

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 23 October 2026

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

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Executive Summary

- **The Adelaide Advertiser** (page 19) reports the Federal Government has funded a record 2100 general practice training places for 2028, with at least half expected to train in rural and remote areas. Health Minister Mark Butler said GPs played a vital role in Australia's health system, and RACGP president said Australians deserve access to high-quality care. *Also reported by: Royal Australian College of General Practitioners*
- **The Adelaide Advertiser** (page 16) reports that an analysis by The Advertiser showed the annual national primary autism diagnoses increased by 92.1 per cent to more than 350,000 in the four years

to June 2026, with a spokeswoman for Autism SA saying this reflects changes in diagnostic criteria and improved detection.

- **The Australian** (page 7) reports that Andrew Chua has been elected as the new president of the Australian Psychological Society, amid two mothers accusing him of alleged intimidation over correspondence concerning the society's guidance on gender-related care for children and teens.
- **The Courier Mail** (page 9) reporting that according to the AIHW, hospitalisations related to e-scooters and e-bikes have more than tripled nationally in the last five years. *Also reported by: The Canberra Times*
- **The Australian Financial Review** (online) reports that Wesfarmers Health: Australia's Health Index 2026, based on nearly 600,000 Health Station checks across its pharmacy network showed rising rates of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, smoking and heart disease risk, however there was gradual improvements in Australians' health since the COVID-19 pandemic. *Also reported by: News24 Australia*
- **The Sydney Morning Herald** (online) reports that according to the Australian Immunisation Register, Queensland recorded Australia's lowest measles vaccination rates. Health experts said people "underestimate measles" and the increase in global measles cases has reversed decades of progress partly due to COVID-19 related immunisation disruptions.
- **The Adelaide Now** (online) reports that doctors described Modbury Hospital's emergency department as operating at 200 per cent over capacity, with a report detailing staff burnout and unsafe conditions for patients.
- **Health Services Daily** (online) reports the Medical Research Future Fund's 2026 Improving the Health of People with Disability grant opportunity will provide individual grants of up to $5 million, for research and innovation projects aimed at improving physical and mental health outcomes for people with disability. NDIS Minister Jenny McAllister said people with disability deserved an inclusive healthcare system that addressed their needs, and the funding would support high-quality research.

Minister Butler

Record GP training places

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 19

More than 2100 junior doctors have been offered general practice training places for 2028 a new record for the program. [...] Federal Health Minster Mark Butler said "GPs play a vital role in the health of our nation".

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Also reported by: *Royal Australian College of General Practitioners*, *The Medical Republic*

Fight continues for MPS

Grenfell Record & Bland Advertiser, General News, 22 Oct 2026, Madeline Blackstock, Page 1

The Weddin Health Council is continuing to push for funding for the long-awaited redevelopment of Grenfell's Multi-Purpose Health Service (MPS), with recent meetings involving federal representatives. [...] The council followed up with a Teams meeting on 15 October with a representative from Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office, with the same local representatives again outlining the case for investment.

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Hallie's powereul voice

Gunnedah Times, General News, 22 Oct 2026, Dylan Smith, Page 1

Twelve-year-old Gunnedah student Hallie Childs has addressed a Canberra event about her personal journey with hearing loss. [...] They are with federal Health Minister Mark Butler, back left.

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Also reported by: *Wee Waa News*, *WEB Gunnedah Times*

E-cigarettes, vapes: ‘Problematic waste item' calls for a proper disposal option amid fire concerns

Perth Now, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Sophie Gannon

The City of Stirling is pushing for a nationwide vape disposal scheme and program to safely collect illegal e-cigarettes amid concerns discarded devices are putting waste workers and infrastructure at risk of fires. […] Letters advocating for the scheme will be sent to WA Health Minister Meredith Hammat, WA Department of Health director general Dr Shirley Brown, Federal Health and Ageing Minister Mark Butler, and Therapeutic Goods Administration head Professor Tony Lawler.

Continue reading

Burwood urgent care clinic nears 8,000 free visits

Melbourne Insider, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Staff

Almost 8,000 people have received free urgent care at the Myhealth Burwood Medicare Urgent Care Clinic since opening in December 2025. […] Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing, visited the clinic in Sydney's Inner West.

Continue reading

Fees debate ignores unseen costs of care: specialists

The Limbic, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Emma Koehn

Australian clinicians say the federal government's war on high specialist fees overlooks the soaring yet often invisible costs of providing care, warning a focus on fee caps alone won't fix the nation's fractured health systems. A federal inquiry into access to and affordability of medical specialists is underway as Health Minister Mark Butler continues to argue out-of-pocket patient costs are a "barbecue stopper" issue causing significant delays to care.

Continue reading

About 500,000 part-pensioners risk losing private health under new proposal

The Senior, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Carla Mascarenhas

The federal government must exclude part-pensioners from its legislation on private health insurance, say National Seniors and the Greens, after the bill was reintroduced into Parliament. […] Health Minister Mark Butler reintroduced the same legislation into Parliament a day later, but The Senior understands that Butler is considering exempting pensioners.

Continue reading

Union calls for up to 35% pay hike

Human Resources Director, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Stephen Owens

Disability support worker Leanne Richards has a clear explanation for why her sector struggles to hold on to people. […] Health and Disability Minister Mark Butler pitched it as a workforce play.

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Minister McAllister

$30M in disability research funding up for grabs

Health Services Daily, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Helen Tobler

Around $30 million in research funding is available for research projects that improve the health and wellbeing and access to healthcare for people with disabilities. [...] NDIS minister Jenny McAllister said people with disability deserved a health system that listened to them, understood their needs, and gave them every opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

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Minister Rae

When life imitates satire

The Weekly Source, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, James Wiltshire

If the writers of the ABC's Utopia are looking for inspiration for their next season, they need look no further than Canberra last week. [...] The following day, Aged Care Minister Sam Rae announced an independent review.

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Assistant Minister McBride

Fight continues for MPS

Grenfell Record & Bland Advertiser, General News, 22 Oct 2026, Madeline Blackstock, Page 1

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Ruston: stop the SEM trials

The Medical Republic, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Holly Payne

Shadow health minister Anne Ruston wants to see an end to the hugely popular single employer model trials for rural generalists in training... so that they can be made a permanent feature of the health system. [...] Assistant rural health minister Emma McBride also spoke at the conference opening and did not escape Dr Swan's trademark grilling.

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Assistant Minister White

No relevant coverage.

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Special Envoy Repacholi

MP's men's health forum

Ipswich Tribune Today, General News, 22 Oct 2026, Page 11

Jets Leagues Club hosted a Men's Health and Wellbeing Forum this week, aiming to keep men connected, active and engaged in their communities. Organised by Blair MP Shayne Neumann with the Australian Government's Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi, the event was attended by local residents and representatives from a range of community groups, RSL Sub Branches, sporting clubs, and support and advocacy organisations.

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Dan Repacholi Leads Men's Health Forum

River FM, Marnie & Campo Breakfast Show, FM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Marnie & Campo

Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi led discussions on men's mental health at a forum held at Jets Leagues Club this week. Hosted by Federal Blair MP Shayne Neumann, the event gathered local residents, Men's Shed, RSL sub-branches, sporting organisations and support groups to highlight community connection and encourage men to seek help.

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Department

How a game of soccer is helping save lives

Ballarat Courier, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Nick Powell, Page 3

After a two-year hiatus, a way to kick stigma, isolation and a soccer ball has relaunched in Ballarat. [...] The program, funded by the federal Department of Health and Aged Care, operates across 30 locations in

Australia.

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Challenges facing seniors

South Burnett Today, General News, 22 Oct 2026, Maddison Richards, Page 13

Seniors gathered at the Nanango Services Club on Friday, 16 October, for a community forum focused on support services, advocacy and the challenges older people face when living in regional areas. [...] The housing research is funded by the Federal Government's Department of Health and Aged Care, with the findings to be compiled into a report for the department's consideration.

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PBAC backs GPs to initiate second-line ADHD medications

Australian Doctor, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Ciara Seccombe

GPs will be able to initiate second-line ADHD treatments atomoxetine and guanfacine when stimulants are not tolerated or ineffective if the latest PBAC recommendations are approved. [...] A spokesperson for the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has confirmed that the PBAC's recommendation would extend to any medical practitioner, including nurse practitioners.

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$30M in disability research funding up for grabs

Health Services Daily, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Helen Tobler

Around $30 million in research funding is available for research projects that improve the health and wellbeing and access to healthcare for people with disabilities. [...] NDIS minister Jenny McAllister said people with disability deserved a health system that listened to them, understood their needs, and gave them every opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

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Ageing and Aged Care

Aged care expansion plan lodged

Cairns Post, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Molly Frew, Page 1

Mareeba's population could soon have access to 67 more aged care beds after Respect Group lodged plans to double its facility. A development application proposes to expand the Mareeba Gardens aged care centre on MacRae St with 67 single bed and private ensuite rooms in a new two-storey building.

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Disability and Carers

Dodgy late disability expo organiser had tax troubles

Daily Telegraph, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Julie Cross, Page 11

A disability expo king who died suddenly while owing hundreds of businesses thousands of dollars, also had a debt with the taxman. It comes as news of River Night's death prompted an associate of his who was banned from working in the NDIS for allegedly "bullying" disabled people posted an online tribute.

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Also reported by: *Herald Sun*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Mercury*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Northern Territory News*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *Adelaide Now*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Cairns Post*

Autism diagnoses double in 4 years

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Karen Grace Prince & Updesh Tanwar, Page 16

The number of Australians diagnosed with autism has nearly doubled in four years. Analysis by The Advertiser has revealed annual national primary autism diagnoses surged by 92.1 per cent from just over 180,000 to more than 350,000 in the four years to June, 2026.

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

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Primary Care

Health Check: Despite a sickly Dr AI diagnosis, Healius flags higher earnings

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Tim Boreham

Pathology chain Healius (ASX:HLS) has affirmed its current-year earnings expectations, despite the unhelpful tendency of folk to consult Dr AI rather than their real-life GP. “Many Australians now rely on AI-generated summaries without consistently checking sources or clinical context,” Healius CEO Paul Anderson told the company’s AGM today.

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Also reported by: *Geelong Advertiser*, *The Courier Mail*, *Adelaide Now*, *Cairns Post*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *Northern Territory News*, *The Mercury*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*

In Practice: GP insights sought on breastfeeding medicine

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

This week’s In Practice also includes an opportunity for Victorian GPs to join a pre-election health debate, new guidance for mental health treatment plan referrals, and registrations open for the upcoming Clinical Update conference. GPs are invited to share their experiences of training and clinical practice breastfeeding and lactation medicine through a national survey.

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Population Health

E-scooter injuries soar

Courier Mail, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 9

The rate of people hospitalised in Australia due to e-scooters and ebikes has likely more than tripled over the past five years. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says it's hard to accurately count the number of hospitalisations linked to escooters and e-bikes because current data lumps them in with other similar forms of transportation.

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Also reported by: *Canberra Times*, *Shepparton News Online*, *Ballarat Courier*, *West Australian*, *Daily Mail UK*, *The Senior*, *Daily Liberal*, *Northern Daily Leader*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, *Bathurst Western Advocate*, *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser*, *Warrnambool Standard*, *The Border Mail*, *Newcastle Herald*, *Yahoo! News Australia*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Sunraysia Daily*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*

New scheme for easier access

Border Watch, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 16

A new portal will allow eligible South Australians to access SA Dental schemes vouchers easily. The new SA Dental Schemes Portal allows participating dentists to electronically process eligible claims for the General Dental Scheme (GDS) vouchers, fast tracking treatment for patients needing care.

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Weight-loss drugs, beauty craze fuelling Wesfarmers Health growth

Australian Financial Review, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Michael Smith

Wesfarmers says it will no longer deploy large amounts of capital into its health portfolio, despite Australians spending more than ever on weight-loss, wellness and cosmetic products at the conglomerate's pharmacies and beauty stores.

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Also reported by: *Australian Financial Review*, *News24 Australia*, *News24 Australia*

Scarborough Beach could be one step closer to smoke and vape-free zones as petition gains traction

West Australian, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Sophie Gannon

Designated smoke and vape-free areas at Scarborough Beach could be introduced under a community petition calling on the City of Stirling to create healthier public spaces for families and beachgoers. Organiser and mother of a young family Bethany Taylor launched the online petition, saying visitors should be able to enjoy the beach without exposure to second-hand smoke and vape emissions.

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Also reported by: *Kalgoorlie Miner*

Lifeblood is calling for donations as Australia's blood supply drops to critical levels

NEWS.com.au, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Ravisha Rajapaksha

It feels like everyone you know has had the same lingering cold for months. Now it's causing a problem far bigger than a few sniffles. Blood supplies have plummeted 60 per cent since June to their lowest level in just under a decade, according to Australian Red Cross Lifeblood.

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We must prepare entire cities for extreme heat. Our new study reveals how

Yahoo! News Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Nicky Morrison

In Australia, the days are growing longer and summer is fast approaching. But a very strong El Niño – a natural weather phenomenon that drives variations in temperature and winds across the Pacific – could make this summer a sweltering one.

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AIHW Data Shows Surge in E-Device Injuries

2CC, Canberra Live, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Leon Delaney

Interview with Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia, about Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data revealing a significant rise in e-scooter and e-bike injuries. Slevin noted hospitalisations more than tripled to 4,000 in 2024–25, disproportionately affecting teenage boys. He called for helmet use, improved data collection, and nationally consistent age regulations.

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Chronic Conditions and Screening

'Health test saved me'

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 2

If Brett Cook hadn't taken his own advice and got a health check, a brain aneurysm he didn't know he had could have proved fatal. "There was a very large possibility I could have had a stroke and passed away," he said.

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41k Aussies to face this

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 16

Ahead of Young Onset Dementia Awareness Day on October 24, Dementia Australia is calling for greater awareness of the condition and the specific challenges experienced by people living with it as well as their families and carers. Young onset dementia refers to dementia diagnosed between the ages of 18 and 64 years.

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Pope Leo Declared Cancer Free After Surgery

Channel 7, Seven News, TV, 22 Oct 2026, Peter Mitchell

Pope Leo has delivered his first address at the Vatican following lung cancer surgery, with doctors confirming he requires no further treatment after tests revealed the localised disease had not spread. With lung cancer killing around 9,000 Australians annually, health experts and Lung Foundation Australia's Mark Brooke emphasised that early detection and screening remain vital.

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Rise in Bowel Cancer Among Younger People

Channel 9, Nine News, TV, 22 Oct 2026, Peter Overton

A new report has revealed a disturbing rise in early onset bowel cancer in New South Wales, with cases diagnosed before age 50 increasing by 72% over two decades. Julien Wiggins, CEO of Bowel Cancer Australia, noted the cause remains unknown and called for revamping stool testing methods. Wait times for follow-up colonoscopies also vary widely across health districts.

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

New chief's gender-care 'intimidation'

The Australian, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Rachel Baxendale, Page 7

Parents of gender-distressed children say they are deeply concerned after the Australian Psychological Society elected as its next president a board member who has been accused of intimidation by two mothers. In April, The Australian revealed the APS was reviewing Andrew Chua's correspondence, after he suggested on behalf of the society that a mother who had expressed concern about the organisation's controversial position on gender-related care may have been preventing her son from receiving appropriate support.

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Also reported by: *The Australian*

Many pitfalls in applying expert risk assessment

The Australian, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Clive Williams, Page 11

In Australia, two overlapping approaches are used to identify and manage people who may pose a threat to politicians and other public figures. [...] The second involves Fixated Threat Assessment Centres, which bring police, mental-health professionals and other relevant agencies together to assess concerning behaviour and intervene where necessary.

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Mum's horror: I didn't know my own baby

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Lauren Novak, Page 21

When Elise Howie's daughter was about six days old, the new mum suddenly didn't recognise her newborn. "I clearly remember looking at her and thinking 'I don't know who that is'," the 35-year-old recalls.

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Also reported by: *Daily Telegraph Australia*

How the answer to healing came from helping others

Canberra Times, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Zac Braxton-Smith, Page 3

Ananya Banerjee had tried just about everything to improve her mental health and was on the brink, but a conversation with a teenager gave her the strength to keep going. "I was volunteering at Fearless Women as a mentor," Ms Banerjee said.

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Also reported by: *Canberra Times*

Helen Haines' attack exposes missing mental health safety nets

The Australian, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Natasha Robinson

An allegedly targeted attack on a politician in Australia sends shockwaves through the community that go to the heart of the safe functioning of our democracy. [...] But the details that are emerging about the accused man, Brendan Nugent, also raise potential critical questions about mental healthcare in this country.

Continue reading

Helen Haines repeatedly warned of broken mental health system in Indi before alleged Wangaratta attack

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Rebecca Borg

Helen Haines knew there was a mental health crisis at Wangaratta's doorstep. "I've spent 35 years working in the hospitals of North East Victoria. I know what it looks like when we fail to properly fund our mental health services," she said.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Adelaide Now*, *Cairns Post*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Northern Territory News*, *The Mercury*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *The Courier Mail*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*

Run club founder defends strict ban on headphones and Strava

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Gabriela Amoils

A running club founder has sparked heated online debate after introducing two strict rules for attendees: no headphones and no fitness-tracking apps. Brooke McIntosh, founder of the "Just One More" movement, posted a video standing on a park bench addressing a crowd of runners with her core ground rules: leave the music behind and don't worry about logging the session on Strava or tracking apps.

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Also reported by: *NEWS.com.au*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Cairns Post*, *Adelaide Now*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *The Courier Mail*

Mums seek help seven times before psychosis diagnosis

Canberra Times, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Emily Woods

A new mother had been crying for days and then suddenly believed her breast milk was poisoning her baby. "I just all of a sudden knew that my breast milk was black, and it was poisoning Charlie," Elise Howie told AAP.

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Also reported by: *Shepparton News Online*, *West Australian*, *Daily Mail UK*, *Ballarat Courier*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser*, *The Senior*, *The Border Mail*, *Warrnambool Standard*, *Bathurst Western Advocate*, *Northern Daily Leader*, *Daily Liberal*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Newcastle Herald*

Working Adelaide mother who lived in car calls for more homelessness support

ABC Online, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

Adelaide mother Amira lived in her car for 10 months following a relationship breakdown. [...] Olav Nielssen, a member of The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, has been working to provide long-term housing for people with chronic mental illness.

Continue reading

Seeing a psychologist is becoming more unequal – and our map shows the gap

Yahoo! News Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Danusha Jayawardana

When you're struggling with your mental health, visiting your GP for a mental health treatment plan can be an important first step. These plans indicate a diagnosed mental health condition (such as depression or anxiety) and allow you to access up to ten subsidised psychotherapy (or "talk therapy") sessions through Medicare's Better Access Initiative.

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Australian Scientists Identify Circadian Depression Subtype

Channel 9, Nine News, TV, 21 Oct 2026, Melissa Downes & Joel Dry

Australian scientists have identified circadian depression, a new subtype linked to the body clock that affects about one in four individuals with severe depression. Common symptoms include waking exhausted, seasonal illness patterns and being a night owl. Experts suggest patients may respond better to sleep-focused interventions such as melatonin and light therapy than to traditional treatments.

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Surge in Young Australians' Mental Health Distress

News24, Paul Murray Live, TV, 21 Oct 2026, Paul Murray

Interview with University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre Co-Director of Health & Policy Ian Hickie about the need for integrated mental health systems. Paul Murray highlighted rising mental health issues across Australia, noting Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data that showed mental health disorders among people aged 12 to 24 rose from around 25% in 2007 to almost 40% in 2021. Hickie stated that Australia requires comprehensive solutions combining healthcare, social housing and community support rather than standalone government programs.

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Also reported by: *News24*

Study Finds Postpartum Psychosis Diagnosis Delays

SBS, World News Australia, TV, 22 Oct 2026, Janice Petersen

An Australian-first study from Flinders University has found mothers with postpartum psychosis make an average of seven attempts to seek help before receiving an accurate diagnosis. Researcher Donna McMahon identified significant communication gaps across the healthcare system. PANDA CEO Julie Borninkhof stated the study highlights the need to raise awareness among health practitioners to prevent women falling through support gaps.

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Study Identifies New Circadian Depression Subtype

2GB, Breakfast, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Ben Fordham

An Australian-led study of over 11,000 participants has identified circadian depression, a new subtype driven by body clock disruptions. Professor Ian Hickie stated that disturbed body clocks drive the condition, which resists traditional treatments and affects women in 80% of cases. Managing sleep schedules and reducing evening light exposure can assist in treating it.

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Canberra Health Services Launches Peer Pathways Programme

ABC Radio Canberra, Mornings, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Saskia Mabin

In an interview with Genevieve Whitlam, Director of Lived Experience, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services, Whitlam discussed Canberra Health Services launching the Peer Pathways program in adult inpatient mental health units. The newly launched team employs peer workers, a lived-experience manager, and an integration support officer to support consumers and clinicians during challenging admissions.

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Immunisation

Global study prompts warning over Queensland's falling vaccination rates

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Courtney Kruk

Measles cases rose globally by 40 per cent in the years after the COVID pandemic, with under-resourced health systems and disruptions to vaccine scheduling contributing to ongoing outbreaks of the disease. The study by University of Queensland researchers, published on Wednesday, examined cases, deaths and vaccine gaps in children under five across more than 200 countries and territories, and prompted a warning from a local expert about a concerning drop in vaccination rates here.

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Health Systems Strategies

No relevant coverage.

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Health Economics & Research

Delivering something wonderful for WA mums

West Australian, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Rhianna Mitchell, Page 16

Perth will become home to a global research institute for women and babies, aimed at bringing together worldleading scientists, universities and hospitals to tackle devastating health issues such as preterm birth and endometriosis. Led by WA's renowned Women and Infants Research Foundation, the WIRF Global Institute for Women and Babies will aim to make breakthroughs in women's health, pregnancy and newborn care.

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Amplia uncovers new clue in pancreatic cancer drug trial

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Murray Ward

Amplia Therapeutics has delivered a sweeping update on its four-front clinical assault with lead drug narmafotinib, targeting some of the toughest cancers, including pancreatic, ovarian and lung cancer. Headlining the progress snapshot is an intriguing new clue from its key pancreatic cancer trial, suggesting the drug’s effectiveness may not depend on whether a patient’s tumour carries certain cancer-driving mutations in the KRAS gene.

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Study Finds Weight Loss Drug Treats Apnoea

Channel 9, Nine News, TV, 21 Oct 2026, Melissa Downes & Joel Dry

A major international trial led by Professor Ron Grunstein from the Woolcock Institute has found that weight loss drug retatrutide effectively treats obstructive sleep apnoea. The medication achieved a 17 to 22 per cent body weight loss over 80 weeks, helping reduce sleep apnoea severity and potentially mitigating associated risks like diabetes, heart attacks and strokes.

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Role of AI in Stroke Treatment

Radio National, Breakfast, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Sally Sara

In an interview with Dr Atul Gupta from health tech company Philips, he discussed utilising artificial intelligence to improve stroke care. He highlighted that clinically tested AI tools are speeding up treatment processes, including in Gold Coast hospitals. He discussed how artificial intelligence and robotics can expand access to healthcare, such as enabling remote stroke thrombectomies and improving maternal health diagnostics in underserved regions.

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Also reported by: ***Radio National***

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First Nations Health

Films & posters in mother tongue boost vax uptake

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Rosa Griffith, Page 4

A vaccination program targeting Aboriginal men and boys has been delivered in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, using traditional language and male nurses to improve health literacy in a culturally safe and appropriate way. The Wati Pirniku Vaccination Uptake Program was rolled out in March, with informative films and posters released in Ngaanyatjarra language to combat the demographic's historically low immunisation rate.

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No government help? No worries, as $6.5m First Nations health clinic opens

The Border Mail, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Chelsea Wilson

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) has officially opened its first Wodonga clinic without any government funding. After 19 years leading the health service, AWAHS chief executive David Noonan has seen his vision of a Wodonga site realised.

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Young Indigenous entrepreneur makes waves with innovative sunscreen business

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Brendan Foster

Like many First Nations small businesses, budding young Indigenous entrepreneur Garnet Brennan faced significant economic barriers when attempting to access finance. [...] "I was able to mix the modern ideologies of insect repellent with traditional Indigenous botanicals to create an Indigenous repellent sunscreen," he said.

Continue reading

West Moreton Health sets priorities for First Nations care

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Joseph Guenzler

West Moreton Health has launched its revised First Nations Health Equity Strategy, outlining priorities to improve healthcare access, eliminate racism and strengthen culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Elders, community members, staff and partner organisations gathered for the launch at Ripley Health Services (Moodoombar Dabbil) during the health service's NAIDOC showcase and 50 Years of Deadly celebrations.

Continue reading

'We Win When We Yarn About Gambling' campaign launched in the Kimberley

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Phoebe Solon

Aboriginal communities across the Kimberley are being encouraged to yarn about gambling harm through a new community-led awareness campaign funded by the WA Government. The We Win When We Yarn About Gambling campaign was launched this week, with resources developed alongside Aboriginal communities and Kimberley health services to reduce stigma and encourage people to seek support.

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Public Hospital and Health Reform

The only long-term fix to resolve the health blame game is for one level of government to take charge

Hobart Mercury, General News, 23 Oct 2026, John Cleary, Page 18

The responsibility for, and the delivery of, health care in Australia is a confused mess. It is time to fix our broken health system once and for all.

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Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

No relevant coverage.

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Health Workforce

Top quality care locally

Border Watch, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Page 17

Residents of the Limestone Coast needing specialist head, neck, or jaw procedures do not need to face lengthy and costly trips to Adelaide, with Dr Shreya Tocaciu at Limestone Coast Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (LICOMS) offering high-level specialist care, right here in Mount Gambier/Berrin. Dr Tocaciu is a highly qualified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon, a unique surgical specialty operating at the intersection of medicine, dentistry, and facial surgery.

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Damning report reveals Modbury Hospital emergency department operating at 200 per cent capacity

Adelaide Now, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Evangeline Polymeneas

Frontline doctors say working at Modbury Hospital is a “daily s**t show”, describing conditions as “demoralising” as its emergency department runs at 200 per cent over capacity. A damning report by the SA Salaried Medical Officers Association (SASMOA) found patients spend their days waiting in emergency while staff are at breaking point and urgent calls for assistancego unanswered.

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

Qld Health engages with nurses union after staff shortage in cardiac unit

ABC Online, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Emily Anderson

Cardiothoracic surgery at a major north Queensland hospital was paused for 10 days last month due to staff shortages, resulting in patients who needed urgent surgery being flown to Brisbane. Townsville Hospital and Health Services (THHS) says it is now engaging with the nurses union over concerns nurses were being inappropriately called into work at the cardiothoracic unit, leading to fatigue-related leave.

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With the rise and rise of subspecialists, do we need to start making 'rural generalists' for the city?

Australian Doctor, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Louise Burns

"I'm sorry, I don't deal with headaches." This was the response I received after referring my patient to a neurologist.

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Rural health commissioner gives partial blessing for prescribing

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Chris Brooker

The Pharmacy Board of Australia is being urged to drop plans to give the green light for pharmacists to prescribe Schedule 8 products as part of its proposed endorse. In April 2026 the Board put forward two options.

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MDO calls for halt to further pharmacist prescribing after analysis reveals the medicolegal risks being taken

Australian Doctor, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Heather Saxena

Avant is urging health ministers to halt further expansion of autonomous pharmacist prescribing until safety standards are in place, following a new report on the medicolegal risks involved. Following an analysis of some 16,000 medicolegal and regulatory complaints against doctors, it has expressed particular concern about pharmacists prescribing for conditions that typically require a doctor's diagnosis — such as COPD and asthma — saying that the medicolegal implications show it should be permanently off limits.

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Avant calls for moratorium on prescribing expansion

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

Australia's largest medical indemnity provider, Avant, is urging governments to pause any further expansion of autonomous prescribing until a consistent national framework is in place. The call came this week with its release of a new analysis, which it describes as the 'first of its kind in Australia', looking into the scale of risks linked to prescribing.

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NSW GPs Complete ADHD Treatment Training

ABC, ABC News, TV, 21 Oct 2026, Jeremy Fernandez

Hundreds of general practitioners in New South Wales have completed training allowing them to diagnose and treat ADHD. Around 70 per cent of the 300 trained GPs will be based across regional areas. Additionally, another 300 doctors are scheduled to begin their training next month.

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GPs Train to Treat ADHD Across NSW

ABC Radio Sydney, Evenings, AM Radio, 21 Oct 2026, Emma Crowe

In an interview with Dr Alison Poulton, academic paediatrician from the University of Sydney, she discussed training GPs to prescribe and treat ADHD. With 300 GPs trained and 300 more starting next month, 600 doctors will soon deliver care across New South Wales. Poulton noted this addresses specialist capacity shortages, though some practitioners worry about increased workloads.

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Technology Assessment and Access

Allowing clozapine access ‘closer to home'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, Chris Brooker

PBAC recommends change to facilitate patients obtaining supply from a community pharmacy sooner after discharge, rather than having to attend a hospital pharmacy.

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Medicare Benefits and Digital Health

No relevant coverage.

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Benefits Integrity

Rogue nurse is struck off list

Hobart Mercury, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Amber Wilson, Page 7

A former registered nurse at the Hobart Repatriation Hospital has been disqualified from practice after stealing a patient's bank card and taking $1000 from their account plus some 61 offences committed off

duty involving drugs, assault and fraud. Alison Smith, 50, had already surrendered her registration and took no part in the proceedings to remove her from the nursing profession.

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The secret sacking

Launceston Examiner, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Matt Maloney, Page 1

An overseas-trained doctor is poised to secure a compensation payout from the state government after he was unlawfully sacked behind his back. Dr Payamreza Azimisolisian had been employed to work at the Launceston General Hospital (LGH) on a two-year contract in late 2023 before the hospital's senior leadership accused him of fraud and revoked his contract.

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Also reported by: *Burnie Advocate*

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Australian CDC

Enough to make you sick

Herald Sun, General News, 23 Oct 2026, Ryan Bourke, Page 1

A new report has exposed the former Andrews government's staggering $40bn Covid bill and shocking examples of waste, with the state's AuditorGeneral finding $777.2m alone was written off on expired masks and other personal protective equipment. The colossal sum includes $72.5m in incorrectly paid Covid-19 grants written off as unrecoverable, while Labor also abandoned investigations into another $253m worth of high-risk grants payments.

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

Opposition Criticises Festival Pill Testing Rollout

2GB, Mornings, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Mark Levy

In an interview with Shadow Health Minister in New South Wales Sarah Mitchell, discussion focused on the first permanent New South Wales government funded pill testing system. She discussed opposition to government-funded pill testing at music festivals, arguing that the initiative provides a false sense of security. She stated that $4.3 million in taxpayer funding should instead be directed towards drug prevention, diversion programs, and school education regarding illegal drugs.

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Festival Pill Testing Sparks Mixed Reaction

2GB, Drive, AM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Clinton Maynard

In an interview with Mark Morri, crime editor at the Daily Telegraph, he discussed results from a festival pill testing initiative at Sydney Olympic Park. Just over 250 of 65,000 attendees had drugs analysed,

uncovering dangerous MDMA levels and unexpected substances. Morrie noted police concerns that the $4.3 million program sends a mixed message regarding drug safety.

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Therapeutic Goods Administration

TrivarX takes key step towards trial of next-gen cancer imaging technology

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

Syntro Health will undertake laboratory formulation activities for the Stabl-Im investigational product, with TrivarX (ASX:TRI) targeting first patient enrolment in Q1 CY27. [...] The company operates Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)-licensed cGMP facilities and supports pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies undertaking Phase I through Phase IV clinical studies.

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Also reported by: *Cairns Post*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *The Mercury*, *The Courier Mail*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Adelaide Now*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *Northern Territory News*

'Dangerous': Warrnambool doctor raises alarm over online 'wellness cult'

Warrnambool Standard, Internet, 22 Oct 2026, William Stanley

An online trend has made its way to the south-west, prompting a warning from a Warrnambool doctor that users could damage vital organs. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is responsible for regulating the safety and quality of therapeutic goods in Australia.

Continue reading

MS-2 Step gets TGA green light for missed miscarriage

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

GPs can now offer patients greater access to medical abortion and more options for miscarriage care after the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved two major changes to a commonly used abortion medication. MS-2 Step (mifepristone and misoprostol) is now approved for medical abortion up to 70 days' gestation, extending the previous approved use by seven days, as well as being newly indicated to medically manage missed miscarriage up to 70 days of gestation.

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Editor's Choice: Hada Labo develops sunscreen just for Australians

Pharmacy Daily, Internet, 22 Oct 2026

Hada Labo Tokyo has entered the sun care category with the launch of four new SPF 50 and SPF 50 sunscreens. Developed by Mentholatum Australasia to meet the strict requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration, each product was designed specifically for Australian conditions.

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National Campaign Targets Penicillin Allergy Testing

ABC Radio Darwin , Breakfast, FM Radio, 22 Oct 2026, Jess Ong

In an interview with clinical immunologist Professor Michaela Lucas, a new national awareness campaign launched by the National Allergy Council is promoting penicillin allergy testing. Lucas explained that 90% of tested individuals are not actually allergic, warning that false allergy labels lead to unnecessary antibiotic avoidance, longer hospital stays, and superbug risks. The campaign also educates GPs.

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Office of Drug Control

No relevant coverage.

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Food Standards

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AICIS

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