

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Tuesday, 27 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 Australian** (page 6) leads coverage reporting the Commonwealth Ombudsman criticised the Federal Government's Integrated Assessment Tool for aged-care eligibility, raising concerns over its fairness and the Department of Health and Aged Care's implementation without "meaningful risk assessment" or analysis. The department said it "does not accept the characterisation", and Health Minister Mark Butler said the government would consider the report, had created an escalation process and commissioned an independent review due in the first half of 2027. *Also reported by: The Adelaide Advertiser, The Canberra Times, ABC Online*

- **The Canberra Times** (online) leads coverage reporting the Federal Government's expansion of pharmacy prescription trial, starting on February 1, 2027, will allow more access to subsidised hormonal contraception and urinary tract infection treatment through pharmacists. Health Minister Mark Butler said this would improve choice and prevent gaps in contraception, while the RACGP said that UTI symptoms could overlap with other conditions and lead to misdiagnosis. *Also reported by: News.com.au, News24 Australia*
- **The Australian** (page 3) reports that Novo Nordisk, the manufacturer of weight-loss drug Wegovy, urged the Federal Government to create an affordable pathway for obesity treatment, amid negotiations over PBS subsidy for Wegovy.
- **The Age** (page 1) reports that new data showed at least 13 Victorians have experienced anaphylaxis after using unregulated peptides since July 2025, with Victorian Chief Health Officer Dr Caroline McElnay saying the state's mandatory reporting system has identified a new public health risk linked to unapproved products and has reported it to the TGA.
- **The Herald Sun** (page 1) reports Victoria Premier Ben Carroll will announce plans today to extend Workplace Protection Orders to hospitals, allowing violent or abusive patients to be banned from hospital sites for up to 12 months, along with a $30 million package for security upgrades to protect healthcare workers.
- **The Herald Sun** (page 3) reports the number of GPs who bulk bill has more than doubled in the past year following the introduction of Federal Government incentives, according to the RACGP.
- **The Herald Sun** (page 5) reports that mental health groups highlighted in a joint statement the "longstanding gaps" and failures in Australia's mental health system, particularly in regional communities, following the alleged attack on MP Helen Haines.
- **The Australian Financial Review** (online) reports the Business Council of Australia will say today that the NDIS has been impacted by red tape, lack of investment targets and outdated pricing models that reward service hours rather than outcomes, and will call on the Federal Government to reduce regulatory and administrative costs by 25 per cent by 2030.

Minister Butler

Ombudsman takes aim at ALP 'black box' aged care algorithm

The Australian, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Stephen Lunn, Page 6

The Commonwealth Ombudsman has criticised the federal government's use of a computer algorithm to determine eligibility for aged care as a "technological black box", and is calling for a review of the system and legal changes to allow more human judgment in the process. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said his government had "heard the assessment system isn't always getting it right, and we've acted".

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Also reported by: *The Australian, ABC Online, MSN Australia, InnovationAus, The Weekly Source, SBS, The Senior, The Guardian*

Labor's fail on aged care plan

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Julie Cross, Page 3

Dodgy assessments panned Labor's botched aged care assessment process has been comprehensively savaged by the Commonwealth Ombudsman for failing vulnerable Australians. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler and Mr Rae said from January, where someone's circumstances weren't fully captured by their assessment, their outcome could be reviewed and changed if necessary.

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

Aged care boss warns federal Support at Home program is failing vulnerable Australians

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Lucy Lincoln

Imagine needing a wheelie walker to move around safely, only to wait five months for a decision. [...] 15 years ago, about 15,000 Australians turned 80 every year; next year, that number is likely to be 90,000, according to Mark Butler, the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Continue reading

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

Watchdog urges human touch to veto aged care decisions

Canberra Times, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Andrew Brown

An algorithm determining levels of aged care support should be changed to allow for humans to override its decisions, a damning report has found. [...] "Older Australians deserve an aged care system that works for them and their loved ones," Health Minister Mark Butler and Aged Care Minister Sam Rae said in a statement.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *West Australian*, *The Border Mail*, *Central Western Daily*, *Daily Liberal*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Newcastle Herald*, *Shepparton News Online*, *Northern Daily Leader*, *Ballarat Courier*, *Bendigo Advertiser*, *Warrnambool Standard*, *dubbophotonews.com.au*, *MSN Australia*, *Great Lakes Advocate*, *Bathurst Western Advocate*, *Gloucester Advocate*, *Moree Champion*, *Inverell Times*, *The Hepburn Advocate*, *Redland City Bulletin*

'A gap': fast treatment for UTIs and birth control

Canberra Times, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Ben McKay & Lucinda Garbutt-Young

Thousands of women will be able to access medicine immediately when it is needed, rather than waiting for a doctor's appointment, following an expansion of federal government support. [...] "We don't want to see women having a gap in their contraception simply because they're not able to access their usual GP," Health Minister Mark Butler told ABC TV on Monday.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *The Border Mail*, *Central Western Daily*, *Daily Liberal*, *Daily Liberal*, *Illawarra Mercury*, *Newcastle Herald*, *Northern Daily Leader*, *Ballarat Courier*, *Bendigo Advertiser*, *Warrnambool Standard*, *Narooma News*, *The Hepburn Advocate*, *South Coast Register*, *Port Macquarie News*, *Great Lakes Advocate*, *Jimboomba Times*, *Mandurah Mail*, *Moree Champion*, *Pharmacy Daily*, *Pharmacy Daily*, *Royal Australian College of General Practitioners*, *The Medical Republic*, *News24 Australia*, *Retail Pharmacy*, *Pharmacy Guild of Australia*, *CityNews*, *NEWS.com.au*, *Redland City Bulletin*

Private health insurance for seniors: Rebate cuts raise aged care funding questions

Hello Leaders Australia, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Hayley Campbell

An estimated 78,000 older Australians could drop private health insurance by 2029-30 under the federal government's proposed rebate changes, according to Health Department modelling obtained by the ABC. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler reintroduced the legislation the following morning.

Continue reading

Mark Butler Expands Women's Pharmacy Trial

Channel 9, Today, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Tom Steinfort & Sylvia Jeffreys

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler, about the expansion of a 12-month pharmacy trial for women. Butler states that the Commonwealth will fund consultations with local pharmacists to supply medicines at PBS prices for conditions like uncomplicated urinary tract infections or contraception needs. He also addresses parliamentary security concerns following an attack on Dr Helen Haines.

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Concerns Raised Over Stem Cell Donor Funding

Channel 9, A Current Affair, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Allison Langdon

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler previously called to expand Australia's stem cell donor pool, but patients and families warn recruitment has been undermined. The Federal Government appointed Lifeblood Australia after Stem Cell Donors Australia's mail-out contract ended, but without extra funding for cheek swab testing, and advocates argue restricting sign-ups to blood donors leaves regional Australians and patients without matches.

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Pharmacy Trial Expands for Women's Healthcare Access

ABC News, News Breakfast, TV, 26 Oct 2026, James Glenday & Emma Reballato

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. Butler says the expanded trial was announced to improve access and affordability for women's healthcare. He also states that the initiative allows patients unable to see their usual GP to visit a local pharmacist for hormonal contraception and uncomplicated urinary tract infections, with consults funded and medicines treated under the PBS.

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Pharmacy Trial Expanded for Women's Healthcare

ABC Radio Sydney, 10:00 News, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026

The Federal Government has expanded a trial allowing women to visit a pharmacy rather than a GP for uncomplicated urinary tract infections and certain hormonal contraception. While previously restricted to concession card holders, the scheme is now open to all women, with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler stating that the expansion will improve access and affordability for Australian women.

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Also reported by: *Triple J*, *ABC Radio Canberra*, *ABC Pilbara*, *ABC Radio Perth*, *ABC Radio Darwin* , *ABC Kimberley*

Expanded pharmacy trial for women's healthcare

Radio National, Breakfast, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Sally Sara

Interview with Federal Health Minister Mark Butler. He discusses the expanded 12-month trial that will enable women to access hormonal contraception and urinary tract infection treatments directly from pharmacists starting in January. Butler also states that the initiative, which previously applied only to concession card holders, aims to improve affordability and access, with consultations covered and medicines charged at PBS rates.

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Minister McAllister

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Minister Rae

Labor's fail on aged care plan

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Julie Cross, Page 3

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Watchdog urges human touch to veto aged care decisions

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Sam Rae Defends Aged Care Assessment Algorithm

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae. Rae addresses a Commonwealth Ombudsman report criticising automation in aged care assessments. Rae defends the system, stating it delivers fairer, more accurate outcomes despite not always getting it right, and he also highlights that a legislated escalation pathway providing clinical overrides for complex cases starting on 11 January.

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Sam Ray Defends Aged Care Algorithm

ABC NewsRadio, Drive, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Dijana Damjanovic

Interview with Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae, about the Commonwealth Ombudsman's report into the aged care algorithm. Ray defended the system, saying human oversight has always existed and that an escalation pathway allowing departmental delegates to override automated decisions was recently legislated. He noted wait times for assessments and home care are decreasing.

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Assistant Minister McBride

Mental health support for high-risk workers gets $6.9m federal boost

Human Resources Director, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Dexter Tilo

The federal government will spend an additional $6.9 million over two years on mental health and suicide prevention support for workers in high-risk industries, with the funding going to MATES in Construction as it expands its presence in New South Wales (NSW). Amanda Rishworth, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Emma McBride, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, announced the investment on 22 October as part of Mental Health Month.

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Emma McBride on Rural Health Funding Gap

News24, Weekend NewsDay, TV, 25 Oct 2026, Jaynie Seal

Interview with Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health Emma McBride, about the National Rural Health Alliance report showing a widening rural healthcare expenditure gap. McBride highlighted government investments, including the tripled bulk-billing incentive graded for rurality, expanded regional mental health centres, and $25b committed through the renegotiated National Health and Hospital Reform Agreement.

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Government Highlights Health Measures Amid Rising Costs

Channel 9, Nine News, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Melissa Downes & Joel Dry

Amid soaring food insecurity and cost-of-living pressures, the Federal Government has pointed to cheaper medicines and lower healthcare expenses. Mental Health Minister Emma McBride described a new pharmacy consultation trial for UTIs and contraception as a major step forward for women's healthcare access and affordability.

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Assistant Minister White

Pharmacy Contraception Trial Expands to All Women

SBS, World News Australia, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Janice Petersen

Women will soon be able to access hormonal contraception through local pharmacies without visiting a GP, as a Federal Government trial expands beyond concession card holders to all women. Rebecca White, Assistant Health and Aged Care Minister, stated that consultation costs will be fully subsidised, leaving only the PBS medicine price.

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No relevant coverage.

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Department

Ombudsman Criticises Aged Care Algorithm Implementation

ABC Radio Canberra, 13:00 News, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026

The Commonwealth Ombudsman has criticised the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing for implementing an aged care classification algorithm without meaningful risk assessment, evaluation or analysis. The Ombudsman called for legislation allowing assessors to override its decisions following hundreds of appeals, but the department rejected claims that it failed to test or validate the system.

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Also reported by:: *ABC Radio Hobart*, *ABC Radio Darwin* , *ABC Radio Brisbane*, *ABC Radio Canberra*, *ABC Newcastle*, *ABC Mid North Coast*, *ABC Gold Coast*, *ABC Sunshine Coast*, *ABC Radio Perth*

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Ageing and Aged Care

Ageing well at home and the rising role of community pharmacy

Australasian Pharmacy, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Lynda Chalmers, Page 30

Australia's population of over 60s is growing rapidly. In fact, it's estimated by 2066 approximately one in five people will be aged 65 and above.

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Property sector urges seniors living overhaul to free up family homes for buyers

NEWS.com.au, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Unity Jackson-Muir

Aussies are finding it increasingly hard to buy homes but senior citizens could be sitting on a solution and industry experts are calling for better incentives to build more seniors living options. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare projects that the over 85 population will triple in size by 2066 and jump from around 603,000 today to almost 1.9 million.

Continue reading

Special new issue of SATURDAY: The new Aged Care Act after 12 months

The Weekly Source, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Ian Horswill

1 November marks the first anniversary of the new Aged Care Act brought in by the Australian Government with much fanfare. "Today is a historic moment for aged care, for older Australians and those of us who love them," said then Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells.

Continue reading

Governments have turned care into a commodity. It's failing us all

The New Daily, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

Most of us use Australia's care system in some way, or know someone who does. After all, from birth to death we all need support at one time or another.

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Also reported by: *Yahoo! News Australia*

'We can and should be doing better': AIN calls for aged care reform

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Natalie Dragon

After working in aged care over a period spanning 30 years, NSW assistant in nursing (AIN) Bronwyn Pillardth feels a deep responsibility to advocate for the sector she loves. Now working in a 125-bed residential aged care facility, Bronwyn has joined the ANMF's Australia Needs Care You Can Count On campaign because she believes the challenges facing aged care workers and residents can no longer be ignored.

Continue reading

Sarcopenia: more than a muscle problem

Medical Journal of Australia, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Lucas Orssatto

Sarcopenia has been treated as a muscle problem for decades. A new paper in The Lancet Healthy Longevity argues that the nervous system has been left out of the picture, and that this explains why so many treatments have disappointed.

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Concerns Raised Over Canberra Respite Beds

2CC, Breakfast, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Murrumbidgee MP Fiona Carrick. Carrick raises concerns about federal funding for Canberra respite care. She stated that despite an $18m grant to save 15 beds at Baranggery, a temporary 12-month closure requires a further $7.9m for short-term beds without permanently increasing the city's respite capacity.

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Disability and Carers

NDIS hostage to outdated pricing and tech, business warns

Australian Financial Review, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Michael Smith

Big business and disability providers have stepped up the pressure on Labor to further overhaul the National Disability Insurance Scheme, saying current pricing models and outdated technology platforms threaten its sustainability even after steep cuts.

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Food for Good Award: Lettuce Eat by Omnia Inclusive

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

As Australia's hospitality industry grows year-on-year, many employers are struggling to attract and retain staff. At the same time, young people with disabilities are an under-represented source of talent, and employers can access this workforce without the red tape and costs associated with visa sponsorship.

Continue reading

South Australia 'disproportionately vulnerable' to NDIS changes, report warns

ABC Online, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Thomas Kelsall

South Australia is "disproportionately vulnerable" to the federal government's changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), according to a new report that warns about gaps in services for children with autism under the new Thriving Kids program. The report, compiled by Deloitte Access Economics, also suggests that family members of people with disability may have to withdraw from the state's workforce to handle caring responsibilities that would previously have been funded by the NDIS.

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'Tip of the iceberg' – Aussie activists help expose alleged NDIS fraud

2GB, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, James Willis

Australian political activist Drew Pavlou, who has been investigating alleged fraud among NDIS providers alongside Pete Zogoulas, has revealed that the government has recently shut down two of the businesses they have investigated. Pavlou joined 2GB Drive and says he and Zogoulas have received "over 1000 tip-offs in the last six months".

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'Families need clarity' on NDIS early autism overhaul

HealthTimes, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

People with disabilities need to be assured of what supports they will receive under changes to the NDIS, advocates have urged, as the first round of reforms roll out. The plan for autistic and developmentally delayed children to roll off the NDIS and onto a state-run scheme called Thriving Kids began its first phase on Thursday.

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Primary Care

Bulk-billing GPs double

Herald Sun, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Page 3

More GPs are bulk billing their patients. The proportion has more than doubled in a year from 12 per cent in 2025 to 26 per cent in 2026, according to the Royal Australian College of GPs Health of the Nation report.

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Also reported by: *Courier Mail*, *Hobart Mercury*, *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *Cairns Post*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Northern Territory News*

Female GPs bear the brunt of burnout

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

The gap between the number of female and male GPs who experience burnout has widened, the latest Health of the Nation report has revealed, with women GPs also less likely to find their job satisfying than their male counterparts for the first time. These are among the early findings of the RACGP's 2026 Health of the Nation report, which surveyed more than 2700 GPs around the country on their views about working in contemporary general practice.

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Specialist fee caps a likely misfire: AMA

The Medical Republic, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Holly Payne

If only fixing affordability and access was as simple as limiting doctor fees. [...] The AMA was responding to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's September consultation paper , which laid out six potential options to address high out-of-pocket fees charged by specialist doctors.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Health Services Daily*

RACGP Highlights Rising Bulk Billing Rates

ABC Radio Adelaide, Mornings, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Rory Mcclaren

Interview with Dr Sian Goodson, South Australian Chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, about rising bulk billing rates following an $8b Federal Government investment. Goodson states that two thirds of Australians are now bulk billed, though she also called for higher Medicare rebates for longer consultations and an independent pricing authority to keep pace with healthcare inflation.

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AMA SA Warns Proposed Crackdown Punishes Patients

FIVEAA, Mornings, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Graeme Goodings

Interview with Australian Medical Association SA President Peter Subramaniam. Subramaniam warns that the Federal Government's proposed crackdown on specialist fees risks unfairly punishing doctors and patients needing specialist care. He states that the Medicare rebate has failed to keep pace with inflation and the true cost of delivering care.

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Population Health

In a third of homes, hunger is not a game

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 27 Oct 2026, Page 22

Australia used to be promoted as the land of milk and honey but many can no longer afford either. One in three households are going hungry to a greater or lesser extent, while food insecurity is a reality in middleincome households the bracket that largely shapes Australian politics.

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Checkup for Mallee health

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Allan Murphy, Page 3

Mallee residents are falling behind in the health stakes at an alarming rate, according to a report detailing key health risk factors. The 2026 Wesfarmers Health: Australia's Health Index has ranked the Mallee region as most at risk in Victoria when considering obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking and vaping.

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$6,000 ‘Birthkeeper' could face perjury charges over free birth death

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

Explosive new evidence has rocked an inquest into the death of a wellness influence who died following a “free birth”. Stacey Warnecke, 30, suffered a massive post-partum haemorrhage after giving birth to her son Axel at home in Seaford, Melbourne, in September 2026.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *NEWS.com.au*, *Adelaide Now*, *Cairns Post*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *The Mercury*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Northern Territory News*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*

'Extraordinary avoidance of responsibility': Greens leader slams department over shackling

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Dechlan Brennan

It's an "extraordinary avoidance of responsibility" for the federal Attorney-General's Department to claim that shackling women during childbirth is the responsibility of the Health Department, the Greens' leader says, days after a photo emerged showing a 16-year-old chained to a bed at a major hospital. The comments from David Shoebridge during Senate Estimates on Monday come after the two major political parties teamed up to block bills introduced by Senator Lidia Thorpe calling for a ban on shackling women during childbirth and strip-searching children.

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Chronic Conditions and Screening

'Treat obesity fight like smoking'

The Australian, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Natasha Robinson, Page 3

The manufacturer of weight-loss drug Wegovy has called for an immediate practical path to affordable treatment for patients as it urges the federal government to display greater ambition in response to the obesity epidemic. Michael Azrak, head of Novo Nordisk in Australia, has warned that people at high clinical risk are being failed by Australia's health system as healthcare for severe obesity is determined by patients' bank balance.

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AIS sparks new brain health debate

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Julian Linden, Page 26

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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Pharmacies driving faster access to hepatitis C care

Australasian Pharmacy, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Grace Hogan, Page 52

In Mandurah a coastal city south of Perth in Western Australia a pilot program is showing how local, private and wellconnected pharmacy services can help more people get tested for hepatitis C, start treatment sooner and overcome outdated assumptions about the virus. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus which affects the liver.

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Why Musculoskeletal Health Australia wants everyone to take a seat

Australasian Pharmacy, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Page 54

Musculoskeletal conditions affect millions of people across Australia and New Zealand, yet they often don't receive the same attention given to other chronic health conditions. One in three Australians and 40 to 67 percent of adults in New Zealand are impacted by one or more of 150 rheumatological and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs), affecting people's ability to work, stay active and enjoy everyday life.

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Personalised Melanoma Vaccine Slashes Recurrence Risk

ABC, 7:30, TV, 26 Oct 2026, Sarah Ferguson

Interview with with Professor Georgina Long, Melanoma Institute Australia, about a breakthrough trial combining existing therapies with a personalised cancer vaccine. The mRNA treatment encodes a tumour's genetic fingerprint to stimulate the immune system, cutting melanoma recurrence or death risks by over 40%. Professor Long noted further trials are expanding to advanced melanoma and pancreatic cancer.

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Also reported by: *ABC*

ACT Leads National Health Index Rankings

2CC, Breakfast, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Stephen Cenatiempo

The ACT has been recorded as the top-performing jurisdiction nationally for rates of high blood pressure and obesity, according to the Wesfarmers Health Index. The report highlights contrasting health outcomes across Australian states and territories regarding chronic conditions.

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Attack raises alarm over mental health 'scandal'

Herald Sun, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Sarah Booth, Page 5

"Longstanding gaps" and failures in Australia's mental healthcare system must be urgently addressed in the wake of the horrific alleged attack on Dr Helen Haines, top psychiatry and mental health bodies have warned. In a damning joint statement, some of the most influential organisations in the sector criticised our mental health system as one "that waits for a crisis before responding" and lets down regional and rural communities.

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

Rage

The Nightly, General News, 26 Oct 2026, Caitlyn Rintoul, Page 1

Federal Parliament came to a sombre standstill on Monday as MPs confronted the brutal fallout of an attack that left independent colleague Helen Haines a double amputee.[...] Victorian Independent MP Monique Ryan pleaded to lift funding for mental health
services in regional areas.

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Full list: Victorian GP clinics that can diagnose, treat ADHD

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Sarah Booth

Dozens of GPs can diagnose and treat ADHD from Monday under a major overhaul to Victorian mental health care. Patients can be assessed for the neurodevelopmental condition and prescribed ADHD

medication – without a psychiatrists' or paediatricians oversight – by 150 GPs across the state under the new reforms.

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

Increase in homicides by people with psychosis due to failings in mental health system, experts warn

ABC Online, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Hayley Gleeson

A fourfold increase in the number of homicides committed by people with psychotic disorders in Victoria is the result of catastrophic failings in the mental health system that are exposing the community to dangerous levels of risk, experts have warned. Frustrated psychiatrists say the alarming uptick in killings by people with psychosis is a triple tragedy for perpetrators, victims and the wider public because many of the recent deaths could have been prevented had the offenders received proper treatment.

Continue reading

Youth stuck between referrals, wait lists as city looks to fix 'broken' system

Ballarat Courier, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Nick Powell

If professionals struggle to navigate Ballarat's fractured mental health system, what hope is there for the parents and teenagers fighting for survival? That question sat at the heart of the Ballarat Youth Mental Health Forum on Monday, October 26 where a consortium of executives, practitioners, professors, front-line responders and community members gathered to confront the regional care gap known as the "missing middle".

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Immunisation

No relevant coverage.

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Health Systems Strategies

It's not mental health driving gold-tier woes

Australian Financial Review, Letters, 27 Oct 2026, Page 31

HCF is rightly concerned about the sustainability of the gold-tier hospital cover, but the problem is closer to home. Product design and cost are driving customers away from gold-tier policies, leaving mental health patients with nowhere to go.

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Health Economics & Research

AdPha Medal of Merit recipient announced

Retail Pharmacy, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) today awarded Romana Cecchele FANZCAP (Lead&Mgmt, ClinTrials) the 2026 AdPha Medal of Merit for her outstanding contribution to clinical trials pharmacy and her national leadership in improving patient access to investigational and novel therapies. Romana joined Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) in Sydney in 2014, during a period of rapid growth in clinical trial activity, and re-established the hospital pharmacy's Investigational Drugs Unit.

Continue reading

Interview Examines Cancer Nutrition and Sugar Research

ABC News, News Breakfast, TV, 26 Oct 2026, James Glenday & Emma Reballato

Interview with infectious diseases expert Dr Linny Phuong. Phuong notes that an Adelaide University study found only one in eight online breast cancer dietary claims had scientific backing. She also clarifies that while sugar does not selectively feed cancer cells, excess sugar increases body fat, raising risks for multiple cancers.

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Prostate Cancer Drug Cuts Relapse Risk

Channel 9, Nine News Late, TV, 25 Oct 2026, Brett Mcleod

Australian researchers have found that the hormone-blocking drug darolutamide reduces the risk of prostate cancer relapse by nearly 60%, with DASL-HICAP Trial Investigator Dr Leily Rezaei stating that 95% of high-risk patients who received the medication saw no progression. Supplier Bayer will need to apply to expand its PBS listing before more men can access the treatment.

Play Now

Australian Trial Shows Prostate Cancer Breakthrough

Channel 10, 10 News (Weekend), TV, 25 Oct 2026, Georgie Tunny

A world-first Australian trial combining the hormone blocker darolutamide with radiotherapy has seen nearly 100 per cent of aggressive prostate cancer patients remain cancer-free after four years. Developed via the University of Sydney involving 1100 high-risk individuals, the treatment significantly limits recurrence and mortality.

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Melanoma Vaccine Delivers Promising Trial Results

2GB, Mornings, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Mark Levy

In an interview with Dr Ross Walker, a Sydney trial led by Professor Georgina Long showed a personalised cancer vaccine reduced the risk of melanoma recurrence or death by 42 per cent. Combining Keytruda with

the vaccine left 82 per cent of patients cancer-free after two years. Walker also emphasised the vital importance of preventative health checks.

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First Nations Health

How to build health care Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men would use

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Karla Canuto

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men have a life expectancy of 71.9 years - 8.8 years less than non-Indigenous men. Rates of potentially avoidable deaths in men under the age of 75 is almost three times higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

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Public Hospital and Health Reform

No relevant coverage.

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Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

No relevant coverage.

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Health Workforce

Violent patients ban

Herald Sun, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Shannon Deery, Page 1

Violent and abusive patients would be banned from Victorian hospitals for up to 12 months under a re-elected Carroll Labor government. As part of a new push to protect nurses and midwives at work, Premier Ben Carroll will reveal plans on Tuesday to expand the government's Workplace Protection Orders Scheme already in place for retail and transport workers to also cover hospitals.

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Rural GP's love of the 'lifestyle'

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Daneka Hill, Page 3

GP doctor Jean Covey moved to Charters Towers in 1993 for a "short stint" in country practice - three decades later, she reflects on what keeps her in town. "I was planning to do a trial in Townsville when I met a country doctor who encouraged me to give rural practice a go," Dr Covey said.

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Where clinical leaders collaborate - inside the PGA's Chief Pharmacists' Network

Australasian Pharmacy, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Page 18

In a rapidly changing community pharmacy landscape, pharmacies are increasingly navigating shared challenges related to implementing full scope services, strengthening clinical governance and embedding sectorwide quality initiatives, including the Quality and Safety Pharmacy Program (QSPP).

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More than a workforce: Australia's migrant nurses, midwives and carers

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Natalie Dragon

Australia’s health and aged care systems increasingly rely on migrant nurses, midwives and carers to fill critical workforce gaps. Yet many continue to face barriers to recognition, career progression and belonging.

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Hundreds more GPs begin ADHD prescribing

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

Hundreds of GPs across two states have now completed training to diagnose, treat and prescribe for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) – making an ‘often-lifechanging’ difference to patients’ health. As of Monday, 150 specially trained Victorian GPs can treat the condition in adults and children aged six years and over, with priority given to GPs in communities with greatest need and barriers to healthcare.

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Union Calls for Healthcare Worker Safety Measures

ABC Radio Hobart, Drive, AM Radio, 26 Oct 2026, Lucy Breaden/Kylie Baxter

Interview with Emily Shepherd, Branch secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmania, about the safety concerns for healthcare workers at Royal Hobart Hospital. Shepherd supported proposals for shuttle buses and security escorts for staff walking to parked cars after hours. She stated the union is seeking commitments from the Tasmanian government during negotiations on 3 November.

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Technology Assessment and Access

No relevant coverage.

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Medicare Benefits and Digital Health

Pharma-style checks 'could make AI safer'

The Australian, Technology, 27 Oct 2026, Jared Lynch, Page 20

A founder of one of Australia's fastest growing start-ups has called for big pharma-style regulation to rein in artificial intelligence. Keoki Alexander-Chang cofounder of Minikai, which has experienced 90 per cent quarter-onquarter revenue growth for the past 12 months has harnessed AI to perform more administrative work in the aged-care sector, freeing up staff to provide more oneon-one care.

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Also reported by: ***Hobart Mercury***

The sci-fi fantasy kid who built a $1.26b start-up

Australian Financial Review, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Euan Black

Thomas Kelly grew up reading science fiction novels about a world in which super-intelligent machines and humans peacefully co-exist. He's now doing his part to make that vision a reality.

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Montu calls for mandatory virtual care standards to eliminate regulatory loopholes

Retail Pharmacy, Internet, 26 Oct 2026

Montu supports the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's draft virtual care standards and calls for compulsory compliance across all digital healthcare providers to prevent a two-tier safety system. Responding to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's draft National Safety and Quality Standards for Virtual Care, which were today publicly released, Montu warned that without being mandatory, the proposed Standards may leave critical regulatory loopholes open.

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Benefits Integrity

Kid porn nurse's short jail stint

Herald Sun, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Euan Kennedy & Rebekah Cavanagh, Page 4

A porn-addicted nurse will face just two months jail after going down a rabbit hole for vile child abuse material on a dark web site called Alice in Wonderland. Federal police uncovered thousands of images and videos on Northern Health perioperative nurse Muhammad Bin Suradi's laptops, hard drives and mobile devices following a raid on his Craigieburn home in December last year.

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Tasmanian nurse struck off

Hobart Mercury, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Duncan Abey, Page 3

A Tasmanian nurse who repeatedly lied about her professional qualifications, then blamed a falsified CV on "malware" and typing errors, has been struck off the state's register of practitioners. Lauren Elizabeth Butler, 33, faced accusations of professional misconduct from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia after an alleged three-year pattern of dishonesty in job applications across Tasmania.

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Private health details posted

Northern Territory News, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Gary Shipway, Page 3

Five patients had their private health information posted on social media by an internationally trained medical observer at Royal Darwin Hospital, sparking a major investigation. Northern Territory Health Minister Steve Edgington confirmed the immediate investigation, including a review of the approval processes for medical observer placements.

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

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Australian CDC

No relevant coverage.

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Therapeutic Goods Administration

Anaphylaxis cases linked to peptides

Age, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Henrietta Cook, Page 1

Victorian emergency departments are treating a growing cluster of patients with life-threatening allergic reactions linked to black market peptides, prompting health authorities to warn people against injecting the unregulated substances. New health data shows at least 13 Victorians have experienced anaphylaxis after using unregulated peptides since July 2025.

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TGA flags risks in digital mental health exemption

Pulse+IT, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Reesh Lyon

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is considering changes to the regulation of digital mental health tools after a review found that some higher-risk products, including those using artificial intelligence, could be exempt from medical device oversight. The review, published on 19 October, found

that existing exclusion criteria may no longer be fit for purpose as digital mental health products become more widely used and increasingly complex.

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Office of Drug Control

Rethink on cannabis

Herald Sun, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Page 11

Australian researchers have raised concerns about a rise in the number of Australians aged under 25 with prescriptions for medicinal cannabis products. University of Melbourne researchers collected data on 52,419 medical cannabis product approvals for people aged 25 and under since 2016 and say prescriptions have increased over time, accelerating further since 2021.

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Also reported by: *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *Courier Mail*

Youth use pot for pain and anxiety

West Australian, General News, 27 Oct 2026, Caitlin Vinci, Page 3

More young Australians are using medicinal cannabis to deal with anxiety and chronic pain, a new report has shown. Data from the Therapeutic Goods Administration shows more than 50,000 medical cannabis product approvals were handed out for individuals aged 25 and under between 2016 and 2024, with the rate rising considerably from 2021.

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

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Food Standards

Sting to honey imports

Daily Telegraph, General News, 27 Oct 2026, John Rolfe, Page 15

Aldi has been accused of selling honey bulked up with cheap sugar syrup, sparking a backlash from local beekeepers fighting for survival. Testing by two world-renowned laboratories has blown the lid off Aldi's rockbottom Bramwells brand, alleging the sweet spread is not genuine.

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

Food recall: Arla Protein Salted Caramel and Chocolate flavour pudding 200g recalled after glass found

West Australian, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Chloe Maher

A range of protein puddings have been pulled from supermarket shelves after glass was found in the products. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand has issued a recall notice for batches of Arla Protein Pudding 200g in the chocolate and salted caramel flavours after the foreign matter was discovered.

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Also reported by: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, *7News.com.au*

Victorian school canteens fail health standards with junk food overload

7News.com.au, Internet, 26 Oct 2026, Ava Cashmore

A 7NEWS investigation into school canteens has revealed Victorian children are at the mercy of unregulated amounts of ultra-processed junk food. More than 70 primary schools were marked against the government's own healthy eating policy.

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