia-led study, people experiencing depression and poor sleep received cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia.

Also reported by: Sunday Tasmanian (Hobart)

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'Soldier on': workers face rising abuse and bullying

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 18/10/2026, Stephanie Gardiner, Page 8

For years, a former emergency worker could not drive through the town where she was pushed out of her job without shaking uncontrollably. Responding to murders, sexual assaults and drug-related incidents in a regional area, the intense workload and "blokey" culture had finally worn her down after two decades.

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IMMUNISATION

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Stolen miracle

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 18/10/2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 1

Rowan Tong-Law may have finally found the donor that could save his life. The 20-year-old is critically ill with blood cancer and for two years his family has relentlessly searched for a rare stem cell match. Then his mother Bronwyn received a call from a stranger to say her son shared the same genetic heritage and was willing to donate.

Also reported by: Sunday Herald Sun (Melbourne), Sunday Telegraph (Sydney), Sunday Telegraph (Sydney), Sunday Territorian (Darwin), Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), Northern Territory News (Online), The Mercury (Online), Adelaide Now (Online), The Courier Mail (Online)

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Stem cell red tape costs lives

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Editorials, 18/10/2026, Page 70

The federal government's failure to appoint an organisation to run Australia's vital stem cell register will cost lives. The Albanese government has had six months to sign a new agreement after it ripped up the 35year contract it had with Stem Cell Donors Australia.

Also reported by: Cairns Post (Online), The Courier Mail (Online)

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HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

Surgeries delayed by email blunder

Sun Herald, General News, 18/10/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 1

A Sydney hospital is urgently contacting patients who are overdue for surgeries after their admission referrals were found in an unmonitored inbox months after they were sent. Canterbury Hospital launched an urgent review after being alerted to the inbox containing more than 3000 emails, including referrals for patients needing urgent elective surgery.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

PBS Success

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 54

It's been 80 years since the 1946 referendum that created the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme by giving the federal government legal authority over the provision of pharmaceutical services. In that time, more than eight billion subsidised prescriptions have been filled.

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Colac mum Veronica Gizas faces $16k annual drug bill after one-in-a-million cancer diagnosis

The Courier Mail, General News, 17/10/2026

A Colac mother-of-two has been diagnosed with a one-in-a-million cancer and now faces a $16,000-a-year drug bill for medication not covered by the PBS. [...] Ms Gizas' oncologist also prescribed her mitotane, an oral chemotherapy drug used to treat adrenocortical carcinoma that isn't listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Also reported by: Daily Telegraph Australia (Online), The Mercury (Online)

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Bogus healer's sexual massage

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/10/2026, Lucy Rutherford, Page 9

An Adelaide health practitioner has had a permanent ban upheld for performing a sexual massage on a "vulnerable" client under the guise of helping her. Adrian Fabio Mangini was found to be a "substantial risk" to the public after he also made claims he could cure cancer and had made a disabled person walk.

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

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Coroner probes ambulance delay as man's family grieves

Daily Mail UK, General News, 17/10/2026

A coroner is investigating a man's death while he waited hours for an ambulance, as his grieving family comes to terms with revelations about the tragic delay. Paramedics found Nick Bradford, 51, dead inside his Annerley home in Brisbane's south after midnight last Sunday.

Also reported by: West Australian (Online), Yahoo! News Australia (Online)

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AUSTRALIAN CDC

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

‘Her body wanted to die': How Telethon-funded treatment saved Bubba Kaio Rerekura's life

West Australian, General News, 18/10/2026, Rhianna Mitchell

Bubba Kaio Rerekura is a five-year-old force; a 'warrior princess' who has a ferocious right kick in mixed martial arts — using a leg almost lost to sepsis — and who can swim like a fish with just one lung. [...] On Bubba's third day at PCH Dr Campbell started the approvals process, first through the Therapeutic Goods Administration as well as ethics and governance committees at hospital level.

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Sponsor announces Tavneos discontinuation

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 17/10/2026, Chris Brooker

Prescribers are being urged not to initiate treatment with Tavneos (avacopan) in new patients, with the drug to be withdrawn from the Australian market next year CSL Seqirus is set to discontinue its antineutrophil cytoplasmic antibody (ANCA)-associated vasculitis drug, Tavneos, from 31 March 2027, the Therapeutic Goods Administration says.

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Docs back tighter controls on 'nangs'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 17/10/2026, Chris Brooker

AMA welcomes proposals to strengthen controls on the non-therapeutic supply and use of nitrous oxide Stronger controls around access to nitrous oxide should be framed as both a supply and patient protection measure, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) says. In a submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) consultation on proposed amendment to the Poisons Standard...

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OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

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AICIS

WHO warning on lead threat

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 18/10/2026, Page 23

The World Health Organisation has told countries to do more to prevent lead exposure, with hundreds of millions of children affected worldwide. Lead is categorised by the WHO as one of the 10 chemicals of major public health concern, along with others including arsenic, asbestos, mercury and highly hazardous pesticides.

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