



TODAY'S NEWS

Friday, 29th December 2023

A more automated version of *Today's News* will be provided on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. It will still capture the main media stories, but will not include an Executive Summary. The report will be emailed to subscribers at the later time of 7:30 am.

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister Wells](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#)
| [Assistant Minister Kearney](#) | [Assistant Minister McCarthy](#) | [Department](#)
| [Coronavirus](#) | [Ageing and Aged Care](#) | [Population Health](#)
| [Cancer, Hearing and Chronic Conditions](#) | [Primary Care](#)
| [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#) | [Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
| [Health Workforce](#) | [Technology Assessment and Access](#)
| [Medicare Benefits and Digital Health](#) | [Benefits Integrity](#)
| [Health Systems Strategies](#) | [Sport](#) | [Health Economics and Research](#) |
[First Nations Health](#) | [Office of Health Protection and Emergency Management](#)
| [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) | [Office for Drug Control](#) | [Food Standards](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- [The Australian](#) (page 1) reports tough new penalties for negligence could lead to an exodus of skilled leadership from the aged care sector, providers have warned, but a spokesperson for Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said jail time would be reserved for the "gravest circumstance".
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 1) reports NSW lifeguards are urging reforms to beach safety following new research showing half of domestic and international students don't understand the current flag system, while beachgoers are being urged to be cautious after a spate of drownings this summer. *Also reported by:* [ABC Online](#), [SBS](#)
- The [Canberra Times](#) (page 1) reports mortality rates and serious illnesses caused by COVID are declining with each new wave of infections, but doctors say Australians should update their vaccinations to continue building immunity.
- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 1) reports Australians with private health insurance have until the New Year to claim unused benefits before policy providers reset their extras cover. *Also reported by:*

[The Australian](#), [Daily Telegraph](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Courier Mail](#)

- **The Australian** (page 5) reports Queensland Health's emergency departments have failed to meet internal patient waiting targets, with new data showing 4,680 people waited more than 24 hours in EDs between July and October this year. *Also reported by:* [Courier Mail](#)
- The **Daily Telegraph** (page 8) reports Australians will be able to receive free vaccinations at local pharmacies under an expansion of the National Immunisation Programme beginning January 1. *Also reported by:* [Herald Sun](#), [Adelaide Advertiser](#), [Courier Mail](#), [Hobart Mercury](#)
- The **Canberra Times** (page 9) reports short-staffing at ACT hospitals could see nurses facing unfair criminal charges for delays under the Territory's proposed voluntary assisted dying laws, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation has warned.
- The **Adelaide Advertiser** (page 9) reports South Australians will be banned from smoking and vaping in a selection of public spaces, including hospitals and major events, from March 1 under new legislation that could also see fines for selling tobacco or vapes to minors double. *Also reported by:* [9News](#), [Sydney Morning Herald](#), [Channel 7](#)

MINISTER BUTLER

Complaints of 'toxic workplace culture'

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/12/2023, Caitlin Fitzsimmons, Page 22

A NSW government body responsible for improving the state's mental health and wellbeing is scrambling to contain the fallout from a disastrous employee survey that revealed it is one of the unhappiest workplaces in the public service. [...] Similar problems at the National Mental Health Commission were raised earlier this year, prompting federal Health Minister Mark Butler to launch a review.

Also reported by: [WA Today \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [The Age \(Online\)](#), [Brisbane Times \(Online\)](#).

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Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong to tie the knot with partner Sophie Allouache after 18-year relationship

Sky News Australia, Other, 28/12/2023, Laura Grassby

Wedding bells are set to ring for Foreign Minister Penny Wong who is soon to marry her partner of 18 years Sophie Allouache. [...] Several politicians are expected to be on the guest list including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, former SA premier Jay Weatherill and Health Minister Mark Butler.

[Read More](#)

Channel 9 Darwin, National Nine News, 28/12/2023, Paul Murphy

Less than a third of urgent care clinics are operating at full capacity, despite the Albanese Government promising they would open for extended hours daily. Health Minister Mark Butler says they fulfilled a major election commitment, but the Opposition claims the job is only half done. According to Butler, opening hours are based on local context, including workforce availability, suggesting there is future capacity to extend clinic hours if demand is there.

Report continues on: [Channel 9 Darwin \(Darwin\)](#), [Channel 9 Darwin \(Darwin\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

MINISTER WELLS

Jail for bosses in aged care fails

The Australian, General News, 29/12/2023, Jess Malcolm, Page 1

Board members of residential aged care facilities face criminal penalties of up to five years in prison if

they are found to be negligent, under a sweeping overhaul of the aged care act the Albanese government is considering. [...] A spokesman for Aged Care Minister Anika Wells said criminal penalties would only occur in the "gravest circumstance" and the aged care royal commission criticised existing enforcement options, saying they did not meet community expectations.

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

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2GB, Afternoons, 28/12/2023, Luke Grant

Grant reports a promise made by the government ahead of the 2022 election is to have a nurse in all aged care facilities 24/7 across Australia by July 2023. He adds Aged Care Minister Anika Wells has failed today following The Australian story by Jess Malcolm, which says the aged care sector is greatly increasing the use of short-time contract workers as they try and meet the demands of the government to keep the promise. Aged Care Industry Association Chief Executive Peter Hoppo said the government's push to meet the failed 24/7 promise was a farce and had become a multi-million dollar burden on providers that are trying to tick a box rather than improve the livelihoods of elderly residents.

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2GB, Mornings, 28/12/2023, Ray Hadley

Interview with Paul Sadler, aged care expert, on staffing costs at aged care facilities that are skyrocketing as providers struggle to meet the Prime Minister's strict election commitment to staffing reforms. The use of expensive short-term agency contract workers has quadrupled since 2019, with third-party staff now delivering 7.5% of care hours to fulfil the federal government's direct care minute targets. Sadler says Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells has initiated an aged care taskforce looking specifically at how Australia can improve the viability of the sector going forward and it is due to report in December.

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[Back to Top](#)

ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

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[Back to Top](#)

DEPARTMENT

Government that can't define woman plans to censor 'misinformation' online

MercatorNet, Other, 28/12/2023, Ben Terangi

In an exchange that will live on in infamy, Federal Senator for South Australia Alex Antic last year asked a panel of Australia's top medical experts representing the Department of Health one decidedly

uncomplicated question, namely, What is a woman? [...] " Finally, aware that he was the most senior health bureaucrat in the room not to mention the nation the department's secretary Professor Brendan Murphy stammered, "There look I think there are a variety of definitions and I think Perhaps to give a more fulsome answer we should take that on notice."

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[Back to Top](#)

CORONAVIRUS

US must come clean on what it's hiding about Covid origins

The Australian, General News, 29/12/2023, Paul Monk, Page 9

It's more than four years since Covid-19 broke out in China and almost four years since it was declared a pandemic. Yet we still don't know how it started: lab leak or zoonosis. The primary reason we don't know is that the Chinese Communist Party is determined to bury the truth, as it tries to do with everything that goes wrong on its territory. But there's a second guilty party: the US government. Or, rather, certain parties within it.

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'I'm 35 - this is not normal'

Canberra Times, General News, 29/12/2023, Lanie Tindale, Page 1

It's hard to believe that nearly four years ago the world closed for a virus few people had heard of previously - coronavirus. Since then, around 7 million COVID-related deaths have been reported to the World Health Organisation, including nearly 24,000 Australians. COVID is very unlikely to go away, but will 2024 be the year we finally learn to live with it?

Also reported by: [Bendigo Advertiser \(Bendigo\)](#), [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#), [Warrnambool Standard \(Warrnambool\)](#).

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Health bosses issue COVID-19 warning for New Year

9News, Other, 28/12/2023, Sarah Swain

State health bosses have warned people to take precautions against COVID-19 this New Year's Eve. While the pandemic rules might have long gone, NSW is asking people to celebrate outside, avoid sharing plates and wash hands to "keep loved ones safe". The week before Christmas NSW Health figures showed COVID-19 cases at "high levels and continuing to increase".

Similar coverage reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 28/12/2023, Elspeth Hussey

One of SA's leading COVID experts warns SA will likely see a spike in infections following post-Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations. There were more than 1600 cases reported in Adelaide last week, but Professor Adrian Esterman says low testing rates mean the numbers are likely far higher.

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ABC News, Mornings, 28/12/2023, Chris Mitchell

Interview with Professor Adrian Esterman, Epidemiologist, University of SA, on various states reporting an increase in Covid hospitalisations, and health officials are warning New Year's Eve could see an even greater spread of the virus. The surge in infections has authorities urging vulnerable people, in particular, to seek booster shots, weeks after new vaccines targeted at subvariants of the Omicron strain became available. Esterman says it's becoming increasingly difficult to track current case numbers because so few people are testing and states or territories are not consistently publishing their data. He adds they instead pass it on to the Department of Health and Aged Care's COVID website, which is a bit of a dog's breakfast.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Housing for aged priority

Northern Territory News, General News, 29/12/2023, Talara McHugh, Page 7

The Retirement Living Council has stressed the importance of age-friendly housing after the NT recorded its highest median age since 2004. Fresh data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed the NT experienced the second biggest jump (5.78 per cent) in median age nationally over the past decade, with the average age of Territorians increasing from 31.85 to 33.69.

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Driven by demand

Ballarat Courier, General News, 29/12/2023, Michelle Smith, Page 1

Two new allied health clinics have been proposed in Ballarat to help meet increasing demand for services including occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech pathology, social work, counselling, psychology, dietetics and podiatry. With long waiting lists for many allied health fields, new clinics and more practitioners are needed as the city's population continues to grow.

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ABC News, ABC Evening News, 28/12/2023, Kamin Gock

Assaults reported at aged care homes in New South Wales have risen to the highest level in a decade. Police are recording more than two a day on average across the state.

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2GB, Mornings, 28/12/2023, Ray Hadley

Aged care providers are warning their costs are becoming unsustainable as they implement a suite of government reforms, including the requirement to have nurses on duty around the clock.

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[Back to Top](#)

POPULATION HEALTH

Clock ticks on 'extras'

Herald Sun, General News, 29/12/2023, Duncan Evans, Page 1

Australians with private health insurance coverage have just four days left to potentially claim thousands of dollars in unused healthcare visits. Nearly all major health insurers will reset their "extras" cover from January 1, meaning if policy holders have not used up their coverage amount, they will lose the money.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Australia\)](#), [Daily Telegraph \(Sydney\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Smoking, vaping ban

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 29/12/2023, Isabel McMillan, Page 9

Smokers and vapers are set to cop a heavy blow in the new year as the state government brings in tough laws to protect the community from secondhand smoke. As of March 1, smoking and vaping will be banned in outdoor areas such as near jetties and patrol flags, schools, children's sporting events and shopping centre entrances. It will also be banned at major events, at hospitals and within outdoor public swimming facilities.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Adelaide\)](#), [Channel 9 \(Adelaide\)](#), [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#), [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#).

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You can't reverse the ageing process but these five things can help you live longer

ABC Online, Other, 28/12/2023, Hassan Vally

At this time of year many of us resolve to prioritise our health. So it is no surprise there's a roaring trade of products purporting to guarantee you live longer, be healthier and look more youthful.

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[Back to Top](#)

CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

A tale of two pharmas: will obesity firms still weigh heavily in 2024?

The Australian, Business News, 29/12/2023, David Wainer, Page 17

In pharma, you can take a larger slice of the healthcare pie than your peers, but you are still constrained by the size of the pie. No matter how good your cancer or diabetes drug is, healthcare systems will still have to keep paying for heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis treatments too.

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DIY asbestos disease

Courier Mail, General News, 29/12/2023, Page 24

Data on West Australian cases of the lung disease mesothelioma, which is primarily caused by asbestos exposure, suggests that the Australia-wide ban on asbestos is working, with a fall in the incidence of DIY/ renovation exposure. The Curtin University study looked at 2796 cases of mesothelioma in WA over 60 years, with about 85 per cent occurring in men.

Also reported by: [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#).

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Skin care key

Border Watch, General News, 29/12/2023, Charlotte Varcoe, Page 1

Cover up! As the weather heats up, medical professionals are encouraging people to take care of their skin and use appropriate protection. According to the Cancer Council, melanoma is the third most common cancer in Australians excluding keratinocyte cancers.

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Lennox Head parents Ollie Long and Brooke Carter share heartbreaking Christmas update on son Hugo's brain cancer battle

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/12/2023, Sam Stolz

On Christmas Eve, Ollie Long and Brooke Carter kissed their "beautiful" baby boy Hugo "a thousand times". [...] Hugo Long, 17 months old, is battling a rare and aggressive form of brain cancer. He was just 10 weeks old when diagnosed with Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid Tumour (AT/RT).

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'Drug free' way to chronic pain in spinal cord injury patients gets \$3m boost

9News, Other, 28/12/2023, Sarah Swain

Dawn Miller-Argue has lived with chronic pain since suffering a major spinal cord injury several years ago. But a new drug-free technique she thought was too simple to be true has produced promising

results. Devices placed from the fingertips to the head will measure how the trial therapy can benefit the hearts and brains of people living with spinal cord injuries.

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[Back to Top](#)

PRIMARY CARE

ED waits stretch as high demand hits public hospitals

The Australian, General News, 29/12/2023, Lydia Lynch, Page 5

Thousands of patients have languished in Queensland emergency departments for longer than 24 hours as demand for urgent care ramps up pressure on the public system. New data, released by the state government in response to a question from the Liberal National Party, revealed 4680 patients waited longer than 24 hours in EDs between July and October. [...] Maria Boulton, president of the Queensland arm of the Australian Medical Association, said patients were in ED longer because there were not enough beds on the wards.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Health workers may face unfair penalties in ACT's VAD bill

Canberra Times, General News, 29/12/2023, Lucy Bladen, Page 9

Short-staffed nurses potentially face unfair criminal charges for failing to meet voluntary assisted dying timelines under the ACT's proposed laws, a nurse's union says. Health practitioners face criminal penalties if they do not accept or refuse a request for voluntary assisted dying within two days. But the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation said, in a submission to the bill's inquiry, the bill does not take into consideration staffing shortages in the ACT and the penalties are potentially excessive.

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

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'Maintain the rage' for rehab facility

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 29/12/2023, Monique Patterson, Page 5

The south-west community must "maintain the rage" about the need for a residential rehabilitation centre, according to MP Roma Britnell. The Member for South West Coast said lobbying for funding for The Lookout in 2024 would be a priority. Ms Britnell said the region desperately needed a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility.

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Less than a third of urgent care links operate at full capacity

9News, Other, 28/12/2023

Less than a third of urgent care clinics are operating at full capacity, despite the Albanese government promising they would open for extended hours daily.

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Mundi Mundi and Birdsville festival-goers raise \$1 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service

ABC Online, Other, 28/12/2023, Bill Ormonde

Since their inception, the Mundi Mundi and Birdsville Big Red bashes have been linked to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The aeromedical service covers all corners of Australia and was a fitting choice as a charity partner for the remote music festivals.

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5AA, Breakfast, 28/12/2023, Will Goodings and David Penberthy

Interview with Chris Picton, SA Health Minister, on urgent care clinics. Picton says they are encouraged by the initial feedback so far and it has been something that the Federal Government has been

investing in around the country. He adds they are hopeful that it will be the beginning of the process, and they can see others expand over time. Picton notes as of today, they are finally seeing the fifth of those Medicare urgent care centres open at Morphett Vale.

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[Back to Top](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Bushfires have poor mental health effect on new mothers

Canberra Times, General News, 29/12/2023, Jasper Lindell, Page 9

Pregnant women and mothers of newborn babies experience worse mental health when exposed to bushfire disasters, new research suggests. A study of almost 1000 women from the ACT and south-eastern NSW who reported exposure to the Black Summer fires found they had higher rates of depression and anxiety.

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'Chaotic violence' as suicidal teen shackled despite pleas for mercy

West Australian, Edition Changes, 29/12/2023, Rebecca Le May, Page 6

Shocking footage obtained exclusively by The West Australian shows a suicidal teenage boy being held down and locked in crude shackles as he moans and sobs, laying bare the chaos going on behind closed doors at WA's scandal-plagued juvenile detention facilities. The confronting vision of three separate incidents, both from body-worn cameras and CCTV, shows the then 16-year-old being restrained in the notorious "figure four" hold, shackled with chains and padlocks, and left bound in a cell after having his clothes cut off and replaced with a rip-proof gown.

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[Back to Top](#)

CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Sacked over uniform breach

Courier Mail, General News, 29/12/2023, Jill Poulsen, Page 28

A Gold Coast University Hospital worker has failed in her bid to keep her job after she gave her friend an embroidered work shirt so she could pass herself off as a hospital staff member when visiting a friend during strict Covid-19 visitation restriction. Andrea Perry was employed as a team leader in operation services at the Gold Coast University Hospital when she was sacked earlier this year over the July 2021 incident.

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[Back to Top](#)

TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

'Great' new jab system

Daily Telegraph, General News, 29/12/2023, Emma Cam, Page 8

Australians will no longer have to pay for vaccines at their local community pharmacy from January

first. In the New Year, Australians can book an appointment with their local pharmacists for all vaccinations on the Commonwealth government's National Immunisation Programme (NIP).

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [2GB \(Sydney\)](#), [5AA \(Adelaide\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#).

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[Back to Top](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

[Back to Top](#)

BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Ailing health system is still broken

West Australian, Edition Changes, 29/12/2023, Lauren Price, Page 9

Parents' plea for change after damning findings into death of their daughter The grieving parents of a young woman who died from an infection after being ramped outside Royal Perth Hospital have called for an overhaul of the health system, saying nothing has changed in the four years since their daughter's "inhumane" death.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [9News \(Online\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#).

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'Predatory' pharmacist nets \$65k in gifts from lonely patients

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/12/2023, Sarah Booth

An "exploitative" Melbourne pharmacist accepted more than \$65,000 in gifts – including a car and free accommodation – from two elderly and vulnerable patients she befriended for personal gain, a tribunal has heard. Carolyn Lam has been banned from pharmacy for at least three years after a series of inappropriate patient relationships, including a "lonely" man with prostate cancer who gave her a \$52,000 car and a woman in her 70s whose home she lived in for nine months.

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Plans to broaden pool of Aussie blood donors

9News, Other, 28/12/2023

Plans are underway to broaden the pool of blood donors across the country by removing the barriers for gay and bisexual men.

[Read More](#)

[Back to Top](#)

SPORT

A dream come true

Hobart Mercury, General News, 29/12/2023, James Bresnehan, Page 1

LawConnect skipper's joy as just 51 seconds splits supermaxis Hours after he had taken supermaxi LawConnect to victory in one of the closest Sydney to Hobart finishes on record, skipper Christian

Beck was still pinching himself at the come-from-behind win. "It's a dream come true.

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Flag raised on beach safety

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 29/12/2023, Julie Power, Page 1

A study has found half of domestic and international university students misunderstood the meaning of the most common safety beach signs. These misunderstandings meant people who were wading, playing or couldn't swim well were potentially swimming in areas outside the flags that were unsafe.

Also reported by: [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), [Sunraysia Daily \(Mildura\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [SBS \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#), [Yahoo! News Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Couzens' council cash query

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 29/12/2023, Will Keech, Page 5

Geelong MP Christine Couzens has questioned the City of Greater Geelong's decision to not apply for infrastructure funding before penning a letter asking for money to be redirected from a proposed swim centre to an indoor stadium. Ms Couzens said the council should have applied for the state government's Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund to help finance the stadium.

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Clamour grows for more women's tests among 'Big Three'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/12/2023

Women's tests have always been a rarity with only 147 played in the nearly 90 years since England faced Australia in the first, and they have become even scarcer since white-ball cricket started to dominate the game. That India had not hosted a single test in nine years until this month reflected the reality that one-off tests only sometimes make up the numbers in multi-format bilateral women's international series.

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South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas blasts Cricket Australia's 'disgraceful' move: 'It's a kick in the guts'

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 28/12/2023, Shayne Bugden

Furious South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas has accused Cricket Australia of delivering a slap in the face to his state with its 'disgraceful' decision to have the West Indies play in the Adelaide Oval Test next month. Malinauskas' problem with the summer schedule is twofold: he wanted his home town to host Pakistan instead of the lowly-rated Caribbean side, and is railing against the Test starting on a Wednesday instead of later in the week, believing both decisions will result in shocking crowds.

[Read More](#)

Perth mayor Basil Zempilas suggests Optus Stadium hosts a day-night Test to increase cricket crowds

7news.com.au, Other, 28/12/2023, Harrison Reid

Perth mayor Basil Zempilas has proposed a left-field idea in response to criticism over his city's turnout to The West Test earlier this month, suggesting it should host a day-night match to draw in bigger crowds. The city of Perth has come under fire for crowd numbers at the summer's first Test against Pakistan, despite it being a WA record for a match involving Pakistan.

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Little girl pulled from Northern Rivers backyard pool dies in hospital

7news.com.au, Other, 28/12/2023, Hayley Taylor

A two-year-old girl pulled unresponsive from a backyard pool in the NSW Northern Rivers has died. Emergency services were called to a property at Whian Whian, 25km north of Lismore, about 2.20pm on Wednesday. Family members had given the toddler CPR as they waited for emergency services to arrive.

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Cyril Rioli hints at resolution yet to come with Hawthorn

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/12/2023, Andrew Mathieson

Cyril Rioli has teased a return to AFL circles immediately after an authorised hearing was scheduled to take place with Hawthorn Football Club to redress issues relating to Indigenous past players and their families. A cryptic remark on Instagram to a Hawks' fan account celebrating Rioli's career with a GIF captioned titled 'job's not finished' aroused the interest of not only a litany of AFL supporters, but also the Tiwi Islander icon with a response of "no contract offers yet".

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[Back to Top](#)

HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Why Australia is ripe for VC

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 29/12/2023, Rebecca Bellan

Over the past couple of decades, Australia, an island continent of 26 million that became rich by, among other things, mining natural resources, has developed into a modern powerhouse that actively works to foster a dynamic tech and startup scene. [...] Health and medtech also have a role to play in Australia's startup future, said Pounder of TCA. Advancements are driven by large government investments into healthcare research, a generous public healthcare system and a population that's increasingly willing to pay out of pocket for private healthcare, according to Pounder.

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[Back to Top](#)

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Kicking goals red dust, big dreams

Northern Territory News, General News, 29/12/2023, Talara McHugh, Page 1

Nestled on the banks of the Daly River, Nauiyu is a small Aboriginal community of about 300 people and home to one of the best barramundi fishing rivers in Australia. However, it was the community's resilience, enthusiasm and potential on the footy field and in the classroom that caught the attention of North Melbourne star and Yorta Yorta man Jy Simpkin.

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

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NSW premier claims police not to blame for Indigenous incarceration

National Indigenous Times, Other, 28/12/2023, Dechlan Brennan

The New South Wales Premier has defended the way police have interacted with young Indigenous people, despite a number of scathing reports in recent months by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) in relation to the policing of Aboriginal people in the state. Chris Minns told the Guardian NSW police are not to blame for the disproportionate Indigenous incarceration rates in the state.

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[Back to Top](#)

OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Channel 7, Seven News, 28/12/2023, Mike Amor

Frankston teenager Lachy Wright is calling for free access to a life-saving vaccine against meningococcal B after cheating death. His parents didn't know there was protection available until it was too late. Wright was vaccinated against meningococcal strains A, C, W and Y, but not B because, for most families, B is not included in the National Immunisation Program.

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2GB, Breakfast, 28/12/2023, Ben Fordham

Interview with Anne Ruston, Federal Shadow Health Minister, a devastated family in the Sydney Morning Herald today urging the federal government to fund a vaccine that will save lives. The family is pushing for NSW to follow SA and Qld in making the vaccine against meningococcal B. At the moment, kids are vaccinated against the A, C, W and Y strains of meningococcal but the vaccine doesn't protect against meningococcal B which is the most prevalent form of the deadly disease. Ruston says we do need to ask and call on the government to have a relook at why they have chosen not to fund the vaccine for that particular strain.

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3AW, Mornings, 28/12/2023, Neil Mitchell

Interview with Professor Robert Booy, Infectious Disease Paediatrician, University of Sydney's Institute of Infectious Diseases, on the B strain of meningococcal. Booy says over 80% of meningococcal disease in Australia is due to B. He adds most parts of Australia are only vaccinating routinely against A, C, Y and W at both 12 months of age and 15 years of age but they are not vaccinating routinely for either infants or teenagers unless you live in SA.

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[Back to Top](#)

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Aussie-made biodegradable Covid-19 kits to cut waste

The Australian, Business News, 29/12/2023, Glen Norris, Page 15

Health company SureScreen Australia will produce biodegradable testing kits at a new \$35m factory in Brisbane as the medical sector moves to avoid a repeat of the millions of tonnes of non-recyclable plastic waste created during the Covid-19 pandemic. SureScreen Australia managing director Troy Stewart said the factory in Brisbane's southern outskirts would address the growing global problem of plastic pollution, which worsened due to the pandemic and the rise in one-use tests.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Biotechs aim for health & wealth in the year ahead

West Australian, Business News, 29/12/2023, Cheyanne Enciso, Page 46

Biotech companies are facing a tough sell to investors, one expert warns, but WA industry bosses are confident the healthcare sector will prove resilient in the face of weaker economic conditions as they each aim to hit milestones in 2024. [...] It follows a decision by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in February allowing medicines containing psilocybin a psychedelic compound found in magic mushrooms and MDMA to be prescribed to patients by authorised psychiatrists from July 1.

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Antibiotics, type 2 diabetes and ADHD drugs in short supply

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/12/2023, Amanda Sheppeard

The arrival of 2024 is not expected to bring much relief for Australia's serious shortages of antibiotics, self-injectables approved for type 2 diabetes but widely used off-label for weight loss, and popular drugs used to treat ADHD. In fact, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has warned self-

injectables Ozempic (semaglutide), Trulicity (dulaglutide) and Mounjaro (tirzepatide) will be in limited supply until the end of 2024.

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Channel 7 \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sky News Live \(Sydney\)](#).

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

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FOOD STANDARDS

Zero-alcohol hangover

Northern Territory News, General News, 29/12/2023, Anna Vlach, Page 24

So-called 'healthy alternative' to drinking under spotlight with study into side-effects So-called healthy zero-alcohol drinks could be a dangerous gateway to the real thing for children and teens, according to Flinders University researchers.

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