

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Sunday, 25 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 **Sunday Age** (page 1) reports that homicides involving people experiencing psychosis in Victoria have increased fivefold, with researchers warning of critical gaps in mental health care. The Australian Society of Psychiatrists will urge Federal Health Minister Mark Butler to fund a national project tracking mental health service demand. *Also reported by: Geelong Advertiser, ABC Online*
- The **Sunday Canberra Times** (page 3) reports that ACT nurses and midwives are threatening industrial action over pay and working conditions, with the union criticising the government's failure to address staffing and workforce planning concerns.

- The **Sunday Age** (page 4) reports that Victorian emergency departments are facing mounting pressure from rising patient numbers, staff shortages and treatment delays, with doctors warning the public hospital system is reaching breaking point.
- The **Sunday Herald Sun** (page 4) reports that Victorian Labor will pledge $1.5 billion to boost 12 hospital emergency departments, promising 1500 additional health workers, 250 beds and waiting time reductions of up to 20 per cent.
- The **Sun Herald** (page 6) reports that a major Australian-led trial found adding the drug darolutamide to standard prostate cancer treatment reduced the risk of relapse and spread by 58 per cent in high-risk patients.
- The **Sun Herald** (page 6) reports that the NSW Government will spend $17 million to accelerate endoscopy procedures after a preliminary audit identified at least 20,000 overdue tests in public hospitals, raising concerns about delayed cancer diagnoses.
- The **Sunday Telegraph** (page 8) reports that hospitalisations involving e-scooters, e-bikes and similar transport have more than tripled in five years, with Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data showing over 4000 cases in 2024–25.
- The **Sunday Mail Brisbane** (page 11) reports that the Federal Government will deliver eight new or upgraded Medicare Mental Health Centres in Queensland as part of a $267.3 million national investment to expand access to free mental health care.
- **ABC Online** reports that First Nations Australians face significant barriers to kidney transplantation, with researchers highlighting systemic discrimination and limited access to specialist care, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Minister Butler

Psychotics kill 45 in two years

Sunday Age, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 1

Homicides committed by people experiencing psychosis in Victoria have quintupled, jumping from four or five per year a decade ago to more than 20, in what researchers say is a "dangerous sign" that gaps in the mental health system are allowing preventable tragedies. [...] The psychiatrists' society will write to federal Health Minister Mark Butler tomorrow with an urgent proposal to fund a national "observatory" project, tracking mental health service demand to help fix the "fragmented, siloed" system.

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Also reported by: *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Brisbane Times*, *WA Today*

Top five candidates to run the Australian Digital Health Agency

Health Services Daily, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Jeremy Knibbs

Listicles are fun right? [...] I'm trying to make a point to Blair Comley and Mark Butler.

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Minister McAllister

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Department

Top five candidates to run the Australian Digital Health Agency

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Ageing and Aged Care

Seniors rebate cut likely to prove a false economy

Sunday Telegraph, Business News, 25 Oct 2026, Noel Whittaker, Page 80

Private health insurance rebates are back in the headlines, with a fierce political battle unfolding in Canberra. Labor wants to cut the rebate for Australians aged 65 and over; the Coalition and Greens oppose the move.

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

Get more exercise? Mine's a daily dash

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Peter Goers, Page 63

Our elders wisely told us one should always have doctors and accountants younger than oneself. Otherwise, they retire or expire and you lose crucial relationships.

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Disability and Carers

No relevant coverage.

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Primary Care

Alcohol harm and regulatory reform

Sunday Examiner, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 30

After representing the AMA at the community alcohol harm forum in Hobart, convened in response to proposed alcohol regulatory reforms in Tasmania, it was clear that many organisations share the same concern: reform should reduce alcohol-related harm, not make alcohol cheaper, more visible or more available. The message from doctors is straightforward.

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Population Health

E-bikes land us in the ED

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 8

The rate of e-scooter and ebike- related injuries leading to hospitalisation in Australia is thought to have more than tripled in the past five years. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says transportation

injuries, which include escooters and bikes, were responsible for more than 4000 hospitalisations in 2024-2025 compared with just under 1300 in 2019-2020.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Mail Adelaide*

Horror DV stats against women

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 14

In 2024-25, almost nine in 10 hospitalisations in Australia involving treatment for assault by a partner were for females. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also says half (49 per cent) of hospitalisations in 2024-25 that involved treatment for assault, and a perpetrator was specified, were due to family and domestic violence (FDV).

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Chronic Conditions and Screening

Cancer treatment hope to help men live longer

Sun Herald, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 6

A major Australian-led prostate cancer trial found a hormoneblocking drug dramatically reduced the risk of relapse among very high-risk men, prompting calls to change the standard of care for these patients and potentially save thousands of lives. Adding the medication darolutamide (Nubeqa) to standard therapies for men with aggressive or treatment-resistant prostate cancer led to a 58 per cent drop in the cancer relapsing and spreading to other organs and tissue four years later, the researchers of the global phase 3 trial reported.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Sunday Age*

Brotherly love aids research into sneaky rare variant

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 18

It's only been seven weeks since Andrew Manettas said goodbye to his sister Jacinda. [...] Jacinda's life stolen by mucinous ovarian adenocarcinoma, a rare ovarian cancer that accounts for just three per cent of cases.

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How cancer fought to steal away these girls

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Kaitlyn Hudson-O'Farrell, Page 18

Before they could legally drive a car, vote or take a sip of alcohol, ovarian cancer left these girls fighting for their lives. Tirion Wilkinson, 14, and Chelsea Regan, 22, are two of a growing demographic of younger women and girls whose lives have been touched by this disease researchers still don't fully understand why.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Mail Adelaide*

MND gets $11.4m to find cure

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 28

NSW scientists hunting for a cure to motor neurone disease have scored a $11.4m war chest. Eighteen research and patient care initiatives across NSW will share in the funding, unveiled as part of charity FightMND's massive $30.6m national blitz across 69 projects.

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Storm asthma alert

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 11

Asthma sufferers in East Gippsland are being warned to be on alert today, with the Department of Health declaring a high risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma. "The combination of forecast high grass pollen levels and a certain type of thunderstorm with strong winds means that there is a chance that a large number of people may develop asthma symptoms over a short period of time," the warning reads.

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Eye on the MND prize

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Sarah Booth, Page 25

Exclusive Optic treatment gets funding to fight killer disease Neale Daniher's legacy continues to reach new heights with crucial MND research set to receive a $27m boost, including work on a promising experimental drug. The Fight MND charity cofounded by the late AFL legend will announce its largest round of grants in history on Sunday thanks to the generosity of donors to beloved fundraisers, including the Big Freeze.

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Also reported by: *Sunday Mail Adelaide*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *The Mercury*, *Northern Territory News*, *Adelaide Now*, *The Courier Mail*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*

AIS sparks new brain health debate

Sunday Tasmanian, Sport, 25 Oct 2026, Julian Linden, Page 73

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has released new guidelines on actions it says athletes can take to protect their long-term brain health. The AIS has trumpeted its recommendations as a "message of hope" to counter the "doom and gloom" around increases in degenerative brain disease Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in amateur and professional footballers.

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'Second chance at life'

Sunday Territorian, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Lottie Hood, Page 3

Two words to Siri on his phone that is all that stood between Australian Kieran Bush living to see his 42nd birthday or becoming a dire statistic. In the moments before, the born and bred Darwinite was tempted to sleep off his feelings of extreme hunger and nausea. [...] The Heart Foundation, where Kieran has recently

become a heart health advocate, said cardiovascular disease (CVD), which included heart attacks, strokes and heart failure, killed one in four Australians.

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Vaccine cuts melanoma death risk by 42 per cent

Ballarat Courier, General News, 24 Oct 2026, Page 18

Moderna and Merck say their mRNA cancer vaccine when combined with Merck's widely used immunotherapy cut the risk of melanoma death or recurrence by 42 per cent in a large trial, potentially paving the way for a new era of personalised treatment. The data from the phase three trial of more than 1100 patients also showed that the combination cut the risk of the cancer's spread by 38 per cent.

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Aussie vaccine hailed a cancer breakthrough

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 24 Oct 2026, Page 9

A world-first trial overseen by a leading Australian scientist could drastically change how cancer is treated. Led by former Australian of the Year Professor Georgina Long, the trial involved deploying an mRNA-based vaccine designed to decrease the risk of melanoma returning in patients who had it surgically removed.

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Student with rare cancer records moving track with acclaimed Australian composer

West Australian, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Alexandra Feiam

A year after Julio Villamil arrived in Sydney from Colombia to study English, he was handed some of the most harrowing news of his life – a rare cancer diagnosis. Diagnosed with desmoplastic small round cell tumour, he is one of 200 people in the world known to have the illness.

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Also reported by: *NEWS.com.au*, *Yahoo! News Australia*, *Adelaide Now*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*

Calls grow for doctors to prescribe exercise as treatment for chronic conditions

7News.com.au, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Alanah Werner

New research reveals cost and time pressures stopping doctors from prescribing exercise. Exercise can be an effective treatment for a range of health conditions, but health experts say doctors continue to face barriers to prescribing it to patients.

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Melanoma vaccine trial and prevention efforts discussed

ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, TV, 24 Oct 2026, Melissa McKay and Johanna Nicholson

Interview with Australian Skin Cancer Foundation CEO Jay Allen, about a clinical trial for a world-first cancer vaccine that reduces melanoma recurrence risk by 42%. Allen highlights the critical importance of early detection and cancer prevention, noting the foundation's mobile trucks offering free skin checks across Australia while urging the public to follow sun safety rules.

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Melanoma vaccine shows radical recurrence reduction

ABC News, Weekend Breakfast, TV, 24 Oct 2026, Fauziah Ibrahim and Johanna Nicholson

An Australian-led clinical trial involving 1100 global patients has revealed a world-first cancer vaccine radically reduces the risk of melanoma recurrence and death. Melanoma Institute Australia Medical Director Georgina Long headed the study, which has reported a 42% reduction in recurrence risk.

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Moderna cancer vaccine slashes recurrence risk

2GB, Weekends, AM Radio, 24 Oct 2026, Luke Grant

Moderna has released results from a phase three trial showing its personalised mRNA cancer vaccine, Intismarin, reduced tumour recurrence or death by 42 percent when combined with pembrolizumab. Chief Investigator Professor Georgina Long stated the treatment will have a significant impact for melanoma and potentially all cancers. The results will be presented at the European Society of Medical Oncology congress.

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Mental health is front of mind

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 11

Queenslanders will have access to more free mental health appointments as the federal government adds eight new or upgraded Medicare Mental Health Centres to the state. More than 130,000 appointments have been delivered since the centres were first introduced in 2021.

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Qld kids' cry for help

Sunday Mail Brisbane, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Jackie Sinnerton and Danica Clayton, Page 23

Queensland children are in crisis as the nation's helpline takes more suicide-related calls from the state's kids than the national average. The shock spike comes as The Sunday Mail reveals that a 15-year-old student from Wynnum State High tragically died on October 13.

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46 per cent of Australian workers would take pay cut for better mental health

The Australian, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Ewin Hannan

Forty-six per cent of Australian workers would accept a pay cut for a job that was better for their mental health, according to a new survey of over 4000 workers that also found two in five took a day off work in the past year due to their mental health. One third of the 4065 workers surveyed said they had left a job due to the impact on their mental health, while 25 per cent of workers seriously considered leaving their current role in the past 12 months due to mental health pressures.

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‘Wake up': Red tape driving small business mental health crisis, Chamber of Commerce warns

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Harry Clifton

The mental health of Australia’s under-siege small business operators is plummeting as they grapple with being blindsided by regular rule changes and rising compliance bills. More than one in three operators – 36 per cent – say they have a mental health condition, spiking from 30 per cent two years ago in 2024.

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

Once a praised environmentalist, Brendan Nugent became isolated and frustrated with the system

ABC Online, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Jessica Longbottom

Ten years ago, a researcher named Brendan Nugent was slogging through the bush in western Victoria, searching for a critically endangered shrub. [...] He said the mental health system in Victoria was in a worse state than before the 2019 royal commission into the sector.

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People helping change the conversation around mental health in Geelong

Geelong Advertiser, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Cam Ward

The state of the nation's mental health in 2026 makes for sobering reading. Yet among the confronting statistics are people working around Geelong to create connection, build resilience and offer hope.

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NSW boosts funding for mental health centres

ABC, ABC News (Saturday), TV, 24 Oct 2026, Lydia Feng

The NSW Government will boost funding by $2.5m to expand staffing and opening hours at two dozen mental health support centres. Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson says early intervention services must be strengthened to shift focus away from crisis management.

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Immunisation

No relevant coverage.

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Health Systems Strategies

New lifeblood for donors

Sunday Telegraph, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 23

The federal government has appointed Australian Red Cross Lifeblood to run the nation's stem cell donation service, days after it was warned it was risking lives by delaying the tender decision for months. [...] Lifeblood replaces Stem Cells Donors Australia, which have run the registry and services for decades.

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Health Economics & Research

Women join endo study

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 6

More than 350 women from across Australia have registered expressions of interest to participate in a groundbreaking Charles Sturt University endometriosis trial. Researchers are investigating the relationship between exercise and pain relief for women with endometriosis.

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Heart risk is adding up

Sunday Mail Adelaide, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Page 16

The nation's updated cardiovascular disease risk calculator is identifying substantially more Australians aged 45-74 as being at "intermediate" risk of heart attack and stroke. Researchers from Australian National University and QIMR Berghofer analysed data from more than 115,000 people aged 45 to 74 who had visited a GP between 2020 and 2022, none with a history of heart disease or stroke.

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First Nations Health

Dental care earns award shot

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 24 Oct 2026, Rosa Griffith, Page 9

A Perth dentist has been named as a finalist in the Fred Hollows Foundation's 2026 humanitarian awards, following extensive community outreach delivering free dental care in the Goldfields. [...] "These efforts have strengthened access to dental services in rural and Indigenous Australian communities, especially low socioeconomic areas, whose residents often would otherwise be unable to afford treatment or would need to travel several hours to access the nearest dentist."

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Also reported by: *West Australian*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*

New documentary spotlights the 'silent killer' disproportionately affecting First Nations Australians

ABC Online, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Stephanie Richards

When Kelli Karrikarringka Owen needed a kidney transplant 10 years ago, her family members offered to donate their organs. [...] Federal government data shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are twice as likely as non-Indigenous adults to have chronic kidney disease.

Continue reading

Documentary highlights first nations kidney care gap

ABC News, ABC Evening News (Weekend), TV, 24 Oct 2026, Meredith Sheehan

A new documentary highlights the barriers First Nations people confront in accessing kidney transplants, despite adults being twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to develop chronic kidney disease. Kidney transplant recipient Kelli Karrikarringka Owen said systemic racism prevented family donations.

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Public Hospital and Health Reform

20,000 Endoscopy tests found overdue

Sun Herald, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Alexandra Smith, Page 6

The NSW Labor government will expedite endoscopy procedures after a preliminary audit found at least 20,000 overdue tests in the public health system, which could be delaying cancer diagnoses. The intervention follows discussion with clinicians and patients about endoscopy waiting times, which prompted NSW Health to collect data from across the public system.

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Also reported by: *Sydney Morning Herald*, *West Australian*, *Daily Mail UK*, *Kalgoorlie Miner*

'God bless this joint': Inside our emergency departments

Sunday Age, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Melissa Cunningham, Page 4

It has just gone 6pm when the barefoot man stumbles into the brightly lit hospital. He is erratic, groaning and dishevelled with a wild, dark beard. There is dirt all over his ankles and feet and blood dripping from his right hand.

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Labor's S1.5bn shot in arm for ED wait times

Sunday Herald Sun, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Alex White, Page 4

Labor will today unveil its first major hospital pledge of the election, promising to boost 12 existing emergency departments and cut wait times in a bid to claw back support from voters. Premier Ben Carroll will officially kick off the party's election campaign bus tour today in Melbourne, announcing the $1.5bn package aimed at un-clogging emergency departments.

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Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

No relevant coverage.

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Health Workforce

ACT nurses threaten industrial action

Sunday Canberra Times, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Peter Jean, Page 3

Nurses and midwives are threatening industrial action over pay and conditions, potentially leading to services being disrupted at Canberra's public hospitals and clinics. [...] The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation this week passed a resolution condemning the government's response to the federation's most recent log of claims.

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Xmas birth fears grow

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 24 Oct 2026, Rosa Griffith, Page 1

The Nationals WA have sounded the alarm about the high rate of midwifery vacancies in the Goldfields health system, saying a repeat of last summer's service shutdown needs to be avoided. [...] "The situation is deeply concerning, with more than 50 per cent of midwifery positions vacant as we head into the holiday period," Mr Horstman said.

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Why Australia's falling birth rate is everyone's problem

SBS, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Shyna Kalra

"I had my baby at 38," says Heer Kaur, an Indian migrant living in Beveridge, north of Melbourne, who had always imagined having a big family. [...] Migrants already make up a large and growing share of the health care and social assistance workforce.

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Technology Assessment and Access

No relevant coverage.

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Medicare Benefits and Digital Health

No relevant coverage.

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Benefits Integrity

Doctor sentenced for stealing fentanyl

Sunday Examiner, General News, 25 Oct 2026, Bailey Forbes, Page 8

A doctor who stole synthetic opioids from the Launceston General Hospital to treat his anxiety has been sentenced. [...] As of September 30, 2026, Nathie had made full admissions to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), Mr Oxley said, which had imposed conditions on his ability to practise medicine.

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Also reported by: ***Launceston Examiner***

Christian Jack Joseph: Doctor charged with manslaughter back working at hospital, identity of victim revealed

West Australian, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Caleb Runciman

A Perth doctor charged with manslaughter is out on bail and back working at a major hospital after he allegedly chased down and placed a beloved father in a chokehold for almost two minutes on a Fremantle street. [...] “All staff are required to meet all professional regulatory obligations, and the organisation follows the directions provided by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in regard to registrations and any associated conditions for medical practitioners,” they said.

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Also reported by: ***Kalgoorlie Miner***

Is the medical board's mandatory CPD regime still a waste of time? AusDoc survey results

Australian Doctor, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Paul Smith

When mass misery first descended in response to the Medical Board of Australia's revamped CPD regime, AusDoc interviewed its then-chair, Dr Anne Tonkin. We pointed out that most doctors we surveyed at the time felt that most of it was in the words of one doctor, a 'soul-destroying, form-filling, foolish endeavour', particularly the demand to write up a professional development plan (PDP).

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Australian CDC

No relevant coverage.

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Therapeutic Goods Administration

Raising alarm over online 'wellness cult'

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 24 Oct 2026, William Stanley, Page 11

An online trend has made its way to the south-west, prompting a warning from a Warrnambool doctor that users could damage vital organs. [...] A TGA spokesperson said it had seen a "significant increase in the unlawful advertising, importation and supply of unapproved peptide products in Australia".

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Black market Melanotan II tanning sprays are targetting the Gold Coast

Gold Coast Bulletin, Internet, 24 Oct 2026, Ann Wason Moore

When it comes to the latest dangerous tanning trend, it seems the Gold Coast is once again ground zero. [...] That the TGA halted its development due to safety concerns, and buying, supplying, or advertising it is illegal.

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Office of Drug Control

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Food Standards

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