



TODAY'S NEWS

Wednesday, 20th December 2023

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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Age](#)** (page 1) reports that the Department of Health has confirmed Victoria's public hospital and healthcare system could be overhauled through a series of mergers and the sharing of surgery waiting lists under the state's Health Services Plan.
- **[Herald Sun](#)** (page 1) reports that Triple Zero whistleblowers claim that the Victorian service is chronically understaffed, with emergency calls taking more than a minute to be answered, and as few as four people rostered on for the whole state at times. *Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#)*
- **[Adelaide Advertiser](#)** (page 2) reports a new SA Health Rural GP Agreement has been sealed between rural GPs and the SA government, which includes \$10,000 payments for new GPs to lure them to regional areas. *Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser](#)*
- **[Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 2) reports that a Hobart woman had to wait five hours for an ambulance, prompting calls for the state government to do more to resource the health care system.
- **[Sydney Morning Herald](#)** (page 5) reports that Health Minister Mark Butler has declined the private health insurance providers proposed premium increase, stating that the providers need

to "put forward a more reasonable figure that considers their years of record profits." Also reported by: [The Age](#)

- [Daily Telegraph](#) (page 7) reports that 352 extra aged care homes now have a 4 or 5 stars on the government's Star Ratings system since December 2022. "The biggest improvement reflected in Star Ratings over the past year is the experience of residents," stated Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells. Also reported by: [Herald Sun](#), [Courier Mail](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Hobart Mercury](#).
- [Herald Sun](#) (page 7) reports that a study by Monash University has revealed more than 85 per cent of Victorians are unaware they have cardiovascular risk factors.
- [West Australian](#) (page 7) reports that federal Health Minister Mark Butler has agreed to let WA use some of the \$4 million set aside to establish an eating disorder centre to set up early intervention and treatment services.

MINISTER BUTLER

How to keep premiums affordable

Australian Financial Review, General News, 20/12/2023, Rachel David, Page 30

If Labor wants to keep health insurance affordable to take pressure off the public system, tougher reforms are needed to make our health system more efficient and sustainable.

Also reported by: [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#).

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Butler asks health insurers to consider 'years of profit'

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 20/12/2023, Olivia Ireland, Page 5

Private health insurance providers say they are suffering from inflationary pressures and the "highest prices in the world" from medical technology companies, criticising the federal government's decision to reject their initial request to increase premiums. Health Minister Mark Butler has declined the 31 insurers' proposed premium increase that could have delivered an average jump of up to 6 per cent as the companies and government hold annual negotiations to set the price.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

[Read Plain Text](#) [Read More](#)

Eating disorder funds in early intervention

West Australian, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 7

Money set aside for a residential eating disorder facility will be spent setting up early intervention and treatment services resolving a four-year State and Commonwealth stand-off. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has now agreed to let WA use some of the \$4 million to set up a "non-admitted eating disorder service" in the Peel region.

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Feds in \$457M boost to key mental health groups

Goondiwindi Argus, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 4

Beyond Blue has welcomed extended funding by the Commonwealth to support key community services including Lifeline, Beyond Blue and Kids Helpline. Minister for Health Mark Butler announced a \$456.7 million 5-year funding package this week.

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Poor diets of children blamed on marketing

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 10

Public-health advocates are calling for action to curb obesity after fewer Australian children were found to be eating fruit and vegetables. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the first step was to work with states and territories.

Health funds target 6pc

Kalgoorlie Miner, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 12

The Albanese Government is resisting pressure for a marked increase in health insurance premiums as another cost-of-living blow looms for struggling Australian families. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said he wasn't inclined to approve the industry's proposed premium increase based on the information it had provided.

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Health minister rejects insurers' bids for large premium increases

ABC Online, Other, 19/12/2023, Tom Crowley

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has told private health insurers to "have another go" after rejecting their bid to lift premiums by up to 6 per cent. Under federal law, health insurers can increase premiums once a year but must seek the minister's approval.

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Money set aside for residential eating disorder facility will be spent setting up early intervention services

Busselton Dunsborough Times, Other, 19/12/2023, Kimberley Caines

Money set aside for a residential eating disorder facility will be spent setting up early intervention and treatment services — resolving a four-year stand-off between the Commonwealth and WA Government. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has now agreed to let WA use some of the \$4 million at Ms Sanderson's request to set up a "non-admitted eating disorder service" in the Peel region.

Also reported by: [Broome Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [North West Telegraph \(Online\)](#), [Great Southern Herald \(Online\)](#),

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Launch of updated Feed Safe app to provide information on alcohol and breastfeeding

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Other, 19/12/2023

Today the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) in partnership with the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) have relaunched the Feed Safe app. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler said the Every Moment Matters campaign is providing Australians with the latest health information about alcohol and breastfeeding.

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Health insurers told to 'have another go' on premiums

Goulburn Post, Other, 19/12/2023, Callum Godde

The Albanese government is resisting pressure to markedly increase health insurance premiums in another looming cost-of-living blow to struggling Australian families. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said he wasn't inclined to approve the industry's proposed premium increase based on the information it had provided.

Also reported by: [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Southern Highland News \(Online\)](#), [Tasmanian Examiner \(Online\)](#), [The Hepburn Advocate \(Online\)](#), [Busselton Mail \(Online\)](#), [North West Telegraph \(Online\)](#),

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Medicare urgent care clinic opens in Carlton

Inner City News, Other, 19/12/2023

Inner-city locals now have greater access to the healthcare they need with the opening of the Inner Melbourne Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (Medicare UCC). [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Carlton clinic would mean people in the community who needed urgent but not acute care could get it quickly even if it was outside standard hours, and all they'd need was their Medicare card.

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Government refuses private health industry request for 6 per cent rise

in premiums

Your Life Choices, Other, 19/12/2023, Jan Fisher

In good news for consumers, the federal government has refused a private health insurance industry request for the biggest average increase in premiums in the past six years. The government and the industry negotiate each year on premium increases, but this year their request for an average 6 per cent rise was rejected, with health minister Mark Butler citing cost-of-living pressures.

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Ausbiz, The Open, 19/12/2023, Compere

Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected the health insurance industry's request to increase premiums between 4% and 6%, the highest increase since 2018. It's part of the annual negotiations for premium increases, which the minister must approve for each provider. An increase would have hit the 14.6 million Australians, or 55% of the population who have hospital or extra cover.

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2GB, Mornings, 19/12/2023, Luke Grant

Grant reports Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected the health insurance industry's request to deliver the biggest premium rise in at least six years as the government tries to quell voter discontent over the rapid increase in the cost of living. He adds as part of the annual negotiations for premium increases, which Butler must approve for them to be agreed to, the country's 31 insurers have requested annual rises that could have delivered an average premium hike as high as 6%. Grant notes Butler said he was not inclined to approve providers' proposed premium increases, based on the information currently provided.

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2SM, 15:00 News, 19/12/2023

Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected a bid by health insurance companies to increase premiums by 6%. Federal law dictates insurance providers must seek the minister's approval to raise rates once per year. Butler said the proposals were not justified or proportionate.

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ABC Radio Brisbane, 15:00 News, 19/12/2023

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has rejected a bid from private health insurers for higher premiums by 6% in 2024. Butler says the bid is unreasonable amid cost of living pressures. An industry spokesperson says the rejected figure was motivated by cost pressures. Insurers can make another proposal in late January.

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MINISTER WELLS

Stars align as rating scale lifts aged-care standards

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/12/2023, Julie Cross, Page 7

Hundreds of aged care residents are living in homes that are not up to scratch or need significant improvement, according to the government's latest Star Ratings system. [...] Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells said the Albanese government was delivering its promise to lift the standard of aged care in Australia.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#)

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Waiting game no fun at all

News Weekly (Merimbula), General News, 20/12/2023, Cheryl Field, Page 8

Senior life and so another year draws to an end and we look forward to a new one - but unfortunately, it looks very much like bringing with it not-so-new problems. [...] Now Aged Care Minister Anika Wells tells us the new system will be introduced in two stages - Home Care Package clients from July 1, 2025, and home support program clients waiting a further two years, until July 1, 2027.

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Star ratings for aged care homes reveals the worst in NSW

Gold Coast Bulletin, Other, 19/12/2023, Sayee Shree & Ravi Sankar

Every aged care home in NSW has been rated, with more than 20 being exposed as needing improvement. See full list and search aged care homes. [...] Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells during Question Time at Parliament House in Canberra.

[Read More](#)

New members of Aged Care Council of Elders announced, strong advocates return

HelloCare, Other, 19/12/2023, Bianca Iovino

The Australian Government has to announce the new and returning members for the Aged Care Council of Elders. [...] Aged Care Minister Anika Wells thanked all outgoing members for their contributions and said she was particularly looking forward to the insights gained from James Carey who lives in an aged care home to gain realistic insights into the services provided.

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54% of residential aged care homes achieve 4 or 5 star rating

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Caroline Egan

One year after Star Ratings were first introduced, the number of aged care homes with a 4 or 5 star rating - which means they are delivering good or excellent care - has increased 15% or by 352 homes to 1,329 (54% of homes) today. [...] "One year on and Star Ratings data shows that the Albanese Government is delivering its promise to lift the standard of aged care in Australia," said Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells.

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2024, and until 2017, and probably beyond, is to be "brutal" years of reforms: Jason Binder, Respect Aged Care CEO

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Caroline Egan

The rapid pace of reform has been one of the biggest themes of 2023, and is set to continue next year and beyond. [...] Between 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023, according to data from the Department, the number of operational aged care places across Australia only grew by 1,502 - far fewer than the 8,000 beds Aged Care Minister Anika Wells forecast last year would be needed.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

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DEPARTMENT

\$2.4 million injection for Walara upgrade

Plains Producer, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 18

Walara Inc has received a financial boost as it upgrades its facilities at Riverton, in the form of more than \$2 million in federal funding. Walara chairperson Malcolm May has announced an additional \$2.4 million has been received from the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care to go towards further improvements at the Walara Gilbert Valley site.

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Five APS agencies vote 'yes' on enterprise agreements

Canberra Times, Other, 19/12/2023, Miriam Webber

Five Australian Public Service agencies have voted up their enterprise agreements, endorsing the Albanese government's pay offer of 11.2 per cent over three years. The Department of Health and Aged Care, National Health Funding Body, Department of Finance, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of the Treasury have voted "yes" on their enterprise agreements, with another two agencies expected to vote before Christmas.

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Can Dry January actually improve your health? Experts explain

Men's Health AU, Other, 19/12/2023, Erica Sweeney

There's a reason cutting back on drinking is a popular New Year's resolution. [...] Drinking in moderation, which the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care define as no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day, isn't all bad.

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First three APS agencies support workplace deals, others front industrial action

PS News, Other, 19/12/2023, Chris Johnson

Employees across three Australian Public Service agencies have voted yes on their enterprise agreements, which include APS-wide pay and conditions, and agency-level matters. Those agencies are the Department of Health and Aged Care; the Department of Finance; and the National Health Funding Body (NHFB).

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Have your say on the new Aged Care Act

rdaep.org.au, Other, 19/12/2023

The Department of Health and Aged Care invites anyone interested in aged care including older people, their families and carers, aged care providers and workers, researchers and experts to have their say. The new Aged Care Act will change the ways aged care services are delivered to older people in their homes, in community settings and in residential care homes.

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The Cairns South Medicare UCC will open to patients with urgent non-life-threatening conditions

Retail Pharmacy Assistants, Other, 19/12/2023, Katrina Crawford

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN), together with the Federal Government, is

pleased to announce that Balance! Edmonton Family Practice will establish the Cairns South Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) and intends to start seeing patients from 19 December 2023. [...] NQPHN welcomed the Department of Health and Aged Care's announcement earlier this year that, of the 58 Medicare UCCs across Australia, one would be in Cairns.

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Australian Digital Health Agency adding hospital aged care transfer summary to My Health Record

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Caroline Egan

The Australian Digital Health Agency has added an aged care transfer summary to My Health Record and will work with software providers to incorporate the product into their platforms. [...] The Agency is also developing discharge summaries for when the resident goes back to residential aged care, and integrating My Health Record with My Aged Care to ensure aged care assessments are available when residents are in hospital.

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Final draft of the Aged Care Quality Standards published

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Caroline Egan

The Department of Health and Aged Care has published the Final Draft of the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards. An urgent review of Australia's Aged Care Quality Standards, which were introduced in 2019, was announced in March 2021, in response to recommendations 19 to 21 of the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

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CORONAVIRUS

Covid fear is wearing thin

Herald Sun, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 2

One-third of Australians do not believe that measures such as staying up to date with vaccinations, wearing masks, hand sanitisation and social distancing, are important to protect against Covid-19. The Covid Community Sentiment Index, a research survey commissioned by Pfizer Australia, also reveals that just under two-thirds of Australians (64 per cent) do not think that new variants will have a significant impact on them in a year's time.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#), [HelloCare \(Online\)](#), [Retail Pharmacy \(Online\)](#).

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COVID-safe actions ebb

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/12/2023

Results from new research conducted during Australia's eighth COVID-19 wave showed that one-third of Australians do not believe that COVID-safe measures, such as staying up to date with vaccinations, wearing masks, hand sanitisation and social distancing, are important to protect against the prevalent virus.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Skilled migrants push

Courier Mail, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 7

State migration ministers have lobbied the federal government to prioritise skilled migration across construction, disability and aged care. The first migration ministers' meeting was held in Canberra on Tuesday with federal immigration minister Andrew Giles.

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Concern for heritage fails for Freo site

West Australian, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 38

A \$90 million aged care residence and wellness centre set for a historic corner of Perth's south has been approved despite heated objections from locals and heritage experts. Plans by aged-care provider Hall & Prior were approved on Thursday for the facility, which is expected to add 160 beds at the former Woodside Maternity Hospital site.

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Hall & Prior gain approval for \$90M aged care facility in East Fremantle

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Ian Horswill

The family-owned aged care provider operating 36 residential aged care homes, with in-home and community care programmes across Western Australia and New South Wales, has been given approval by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to build a \$90 million aged care facility on the site of the former heritage-listed Woodside Hospital in East Fremantle, 13km southwest of Perth city centre.

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Esteban Cox appointed CEO of Southern Cross Care (Tasmania) Inc

The Weekly Source, Other, 19/12/2023, Caroline Egan

Tasmania's largest Not For Profit aged care provider Southern Cross Care (Tasmania) Inc has appointed Esteban Cox CEO, after former CEO Robyn Boyd resigned in August. Esteban has business management experience in a range of community sectors including aged care, primary healthcare and disability and has worked in both Australia and overseas in a range of multinational healthcare organisations.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Horror stats show sex health crisis

Courier Mail, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 8

A worrying new report has revealed the number of Australians infected by syphilis has tripled over the past decade, as sexually transmitted diseases continue to surge. As many as 24 people out of every 100,000 were infected with the once-debilitating bacterial STI in 2022, according to a new report from UNSW's Kirby Institute.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Smokers out of puff

Daily Telegraph, General News, 20/12/2023, Page 11

Seventy per cent of people who smoke at least once a week would like to quit in the next one to two years, according to a survey of Australian and international smokers. Researchers from the University of Melbourne, Monash University and the University of Queensland surveyed 8642 people who smoked at least weekly.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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How Ozempic could affect the health of the global economy in more ways than one

ABC Online, Other, 19/12/2023, Ian Verrender

Not since the advent of Viagra has there been a bigger "accident" in the world of medicine. Ozempic, a drug initially formulated to treat type 2 diabetes, suddenly has become the hottest product on the planet, at least in the developed world.

Also reported by: [4BC \(Online\)](#).

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Why are doctors still telling women with endometriosis to become pregnant?

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 19/12/2023, Gina Rushton

Endometriosis was mentioned possibly for the first time in Australian media in a 1949 article in the Catholic Weekly . Doctors in the piece prescribed pregnancy as a treatment for "one of the most crippling of female diseases", which they claimed was suffered by women who didn't have kids young enough or who used contraception.

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SPF 101: Everything you need to know about choosing a sunscreen

The Courier Mail, Other, 19/12/2023, Holly Berckelman

We've done the hard work for you Sunscreen is the most important accessory in Australia so how do you choose the right one? We asked the experts.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 19/12/2023, Spence Denny

Syphilis cases have tripled in Australia over the past decade, according to a national sexual health report by the Kirby Institute. The report says Australia recorded the highest number of syphilis cases over the past decade. The report found that while the majority of cases of the sexually transmitted disease were in men, rates increased sixfold among women.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Pop-up heart checks a lifesaver

Herald Sun, General News, 20/12/2023, Robyn Riley, Page 7

Regional testing a success Victorian lives have been saved by a simple idea to put pop-up heart health checks in regional shopping centres and workplaces. The Monash University study found most of the 454 adults who took the four-minute test unknowingly had at least one cardio vascular risk factor.

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Jackson Warne thanks the public for supporting the Shane Warne Legacy

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/12/2023

Jackson Warne has thanked the public for supporting the Shane Warne Legacy organisation, which provides free heart tests. Sharing a throwback photo of himself and his late dad together, the 24-year-old wrote, 'Thank you so much for your overwhelming support on dad's Legacy so far.

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One in two Australians living with a chronic condition

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 19/12/2023

Mental and behavioural conditions were the most prevalent in 2022, followed by back problems and arthritis. Nearly 80% of people aged 65 and older had at least one chronic condition in 2022.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 19/12/2023, Sandra Sully

According to a new Australian study, common painkillers like aspirin, may be just as effective as some opioids when it comes to treating cancer pain. Those findings are coming from the world's largest research project into opioid use for cancer pain, led by academics from the University of Sydney.

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/12/2023, Mark Ferguson

Australian researchers from QIMR Berghofer are on a mission to prevent irreversible blindness with a simple saliva test. Hundreds of thousands of people suffer from glaucoma and don't even know it, and a home testing kit could save their sight.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 19/12/2023, David Reilly

Interview with Rick Bennett, prostate health advocate and Anne Savage, Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, on the PCFA urging men to take charge of their future. Around 70 Australian men are diagnosed every day with prostate cancer and over 3000 will die from prostate cancer in 2023. Bennett says he was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2019 after a routine check-up encouraged by a proactive GP. Savage says if we apply the knowledge we have to detect prostate cancer early through a simple PSA blood test, they know that they can give every Australian man an excellent chance of beating the disease.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#), [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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PRIMARY CARE

Local health services face mergers, shared wait lists

Age, General News, 20/12/2023, Aisha Dow & Benjamin Preiss, Page 1

A secret overhaul of the state's public hospital system is investigating possible forced mergers of local health services and the sharing of surgery waiting lists in what could be a major shake-up of how Victorians access care. The state has 76 health services, compared with 15 local health districts in NSW.

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Wait a minute

Herald Sun, General News, 20/12/2023, Shannon Deery, Page 1

Triple-0 whistleblowers say the embattled service remains chronically understaffed with as few as four people rostered on at times to cover the entire state. Leaked internal records expose critical delays of more than a minute for emergency calls to be answered, well above the service's five-second target.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Painful five-hour solo wait for an ambulance

Hobart Mercury, General News, 20/12/2023, David Killick, Page 2

A Hobart woman who spent about five hours lying alone and in pain on her bedroom floor after calling an ambulance following a serious fall says the state government needs to do better. Kristina Reid of Rokeby fell in her bedroom about 12.30am last Tuesday and could not get up.

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Life-saving gift that's needed most of all

West Australian, Edition Changes, 20/12/2023, Claire Sadler, Page 16

The Australian Red Cross is urging West Australians to donate blood in a bid to prevent a shortage over the festive season. An extra 830 donations a day are needed across the country between December 22 and January 2 to meet hospital demand for patients, with at least 1000 donations needed over this period in WA.

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Urgent services are opening after floods in Cairns region

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/12/2023

An urgent care, fully bulk-billed clinic offering walk-in care will be opening in Edmonton on December 19 to treat patients with non life-threatening conditions. The Cairns South Medicare Urgent Care Clinic will open seven days a week to residents impacted by the effects of ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper and floods, and those in need of urgent care.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Hospital giving women a green whistle to help with IUD pain relief

ABC Online, Other, 19/12/2023, Shalailah Medhora

A Melbourne public hospital has become one of the first in the country to offer women Pentrox, commonly known as the green whistle, for painful IUD procedures. Frankston Hospital, which is run by Peninsula Health, began trialling the pain relief option a few months ago and is now offering it to every patient who has an IUD inserted or removed.

[Read More](#)

A medical miracle for residents as Royal Flying Doctor Service to revive Condobolin GP surgery

ABC Online, Other, 19/12/2023, Joanna Woodburn

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) has swooped in to ensure a small town in western New South Wales has access to general practitioners. The Australian medical icon is taking over Condobolin's GP surgery in Melrose Street in January, and will offer medical appointments, preventative health and screening, and chronic disease management.

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'It would have saved my arm': Cash injection for vital helicopter service

Northern Daily Leader, Other, 19/12/2023

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service has received a funding injection from Squadron Energy for their Tamworth and Lismore based aircraft. Squadron Energy's support will contribute to the ongoing emergency aeromedical services that support 1.5 million people across Northern New South Wales.

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ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 19/12/2023, Spence Denny

Royal Australian College of GPs' Dr Nicole Higgins says better training and rule changes are leading to a bigger takeup of long-acting reversible contraceptives like IUDs. Intrauterine devices are less popular in Australia than overseas because of poor pain relief options for procedures. Still, Higgins says two-thirds of GP trainees are now women and it is leading to meaningful change in the system.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

War veteran released from mental ward, shot dead by police hours later

Steven Angus was hospitalised after a two-hour siege with police, the next day he was released and hours later he was dead, now an inquest will examine what went wrong. Shayla Bulloch Queensland Police Association President Ian Leavers says the death of army veteran Steven Angus "should have been preventable".

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Husband of Melbourne woman who killed three children in murder-suicide sues doctor and hospital for negligence

7news.com.au, Other, 19/12/2023, Molly Magennis

Katica Perinovic, 42, took her own life and the lives of her three children during a psychotic episode in 2021. The husband of a Melbourne mother who killed their three children in a murder-suicide is suing his wife's doctor and hospital

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Channel 7, Seven News, 19/12/2023, Susannah Carr and Rick Ardon

A surge in eating disorders in WA is putting increasing pressure on hospital beds, but an Australia-first clinic has just opened in Perth's south that aims to keep patients in recovery at home.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

'Incredible': Sydney woman delivers first baby after getting uterus transplant

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 19/12/2023, Nathan Schmidt

The first baby to be born in Australia under a "groundbreaking" uterus transplant research trial being run at the Royal Hospital for Women in Sydney has arrived. Kirsty Bryant, 30, gave birth on Friday to a healthy baby boy after becoming the first person in the country to have undergone uterus transplant surgery in January.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Liberal \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

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Inside South Australia's new virtual care service for women with symptoms of early pregnancy loss

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal, Other, 19/12/2023, Robert Fedele

Women in South Australia who are showing signs of early pregnancy loss can now conveniently access vital midwifery-led care and support through video consultations from the comfort and privacy of their own homes. The new virtual Women's Assessment Service, run by the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN), enables women across the state experiencing symptoms such as pain or bleeding in early pregnancy, or other gynaecological concerns, to tap into care from an experienced midwife virtually instead of needing to present and wait in emergency departments during such a vulnerable time.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Pay deal to lure regional medicos

Dozens of country towns will offer new GPs a \$10,000 welcome under a new pay deal with the state government. While remote towns offer up to \$50,000 as a signing-on deal, another 32 rural towns will offer the new payment of up to \$10,000 to encourage new doctors to settle, including Mount Pleasant, Kapunda, Eudunda, Barmera, Meningie, Mannum, Renmark, Waikerie, Bordertown, Kingston, Millicent, Penola, Clare, Wallaroo, Peterborough, Laura, Port Broughton, Crystal Brook, Jamestown, Quorn and Hawker.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#)

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Hundreds of millions spent on agency nurses as NSW local health districts struggle to keep staff

ABC Online, Other, 19/12/2023, Bruce MacKenzie, Hugh Hogan, Romy Stephens & Bruce-Mackenzie

The use of agency staff is causing "hyperinflation" in nursing costs. Health authorities across NSW are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to fill nursing vacancies with agency staff on locum rates.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Hours cut

Ballarat Courier, General News, 20/12/2023, Michelle Smith, Page 1

Ballarat will no longer have a 24/7 pharmacy after changes were made to the state's Supercare Pharmacies Initiative. The Sturt Street UFS Pharmacy, which has operated 24/7 since 2016, will revert to opening daily from 7am to 11pm as of January 1, 2024.

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NT opens door to pharmacist administered NIP shots

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 19/12/2023, Tina Patterson

NT Government brings pharmacist vaccination rules into line with Commonwealth's NIP Pharmacists in the Northern Territory will be able to administer the full suite of National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines to individuals aged five years and older from 1 January 2024.

Also reported by: [Pharmacy Daily \(Online\)](#), [Retail Pharmacy \(Online\)](#)

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WA's response

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/12/2023

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia WA Branch has expressed concerns about the proposal to reverse-list Chemist Warehouse on the Australian Securities Exchange via Sigma Healthcare Ltd. The proposed merger poses significant questions and risks related to aspects of patient care, community pharmacy ownership, competition, and the future of the Customer Service Obligation.

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PSA's workforce survey seeks input

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/12/2023

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has launched a pharmacist workforce survey this week, with support from The University of Queensland. The Pharmacy in Australia: measuring employment, labour decisions and activity (PAMELA) survey aims to capture current and future dynamics of the Australian pharmacy workforce, including trends in job history, income, career plan, professional commitment, and job satisfaction to help foster a better understanding of workforce decisions by pharmacists.

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The Pharmacy Guild Queensland urges Australian Government to expand continued dispensing arrangements for community pharmacies to supply all PBS subsidised medicines to patients impacted by floods in Far North Queensland

Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Other, 19/12/2023

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Branch President Chris Owen is calling on the Albanese Government to broaden continued dispensing arrangements to include all PBS subsidised medicines for residents impacted by the current disaster in Far North Queensland. "As medicines experts, patients should be able to access all PBS subsidised medicines from their local community pharmacist during a disaster, and we are calling on the Albanese Government to expand the list of medicines available under the National Health (Continued Dispensing) Determination 2022 to include all PBS subsidised medicines for patients in the North," says Mr Owen.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Dhulwa nurse was unfairly dismissed, commission finds

Canberra Times, General News, 20/12/2023, Lucy Bladen, Page 5

A nurse who was sacked from Canberra Health Services over allegations she had disclosed patient information was unfairly dismissed, the Fair Work Commission has found. The commission said the decision to dismiss Carol Sandland was "marked by unnecessary haste" but it was likely the nurse would have been dismissed even if a "more careful and considered approach" had been undertaken.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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Midwife struck off after holiday

Courier Mail, General News, 20/12/2023, Vanda Carson, Page 13

A Townsville midwife has been struck off and can't apply for new registration for a year after she was found guilty of misconduct for "almost entirely" failing "to fulfil her duties as a midwife" by going on holiday during a birth. In a decision handed down by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal last Friday, Linda Ann Peller's midwifery registration was cancelled and she was banned from providing any pregnancy-related health service or birthrelated health service until she is allowed back into the profession.

Also reported by: [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#).

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Fake physio jailed for \$400k fraud, money laundering

Bathurst Western Advocate, Other, 19/12/2023, Cheryl Goodenough

After defrauding a service station of about \$400,000 and laundering money - some belonging to a sports club - Carlos Adelino Henrique Ferreira pretended to be a qualified physiotherapist. [...] Ferreira's lack of qualifications was discovered before he saw patients, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency said earlier.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#).

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No Taste of tobacco, vapes at big festival

Hobart Mercury, General News, 20/12/2023, Genevieve Holding, Page 9

A week out from one of the state's biggest summer events, the 2023-24 Taste of Summer organisers are promising a breath of fresh air at the festival with a ban on smoking and vaping. The Taste starts next Thursday, with the event's smoke-free focus stemming from recent federal and state government restrictions on vaping and smoking, Taste of Summer chairman Jarrod Nation said.

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SPORT

Adelaide targets the SCG and MCG

Sydney Morning Herald, Sport, 20/12/2023, Daniel Brettig, Page 38

Adelaide Oval's Test can be more profitable than Sydney's and Melbourne's if it gets the type of promotional support that bolstered crowds at this week's match in Perth, South Australia's cricket boss believes. South Australia Cricket Association president Will Rayner said Adelaide Oval's mix of old-school charm and modern comfort made it the ideal venue for cricket's long form.

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Mitchell Johnson stood down from Cricket Australia functions in wake of article on David Warner and George Bailey

7news.com.au, Other, 19/12/2023, Harrison Reid

Mitchell Johnson was reportedly asked to stand down by Cricket Australia from appearing as a guest at two functions in the wake of his scathing article directed at David Warner and George Bailey. CA felt it couldn't stand by its commitment to have Johnson appear as a guest during two lunches of the Perth Test, given the vitriol with which he treated Warner and Bailey in his controversial column for The West Australian.

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Shock figures reveal which Aussie city is in danger of losing its cricket Test matches

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/12/2023, Andrew Prentice

Perth could lose the right to host Tests during the Australian summer of cricket if crowd numbers don't improve over the next few years. The development follows projected figures which revealed Perth is expected to bring in millions of dollars less from Tests for Cricket Australia than Melbourne Sydney and Adelaide until 2028.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Surgical robot wins US development support

The Australian, Business News, 20/12/2023, Joseph Lam, Page 15

A surgical robot developed by a Queensland medical technology start-up has won a place in a highly coveted US program to fast-track its commercialisation. Convergence Medical, led by 37-year-old entrepreneur Chris Jeffery, has developed the V01, an assistive medical robot that can provide a spare pair of hands and eyes to help perform arthroscopic surgery.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

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JCU granted \$1.5 million for Melioidosis research program

Adelaide Now, Other, 19/12/2023, Jami Roberts

Cases of a disease that spreads through muddy soil and water continue to rise as floods plague Far North Queensland. Cases of a North Australia disease that spreads through muddy soil and water continue to rise as floods continue to plague Far North Queensland.

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Share or comment on this article: Carrots can reduce cancer risk and other good news at...

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 19/12/2023

Scientists have found carrots can help us to avoid cancer and other traditional elements of the Christmas dinner have health benefits. A study at Newcastle University found five servings of the vegetable per week was linked to a 20% reduction in developing all types of cancer.

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Super ageing

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 19/12/2023

Research led by UNSW Sydney's Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing has highlighted the need for clarity when defining late-life cognitively high performers, which could ultimately inform strategies to help prevent the development of dementia. Currently, there isn't a consistent approach to measuring cognitive super-ageing, stated UNSW.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Asbestos exposure concerns unearthed at CITIC Pacific's mega Sino Iron magnetite project near Karratha

Kalgoorlie Miner, Other, 19/12/2023

There are fresh fears CITIC Pacific Mining's Sino Iron magnetite project near Karratha has been potentially exposing thousands of workers to deadly asbestos without adequate health and safety measures in place, The West Australian can reveal. Fibrous minerals – including the deadly blue asbestos — is naturally occurring throughout the earth of the Pilbara region.

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Channel 9, Today, 19/12/2023, David Campbell, Sylvia Jeffreys, Lara Vella

Cases of RSV, human parainfluenza and swine flu are growing, joining new strains of COVID and the common cold. Health experts are concerned that holiday travel and gatherings will accelerate transmission of the viruses, which can lead to severe illnesses.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

TGA flags compounded Ozempic safety concerns

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 19/12/2023

Pharmacists are being warned that liable for any adverse outcome patients experience should they supply compounded semaglutide-like products. Reports that a telehealth provider plans to make compounded versions of Novo Nordisk's Ozempic (semaglutide), have prompted the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to warn that such products "may contain undisclosed and potentially harmful ingredients".

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

No relevant coverage

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AICIS

CDPP mulls charges over vials of isotopes

The Australian, General News, 20/12/2023, Ellen Whinnett, Page 7

Australian Border Force has handed a brief of evidence relating to the discovery of 52 vials of radioactive material in Sydney to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. The Australian understands the brief covers a range of potential charges relating to seizure of the vials of low-level radioactive isotopes from a flat at Arncliffe in suburban Sydney in August.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#)

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