

Wednesday, 21st 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 Sydney Morning Herald** (page 8) reports that Avant urged governments to pause the expansion of autonomous pharmacist prescribing nationwide until a national safety framework is in place, citing concerns over prescription-related incidents, meanwhile RACGP president Michael Wright said GPs and pharmacists should work together rather than duplicate services.
- **The Herald Sun** (page 12) reports that Victorian doctors have cancelled a planned 12-hour strike today after they reached a 12-month interim deal with the state government, including a 3 per cent pay rise for senior medical staff with a $2000 sign-on payment, a 6 per cent increase for junior doctors and changes to working hours.
- **The Adelaide Advertiser** (page 16) reports that SA Health Minister Blair Boyer announced the final construction stage of the state's $13 million Statewide Eating Disorder Service at the Repat Hospital Precinct in Daw Park, with expected completion by August next year.
- **The Hobart Mercury** (page 3) reports the Australian Medical Association's Tasmanian branch called for an independent inquiry into the state's health system to investigate problems across emergency departments, ambulance services and hospital capacity. Health Minister Bridget Archer dismissed the proposal and attributed some hospital pressures to delayed federal-funded aged care placements. *Also reported by: ABC Online*

- **The Hobart Mercury** (page 8) reports that Adelaide University research found that millions of Australians were prescribed medicines with overlapping adverse effect risks, particularly falls and fractures affecting an estimated 2.3 million older people.
- **The Australian Financial Review** (page 1) reports the Federal Government faces an estimated $11 billion budget shortfall, requiring spending cuts to offset rising debt interest costs and delayed savings from measures like the NDIS reforms. Health Minister Mark Butler has maintained the plan to scrap the higher private health insurance rebate for over-65s to save $3 billion, but it has been met with opposition.
- **ABC Online** reports that Ageing Australia and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia called for essential skills visa to protect aged care staffing from proposed migration cuts, saying that overseas workers make up 51 per cent of the residential care workforce and the sector will need an additional 110,000 workers by 2030.
- **7News** (online) reports that Asthma Australia warned of a potentially severe thunderstorm asthma season this spring, urging people to check their inhalers and medication as higher pollen levels are expected in Victoria and South Australia.

MINISTER BUTLER

Chalmers faces $11b budget hole

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/10/2026, Michael Read, Page 1

Treasurer Jim Chalmers will need to find about $11 billion in cuts to offset a rising interest bill and the cost of backflips and delays to savings initiatives, such as the NDIS overhaul, to prevent a major budget blowout.

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Govt struggles to define a 'greedy doctor'

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Paul Smith, Page 40

How can we define a greedy doctor? [...] As reported in Australian Doctor, the federal health minister Mark Butler recently fronted the AMA conference to bemoan the specialists charging at the 95th percentile, saying that this was the launch point for fees to "take off like a rocket".

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Milestone for subsidised women's meds

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 8

Subsidised medicines for contraception, endometriosis and menopause have been accessed by more than a million women since March last year, the federal government says. Health minister Mark Butler released a series of statistics to mark Women's Health Week, revealing that more than four million scripts have been filled for listed oral contraceptives, menopausal hormone therapies and the treatment of endometriosis.

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'Surely there has to be a way to restore this service to the community'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 12

Two pharmacists, a federal MP and a local community have worked together to bring back PBS services to a New South Wales community, resulting in a new ministerial decision. [...] In November 2025, the Department of Health and Ageing had issued a statement outlining that Health Minister Mark Butler had revoked the PBS approval of Kea & J Pharmacy Co Pty Ltd, trading as Woodberry Community Chemist.

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Tasmania's peak medical body calls for independent commission of inquiry into failing health system

ABC Online, General News, 20/10/2026

An independent commission of inquiry into Tasmania's health system is needed to get to the bottom of system-wide problems and find evidence-based solutions, doctors say. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler last week said the government had eased hospital pressure through increased funding, more aged care beds, expanded bulk billing and Urgent Care Clinics.

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Tailem Bend GP clinic will reopen under new management

Murray Bridge News, General News, 20/10/2026, Peri Strathearn

Federal Health and Wellbeing Minister Mark Butler has intervened to make sure doctors will be able to return to the town. Tailem Bend's GP clinic will reopen in a matter of weeks under new management, the mayor of the Coorong district has revealed.

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Studying physio, pharmacy or speech pathology? Paid prac arrives in July 2027

Made in India Magazine, General News, 20/10/2026, Himanshu Yadav

From Thursday 1 July 2027, eligible students on compulsory placements in pharmacy, physiotherapy, speech pathology and seven other allied health courses will be able to receive a weekly payment while they are there. [...] The health minister, Mark Butler, put it more plainly: "if you're training to be a pharmacist, physio or psychologist, you'll also now have a bit of extra help to get through."

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ACN warns nurses overlooked in private health reforms

Nursing Review, General News, 20/10/2026, Stefanie Schultz

The federal government's controversial private health insurance reforms have been thrown into doubt after the Opposition, the Greens and crossbench voted to remove the legislation from the Senate agenda last week. [...] Health and ageing minister Mark Butler criticised the Senate's decision, arguing Parliament should have debated the proposal rather than removing it from consideration.

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Butler claims 10% of phone line callers avoid ED

The Medical Republic, General News, 20/10/2026, Holly Payne

Health minister Mark Butler says 1800MEDICARE has taken pressure "off overwhelmed hospital emergency departments" in a big way – but it's no match for general practice. According to figures made public by Mr Butler's office today, 1800MEDICARE has logged more than 1,000,000 calls since it commenced operations in January.

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The free number that could save you a long wait in emergency

Your Life Choices, General News, 20/10/2026, Jeni O'Dowd

If you've ever sat for hours in a hospital waiting room wondering whether you really needed to be there, there's a free phone number worth saving in your contacts. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said anyone could call 1800MEDICARE and speak with a registered nurse within minutes.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 20/10/2026, Monique Wright and Matt Shirvington

Interview with Health Minister Mark Butler. Compere mentions that, according to the AFP, more than 1000 credible threats against Federal MPs have been made just this past 12 months. Butler admits that the number is double what it was only five years ago. He adds that the Director of National Intelligence, the head of ASIO, PM Anthony Albanese, and the AFP have all been warning for some time of the need to turn the temperature down, as the huge increase in hate and intolerance, as seen with the recent attack on MP Dr Helen Haines, is spiking.

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Channel 9, Today , 20/10/2026, Tom Steinfort and Sylvia Jeffreys

Interview with Health Minister Mark Butler, about the attack on Indi MP Dr Helen Haines. Butler admits that upon hearing the news, he's shocked and appalled by the attack. He says he can only imagine the shock and distress that Haines' family are feeling right now as they wait for news about her surgery overnight.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 20/10/2026, Hamish Macdonald

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, about the attack on Independent MP Dr Helen Haines. Butler admits that he currently has no update on Haines' condition and adds that they are all waiting with bated breath, but is still hopeful that there will be positive news about her condition.

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5CC, 09:03 Regional News, 20/10/2026

Health Minister Mark Butler says he's in a state of shock following the attack on Independent MP Helen Haines after her car was struck by another in Victoria. He admits that there has been an increase in political violence on home soil and warns that the "temperature should be turned down".

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SENQ, 14:00 News, 20/10/2026

It's been almost a year since 1800MEDICARE was launched designed to take pressure off hospital emergency departments. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it's taken well over a million calls since it began with Australians receiving high quality medical advice.

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Back to Top

MINISTER MCALLISTER

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Back to Top

MINISTER RAE

Too old for cruel wait

Herald Sun, Editorials, 21/10/2026, Page 24

The Albanese government and Aged Care Minister Sam Rae need to step forward immediately to ensure humanity, care and dignity is provided in home care for the elderly. On Tuesday, the Herald Sun reported on the appalling sixmonth-plus wait Mollie Heywood has endured for a simple assessment for home care.

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Aged care reforms face Royal Commission test

The Weekly Source, General News, 20/10/2026, Caroline Egan

The Government’s aged care reforms are facing their first statutory test against the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety’s recommendations released on 26 February 26, 2021. [...] The final report is due to Aged Care Minister Sam Rae by 1 November 2027.

Read More

Back to Top

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

McBride's Mitchell meetings

Whittlesea Review, General News, 20/10/2026, Page 4

Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride was in Wallan on Friday, visiting key mental health advocate groups during Mental Health Month. Joined by Federal Member for McEwen Rob Mitchell, Ms McBride caught up with The Bridge Youth and Family Services and the Mitchell Suicide Prevention Network to get an idea of the issues facing people in the region.

Also reported by: *North Central Review (Kilmore) (Melbourne)*

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'Australia needs passionate pharmacists now more than ever'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 8

The National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association's (NAPSA's) leadership of the campaign to have the Commonwealth Prac Payments program extended is being lauded by pharmacist-turned-politician Emma McBride. Speaking at the Pharmacy Connect conference in Sydney in early September, McBride, the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, praised NAPSA president Mia Avram's advocacy efforts.

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ABC Central Coast, Breakfast, 20/10/2026, Scott Levi

Interview with Member for Dobell Emma McBride, about the condition of Independent MP Dr Helen Haines after attack. McBride admits that she's rather devastated and shocked about what has happened to Haines and adds that so many Australians across the country saw this as a tragic situation. She adds that her thoughts are with Haines' family, friends, her team, and the community.

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Back to Top

ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

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Back to Top

SPECIAL ENVOY REPACHOLI

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Back to Top

DEPARTMENT

FOI shows rebate cuts could add 153,000 patient days to public hospitals

Health Services Daily, General News, 20/10/2026, Cate Swannell

Internal DoHDA modelling shows the proposed private health insurance rebate cuts could generate an additional 112,576 public hospital patient days in 2028-29 under its central scenario, rising to more than 153,000 under a higher-use scenario.

Read More

Back to Top

AGEING AND AGED CARE

Supporting healthier ageing

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Leanne Philpott, Page 34

Australia's population is ageing, driven by increasing life expectancy and declining fertility rates. One in six Australians are aged 65 years and older, with this figure expected to increase to one in four by 2066.

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Aged care sector calls for new essential skills visa as parties propose broader migration cuts

ABC Online, General News, 20/10/2026, Bronwyn Herbert & Melanie Vujkovic

Aged care providers and an economic think tank are calling for a dedicated essential skills visa to protect critical workforces from proposed cuts to migration, warning overseas workers are central to caring for Australia's aging population. It comes as Labor, the Coalition and One Nation put forward competing plans to cut net overseas migration over coming years.

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WA woman stranded in Bali hospital after horror fall while on holiday

ABC Online, General News, 20/10/2026, Chela Williams

A West Australian grandmother is facing a potential bill of $100,000 to return home to Australia after falling down stairs at a Bali restaurant. Estelle Ravenscroft, 79, and her husband Keith remain in Bali, where Ms Ravenscroft is in the intensive care unit at a local hospital.

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Sandra found a way to fight the 'grief, loneliness' that comes with dementia

The Senior, General News, 20/10/2026, Phoebe Loomes

After caring for her husband through his battle with dementia, Melbourne woman Sandra Verdam struggled with stress, sadness and felt isolated from friends. "The whole process is full of grief and loneliness," Verdam told The Senior.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 20/10/2026, James Glenday & Emma Reballato

Interview with Tom Symondson, CEO, Ageing Australia. Symondson admits that they have a huge shortage of aged care workers across Australia, and they need another 110,00 just by the end of this decade and 400,000 by 2050. He admits that they won't be able to keep up at this rate, as the demand is outgrowing the workers heavily.

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Back to Top

DISABILITY AND CARERS

Community sector workers 'can get better pay at Woolies'

Newcastle Herald, General News, 21/10/2026, Madeline Link, Page 3

Leanne Richards has worked as a disability support worker for decades. The reality of the job goes beyond glossy advertisements showing staff taking clients out to the movies and lunch, and workers deserve to be paid for it, Ms Richards said.

Also reported by: Newcastle Herald (Online)

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Wyatt's family in need of a lift

Cairns Post, General News, 21/10/2026, Cameron Bates, Page 10

A Townsville woman says her family is facing a costly transport crisis after the NDIS approved disability modifications for her grandson's vehicle but refused to fund a temporary wheelchair-accessible replacement while the work is completed. Gail Shields said she brought a KIA Carnival for Wyatt who is living with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and significant mobility challenges in June 2025, saying it took 18 months for the NDIS to approve funding for modifications to allow her grandson to remain in his wheelchair while travelling.

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ATO's payday super chief picked to spearhead NDIS reforms

The Mandarin, General News, 20/10/2026, Julian Bajkowski

If there's one Australian Public Service leadership role that's going to be less publicly popular than the Australian Taxation Office's attempt to remove taxpayer subsidies to banks by saying 'no' to top-price credit card payments, the reform of the National Disability Insurance Scheme must surely be one of them.

Read More

Back to Top

PRIMARY CARE

We need new health remedy

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/10/2026, Genevieve Holding, Page 3

Pressures on patient care and workforce shortages require "an independent, system-wide investigation" says a peak medical professional body who on Tuesday urged the Tasmanian government to establish a formal Commission of Inquiry into the public health system. Australian Medical Association Tasmanian branch (AMA Tas) president Dr Meg Creely said the term "crisis" had continued on for "decades" in relation to the state's healthcare system and that the only way to improve the health system was to review it as a whole.

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

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Top End Medical opens doors to new Nhulunbuy GP clinic

Northern Territory News, Business News, 21/10/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 23

The opening of a new GP service in a remote Northern Territory community was greeted with welcoming smiles from staff and families last week. Top End Medical Centre Nhulunbuy opened its doors for the first time on Monday, October 12, from Nhulunbuy Community Health Centre.

Also reported by: Northern Territory News (Online)

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Specialists can appeal errors on fee website

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Page 3

Specialists will be given a formal pathway to challenge fee information published about them on the Federal Government's revamped Medical Costs Finder, following changes to legislation passed by Parliament. The names of all specialists along with their fees and likely out-of-pocket costs will be published on the website in a major revamp expected later this year or early next year.

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'Victim-blaming a whistleblower'

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 14

The elected president of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians will remain banned from taking office for another three months as she accuses the charity regulator now controlling the college of

unfairly singling her out. Dr Sharmila Chandran was due to become president on 18 May, but just 10 days before, the Australian Charities and Not-forprofits Commission stepped in.

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'Some patients may never be seen'

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Jamie Thannoo, Page 13

Non-urgent patients referred for a specialist outpatient appointment in Tasmania may "never realistically reach" the end of long hospital waiting lists, doctors are warning. AMA Tasmania said that it was hearing from alarmed hospital doctors who feared some category 3 patients were now unlikely to be seen by the health system.

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I can generate CPD hours by typing gibberish. What does that tell us?

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/10/2026, Craig Lilienthal

It has been almost three years since the Medical Board of Australia introduced the biggest shake-up in the history of CPD. Professional development is no longer about self-selected, didactic educational activities; the new regime now requires practitioners to focus more on self-reflection, reviewing outcomes and measuring performance.

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I've seen how unconscious bias blinds doctors. This infant's death is a warning

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/10/2026, Vivienne Tedeschi

Last month, a Victorian coroner called for a statewide electronic medical record with integrated trauma alerts after an eight-week-old baby was killed by his father after red flags were missed at multiple hospital presentations. Before his final presentation to hospital, the infant was presented to two different EDs and was also assessed through the state's virtual ED for a hole under his tongue.

Read More

Back to Top

POPULATION HEALTH

Selena Gomez believes addiction to nicotine vapes changed her voice

7News.com.au, General News, 20/10/2026, Smita Kunvarji

Singer and actress Selena Gomez has issued a stark warning about the possible dangers of vaping, as she believes her past nicotine addiction has changed her voice. [...] According to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, even though scientists and public health experts are still learning about e-cigarettes, they do not consider them safe.

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Work pregnancy discrimination 'widespread' in Australia

Daily Liberal, General News, 20/10/2026, Emily Woods

After being passed up for an associate principal role, a woman went on maternity leave to have her first baby. When she returned to work, she expected to go back to her role in leadership.

Also reported by: Northern Daily Leader (Online), Warrnambool Standard (Online), The Senior (Online), The Border Mail (Online)

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Connected Care rollout expands specialist maternity services across the Kimberley

National Indigenous Times, General News, 20/10/2026, Phoebe Solon

Women with high-risk pregnancies in the Kimberley are set to benefit from improved access to specialist antenatal care through a $450,000 telehealth project backed by the Western Australian

Government. The Connected Care project brings together the WA Country Health Service and Women and Newborn Health Service to connect regional patients with maternal-fetal medicine specialists at Perth's King Edward Memorial Hospital.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 20/10/2026, Angela Cox and Mark Ferguson

There's a new warning about a potentially deadly spring combination: thunderstorms and pollen. Australians are being urged to prepare now and shelter before wild weather hits, even if they've never been diagnosed with asthma.

Also reported by: Channel 7 (Brisbane), Channel 7 (Adelaide), Channel 7 (Melbourne), Channel 7 (Perth)

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Back to Top

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Wrong on abortion

Herald Sun, General News, 21/10/2026, Page 13

Melbourne's Catholic Archbishop, Peter A. Comensoli, has launched a scathing attack on Victoria's major political parties for enabling a "culture of death". Following bipartisan pledges to fully fund abortions for Victorian women, Archbishop Comensoli has condemned both Labor and the Coalition, alongside the Greens and One Nation, for championing policies that deliberately end human life.

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Culture of death is here, too

Herald Sun, General News, 21/10/2026, Peter Comensoli, Page 41

Australians were rightly horrified by the announced livestream execution of a convicted mass murderer. [...] In the past week, the Labor Party proudly announced that, if it were re-elected, Victorian taxpayers would cover the full cost of abortions for expectant mothers.

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Men like me with prostate cancer deserve truly specialised nurses

The Australian, General News, 20/10/2026, Tony Morrissey

For six weeks after being diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer, I refused to go to bed. I was terrified that if I fell asleep, I wouldn’t wake up.

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'Really traumatic': the postcode lottery of cancer care

Canberra Times, General News, 20/10/2026, Stephanie Gardiner

Nurse and midwife Victoria Turner went to her rural GP for prolonged fatigue and unexplained weight loss, only to be told she was experiencing symptoms of menopause and stress. After eight months of persistent issues, including changes in urinary habits, the 59-year-old insisted on a scan that ultimately revealed a large ovarian tumour in May 2020.

Also reported by: Shepparton News Online (Online), West Australian (Online), Newcastle Herald (Online), Illawarra Mercury (Online)

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Thunderstorm asthma warning issued as dangerous spring season approaches

7News.com.au, General News, 20/10/2026, Jennifer Bechwati

Australians are being urged to check their puffers and medication as experts warn of a dangerous thunderstorm asthma season ahead. Almost a decade after thunderstorm asthma killed ten Victorians, health authorities are raising the alarm about the dangerous combination of storms and pollen expected this spring.

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Action urged to stem OA impact

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 20/10/2026

A new analysis has projected that almost one billion people will be living with osteoarthritis by 2050, up from about 600 million in 2023, with researchers calling for stronger health policy action to arrest the growing global disability burden.

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More Aussies at risk of heart attack and stroke, study finds

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 20/10/2026

Australia's updated cardiovascular disease risk calculator is identifying substantially more Australians aged 45–74 as being at "intermediate" risk of heart attack and stroke, according to new analysis published in the Medical Journal of Australia. The insights could provide patients and their GPs with a valuable opportunity to act early and prevent cardiovascular events.

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PBAC push to lift antidepressant prescribing restrictions

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, General News, 20/10/2026

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) is calling for a shakeup to the way 14 common antidepressants are prescribed, as the class of drugs continue to be one of the most used in Australia. Following its latest meeting , the PBAC is proposing changes to PBS restrictions for select low-cost antidepressants to support broader PBS-subsidised access 'consistent with contemporary Australian clinical practice'. This also considers the estimated financial impact to the PBS, of which full details have not been released.

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More Australians at 'intermediate' risk of CVD: Study

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, General News, 20/10/2026

More than twice the number of Australians aged 45–74 are at 'intermediate' risk of heart attack and stroke than previously estimated, while those considered at 'high' risk have almost halved, according to a new study based on data using the updated cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk calculator. The researchers from Australian National University (ANU) say their findings also mean one in three people in Australia could benefit from preventive CVD medications, providing GPs and their patients 'a valuable opportunity' to help prevent cardiovascular events.

Read More

Back to Top

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Knee pain persuades pioneer to retire

Sydney Morning Herald, Sport, 21/10/2026, Shayne Hope, Page 35

Australian basketball trailblazer Isaac Humphries has announced his retirement, citing a degenerative knee injury as the reason behind his "incredibly difficult" decision. [...] The 28-year-old has spoken publicly about struggles with his sexuality and mental health issues, as well as surviving a suicide attempt.

Also reported by: Age (Melbourne), 7News.com.au (Online)

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Seniors unmask hidden autism

Herald Sun, General News, 21/10/2026, Darcy Fitzgerald, Page 17

Victorian grandmother Kim Henderson was 60 years old when she received her autism and ADHD diagnosis. "I wanted to understand why I was the way I was.

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

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Vital help to fight crippling disorder

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 21/10/2026, Jess Adamson, Page 16

Health Minister Blair Boyer yesterday toured the construction site of SA's new Statewide Eating Disorder Service at the Repat Hospital Precinct in Daw Park. He announced commencement of the final stage of the $13m project, with completion on track for August next year.

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Back to Top

IMMUNISATION

Dengue vaccine arrives

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Page 4

The first dengue fever vaccine has arrived in Australia after a fouryear wait, with ATAGI advising it can be used more widely than in other countries. The live-attenuated tetravalent vaccine, Qdenga, became available for GP practices to order on 1 October.

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Travel health: preparing Australians for overseas travel

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Jala Moushi, Page 43

International travel brings excitement and opportunity, but it can also expose travellers to a range of health risks. [...] While vaccination is an important component of travel medicine, an effective pre-travel consultation extends well beyond determining which vaccines are required for a particular destination.

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Covid vax doesn’t change lingering smell and taste loss for most people, UQ study finds

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 20/10/2026

According to research led by the University of Queensland, Covid-19 vaccination doesn't alter persistent smell or taste problems in most people who have them after infection. Dr Daniel Hwang from UQ's Institute for Molecular Bioscience led an international research team investigating whether vaccination affects long-term sensory changes, "particularly among people who experienced persistent sensory changes after contracting the virus".

Read More

Back to Top

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

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Back to Top

HEALTH ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Science boost

Courier Mail, Business News, 21/10/2026, Chris Herde, Page 41

A $110m plus, state-of-the-art facility that will help turn promising scientific discoveries into real-world treatments opened in Brisbane this week, promising to accelerate the pathway from research to patient

care. ENTRI is one of Australia's first purpose-built cGMP (or rather current Good Manufacturing Practice) biomanufacturing facilities.

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Risky mix of medicines

Hobart Mercury, General News, 21/10/2026, Page 8

Millions of Australians are being dispensed medicines with overlapping adverse effect risks. Adelaide University research shows the most common overlapping risks are falls and fractures, affecting an estimated 2.3 million older Australians, followed by constipation (1.7 million) and kidney-related injury (more than 1.2 million).

Also reported by: Pharmacy Daily (Online), Northern Territory News (Darwin), Retail Pharmacy (Online)

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Channel 9, Nine News, 20/10/2026, Peter Overton

Misti, the University of Melbourne's start-up company, has developed a new aerosol technology to deliver respiratory medication and improve the efficacy of current therapies. Unlike mesh nebulisers that can clog, the digital inhaler uses sound waves to reduce drug particle size to match the patient's needs.

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

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Back to Top

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Pormpuraaw welcomes new $35 million health centre

National Indigenous Times, General News, 20/10/2026, Joseph Guenzler

Pormpuraaw's new $35.4 million Primary Health Care Centre has welcomed its first patients, with community members gathering for an open day on October 14. The event marked completion of the new building and included a blessing and a performance by Pormpuraaw's traditional dance group.

Read More

Back to Top

PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

E-scooter injuries decline

Courier Mail, General News, 21/10/2026, Taylah Fellows, Page 10

The state government has celebrated an early decline in the number of children presenting to hospitals with e-scooter injuries as proof its e-mobility crackdown is working. New data provided by the Queensland Children's Hospital shows a 60 per cent decline in child emobility injuries at its emergency department.

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Major boost for rural surgery

Cairns Post, General News, 21/10/2026, Tom Volling, Page 1

Patients will soon spend less time travelling on the highway and more time recovering close to home under a multi-milliondollar rural health expansion in the Far North. The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service has injected $3.6m to unlock more surgeries and specialist clinics in Atherton, Mareeba and Innisfail.

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Urgent surgery referrals missed in hospital email bungle

Australian Doctor, General News, 20/10/2026

More than a dozen patients have had timely surgeries delayed after thousands of emails were left unread in an inbox at a major hospital. An urgent review at Canterbury Hospital in Sydney, found that four patients needing urgent procedures and 12 with semi-urgent conditions had not been allocated dates for elective surgeries within clinically recommended timeframes as a result of the bungle.

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ABC, ABC News, 20/10/2026, Guy Stayner

The Australian Medical Association's Tasmania branch says a commission of inquiry into Tasmania's health system is the only way to fix its long-running crisis. The Tasmanian Government has already rejected the suggestion, saying it could cost tens of millions of dollars as it fends off criticism over cost-cutting.

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Back to Top

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Nurses face $2k parking squeeze as Redland axes free roadside parking

The Courier Mail, General News, 20/10/2026, Judith Kerr

Nurses at Redland Hospital face paying more than $2000 a year to park at work as a council crackdown threatens to remove free roadside parking used by hospital employees. Redland City Council will introduce no-stopping restrictions along Wellington St between South St and Coburg St West, next month forcing motorists who use the areas for parking to find alternatives.

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

Read More

Back to Top

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Plea to curb prescribing powers

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/10/2026, Clair Weaver, Page 8

The public safety risk of expanding pharmacists' powers to prescribe medicines is under the spotlight as new data reveals one in five people involved in prescription-related incidents suffer serious injury. Australia's largest medical indemnity insurer, Avant, which analysed 16,000 claims against medical practitioners over five years, is calling on governments to halt expansion of autonomous pharmacist prescribing across the country until a national safety framework is established.

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Docs call off strike, but write script for election campaigning

Herald Sun, General News, 21/10/2026, Shannon Deery, Page 12

Victorian doctors have called off a planned 12-hour strike after reaching an interim agreement with the Carroll government, including a 3 per cent pay rise for senior medical staff with a $2000 sign-on payment, and a 6 per cent increase for junior doctors, backdated to July. The 12-month agreement includes changes to workplace conditions, hours of work, doctor fatigue and the recording and payment of previously unpaid overtime for those in training.

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

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'You need to be bashed'

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Page 1

Heather Saxena dr Ka Chun Tse and his husband David Tse were preparing an early Christmas dinner for family when the attack began. About 10 strangers had gathered outside their home in Shepparton in rural Victoria.

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Guild targets Grattan's donors

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Paul Smith & Jamie Thannoo, Page 6

The Grattan Institute has revealed that the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has written to its supporters with "false and misleading claims" asking them to pull their support from the think tank. It followed the publication of a Grattan report called Future Pharmacy: A Better Deal for Patients and Taxpayers which said the guild had too much control over pharmacy at the expense of both patients and taxpayers.

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Liability fears over RN deals

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Ciara Seccombe, Page 8

Lawyers are seeking guidance from the Medical Board of Australia amid growing uncertainty about the medicolegal risks faced by doctors signing partnership agreements with RNs allowing them to prescribe. Formal written agreements with doctors or nurse practitioners are a mandatory part of the RN prescribing model and are meant to document when an RN can initiate and cease medications, along with the conditions and indications for which they can prescribe.

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Pharmacists shunning full-time roles

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 10

Employee pharmacists are opting for part-time and casual positions over full-time roles, data from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's 2025/26 Remuneration Report reveals. The report found slightly more than one-in-five (20.2%) pharmacists working in the community pharmacy have full-time positions.

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Tougher laws needed to fight pharmacy assaults: Guild

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 10

State and territory governments are being urged to implement tougher sanctions for perpetrators of violence against pharmacy workers, in response to an increase in physical and verbal attacks on staff. Speaking after the issue was highlighted by Nine's A Current Affair program on 5 September, Pharmacy Guild of Australia national president Professor Trent Twomey called premiers and chief ministers to mirror South Australian legislation that provides protections for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.

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More than access: the evolving role of pharmacists in UTI care

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 56

Since pharmacist-led urinary tract infection (UTI) services were first introduced, thousands of Australian women have chosen community pharmacies as their first point of care for uncomplicated UTIs. However, as the service becomes embedded in primary care, attention is turning from access alone to the realities of delivering best-practice UTI management, including recognising patients who need referral, supporting antimicrobial stewardship and helping prevent recurrent infections.

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Hundreds of NSW GPs cleared to assess, diagnose and prescribe for ADHD

Daily Telegraph Australia, General News, 21/10/2026, Hannah Farrow

Thousands of NSW families battling months-long waits and crippling specialist fees could soon get an ADHD diagnosis at their local GP, with almost 300 doctors now cleared to assess, diagnose and prescribe. The Daily Telegraph can reveal that nearly 300 GPs across NSW, with priority given to rural

and regional areas, have completed a state government training program and are now able to offer ADHD diagnosis appointments.

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

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Strike cancelled after doctors reach last-minute deal

Canberra Times, General News, 20/10/2026, Duncan Murray

A last-minute deal has averted a planned strike by doctors across Victoria but unions say they won't rest until they secure a longer-term solution. The Australian Medical Association of Victoria said on Tuesday it had reached a 12-month interim agreement with the Ben Carroll-led state Labor government.

Also reported by: The Border Mail (Online), West Australian (Online), Illawarra Mercury (Online), Northern Daily Leader (Online)

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Medical colleges draw line on ‘extreme fees' with new patient guide

Australian Doctor, General News, 21/10/2026, Carmel Sparke

Australia’s medical colleges have launched a fact sheet for patients to discuss costs with specialists as part of their ongoing bid to address “extreme fees”. The guidance outlines the patient’s rights and says they should expect to be given a written estimate of what they will need to pay.

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Healthy Bones Australia urges pharmacists to ‘join the Program for stronger bones’

Retail Pharmacy, General News, 20/10/2026

On World Osteoporosis Day (20 October 2026), Healthy Bones Australia is encouraging pharmacists to register their community pharmacy to participate in a unique Australia-wide osteoporosis health literacy initiative. Healthy Bones Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), Fred IT Group and Healthily have collaborated to offer a free Osteoporosis Medication Health Literacy Program for pharmacies that use Fred Dispense Plus software.

Read More

Back to Top

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Blood and iron: Tired women turn to injections

Australian Financial Review, General News, 21/10/2026, Euan Black, Page 8

Eight weeks ago, Christine Foggiato joined a rapidly growing segment of the Australian population: women who have received an iron infusion. Months of taking iron pills had failed to boost the 37-year-old recruiter's iron levels.

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Tacrolimus for eczema joins PBS

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Dr Louise Goodwin, Page 9

The eczema treatment tacrolimus will be listed on the PBS, benefitting an estimated 143,000 patients annually, the Federal Government has announced. Topical tacrolimus 0.1%, sold under the brand name aZematop, will be listed from 1 October for patients aged 16 and over with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis.

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Department flags drug substitution rules as doctors raise concerns

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 9

Pharmacists are being warned that they could find themselves in breach of legislation if they supply an alternative brand to a prescribed medication when a prescriber has signal not to substitute the drug. [...] "Under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) pharmacists may only substitute a prescribed brand in accordance with the National Health Act 1953 and PBS listing requirements," the spokesperson said.

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PBAC push to lift antidepressant prescribing restrictions

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, General News, 20/10/2026

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) is calling for a shakeup to the way 14 common antidepressants are prescribed, as the class of drugs continue to be one of the most used in Australia. Following its latest meeting , the PBAC is proposing changes to PBS restrictions for select low-cost antidepressants to support broader PBS-subsidised access 'consistent with contemporary Australian clinical practice'. This also considers the estimated financial impact to the PBS, of which full details have not been released.

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Clinicians to help shape AI use across St Vincent's network

Nursing Review, General News, 20/10/2026, Stefanie Schultz

One of the country’s largest healthcare providers has brought together clinical leaders from across its hospitals and aged care services to help guide the safe, ethical and effective use of AI in healthcare. St Vincent’s has established a national Artificial Intelligence Clinical Council that it says will play a key role in identifying, evaluating and scaling technologies that improve patient care and clinician wellbeing, while ensuring AI adoption remains grounded in clinical expertise and compassionate care.

Read More

Back to Top

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

AI used to identify MBS rorts

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Page 2

Federal health officials are worried about the growing use of AI by medical practices to maximise MBS billing, saying the technology could increase the "scale, speed or sophistication" of Medicare rorts. The concerns focus on practice management software that suggests possible MBS items following consults technology widely promoted as a way of helping practices bill accurately given the complexity of the schedule and its arcane rules.

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Waxing indignant over Medicare's warped logic

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Dr Craig Lilienthal, Page 16

During a recent holiday in sunny Queensland, I jumped into a swimming pool and emerged with blocked ears. I was able to secure an appointment with a local GP the next day, and he performed an ear toilet using a binocular microscope and microsuction.

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Would subsidising weight loss drugs make health care fairer?

Yahoo! News Australia, General News, 20/10/2026

GLP-1 medicines such as Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro have transformed the treatment of obesity, but access to them in Australia increasingly depends on something much less medical: whether you can afford them. Around half a million Australians are now using GLP-1 medicines.

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Back to Top

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Struck-off podiatrist posed as practitioner on TV

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 21/10/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 8

A former podiatrist has been convicted of posing as a registered healthcare practitioner after he treated patients and appeared on national television, warning viewers of the perils of pointy shoes while he was suspended. [...] "Many of the patients Mr Al Hamid treated were vulnerable, including children, individuals with intellectual disability who were non-verbal or had reduced capacity to communicate, and patients with impaired mobility," the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, which prosecuted Al Hamid, said yesterday.

Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online)

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AHPRA targets off-label prescribing

Australian Doctor, General News, 09/10/2026, Heather Saxena, Page 12

Doctors who prescribe unapproved peptides, medicinal cannabis and GLP-1 weight loss drugs off label could face an investigation without a complaint first being made about their conduct, AHPRA has warned. The watchdog launched new guidance last month aimed at tackling "reckless" prescribing off label or for unapproved medicines, especially following brief consultations with patients.

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Doc's remorse over ‘terrible experience'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 20/10/2026, Megan Haggan

A Chemist Warehouse pharmacy refused to dispense on a fraudulent script presented by a doctor in his own name. A doctor forged a prescription for the purpose of obtaining oxycodone for personal use, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal has heard.

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Back to Top

AUSTRALIAN CDC

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Back to Top

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

NSW Health warns of ‘alarming' rise in peptide-related harm

Nursing Review, General News, 20/10/2026

More than two people a day are being admitted to hospital in NSW because of illness or injury linked to unapproved peptide products that promise health benefits, prompting a fresh warning from authorities about the risks of substances promoted online. The latest NSW Health surveillance data shows there were 1180 emergency department presentations associated with peptide use between 1 July 2025 and 30 September 2026, highlighting a sharp escalation in peptide-related harm.

Also reported by: Pharmacy Daily (Online), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (Online)

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Back to Top

OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Pharmacy for party drugs?

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 94

The idea of housing drugs that young people purchase (not always young) before a night out, is as divisive as which drug they choose. All the positive role modelling and education in the world, as important as it is, cannot always protect our young people from experimenting with drugs.

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Back to Top

FOOD STANDARDS

Smarter sensing targeting food waste

Food & Beverage, General News, 01/10/2026, Page 36

Packaging plays an important role in protecting food and beverage products throughout the supply chain. A packaging fault that goes undetected, however, can lead to product spoilage, waste and unnecessary costs further down the line.

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Back to Top

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Back to Top

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