

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 29 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 Daily Telegraph** (online) reports Health Minister Mark Butler announced that from February 2027, eligible women will have access to free pharmacy consultations for uncomplicated UTIs and prescriptions for hormonal contraception, expanding the 12-month pilot program. General patients will pay up to $25 per prescription, while concession cardholders will pay the $7.70 standard capped fee. *Also reported by: ABC Online*
- **The Sydney Morning Herald** (page 9) reports NSW Health Minister Ryan Park said the shortage of aged care and NDIS placements for patients ready to leave hospital was one of the state's biggest health

system challenges, with 34 patients stranded at Royal North Shore Hospital and 96 across Northern Sydney Local Health District awaiting placements in June.

- **The Daily Telegraph** (page 23) reports the Australian Medical Association and the Australia and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists urged the TGA to ban the sale or possession of the large bottles of addictive nitrous oxide or “nangs”, warning of potential misuse and harm.
- **The Herald Sun** (page 21) reports new transparency laws revealed the most complained about aged care providers in Australia, with more than 10,600 complaints lodged nationally in eight months. *Also reported by: The Courier Mail*
- **The Adelaide Advertiser** (page 10) reports that according to the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute’s Health Policy Centre, food delivery apps encourage consumers to choose unhealthy meals through promotions, urging government action to make healthier options more accessible and affordable.
- **Health Services Daily** (online) reports the DoHDA confirmed at Senate estimates the $727 million underspend in the Support at Home program in its first eight months, saying that providing older Australians with partial funding while they waited for full packages may have contributed. Department secretary Blair Comley said the department was investigating whether lower-than-expected spending was a temporary transition issue or longer-term feature of the program.
- **ABC Online** reports that Directions Health Services in Canberra said it has limited the supply of free injecting equipment to clients amid increasing demand from peptide users, saying it needs to preserve stock for marginalised communities.

Minister Butler

Chalmers makes the blame game personal

The Australian, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Geoff Chambers, Page 1

Jim Chalmers has entered the political danger zone after name checking Anthony Albanese and other ministers for their "parts" in driving the government's tanking popularity. [...] NDIS Minister Mark Butler should be accountable for national disability scheme cuts.

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Also reported by: *The Australian*

Hospital patients stranded by bed block crisis

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Rachel Rasker, Page 9

David Witt is starting to forget what's beyond the four walls of his hospital room. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler faced growing pressure from state and territory health leaders to increase access to aged care places and promised an additional 5000 aged care beds per year, funded by cuts to the health insurance rebate for over-65s.

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The Rate Rise that stops a Nation Melbourne Cup Sweep

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Page 6

As South Australians brace for Melbourne Cup Day interest-rate pain driven in large part by excessive government spending, The Advertiser has created a tongue-in-cheek rate-rise field of inflation stars and duds and speculated on the finishing order. [...] Jockey: Mark Butler Weight: 53kg You rang?

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Australian women to access pill and UTI treatments at pharmacies under national expansion

Daily Telegraph Australia, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Gabriela Amoils

Australian women will soon be able to bypass long GP waitlists and pick up the contraceptive pill and urinary tract infection (UTI) treatments straight from their local chemist under a major nationwide expansion. [...] In a major shake-up to healthcare access, Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed the Federal Government's 12-month pilot program — originally limited to concession cardholders — will open to all eligible women from February 2027.

Continue reading

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

How is access to UTI treatment and the pill changing? And is the policy backed by evidence?

ABC Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Lauren Cortis & Hilary Bowman-Smart

From February 2027, eligible women will be able to consult a pharmacist at a participating community pharmacy for treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs) or hormonal contraception, with no out-of-pocket consultation fee. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler has promoted the initiative, which will be trialled for 12 months , as a win for women's health.

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Also reported by: *Healthed Australia*

Private health bill is back: What happens next and will pensioners be spared?

The Senior, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Carla Mascarenhas

Controversial private health insurance legislation is back on the agenda after Health Minister Mark Butler reintroduced the exact same bill into the House of Representatives. Many readers of The Senior are asking what happens next.

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HMR and RMMR telehealth follow-ups start on 1 November

Australian Pharmacist, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Chloe Hava

From 1 November, credentialed pharmacists can deliver Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs) and Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRs) follow-ups via telehealth. The change in the program rules was announced by Federal Health Minister Mark Butler at PSA26 in July.

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MSAC suggests minister skip HTA and make policy fix to ensure access to this technology

BioPharmaDispatch, Internet, 27 Oct 2026

Australia's Medical Services Advisory Committee has made a striking intervention on continuous glucose monitoring, suggesting that Health Minister Mark Butler expand eligibility to some patients as a policy

decision.

Continue reading

Is universal bulk-billing back? 20,000 GPs given $5000 under Butler's incentive scheme

Australian Doctor, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Jamie Thannoo

Some 20,000 GPs offering universal bulk-billing have been paid an additional $5000 under Mark Butler's drive to increase the number of universal bulk-billing clinics across Australia. The figures are drawn from the Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program, where GPs working at practices that bulk-bill everyone get a 50% cut of the payments.

Continue reading

Calls for Federal Action on Hospital Capacity

2GB, Mornings, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Mark Levy

In an interview with the New South Wales Health Minister Ryan, discussions focused on hospital bed shortages linked to federal policy. The minister stated that federal counterparts, including Mark Butler, must deliver more home care packages and residential aged care places to help move roughly 1,134 older patients out of hospital beds and ease emergency department demand.

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Koutsantonis Addresses State Debt and Health Spending

ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Sonya Feldhoff & Jules Schiller

Interview with South Australian Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis about the Auditor-General's report, state debt, and infrastructure programs. Addressing health spending forecasts and hospital ramping, Koutsantonis stated that the Commonwealth is shifting aged care responsibilities onto public hospitals. Presenters noted Mark Butler has shown no signs of altering this, while over 500 patients await aged care beds.

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Back to top

Minister McAllister

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Minister Rae

Minister defends algorithm as watchdog finds unfair outcomes

Weekly Times, General News, 28 Oct 2026, Page 8

Older Australians are being assessed by a tool the Commonwealth Ombudsman says lacks safeguards and has produced unfair outcomes, but the Federal Government is refusing to adopt the watchdog's call for a

broad human override. Aged Care Minister Sam Rae told ABC's Afternoon Briefing today the Government accepts the system "is not always getting it right", but insisted it was delivering fairer, faster and more accurate results than the one it replaced.

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Also reported by: *The Weekly Times*

Automated aged care assessments unfair

Government News, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Katarina Lloyd Jones

Australia's departmental administrative investigator has said automated aged care assessments had led to unfair outcomes and recommended the government amend legislation to allow decision makers to override the algorithm. [...] Speaking to the ABC, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors Sam Rae acknowledged that the automated system had made mistakes.

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Back to top

Assistant Minister McBride

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Assistant Minister White

GPs' 'amazing capacity' celebrated at Health of the Nation launch

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

GPs from all corners of Australia have gathered with politicians and media in Canberra for the launch of the 2026 Health of the Nation report, the centre-point of the college's biggest advocacy event of the year. [...] RACGP President-elect Dr Ramya Raman, the event MC, then introduced Federal Assistant Health and Ageing Minister Rebecca White, who shared the story of her grandfather, Dr Peter Pitney, who practised as a GP in Tasmania until he was 80.

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Back to top

Special Envoy Repacholi

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Department

Unspent $727m leaves seniors waiting months for full packages

Health Services Daily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Cate Swannell

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing cannot say how much of a $727 million Support at Home underspend was caused by older Australians receiving only partial funding, as Senate estimates heard some people had waited four months for their full packages. The department confirmed the $727 million underspend related to the first eight months of Support at Home, from 1 November 2025 to 30 June 2026.

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Aged-care assessment appeals rejected by default after 90-day deadline

Health Services Daily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Cate Swannell

Eighty-six challenges to aged care assessment decisions were automatically rejected after the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing failed to determine them within the statutory 90-day deadline, leaving the original decisions standing. The figure emerged during Senate estimates on Wednesday afternoon, when departmental officials were questioned about the reconsideration process for older Australians dissatisfied with the outcomes of their aged care assessments.

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DoHDA claims outsourcing reduction despite rise in consultant spending

Health Services Daily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Cate Swannell

The Department's annual report is out. Apart from the outsourcing numbers, secretary Blair Comley acknowledged concerns raised by the ANAO about aspects of the department's performance reporting.

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Aged care assessors wrongly promised algorithm overrides for a year

InnovationAus, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Joseph Brookes

Health and ageing officials wrongly advised stakeholders that decisions by its controversial aged care assessment algorithm could be overridden for more than a year after the Albanese government ruled out the safeguard. [...] However, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) which built the IAT and wrote the legislation and rules governing its use continued advising overrides were possible right up to its full deployment in October 2025.

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Australia's defective aged care algorithm needs legislative reboot, Commonwealth Ombudsman concludes

startupdaily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Julian Bajkowski

Robodebt royal commission transparency recommendations not applied to aged care algorithm; black box refuses to divulge secrets. The Albanese government and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing have copped a robodebt-grade excoriation from the Commonwealth ombudsman over its ham-fisted implementation of automated decision-making for aged care.

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Health Experts Urge Action on Pulmonary Fibrosis

Radio National, AM, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Isabella Higgins

Lung health experts are in Canberra lobbying the federal government for increased funding to treat and research pulmonary fibrosis, which claims 4,000 Australian lives annually. A report backed by the Lung Foundation also called for faster pharmaceutical benefit scheme access to medicines. In response, a federal health department spokesperson said the Centre for Disease Control is considering expanded screening programs.

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Also reported by: *ABC North Coast NSW*, *ABC Broken Hill*, *ABC Central Coast*, *ABC Shepparton*, *ABC New England North West*, *ABC Riverina*, *ABC Central Victoria*, *ABC Riverland SA*, *ABC South East SA*, *ABC Radio Brisbane*, *ABC Wide Bay*, *ABC Capricornia*, *ABC Alice Springs*, *ABC Radio Darwin* , *ABC Radio Perth*, *ABC South East NSW*, *ABC North West Qld*

Back to top

Ageing and Aged Care

Hidden frailty: why your 40s are the time to act

Age, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Paula Goodyer, Page 14

When some women first walk into the gym at The Bone Clinic, their bones are thinning, their bodies are stooped, and they're often leaning on a walking stick. "They see people lifting heavy weights and say, 'I could never do that'.

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Also reported by: *Sydney Morning Herald*

Aged care service gripes revealed

Herald Sun, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Julie Cross, Page 21

Millhaven Lodge in Pakenham has emerged as the most complained about residential aged care home in Australia, with 37 complaints lodged in just eight months. Under tough new transparency laws, Australians can see exactly how many complaints have been made against every aged care home and provider in the country and why clients and families are raising the alarm.

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Also reported by: *Courier Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Telegraph*

Five-star rating for aged care excellence

Bairnsdale Advertiser, General News, 28 Oct 2026, Page 11

A commitment to personalised care and the dedication of staff has seen Lewington House at Omeo District Health build on last years success, achieving a five out of five star rating for residential aged care, as issued by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. The 14-bed residential aged care facility continues to demonstrate that exceptional care can be delivered in small regional communities, with its latest results reflecting ongoing improvements and a strong commitment to residents and their families.

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Beyond homelike: designing for people living with dementia

Build Australia, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Page 83

Residential aged care is changing. The institutional model of long corridors, centralised nursing stations and identical bedrooms is increasingly giving way to smaller, softer and more residential environments.

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Aged care assessment tool given scathing review

Canberra Times, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Lucinda Garbutt-Young

An algorithm that determines people's level of aged care has come under fire, as government officials struggle to rectify the system after a damning investigation. Older people have been left distressed by the government's compulsory Integrated Assessment Tool, which has operated since 2024 to decide what level of need and funding people require.

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

Respect takes on another aged care operator and plans expansion

The Weekly Source, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Ian Horswill

Another community-owned aged care provider has decided it needs the financial strength of a larger organisation to secure its future. And the proposed takeover will deliver additional residential aged care places in regional Queensland.

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Tasmanian dementia researchers look to gardening to improve quality of life

Your Life Choices, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

Peter Maloney lives with dementia, but in recent times he has felt a positive change in himself. “I suppose rather than focusing on what’s gone, my mind has shifted to what’s there,” Mr Maloney said.

Continue reading

Back to top

Disability and Carers

'GST hike only one element of reform'

The Australian, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Matthew Cranston, Page 4

The architect of the GST, Peter Costello, says increasing the rate above 10 per cent without income tax reform would be a mistake, and that governments need to recommit to tough fiscal rules or risk further inflation and interest rate rises. [...] Australia's longest-serving treasurer slammed several federal government programs, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme and JobKeeper, and a lack of means testing.

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Also reported by: *The Australian*

Disability funding cuts hit schools

Herald Sun, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Mary Papadakis, Page 8

Victorian schools are set to lose millions of dollars in disability support funding under a new "underhanded" state government funding formula. The changes to the Disability Inclusion funding, which will take effect from next year, were revealed to Victorian principals late on Tuesday, sparking backlash among educators already struggling to deliver inclusive education in mainstream schools.

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

Pop-up Chatswood restaurant named Good Food Guide Food for Good winner

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Bianca Hrovat

Lettuce Eat is an exclusive annual pop-up restaurant in Chatswood that prepares young adults living with a disability to secure their dream jobs in Sydney's hospitality sector. The 12-week initiative, led by employment service provider Omnia Inclusive, received the Food for Good award at The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide launch at Carriageworks on Monday, an award that recognises people and organisations with bright ideas and innovative practices that better the community.

Continue reading

What disability housing support could look like – beyond Australia's outdated group home model

The Conversation, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Di Winkler

Group homes have long been the default for Australians with disability who need a lot of support. This has typically meant four or more people with disability living under one roof, with a 24-hour roster of support workers.

Continue reading

Back to top

Primary Care

Survey reveals gender divide in burnout, stress among doctors

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Courtney Kruk

Female GPs are seeing more patients with complex psychosocial and health needs, and spending longer consulting than their male colleagues, a report has found, with women in general practice experiencing higher rates of burnout and stress related to work-life balance. Over 3,500 practising, non-practising and in-training GPs were surveyed for the latest Health of the Nation report, published by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners on Wednesday.

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More Australians are seeing a GP. What happens next is becoming more complex

SBS, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Rachael Knowles

General practitioners (GPs) are spending more time with patients, treating increasingly complex conditions and working across specialist remits, according to a new report. The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) is calling on the federal government to increase Medicare patient rebates for longer consultations, after its latest Health of the Nation report found that two-thirds of GPs were spending more time with patients than in previous years.

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Kids cut from allergy waitlist as GPs left to fill gap

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

The RACGP is demanding answers from Canberra Health Services (CHS) after hundreds of paediatric allergy patients were removed from a public waiting list, leaving them with very few options but to seek care from their GP. CHS recently wrote to approximately 1000 families explaining their child is no longer eligible to be seen at the clinic following a review and update of the criteria by clinicians, with affected patients asked to see their child's GP or paediatrician to discuss a care plan.

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General practice the focus of Victoria health debate

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

Victoria's leading medical bodies will join politicians from all sides to discuss ways to address current challenges facing the state's health system. As Victorians prepare to head to the polls at the end of November, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) state branch will join RACGP Victoria to hear from local health representatives for a pre-election debate examining the future of healthcare – including access to care, general practice funding, hospital capacity, and workforce pressures.

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RACGP reflects on 'critical year' for general practice

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

The RACGP says 2025–26 was a 'critical year' for general practice across Australia, and one that has led to 'strong results' for the college. According to its new annual report, the past year was one of 'meaningful progress and momentum', as the college focused on four key areas: an outstanding Fellowship, a flourishing GP workforce, a future-ready profession, and general practice at the heart of the health system.

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Government Highlights Primary Care Relief Measures

ABC News, Afternoon Briefing, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Patricia Karvelas

Interview with Daniel Mulino, Assistant Treasurer, discussing cost-of-living pressures and government relief efforts. Mulino highlighted that primary healthcare initiatives, such as the urgent care clinic in Sunshine, cheaper medicines, and higher rates of bulk billing, are making a real difference to the community alongside broader economic support.

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GPs Urge Caution Over Health Chatbots

Channel 7, Seven News, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Angela Cox & Mark Ferguson

As appointment lengths rise due to complex care needs, RACGP President Michael Wright noted that while more GPs are enabling more bulk billing, securing appointments remains difficult. Consequently, over a third of Australians have turned to artificial intelligence for health advice. While doctors and Patients Australia Ambassador Nick Coatsworth welcome the technology, experts warn it cannot replace medical diagnoses.

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Similar coverage reported by: *Channel 7*, *Channel 7*

RACGP Calls for Longer Consultation Funding

SBS, World News Australia, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Janice Petersen

In an interview with Dr Michael Wright, President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, he discussed a new report finding GPs are managing increasingly complex conditions and experiencing racism. Wright noted ageing populations and mental health conditions are lengthening consultations, calling on the government for additional Medicare investment for longer appointments.

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RACGP Report Highlights Online Misinformation and Medicare

ABC Radio Sydney, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Craig Reucassel

In an interview with Dr Michael Wright, President of the Royal Australian College of GPs, about the Health of the Nation report, he discussed growing concerns regarding AI medical misinformation. He also urged the government to increase Medicare rebates for longer consultations to address systemic gender pay disparities and called for strategies to eliminate healthcare racism.

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RACGP Highlights Bulk Billing and Consultation Funding

ABC Radio Hobart, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Tracey Strong

In an interview with Dr Toby Gardner, chair of the Royal Australian College of GPs Tasmania branch, about the Health of the Nation report, Gardner stated that increased government funding has boosted bulk billing. However, he called for higher Medicare rebates for longer consultations, noting female GPs earn less because Medicare currently incentivises short appointments.

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Health of the Nation Report Highlights GP Access

2CC, Canberra Live, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Leon Delaney

interview with RAGCP National President Dr Michael Wright about the Health of the Nation report. Wright reported that GP access and bulk billing have improved across Australia following government investment. However, the speaker called on the government to increase Medicare rebates for longer consultations over 20 minutes to address persistent out-of-pocket fees and doctor shortages in the ACT.

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Continuing interview on: *2CC*

Back to top

Population Health

$770M of free housing

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Nicole Madigan, Page 22

Airbnb's offer to help disaster relief, domestic violence and people needing treatment Airbnb will commit $770 million over the next five years to provide free accommodation for people facing disasters, serious illness and domestic violence, with thousands of Australians expected to benefit from a major expansion of its charitable housing program. For 74-year-old Leigh Stephens, the initiative has been life-changing as he undergoes treatment for leukaemia, requiring regular travel and extended stays away from home.

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Also reported by: *Courier Mail*, *Hobart Mercury*, *Geelong Advertiser*

Weigh up cost of meal apps

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Brad Crouch, Page 10

Meal delivery apps are steering Australians towards unhealthy food options, according to a study led by researchers at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute's Health Policy Centre. It has prompted calls for government action "to reset the balance" and make choosing healthy options easier and more affordable.

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Warming climate stresses need for extreme workplace heat mitigation

Build Australia, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Berkay Erkan, Page 62

The increasing frequency and severity of extreme heat events and their associated heatrelated health risks are a significant challenge to modern Australian society, and in particular to construction workers and other professions that frequently perform strenuous work outside. The consequences of occupational heat stress can be wideranging and severe, including reduced safety due to impaired concentration, decreased work capacity, and illnesses such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash.

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Modern hvac systems target healthy buildings and healthy bodies

Build Australia, General News, 01 Oct 2026, Berkay Erkan, Page 58

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems used for indoor thermal comfort account for at least 40 per cent of energy consumed by buildings, positioning new technologies that make HVAC more sustainable and efficient as crucial to decarbonising the economy. [...] Transitioning refrigerants requires selecting and deploying new gases in line with Kigali Amendment timelines while advancing a shift toward low-GWP, PFAS-free alternatives.

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How much alcohol raises your risk of dying – the weekly number

The Australian, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Natasha Robinson

Fourteen drinks in a week sounds like a lot. But the drinks can easily stack up.

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The parents ditching IVF and embracing the 'turkey baster'

Sydney Morning Herald, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Rachel Rasker

Emma Mansell always dreamed of a "cheaper by the dozen family". After growing up an only child, the wholesome, busy chaos of a large family held great appeal.

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Regional Australians are feeling lonely, but these Old Bast**** are helping

ABC Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Sinead Mangan

Every Thursday night, John Abreu heads down to the Gascoyne Hotel in Carnarvon in Western Australia with his brother and daughter for the gathering of the Old Bast****. The group catch up weekly to have a yarn, a drink, play games and fundraise for their community.

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Also reported by: *Your Life Choices*

Every second counts in an emergency

Shepparton News Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, None

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), about 15,800 injury-related deaths happen each year, driven mainly by accidental falls in older people and severe road incidents. Injury is the leading cause of death for Australians aged one to 44.

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Call to Minimise Alcohol Harm at Races

2CC, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Stephen Cenatiempo

In an interview with Dr Nicole Lee, adjunct professor at the National Drug Research Institute and CEO of Hello Sunday Morning, excessive drinking culture during the Spring Racing Carnival was discussed. Lee called on event organisers and venues to minimise alcohol harms and stop promoting overconsumption, noting that alcohol impairs decision-making and increases risks such as physical injury and gambling losses.

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Opposition to Brisbane CityCat Alcohol Trial

4BC, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Jason Matthews

Interview with Professor Amie Steel, President of the Queensland branch of the Public Health Association of Australia, about Brisbane City Council's proposed trial of alcohol sales on selected CityCats. Steele and public health experts urged the council to abandon the plan, arguing that passengers on public transport would have nowhere to go if alcohol-related incidents occur.

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Continuing interview on: *4BC*

Rise in Alcohol-Induced Deaths Among Women

ABC Radio Perth, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Mark Gibson

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals a rise in alcohol-induced deaths among women over the past year, alongside an increasing overall rate across the entire population over the past decade. Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education chief executive Ayla Chorley stated that women are facing growing rates of alcohol-related harm, reflecting concerning community drinking patterns.

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Coalition Calls for Indoor Air Quality Standards

2GB, Breakfast, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Ben Fordham

Doctors and scientists are warning that indoor air pollution inside schools, hospitals, and workplaces is putting Australians at risk of health problems. A coalition of 85 organisations is urging Canberra to take action and calling for national standards to regulate indoor air quality. They say Australians are being exposed to poor conditions.

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Back to top

Chronic Conditions and Screening

Actor's MS misdiagnosis puts spotlight on the cost of doctors getting it wrong

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Lauren Ironmonger, Page 15

For nine years, Nicole - a Sydney woman who is using a pseudonym for privacy reasons - believed she had multiple sclerosis (MS). The period was marked by countless specialist appointments, tests, intensive bouts of medication and, above all, grief.

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Finding real 'courage'

Canberra Times, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Megan Doherty, Page 1

Joe Roff is well known in Canberra for his rugby career and his work as chief executive officer of the John James Foundation. What is less well known is the shadow that cancer casts across three generations of his family.

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Critical cash to boost health

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Luke Griffiths, Page 9

Barwon Health has been handed the funds to upgrade critical medical equipment, including an increasingly unreliable 16-year-old scanning system and imaging equipment that has broken down 32 times in two years. Labor MPs Christine Couzens and Alison Marchant visited Geelong Hospital on Wednesday to inspect first-hand the equipment that will be replaced thanks to around $8m of funding from latest round of the regional health infrastructure scheme.

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New service connects cancer support sector

Pharmacy Daily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

Cancer Council has today launched Cancer Connect, a national initiative designed to provide healthcare professionals and patients with resources to help coordinate cancer support services. It means healthcare professionals can now more easily help any Australian affected by the disease find trusted information and navigate practical and emotional support services.

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Australian Researchers Develop Early Heart Disease Screening

ABC, Late Night ABC News, TV, 27 Oct 2026, Jade Barker

Sydney researchers at Royal North Shore Hospital are developing a world-first screening program to detect heart disease before symptoms appear. Cardiologist Dr Gemma Figtree's team has identified five biomarkers common in patients' blood to triage individuals for scans. The test aims to prevent silent heart attacks in community health checks, including in regional areas like Bourke.

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Push for Early Pulmonary Fibrosis Detection

ABC News, News Breakfast, TV, 28 Oct 2026, James Glenday & Emma Reballato

Interview with respiratory physician Dan Chambers and patient Jake Reid about a major push launched for improved screening and detection of pulmonary fibrosis. Chambers stated the fatal condition is frequently misdiagnosed or delayed in diagnosis despite treatments being available. Reid, who developed progressive massive fibrosis from late-stage silicosis, urged individuals experiencing symptoms to seek immediate medical checks.

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Call for Pulmonary Fibrosis Investment

Channel 9, Nine News, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Peter Overton

Lung Foundation Australia CEO Mark Brooke has called on the Australian Government to invest in pulmonary fibrosis. Brooke stated that this funding would improve the lives of 22,000 Australians. A speaker added that 21 per cent of lung scarring results from exposure to hazardous materials in the workplace.

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National response urged for pulmonary fibrosis

SBS, World News Australia, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Janice Petersen

A report by Lung Foundation Australia and Boehringer Ingelheim has called for a national response to pulmonary fibrosis, which claims nearly 4,000 Australian lives annually. With 22,000 Australians living with irreversible lung scarring, CEO Mark Brooke recommended expanding cancer screening checks, while advocates urged increased research funding and faster PBS access to slow disease progression.

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Report Warns of Rising Pulmonary Fibrosis Cases

ABC Radio Brisbane, Mornings, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Steve Austin

In an interview with Mark Brooke, chief executive of the Lung Foundation of Australia, he discussed a new report warning that pulmonary fibrosis cases could surpass 25,000 by 2030. Brook stated that 11 Australians die daily from the incurable condition, with workplace exposures causing many cases. He urged greater government research funding and heightened community awareness of symptoms.

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Back to top

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

How many tragedies before we bring back asylums?

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Tanveer Ahmed, Page 13

The assault on Helen Haines has prompted familiar commentary about the growing anger and hostility in Australian society. Yet beneath the debate about political violence lies a more mundane possibility: our failure to care for people whose lives are progressively consumed by serious mental illness.

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Turning struggles into aid for others

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Natalie Croxon, Page 4

When Ethen Blakeney was facing problems with his mental health that threw his life "out of whack", a friend who'd gone through her own difficulties helped him through. Now Ethen, 21, is planning to start training to become a peer support worker so he too can use his experience to help others, through an innovative program covering the Illawarra and southern NSW.

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AFP issues online hate alert

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Page 4

No single measure can undo the change in social attitudes driving political threats, according to the head of the Australian Federal Police, as it grapples with how to keep parliamentarians safe. Commissioner Krissy Barrett began her late-night appearance at the Senate Estimates hearing noting "a heaviness that hangs across Australia" after the attack on independent MP Helen Haines.

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Anorexia and bulimia cases up 71 per cent since 1990, with increase expected to continue through to 2050

West Australian, Internet, 29 Oct 2026, Hannah Cross

New research has revealed an alarming spike in anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa cases worldwide, with Australian rates among the highest. Eating disorders are a growing public health challenge globally.

Continue reading

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

Dunsborough-founded friendship app Wingmate aims to tackle loneliness

West Australian, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Madelin Hayes

A Dunsborough-founded app designed to help people find friendship through shared interests and simple catch-ups will launch next month, with its founder hoping to address loneliness and social isolation. Wingmate matches users based on activities such as golf, surfing or pub trivia, while allowing them to organise meet-ups and events through the app.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Kalgoorlie Miner*

Debate starts on Tasmania's conversion practices ban as premier voices support for Greens bill

ABC Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Josh Duggan

A Greens bill to ban conversion practices is set to pass Tasmania's lower house of parliament with the support of Labor, several independents and three Liberals. [...] Research by La Trobe University has found that one in 20 young queer Tasmanians have experienced them, and that they are associated with a higher suicide risk.

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Patients in Australia can now be diagnosed with ADHD by a GP. What does this mean for treatment?

The Guardian, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Jack Larkin

Historically, people seeking a diagnosis and prescription for ADHD needed a referral from their GP to see a specialist, often a paediatrician for children, or a psychiatrist for adults. Patients and advocacy groups have long said this leads to high costs and long waits especially for those in regional areas, and amid rising rates and awareness of ADHD.

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After 31 years in psychiatry, I have witnessed the immense cost of badly funded care

Australian Doctor, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

The dire state of mental health funding was laid bare when a state government was compelled to provide figures under parliamentary rules. NSW Health revealed a $550 million annual shortfall in funding for clinical and support staff.

Continue reading

Back to top

Immunisation

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Health Systems Strategies

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Health Economics & Research

New study provides evidence for stronger, faster CML treatment

Retail Pharmacy, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

A more effective and better-tolerated treatment for chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) could improve quality of life for people living with the disease. A new study led by Adelaide University and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) has provided the first direct evidence that a breakthrough targeted therapy can rapidly and consistently suppress the molecular signals that drive CML.

Continue reading

Back to top

First Nations Health

Serious flaws have widened gap, not closed it

The Australian, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Paige Taylor, Page 6

Scott Morrison told us the era of "government knows best" in Indigenous affairs was over. Australia would put faith and resources into Aboriginal corporations as frontline service providers.

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Also reported by: *The Australian*

New york call

Northern Territory News, Sport, 29 Oct 2026, Oliver Shedden, Page 40

A pair of Top End marathon runners will embark on the journey of a lifetime to participate in the world's biggest event of its kind this weekend. Two Indigenous athletes - Nathaniel Cooper from Crocker Island, who is a part of the Minjilang Mob, as well as Michelle Kerrin from Darwin and part of the Arrernte and Luritja Mob - will travel to the US for the New York City Marathon on November 1 as part of the Indigenous Marathon Project.

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Lotjpa Yapaneyepuk takes home health excellence award

Shepparton News Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Bree Harding

Historically, there has always been a gap between positive cancer outcomes for metropolitan and regional patients, which widens even further for First Nations patients. It's a gap a local partnership, which

launched a now award-winning community-led initiative earlier this year, is trying to bridge in the Goulburn Valley, where the largest Indigenous population outside Melbourne lives.

Continue reading

Hall of Fame recognition for Cape York health leader

National Indigenous Times, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Joseph Guenzler

Debra Malthouse has been inducted into the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council Hall of Fame, recognising more than 45 years of work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services. Born in Mareeba and raised on the town's Aboriginal Reserve, known as The Yumba, Ms Malthouse is now CEO of Apunipima Cape York Health Council.

Continue reading

New oral health program to target SA's most remote areas

Bite Magazine, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

The Australian Dental Foundation (ADFi) has announced that its new Central Smiles Project will travel to Ceduna and the Eyre Peninsula to address health accessibility in the community. Funded by the Straumann Group Foundation, the $510,000 project will deliver preventative care, dental examinations, restorative treatments, extractions and referrals in conjunction with local health services and Indigenous health organisations.

Continue reading

Back to top

Public Hospital and Health Reform

Hunter hospitals ranked among worst for surgery waits

Newcastle Herald, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Chloe Coleman, Page 8

Elective surgery wait times at three Hunter hospitals are among the worst in the state, according to a new report. Compare The Market's Australian surgery wait times report revealed Maitland hospital had the third-highest elective surgery wait times, according to public hospital waiting list data.

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Also reported by: ***Newcastle Herald***

Children taken off hospital waiting list

Canberra Times, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Peter Jean & Jasper Lindell, Page 5

Even though doctors suspect 13-year-old Jordan Mavroudis has a potentially life-threatening illness, he has been removed from a specialist waiting list at Canberra Hospital. Jordan is one of about 1000 patients deemed ineligible for paediatric outpatient appointments as part of a clinical review of the waiting list.

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Also reported by: ***Canberra Times***

Rockingham Hospital urgent surgery delays revealed in WA elective surgery waiting time figures

West Australian, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Troy De Ruyter

Rockingham General Hospital completed just 42 per cent of its urgent elective surgeries within clinically recommended timeframes in 2024–25, according to figures highlighting wide differences in surgery waiting times across WA's public hospitals. The hospital recorded the lowest overall on-time rate among the 10 hospitals in the bottom-performing table, with just 56.3 per cent of its 2746 elective procedures completed within the recommended timeframe.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Kalgoorlie Miner*

Desk chair used as makeshift stretcher amid Queensland's ambulance ramping crisis

ABC Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Janelle Miles & Emma Pollard

After Liz Cullen fell heavily at her central Queensland home, she pushed through excruciating pain to shuffle along the floor and pull herself up on one leg to reach her mobile phone and dial Triple Zero (000). In tears because of the "10-out-of-10" pain in her right knee, the 63-year-old, who lives alone, expected she may have to wait a couple of hours for an ambulance after she was told paramedics would get to her "as soon as possible".

Continue reading

Back to top

Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Health Workforce

'Inadequate and dangerous': Union slams Katherine Hospital security response after six staff attacked

Northern Territory News, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Lottie Hood

Six hospital staff were allegedly repeatedly punched, kicked and bit with two workers being "smacked" over the head with a heavy set of baby scales by a patient in Katherine Hospital three days ago. The distressing incident reportedly unfolded in Katherine Hospital emergency department (ED) on Sunday, October 25 all while one hospital security guard could only stand and watch.

Continue reading

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

North Queensland GP Dr Carmel Cockburn wins national award after rebuilding Ingham maternity ward

The Courier Mail, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Emma Cam

For Ingham mother of four Dr Carmel Cockburn, returning to the North Queensland town a decade ago was as much about community as it was about medicine. Now, the Rural Generalist has been named the 2026 Rural Doctor of the Year by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Townsville Bulletin*, *Cairns Post*, *Adelaide Now*, *Northern Territory News*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*, *Townsville Bulletin*

'A very big win': State government dumps plan to abolish Tasmanian Industrial Commission

The Mercury, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, David Killick

The state government has backed down on plans to abolish the state's industrial commission umpire. [...] The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation also welcomed the decision.

Continue reading

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

Albany hand therapist wins State award for virtual training program supporting rural health workers across WA

West Australian, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Amy Towers

An innovative training program developed in Albany to give rural and remote health workers access to specialist skills has earned Lauren Irvine a major State award. The WA Country Health Service hand therapist was named Allied Health Educator of the Year at the 2026 WA Excellence in Allied Health Awards, held at the WACA Ground on October 14.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Kalgoorlie Miner*

Back to top

Technology Assessment and Access

Owners reminded of responsibilities

Pharmacy Daily, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

The PBS Audit and Intervention Section of the Department of Health is reminding pharmacy owners on their responsibilities for the lawful operation of their pharmacies in the wake of compliance activities indicating shortfalls in understanding of professional obligations.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Australian Journal of Pharmacy*

Back to top

Medicare Benefits and Digital Health

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Benefits Integrity

Surgeon Dr James Ian Spark disqualified from practising for two years after defrauding over $50,000 from health authorities

Adelaide Now, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Lucy Rutherford

A “highly regarded” vascular surgeon has been banned from practising after he scammed more than $52,000 in taxpayers’ money. In a judgment published online, the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal disqualified Dr James Ian Spark from applying to be re-registered as a health practitioner for two years.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Toowoomba Chronicle*, *Cairns Post*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*

Qld doctor Sophara Roath suspended after being charged with raping patient in clinic

The Courier Mail, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Vanda Carson

A Queensland doctor accused of attacking a male patient during a rectal examination has been suspended from practise. Sophara Roath, who worked from Our Medical in Loganholme, south of Brisbane, had his registration to work as a doctor suspended by the healthcare watchdog on October 23.

Continue reading

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

Hospital data breach pauses overseas doctor training

Shepparton News Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Lloyd Jones

A training program for overseas doctors has been suspended over a privacy breach in which pregnant patients' details were shared on social media. At least 12 pregnant women had their confidential medical information shared with 28,000 followers on social media by a visiting medical observer at Royal Darwin Hospital in October.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *Daily Mail UK*

Back to top

Australian CDC

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Therapeutic Goods Administration

Dodgy peptide killed legendary stuntman

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Sarah Booth, Page 5

A beloved Aussie stuntman and actor's death was caused by a popular unapproved peptide, a coroner has found, paving the way for a crackdown on their use. Richard Norton, who had worked with the likes of Margot Robbie, Jackie Chan and Chuck Norris, died in March 2025 after a prescribed, but unapproved peptide triggered an anaphylactic reaction.

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Also reported by: *Adelaide Advertiser*, *Herald Sun*

Call to ban nitrous oxide and end the 'nang' dealers

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Craig Dunlop, Page 23

Two of Australia's top doctors' groups have backed calls for a nationwide crackdown on predatory online nitrous oxide dealers that profit from selling highly addictive, sometimes deadly "nangs". Both the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Australia and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) have urged the national medicines regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, to prohibit the sale or possession of the large bottles nitrous oxide, warning they pose a growing public health issue.

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Also reported by: *Herald Sun*, *Hobart Mercury*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Courier Mail*, *Daily Telegraph Australia*

We all need a pep talk on this crazy fad for peptides

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Dr Sarah Kleinman, Page 25

One minute you are young and cool (well, cool-ish) and the next minute, everyone is talking about peptides and you don't understand what they mean. So, this week, I thought that we should all find out together.

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'Enormous surge' in peptide use forces needle and syringe programs to restrict safe injecting resources

ABC Online, Internet, 28 Oct 2026

Needle and syringe programs (NSPs) established to stem the spread of blood-borne viruses, including HIV, are struggling with an "enormous surge" in peptide use, with social media influencers suggesting people access free syringes at the harm minimisation charities. Directions Health Services in Canberra is funded by the ACT government to offer safe injecting equipment to drug users but says it has had to limit the stock it can give clients due to an increased demand from peptide-users.

Continue reading

Jump in prescription medicine applications

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Megan Haggan

TGA misses 100% performance target due to "increased number and complexity of applications," Dept of Health annual report finds. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) completed 98.8% of prescription medicine evaluations within statutory timeframes, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's annual report 2025-26, released last week.

Continue reading

The billion-dollar cancer bill Australia's sunscreen overhaul may not fix

SBS, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Cameron Carr

Australia's sunscreen regulator is planning tougher rules after concerns some products failed to deliver the sun protection promised on their labels. But experts say more reliable testing is only part of the solution, with boosting awareness on how Australians need to apply and reapply sunscreen also critical to preventing skin cancer.

Continue reading

Also reported by: *The New Daily*, *Pharmacy Daily*, *Australian Journal of Pharmacy*, *MSN Australia*

Tougher Testing Rules Proposed for Sunscreen Brands

Channel 7, Sunrise, TV, 28 Oct 2026, Monique Wright & Matt Shirvington

Interview with Dr Deshan Sebaratnam, Dermatologist about proposed tougher rules from the medicines regulator for Australian sunscreen brands. Sebaratnam stated that proposed changes would introduce more objective testing using a spectrophotometer alongside existing methods. He noted sunscreens marked broad spectrum SPF 50 plus that avoid the TGA naughty list provide reliable protection against skin cancer.

Play Now

TGA Toughens Sunscreen Testing Standards

2CC, Canberra Live, AM Radio, 28 Oct 2026, Leon Delaney

Interview with Public Health Association of Australia CEO Professor Terry Slevin about sunscreen efficacy. The Therapeutic Goods Administration has decided to improve and mandate more rigorous testing following an investigation by consumer organisation CHOICEthat found some sunscreens do not meet claimed protection levels. Slevin emphasised that the vast majority of Australian sunscreens remain effective and urged continued public use.

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Back to top

Office of Drug Control

No relevant coverage.

Back to top

Food Standards

Use your loaf: council

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 29 Oct 2026, Leighton Smith, Page 7

A fledgling hospitality business with plenty of community support has been shut down after council officers determined its cheesy cob loaf creations could not legally be prepared in a home kitchen. Since Get Cobbed Townsville was launched by Townsville sisters Shianne and Renee Salmon in mid-October, the small business made a splash on social media, with an "amazing response" from locals.

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Bomberry Belgian chocolate-covered blueberries and raspberries recalled over metal contamination fears

7News.com.au, Internet, 28 Oct 2026, Katharina Loesche

A popular frozen fruit snack coated in Belgian chocolate has been pulled from shelves nationwide over fears it may contain metal. The recall involves four 150g varieties of Bomberry chocolate-covered blueberries and raspberries, sold at Woolworths and independent food retailers nationally, including IGA, Harris Farm and Drakes supermarkets, as well as online.

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Also reported by: ***Daily Mail UK***

Back to top

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Back to top

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