

Health Insights

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- [ACCC commences proceedings against Cryosite Ltd for alleged cartel conduct](#) - The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has commenced legal proceedings in the Federal Court against Cryosite Ltd (Cryosite), a biotech company which specialises in biorepository and cord blood and tissue banking in particular.
- [ACCC pings GAIA](#) - Dreamz Pty Ltd, trading as GAIA Skin Naturals was found to allegedly be making misleading and deceptive representations after claiming their baby shampoo, moisturiser and bath wash were 'pure, natural and organic'. The company has paid fines worth \$37,800 for including sodium hydroxyl methyl glycerinate and phenoxyethanol in its products.
- [ACCC takes action against hearing aid retailers for misleading statements](#) - Last month, the ACCC commenced action against Oticon Australia Pty Ltd and Sonic Innovations Pty Ltd, both hearing aid retailers, for allegedly making false and misleading representations in advertisements for hearing aids available under the Australian Government Hearing Services Program (Hearing Program). The Hearing Program is available for pensioner concession card holders, veterans and defence force personnel.
- [AHPRA Register changes improve consumer access to public information](#) - Following AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia's independent review of the use of chaperone conditions in late 2016, the Medical Board of Australia, supported by AHPRA, has implemented the final recommendation from that review.
- [AHPRA releases new tool to help guide use of testimonials in advertising](#) - The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency ("AHPRA") has recently launched a new tool to assist practitioners and advertisers understand their obligations about using testimonials and reviews to advertise regulated health services.
- [AMA calls on COAG to urgently develop a national medical workforce strategy](#) - AMA Medical Workforce and Training Summit was held at the Australian Medical Association ("AMA") Victoria in Melbourne on 3 March 2018 ("Summit"). More than 80 key stakeholders took part in the Summit to discuss key medical workforce challenges and how to better meet community need.
- [AMA disappointed with mandatory reporting recommendations](#) - In a recent press release, the AMA expressed its disappointment at the decision of the Queensland Parliament Health, Communities, Disability Services, and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee (the Committee) to pass proposed mandatory reporting laws for doctors treating other medical professionals for mental health issues.
- [AMA NSW supports safe access zones for women's health services](#) - On 24 May 2018, the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018 ("Bill") passed the NSW Legislative Council without amendments. The Bill proposes to make amendments to the Public Health Act 2010 (NSW) by introducing an

150-metre exclusion zone around reproductive health clinics to stop patients and staff members being harassed or intimidated by anti-abortion protestors. The change would bring NSW in line with ACT, Victoria and Tasmania, who already have similar legislation.

- [AMA Position Statements: men's health, drugs in sport and the NDIS](#) - The Australian Medical Association ("AMA") has recently released position statements in relation to a number of health hot topics. First on the agenda is Men's Health, which the AMA believes requires a national strategy to address the greater vulnerability men have to various health disorders as well as substance abuse, suicide, and mental health problems. You can view the AMA's Position Statement on Men's Health in full [here](#).
- [AMA raises concerns for human health as a result of climate change](#) - The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has made a public statement following the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) recent report. In the report, the IPCC has urged that global warming should be limited to 1.5°C rather than 2°C but that the necessary measures would require far-reaching changes across society.
- [Australia's largest cosmetic surgery clinic subject to parliamentary inquiry](#) - A Parliamentary inquiry commenced regarding the NSW Cosmetic Institute's failure to employ experienced and qualified surgeons to perform breast augmentation surgery.
- [Australia's tobacco plain packaging laws upheld by World Trade Organisation](#) - A panel of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has rejected complaints from Indonesia, Cuba, Honduras and the Dominican Republic that Australia's plain packaging laws infringed tobacco trade marks and were inconsistent with Australia's obligation under international agreements.
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics – Patient Experiences in Australia](#) - The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released the results of the 2016-17 Patient Experience Survey, which collected data on access and barriers to a range of health care services.
- [Australian government responds to independent review of health providers' access to Medicare card numbers](#) - The Australian government has released its response to the Independent Review of Health Providers' Access to Medicare Card Numbers ("Review"). The Review was commissioned following media reports that Medicare card numbers were available for sale on the 'dark web'. These reports were referred to the Australian Federal Police, and its investigation is ongoing.
- [Call for changes to mandatory reporting for treating practitioners](#) - United General Practice Australia ("UGPA"), is seeking changes to mandatory reporting requirements for treating practitioners. The current requirement are seen to increase the risk that health practitioners will not seek independent medical assessment, advice and treatment to address a physical or psychological medical condition that they may be personally experiencing.
- [Changes to mandatory reporting under the National Law](#) - The Queensland government introduced the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 into parliament on 31 October 2018.
- [Changes to the therapeutic goods advertising framework commence](#) - Following the Therapeutic Goods Administration's ("TGA") Review of Medicines and Medical Devices Regulation a range of changes to the regulatory framework will be made between 2018 and 2020, with the first changes commencing last month.
- [Children with gender dysphoria no longer have to seek court approval to undergo treatment](#) - Parents, minors and doctors are being given

[to undergo treatment](#) Parents, minors and doctors are being given their autonomy back when it comes to cases of gender dysphoria. The Family Court has determined that where all three agree, parents will not have to seek court consent for Stage 3 treatment for gender dysphoria in adolescents and adults.

- [Commissioner investigates drug & alcohol services](#) - The Health Complaints Commissioner ("HCC") has used her new powers to prosecute a person who is prohibiting from carrying out a health service in South Australia, who is alleged to have contravened that ban by carrying out a counselling service in Victoria. Mr Mittiga was banned in 2015 from providing any health service in South Australia but has allegedly been practising in Victoria, in violation of that ban. If convicted, Mr Mittiga faces a penalty of up to \$38,000, two years imprisonment or both.
- [Company fined over importing unapproved cosmetic therapeutic goods](#) - ESCHOICE Pty Ltd, an Australia Company, has been fined over \$25,000 after the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) issued them with an infringement notice.
- [Conscientious Objection to Voluntary Assisted Dying](#) - Patients suffering incurable and terminal illnesses or medical conditions may be eligible under the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 (Vic) (Act) for access to voluntary assisted dying. However, under the Act, a registered health practitioner who has a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying has the right to refuse to provide information about voluntary assisted dying, or to assist and prescribe the voluntary assisted dying substance (Substance).
- [Coroner urges for laxatives to be pharmacist-only medication](#) - A South Australian coroner has recommended that laxatives be classed as 'pharmacist-only medications' following the death of a 28 year old woman.
- [Counsellor convicted after claiming to be a psychologist](#) - Print The New South Wales Health Care Complaints Commission received complaints alleging that a counsellor, Mr David Citer, was falsely holding himself out to be a registered psychologist. Mr Citer had referred to himself as a "Specialist Child, Adolescent and Family Psychologist" in emails to a registered psychologist. However, Mr Citer had never been registered as a health practitioner or student under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law).
- [Court of Appeal requires doctor to produce patient records to VCAT](#) - Dr Kemp, a medical practitioner, was asked to produce medical records to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) as part of a professional regulation matter despite his patient's refusal to consent.
- [Department of Health offers enforceable undertaking following Medicare and PBS data breaches](#) - In September 2016, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner ("OAIC") was notified of vulnerabilities in the Medicare Benefits Schedule and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme datasets published online. The datasets were based on personal information held by the Department of Health ("Department"). Following the notification, the OAIC opened an investigation to assess whether personal information had been compromised and the adequacy of the Department's processes.
- [Digital health meets international sport](#) - ASX listed Melbourne based digital health company Global Health has announced its partnership with Jobs4Sport digital platform to enable athletes to take their medical records with them when they move between countries and clubs.
- [E-cigarettes lose puff in public places](#) - New South Wales has introduced legislation to curb vaping and smoking of e-cigarettes in public places.
- [End of Life Directions for Aged Care project launched](#) - On 15 June 2018 the Commonwealth Government formally launched the End of Life

2018, the Commonwealth Government formally launched the End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) project. The project includes a new website which is intended to be a one-stop resource for support and advice on palliative care and advance care planning.

- [Experts call for ban on “Real Bodies – The Exhibition”](#) - The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has condemned the Real Bodies exhibition on the basis that the specimens were unethically and illegally obtained which breaches the NSW Health Regulations. RACP has called for the exhibition to be shut down.
- [Fake chiropractor and fake psychologist successfully prosecuted](#) - AHPRA has successfully prosecuted two people for unlawful use of the protected titles psychologist and chiropractor and holding themselves out as registered health practitioners.
- [Family Planning NSW targeted by hackers with ransom demand](#) - Family Planning NSW recently had its website hacked by a group threatening to release confidential data unless a ransom was paid.
- [Federal government announces mandatory flu vaccines for aged care](#) - The Australian government has recently announced that flu vaccinations will be compulsory for all staff in residential aged care facilities ahead of this year's flu season. The announcement comes following research showing a significant link between greater staff immunisation and lower rates of flu outbreaks in aged care facilities.
- [Flaw in Telstra Health’s Argus software exposed medical records to hackers](#) - Telstra Health has urgently addressed potential privacy breaches caused by a flaw in its Argus software.
- [Funding for PrEPX to keep protecting Victorians](#) - The Victorian Government has announced that it will provide an extra \$400,000 funding to extend the PrEPX HIV prevention medication study. The additional investment means the study will now run until 30 June 2018 – three months longer than its initial period.
- [Government says it will take “sweeping steps” to support the transvaginal mesh implant recommendations](#) - A recent Senate Inquiry into the adverse impacts of transvaginal mesh implants raised awareness of the traumatic experiences experienced by women who have undergone mesh-related procedures. As a result, the Inquiry was able to identify how women who have been affected by these procedures are being recognised and supported.
- [Government’s plans to strengthen privacy protections for my health record](#) - In a media release on 31 July 2018, the Federal Minister for Health, Mr Greg Hunt announced that the Government will strengthen privacy provisions under the My Health Records Act 2012 (Cth) (Act), to match the existing Australian Digital Health Agency’s Privacy Policy (ADHA Policy). This announcement was made after discussions between the Government and the Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.
- [GST on feminine hygiene products to be removed from 1 January 2019](#)
 - On 28 November 2018, the Federal Government signed the determination that will remove the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from feminine hygiene products from 1 January 2019 (Determination).
- [Hair implants refusal puts company in HIV discrimination spotlight](#) - A hair-loss treatment clinic was forced to apologise to a HIV-positive man it refused to treat after Queensland’s Anti-discrimination Commission concluded its investigations. This is one of several cases highlighted in the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland’s annual report for 2017-18 (Report).
- [Healthcare facility concedes privacy breach after specialist sends medical report to wrong GP](#) - In NSW, the Health Privacy Principles (HPPs) contained within the Health Records and Information Privacy Act

2002 (HRIP Act) protect individuals in NSW in relation to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of their health information by NSW public sector agencies and health service providers. The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Tribunal) has recently considered whether there was a breach of HPPs as a result of the disclosure of personal information to a general practitioner not involved in the care of the patient due to a computing error.

- [HealthEngine may be in breach of privacy law in sharing patient data](#) - Print Health Minister Greg Hunt has ordered an “urgent review” of Australia’s biggest online doctor appointment service, HeathEngine.
- [Immediate action against a practitioner in response to serious forced labour offences](#) - Three concurrent Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Tribunal) matters have found that the immediate action taken to supervise the practices of Dr Farshchi, a registered acupuncturist, chiropractor and medical practitioner, was appropriate.
- [Improved Health and justice outcomes for Victorians](#) - To ensure vulnerable Victorians continue to have access to justice, the Victorian Government is providing \$1.6 million of funding to Health Justice Partnerships. The money will be distributed amongst eight Health Justice Partnerships throughout Victoria until 2020.
- [Indemnity insurance changes possible](#) - A review of the Indemnity Insurance Fund (“IIF”) and seven associated schemes was recently completed and a report provided to the Department of Health. The First Principles Review Report - which consulted with key stakeholders including medical indemnity insurers and medical professional groups - assessed the cost, availability and viability of the current Indemnity Insurance scheme.
- [Inquiry into drug law reform](#) - On 27 March 2018, the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee published the Report into Drug Law Reform.
- [Investigation into complex pharmacy licence applications set to target franchise agreements](#) - The Victorian Pharmacy Authority (“VPA”) has announced that it is set to begin stricter investigations into complex pharmacy licence applications to ensure compliance with the Pharmacy Regulations Act 2010 (Vic).
- [Law Council of Australia makes submission on Drug Testing Trial Bill](#) - The Law Council of Australia has provided a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs regarding the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Drug Testing Trial) Bill 2018. The Bill will establish a two year drug testing trial in three regions of Australia for 5000 new recipients of Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance.
- [Medical Board revised guidelines on sexual boundaries a timely reminder for doctors](#) - Revised Medical Board of Australia guidelines on sexual boundaries in the doctor-patient relationship took effect on 12 December 2018. The updated guidelines apply to all registered medical practitioners in Australia and define the standards of ethical and professional conduct expected of doctors by the Board, their peers and the community.
- [Medical practitioner convicted of fraud has registration suspended by VCAT](#) - The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (“VCAT”) determined Dr Pralay Mazumdar, a specialist psychiatrist, engaged in professional misconduct and unprofessional conduct in November 2017.
- [Medicine companies required to report medicine shortages under new law](#) - Last month, the federal parliament passed the Therapeutic Goods Amendment (2018 Measures No. 1) Act 2018 (Act). The Act will commence on 1 January 2019 and requires medicine companies to report shortages of important medicines as soon as they occur.
- [Michael Gorton AM will conduct the review of the Assisted Reproductive](#)

[Treatment Act](#) - Russell Kennedy Principal, Michael Gorton AM will lead this 12-month review which is scheduled to commence this month. The primary focus of the review is to ensure women and families using assisted reproduction are supported through their entire treatment and receive the correct information throughout their journey.

- [My health Record privacy measures pass the Senate](#) - The Federal Government has passed new My Health Record privacy and security protections through the Senate.
- [New assisted reproductive technology laws in NSW](#) - Last week the NSW Parliament passed legislation which will strengthen the rights of individuals born through Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) after 2010 to access details about their biological heritage. The changes are aimed at improving the information contained on the central register about donors and donor-co
- [New clinical standard designed to prevent deaths related to blood clots](#) - The first national Venous Thromboembolism Prevention Clinical Care Standard (Standard) has been developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (Commission) to support clinicians and health services to implement the delivery of high-quality care to prevent venous thromboembolism (VTE) acquired in hospital and following hospital discharge.
- [New food labelling laws take effect in Victoria this month](#) - As of 1 May 2018, fast food and supermarket chains in Victoria are required to display the kilojoule content of ready-to-eat food and drinks as well as the average adult daily energy intake of 8,700 kilojoules.
- [New laws requiring all Victorian hospitals to report cases of potentially fatal anaphylaxis](#) - From 1 November 2018, Victorian public and private hospitals will be required to notify the Department of Health and Human Services of anaphylaxis presentations (Department) under an amendment to the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) (Act).
- [New National Rare Diseases Framework announced](#) - Last month, the Federal Government announced their development of Australia's first Rare Diseases Framework and Action Plan in support of those people battling rare conditions. The framework will receive \$170,000 in funding as part of the Government's Public Health and Chronic Disease Program.
- [Nick Xenophon's FOI](#) - The Australian Information Commissioner ("AIC") handed down its decision on 8 February 2018 with respect to Nick Xenophon's application to review the Department of Health's ("Department") decision to refuse access to the legal costs invoiced in relation to arbitration between the Commonwealth and Phillip Morris Asia Limited (Hong Kong).
- [No Jab, No Play laws strengthened to protect Victorian children](#) - From 1 November 2018, Victorian parents or carers of children who attend early childhood services are required to provide them with periodic Immunisation History Statements to prove that their child's immunisations are up to date. The Immunisation History Statements must evidence appropriate immunisation of the child and be submitted within 2 months after the child reaches a prescribed age or at intervals not exceeding seven months.
- [NRL to keep some concussion breaches secret](#) - Last year the NRL issued fines to three clubs because they failed to observe the proper procedures when players suffered serious head collisions. The NRL has asked clubs about incidents where players have exhibited signs of concussion but have returned to the field of play. These inquiries are not made public.
- [NSW Coroner critical of failure to listen to parent concerns](#) - On 23 November 2018, the Coroner's Court of New South Wales released its findings in the inquest into the death of Angelique Burton-Ho; a 12 year-

old child who died as a result of cardio-respiratory failure shortly after being transported from Bowral Hospital to the Sydney Children's Hospital (SCH).

- [NSW unregistered dental practitioner receives timely conviction](#) - Earlier this year on 14 May 2018, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) charged a New South Wales man, Mr Majid Rahebi, with 44 counts of "falsely representing that he was a registered dentist" and 31 counts of "performing a restricted dental act".
- [Palaszczuk Governments acts on discrimination](#) - The Palaszczuk Government in Queensland has committed to changing the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 so that people who undergo gender reassignment will not have to divorce their partner.
- [Palliative Care Funding Model Review report published](#) - In November 2017, the Victorian government engaged an expert panel to review palliative care offerings and services across Victoria to identify areas for improvement. The Panel, made up of Patricia Faulkner AO, Jennifer Williams and Carmel Smith published their Palliative Care Funding Model Review Report (Report) in October 2018. The Panel undertook a review and consultation process before making seven recommendations which are set out in the Report. The recommendations include additional funding for community-based palliative care services and seeking increased activity in the use of community-based services for certain patient cohorts. The Report also recommends better integration of palliative care with other services (such as hospitals) and supports the inclusion of more flexible palliative care arrangements which allow people to die at home. The Report acknowledges and recommends that further investment in technology and support systems is required to implement a more patient-centred approach to palliative care. In the last 12 months, the government has provided an additional \$23.4 million in funding which is intended to address some of the recommendations by increasing palliative care beds and access to home-based palliative care. Read the Report here.
- [Pharmacist loses defamation case](#) - A pharmacist convicted of six offences for failure to maintain a register in relation to dispensing oxycodone and fentanyl, failure to make an inventory of drugs of addiction and failure to keep the safe containing Schedule 8 drugs locked has lost a long running defamation case against the Pharmacy Board of Australia ("Board").
- [Proposed changes to provision of Medicare funded services by nurses rejected by AMA](#) - The Australian Medical Association Limited (AMA) has called on the Government to immediately reject draft proposals which would expand the ability of nurse practitioners to provide Medicare funded services and remove the current requirement for them to collaborate with doctors in delivering care for patients.
- [QCAT finds anaesthetist did not make false statements about methylamphetamine use](#) - On 21 December 2018, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal released findings in relation to disciplinary proceedings against an anaesthetist (Dr Euston) who was charged and convicted of supplying methyl-amphetamines and possessing dangerous drugs in breach of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986. The Tribunal was required to determine the factual disputes prior to the parties providing evidence and submissions in relation to any sanction being imposed. On 19 October 2013, Queensland Police Service members carried out a search of Dr Euston's home locating drugs and other items. Previously, he had denied supplying methyl-amphetamines or possessing dangerous drugs. He was later convicted on his own plea of guilty to various criminal charges relating to the unlawful supply and possession of a dangerous drug. AHPRA placed a condition, to which Dr Euston voluntarily submitted, on Dr Euston's registration requiring him to attend for drug testing. Results of urine and hair samples suggested the presence of methyl-amphetamine in his body but Dr

Euston denied ever using methyl-amphetamines. Dr Euston deposed that in the six months prior to the testing he had taken Selegiline, a medication that metabolises to methylamphetamine and has been implicated in false positive hair tests in the past. He argued the quantity of methylamphetamine found was also significantly below international guidelines required to indicate methylamphetamine use. The Tribunal accepted Dr Euston's evidence as to his use of Selegiline and as a result did not accept that the positive hair test result was evidence of his methylamphetamine use. The Tribunal therefore found that Dr Euston was a truthful witness and the concerns regarding his false evidence and statutory declaration were unfounded.

- [Queensland court case allows a woman access to her deceased partner's sperm](#) - On 20 June 2018, the Supreme Court of Queensland handed down a decision granting a young woman (Ms Creswell) to use her deceased partner's sperm for the purposes of reproduction.
- [Refreshed Food Allergen Portal released](#) - Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has launched its new Food Allergen Portal (Portal), which is designed to make it easier for people to navigate and access links to food allergy related resources and information.
- [Registered nurse suspended after inappropriately touching students](#) - On 6 July 2018, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) suspended Mr Alfredo Crocetti, a registered nurse, after finding that he acted inappropriately while teaching student nurses at Victoria University (VU).
- [Regulatory review of Schedule 8 opioid use and misuse in Australia](#) - The Commonwealth Department of Health's Therapeutic Goods Administration ("TGA") is in the process of conducting a review into a possible regulatory response to the potential misuse of prescribed Schedule 8 opioids in Australia. Australia is ranked eighth internationally for daily doses of prescription opioids per million population.
- [Royal Children's Hospital launches real-time emergency department updates](#) - The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) recently launched an online portal which allows parents to gauge how busy the Emergency Department is in real-time, 24 hours a day. The tool was developed in response to research which found that more than 60 per cent of patients with non-life-threatening illnesses sidestepped their local hospital and instead faced long delays at the RCH.
- [Rural Doctors Association of Australia given provisional green light to negotiate on behalf of rural doctors](#) - The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is currently considering expanding the Rural Doctors Association of Australia's (RDAA) capacity to negotiate contracts on behalf of General Practitioners (GP) and other rural doctors. The proposed extension to the RDAA's powers would see a continuation of the RDAA's current agreement allowing them to collectively negotiate on a state-wide level, and the additional authority to negotiate nation-wide, irrespective of the health system of a particular state.
- [Russell Kennedy Principal elected to international health body](#) - Russell Kennedy Principal, Michael Gorton AM, was recently elected by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) as a founding member of its new Academy of Quality and Safety in Health Care (IAQS).
- [SafeScript on track for October 2018 – Time to prepare](#) - The real-time prescription monitoring service (known as "SafeScript") will be launched in October this year. SafeScript, will transmit pharmacy dispensing records for certain medicines in real-time to a centralised database, allowing prescribers and pharmacists to access an up-to-the-minute prescription history of certain high risk medicines for their patient at the point of consultation, enabling safer clinical decision making.
- [Senate Selected Committee into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia](#) - The

Senate Select Committee into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia (Committee) was established on 16 May 2018, and aims to introduce a federal National Obesity Strategy to tackle the dramatic increase of overweight and obesity in all age groups.

- [South Australian man convicted of 11 charges relating to counterfeit and unapproved medicines](#) - In early January 2019, a South Australian man pleaded guilty to 11 criminal charges under the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cth) relating to illegal acts involving counterfeit therapeutic goods. The Adelaide Magistrates' Court convicted the man of all charges including:
- [Special summit of experts to assess rural maternity services in Queensland](#) - In a media statement dated 12 August 2018, the Queensland Government announced that it will convene a special summit of experts to assess the provision of maternity services in rural and remote parts of Queensland.
- [Taskforce appointed to implement voluntary assisted dying laws](#) - The Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Taskforce met for the first time on 26 February 2018 and is chaired by former public advocate Julian Gardner.
- [Taskforce recommends time-tiered billing for specialists and consultant physicians](#) - The Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce (Taskforce) has recommended that billing under the MBS be reviewed to better reflect the contemporary roles of specialists and consultant physicians. Under the proposed changes, a new simplified model of attendance items would be introduced – with the core change to set standard attendance schedule fees based on time. The Taskforce considers that changing to this model would strengthen the capacity of consumers to give informed financial consent.
- [Taskforce to map out stronger community health services in Victoria](#) - The Community Health Taskforce ("Taskforce") has been established to advise the Victorian Government on opportunities to strengthen community health services to better meet the healthcare needs of vulnerable Victorians.
- [The Australian Medical Association \(AMA\) raises concerns on revised Code of Conduct for Doctors](#) - The AMA submitted commentary on the revised Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia to the Medical Board of Australia.
- [The Australian Medical Association renews its call for a sugar tax](#) - The Australian Beverages Council recently pledged to reduce the amount of sugar added to beverages by 20 per cent by 2020, however the Australian Medical Association (AMA) has labelled the announcement "totally inadequate".
- [Time critical defined transfer guidelines](#) - The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) published guidelines for time critical defined transfers in Victoria (Guidelines) on 6 February 2019. The Guidelines have been published to safe guard patient care in circumstances where demand for critical care beds exceeds the immediate supply, leading to no ICU bed being immediately available for a critically ill patients requiring timely and appropriate investigations, interventions or ICU care.
- [Townsville Hospital introduces body camera for staff to try to stop increasing number of attacks on staff](#) - Following a successful trial in 2017 (read more here), Townsville Hospital has introduced body-worn cameras for its staff in an attempt to stop a rising number of attacks they experience.
- [Trainee doctors will get their money back for botched exam](#) - The Board of Royal Australasian College of Physicians ("RACP") has agreed to reimburse the full exam fee of almost \$2,000, which is estimated to cost the RACP more than \$2 million after 1,200 trainee doctors were affected

and over \$100 million, after 1,200 trained doctors were directed by a computer glitch that occurred five hours into the Basic Training Written Divisional Exam.

- [Tribunal upholds patient Review Panel refusal to provide IVF treatment to couple](#) - A couple, with the pseudonyms RGJ and OMU, sought IVF treatment as RGJ had Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome and they had struggled to conceive. However, they were refused treatment because OMU had been convicted of a violent offence, which triggered a presumption against treatment under the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic) (Act).
- [Victims to have their say in forensic mental health cases](#) - As a result of recent amendments to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 No. 10 (NSW), victims of forensic patients in NSW will now have a greater opportunity to be heard in the Mental Health Review Tribunal (Tribunal).
- [Victoria will partner with Seattle experts to implement voluntary assisted dying laws](#) - The Victorian government has recently announced that it will partner with the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance to support the implementation of the voluntary assisted dying laws passed by Victorian parliament late last year prior to the people being able to access the scheme in June 2019.
- [Victoria's new information sharing scheme aimed at reducing family violence](#) - A new information sharing scheme in Victoria will come into effect this month to address the concerns raised by the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017 is aimed at minimising the legislative barriers that have prevented the timely sharing of information in cases of family violence.
- [Victoria's SafeScript system begins roll out in Western Victoria](#) - Victoria's comprehensive real-time prescription monitoring system, SafeScript, goes online this month. SafeScript commences its roll out in the Western Victoria Primary Health Network catchment in October, before being introduced to the rest of Victoria early next year.
- [Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board appointed](#) - The Victorian Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy has recently announced the members of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (Board). Former Supreme Court judge, Betty King QC will chair the Board with ICU specialist, Charles Corke to act as deputy chair. The remaining 11 members are made up of health and legal experts.
- [Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service FAQs](#) - In January 2019, the Victorian government announced that the pharmacy service at The Alfred hospital will be the sole service for dispensing voluntary assisted dying medication when the scheme takes effect on 19 June 2019. The voluntary assisted dying medicine will be funded by the Victorian government and patients will not be required to be out-of-pocket to access the medication.

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