



A Collection of Recent NGO, Think Tank, and International Government Reports

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Welcome to Grey Matter, the Ministry of Health Library's Grey Literature Bulletin. In each issue, we provide access to a selection of the most recent NGO, Think Tank, and International Government reports that are relevant to the health context. The goal of this newsletter is to facilitate access to material that may be more difficult to locate (in contrast to journal articles and the news media). Information is arranged by topic, allowing readers to quickly identify their key areas of interest. Email library@health.govt.nz to subscribe.

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Immunisation

[The broader economic benefits of COVID-19 vaccination](#)

"While public health strategies around COVID-19 have transitioned from a pandemic to an endemic setting, the disease remains a persistent and evolving threat characterised by year-round viral activity, surges, and an ongoing health and economic burden. Nevertheless, recommendations for

routine COVID-19 immunisation have become increasingly restrictive worldwide, predominantly focusing on older adults (≥65 years) and population groups at risk of severe outcomes, and largely exclude healthy working-age adults. Whereas the latter group are less likely to suffer severe health outcomes leading to hospitalisation, they may still experience symptomatic illness and long-term consequences, through potential exacerbation of underlying conditions, leading to lost productivity. This lost productivity means that COVID-19 infections in the working-age population have a greater impact on the national economy.

Using a cost-of-illness analysis based on 2024 cost data, this report investigates the economic burden of COVID-19 during the post-pandemic era and the potential economic benefits of ongoing immunisation for healthcare systems and national economies. This report focuses on four high-income countries currently recommending COVID-19 vaccination to older and at-risk adults, namely the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan and the Netherlands." *Source: Office of Health Economics*

Monitoring and reporting of essential immunization catch-up: implementation guidance

"The Big Catch-Up is a global initiative launched in April 2023 to close gaps in immunization caused by the reduction in immunization coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic, to restore global immunization levels and to strengthen immunization systems so that catch-up activities become an integral part of immunization programmes. Countries are employing various approaches to catch up unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children. Such approaches include routine service delivery, periodic intensification of routine immunization (PIRI), and supplementary immunization activities (SIAs). Suggested indicators at the country level include the availability of a catch-up policy and schedule, adapted data collection tools and the number of catch-up activities implemented. Suggested indicators at the global level include: the availability of approved catch-up and recovery plans, policies, schedules, tools and activities; information systems for capturing delayed doses; appropriate budgeting; additional vaccines requested and received; delayed doses administered; and children reached. Monitoring the Big Catch-Up is vital to close immunization gaps and prevent further disease outbreaks. It is also essential to learn from the initiative's success, and to ensure accountability between countries, in-country partners, and global stakeholders. During the Big Catch-Up and beyond, data systems should be strengthened to capture delayed doses, and catch-up monitoring should be integrated into all systems for monitoring routine vaccination coverage to ensure that no one is left behind." *Source: World Health Organization*

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Health Systems, Costs, & Transformation

The Growth and Drivers of Australian Public Hospital Costs and Prices

"This independent report, prepared by Create Health Advisory with the support of Dr Stephen Duckett, was commissioned by state and territory Treasurers to inform future negotiations on the National Health Reform Agreement with the Commonwealth Government. It seeks to clarify the underlying drivers of recent cost growth in public hospital services and to provide a clearer evidence base to support reforms to funding arrangements, including the National Efficient Price (NEP). The analysis is intended to support state and territory Treasurers pursue a more balanced, transparent and sustainable funding partnership with the Commonwealth, while preserving the benefits of activity-based funding." *Source: Australian Board of Treasurers*

Strengthening rehabilitation care: Learning from countries' experiences on organizing service delivery and financing

"Rehabilitation care is about improving or restoring function — but it also addresses the mental and psychosocial issues that so often come with disabling conditions. Its importance has been thrown

into stark relief in Ukraine since the beginning of the war. This dramatically increased the population's need for rehabilitation care. It also demonstrated that rehabilitation is a priority not just in conflict-impacted regions or for addressing trauma-related needs but for all types of patients. It has become an important concern as Ukraine shapes reforms in the health sector and clearly should also be a critical element of health system strengthening globally. This policy brief rests on cross-country analysis of 14 WHO European Region Member States. It provides conceptual clarity and a comprehensive review of evidence on the organization and delivery, coverage, purchasing and financing of rehabilitation care. It offers policy-makers insights into policy options, their implementation and their impact." *Source: European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies*

[Comparing Performance of Universal Health Care Countries, 2025](#)

"This study is a revised edition of the series, Comparing Performance of Universal Health Care Countries (2016–2024). The study examines two categories of measures: [1] what countries are spending on health care and [2] what these countries get in return for those expenditures. The cost of health care is measured using one indicator, while what is received in return for this spending is measured using 13 indicators. The outline of this study is as follows. The first section provides an overview of the study's methodology. The second section presents data reflecting how much Canada spends on health care in comparison with other high-income countries that provide universal health care. The third section presents data on what Canada's health-care system provides in return for that spending, as measured by the availability of resources and access to those resources. A summary of the results and conclusion follows." *Source: Fraser Institute*

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Mental Health & Wellbeing

[Impacts of harmful pornography on mental, emotional, and physical health](#)

"A report from a New South Wales (NSW) inquiry into the impacts of harmful pornography on mental, emotional and physical health, as well as its influence on attitudes toward sex, relationships and consent. The inquiry also examined the role of technology and accessibility, noting the ease with which harmful content can be accessed online and the challenges this poses for parents, educators and policymakers. Of particular concern was the accessibility of pornography online that includes themes that are illegal under NSW legislation. Another concern regarding technology was the increasing prevalence of image-based abuse, particularly using artificial intelligence (AI), and the impacts this is having.

The report finds the impacts of harmful pornography do not exist in isolation, but rather they intersect with broader concerns around gender-based violence, mental health and the regulation of online spaces. The 17 recommendations aim to support a coordinated, whole-of-community response that prioritises prevention, education and support." *Source: Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues (NSW),*

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Research, Technology, & Innovation

[Artificial intelligence for healthcare in Australian Indigenous communities: Scoping project to explore relevance](#)

"Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising healthcare and expanding into previously human-exclusive areas, bringing breakthroughs and challenges. Over the past decade, considerable efforts

have been made to reconcile ethical considerations with the introduction of AI in healthcare internationally.

In Australia current AI principles are not tailored for healthcare and are overly abstract, lacking consideration of cultural diversity. Data quality and fairness are pivotal for the success of any AI-based solution, the mismanagement of data biases poses a potential source of discrimination and injustice. There is a gap in the inclusion and priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices in the fast-developing world of AI. Yet, due to the national policy and protocol infancy of this resource in healthcare applications, we simply do not know the relevance and priority AI plays in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare." *Source: CSIRO*

Artificial Intelligence and Women's Health

"Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming healthcare in Australia by providing opportunities to enhance productivity and efficiency as well as improve access to health services. In 2024, the Albanese Government invested almost \$30 million in funding for research into how to integrate AI into healthcare and conducted a review into Safe and Responsible Artificial Intelligence in Health Care. The National Digital Health Strategy 2023-2028 also recognises that "strong ethical frameworks and high clinical standards are required" to support successful adoption of AI in healthcare. However, little attention has been paid to the specific impacts of AI on women's healthcare. This gap is significant, given that new technologies risk deepening existing inequalities in healthcare and exacerbating harm against women and other marginalised people. Further, while the regulatory and policy focus has, rightfully, been on clinical interactions with AI, the current safeguards for community interaction with large language models (LLMs) and AI systems for health advice are inadequate. Members have highlighted cost, long waitlists for appointments, and location as significant barriers to accessing reproductive care. Research suggests women are disproportionately more likely to use general AI tools to fill these gaps in healthcare and can be more susceptible to harm from potential mis- and dis-information. Women are also increasingly likely to use FemTech – apps and devices specifically designed to support and track women's health. Despite the speed with which new technologies are being integrated into healthcare, safeguards and privacy regulations have failed to keep pace. These are not new problems, but they do require new policy solutions. Australia has an urgent need for a gender lens on digital health policy." *Source: Working With Women Alliance*

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Health of Older People

Legislation to action: Delivering inclusive care for all

"Initiatives and frameworks for inclusion in care systems and services aim to promote equitable access for people in marginalised, disadvantaged, and underserved communities. However, these frameworks do not always work as intended to ensure inclusion. Some of the reasons for this include structural and systemic challenges that limit the scope of inclusive practice.

This paper explores several challenges to achieving greater inclusion in Australian aged care, including systemic barriers stemming from a market-based model that limits equitable access and the difficulty for individuals to navigate the complex system." *Source: Australian Association of Gerontology*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ageing research: Ethical considerations and implications

"AI's capability to accelerate knowledge in research is viewed with caution by the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) membership, especially regarding the risk of removing human involvement in how research is conducted, analysed, reviewed, and evaluated. In addition, consideration is warranted regarding the impacts of AI on the development of early career

researchers (ECRs) and core academic activities which may lead to deskilling, as well as rising concerns about ethical boundaries and harm associated with its use. This includes a need for wider consensus and monitoring of acceptable applications of AI technologies within the field of ageing research." *Source: Australian Association of Gerontology*

The Economic Benefit of Promoting Healthy Ageing and Community Care

"Without a stronger focus on healthy ageing, population ageing will have a strong impact on health and long-term care expenditures. This report discusses how a stronger focus on preventive interventions and reablement helps promote healthy ageing. It highlights that promoting healthcare closer to people and more integrated care are cost-effective interventions for older people. Appropriate and adapted housing and sufficiently affordable home care are also necessary to ensure that people can age well at home. Yet, for some older adults, social isolation calls for innovative community solutions to be developed such as expanding day care and communal living with services." *Source: OECD*

Supported decision-making for people living with dementia in NSW

"Supported decision-making is a legal principle that requires individuals with impaired capacity to be provided with assistance so they can be empowered to make their own decisions. This assistance can come in various forms, such as the provision of language support, visual aids, or other means that are tailored to an individual to enable them to decide questions about their lifestyle, finances and healthcare. A supported decision-making approach requires that when a person is not able to make their own decisions even if supported, decision-making be driven by their will and preferences. The size and scale of dementia in Australia means that everyone in Australia will be affected by dementia at some stage in their lives, either as a person living with dementia or as a partner, family member, or friend of someone with dementia." *Source: Parliamentary Research Services (NSW)*

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Workforce

Duty of care: how to fix the aged care worker shortage

"Duty of care: How to fix the aged care worker shortage calls for more action to be taken to address Australia's shortage of aged care workers. It recommends that the Federal Government introduce an essential skills visa for occupations facing severe and ongoing worker shortages in the care sector, starting with aged care. This report contributes to the wellbeing, security & participation focus area of CEDA's Progress 2050 vision for a better future for the next generation of Australians." *Source: CEDA*

District nursing: Understanding the decline and mapping the future

"District nursing services provide care for patients and support for family members in the community, including at home, in clinical settings and in care homes. Services are intended to be universal – covering every community, village, town and city in England – and operate most, if not all, hours of the day, 365 days a year. Typical nursing care includes wound management, diabetes management, leg and pressure ulcer treatment and end-of-life care. This report, the result of rapid mixed-methods research, describes the current situation in district nursing – including the size and structure of services, how these have evolved over time and how they vary across England. It also explores the case for investment in district nursing and defines some of the core components of high-quality, sustainable district nursing services." *Source: Nuffield Trust*

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Health Policy

[How will waiting times in community health services affect the shift towards neighbourhood health?](#)

"Community services are under growing strain, with more than 1.1 million people waiting for care, and the steepest rise among children and young people. Focus to date has largely been on efforts to improve waits for hospital care, but as neighbourhood health services are rolled out, addressing pressures on community services will be essential if the UK government's 10 Year Plan 'hospital to community' shift is to become a reality." *Source: Nuffield Trust*

[Global traditional medicine strategy 2025-2034](#)

"WHO recognizes the growing role of traditional medicine worldwide and the need for evidence-based integration into health systems. In 2023, the World Health Assembly requested the development of a new global strategy for 2025–2034. Through extensive consultations with Member States, experts and stakeholders, WHO crafted a vision for universal access to safe, effective and people-centred traditional, complementary and integrative medicine. The strategy sets guiding principles and four objectives: strengthen evidence, ensure safety and regulation, integrate TCIM into health systems, and optimize its cross-sectoral value. This comprehensive process culminated in the adoption of the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly." *Source: World Health Organization*

[Global standards for quality health care services for adolescents](#)

"This publication is an updated version of the document published in "2015" under the title "Global standards for quality health-care services for adolescents: a guide to implement a standards-driven approach to improve the quality of health care services for adolescents", now released under a different title. This updated version reflects the emerging needs and opportunities such as pandemic preparedness, digital health technologies and approaches to self-care. At the same time, it maintains the core quality themes: adolescent empowerment and participation; a non-discriminatory, rights-based approach; evidence-based, competent care; family and community engagement; welcoming environments; and data-driven quality improvement.

Describing nine global standards, the guidance defines the required level of quality in the delivery of services to the adolescent population (the what) and suggests the strategies and cycles for implementing these standards (the how). By adopting these standards, health systems can better align with adolescents' specific needs, promote their active participation in health care and create environments where young people feel supported to engage fully in their health journey." *Source: World Health Organization*

[Regional action framework for health financing to achieve universal health coverage and sustainable development in the Western Pacific](#)

"The Regional Action Framework for Health Financing to Achieve Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development in the Western Pacific was endorsed by Member States at the seventy-fifth session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in 2024. The framework provides strategic actions to take: greater reliance on public funding for health, more equitable and efficient health spending, financing primary health care now and into the future, strengthening governance for health financing, and promoting Health for All as a central goal of economic and social policy. It calls on innovative solutions for more equitable and sustainable health financing to advance universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals." *Source: World Health Organization*

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Public Health

[Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

"This Strategic Joint Evaluation examines how international development and humanitarian actors responded collectively to the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. Drawing on evidence from over 60 organisations and a wide range of country and provider case studies, it sheds light on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the global response. The evaluation reveals that while the pandemic placed immense pressure on global systems, it also spurred unprecedented levels of co-operation, innovation and resource mobilisation. It highlights the importance of flexibility, local leadership and timely support, while also noting where incoherence and missed opportunities limited impact. This report offers a system-wide perspective – one of the few of its kind – capturing critical lessons to strengthen future responses to global crises. It is a valuable resource for policymakers, development professionals, humanitarian actors, and anyone seeking to understand how the international community can act more effectively in times of emergency."

Source: OECD

[Governance for public health across the health and allied sectors: a report to guide country-level institutional capacity for essential public health functions underpinning multisectoral approaches](#)

"The diverse public health challenges require multisectoral, integrated action, supported by robust and well-coordinated governance that involves actors within and beyond the health sector. Framed around Essential Public Health Functions, the report serves as a reference for national and global public health actors, providing guidance to define and strengthen public health governance to ensure effective delivery of public health functions and services.

Specific objectives are to collate the current understanding of public health governance and develop an operational definition; identify and describe the core components, enablers and guiding principles required to improve public health governance across health and other sectors responsible for various aspects of population health; promote the roles of existing institutional set-up (including ministries of health, national public health institutes or their equivalent with heads of government) in benchmarking and building public health governance, considering the dispersed nature of public health stakeholders in countries.

The report is intended for national and subnational actors—within and beyond the health sector—who are involved in public health governance and in coordinating and delivering public health functions and services. This includes governments, ministries of health, public health institutes, research and professional bodies, allied ministries with key responsibilities for public health, such as finance, planning, local administration, environment, education, agriculture, and commerce, and subnational authorities." *Source: World Health Organization*

[Global antibiotic resistance surveillance report 2025](#)

"Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing threat to global health, undermining the effectiveness of life-saving treatments and placing populations at heightened risk, whether from common infections or routine medical interventions.

The WHO Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) supports countries in building national surveillance systems and generating standardized data to guide public health action.

This new WHO report presents a global analysis of antibiotic resistance prevalence and trends, drawing on more than 23 million bacteriologically confirmed cases of bloodstream infections, urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal infections, and urogenital gonorrhoea. Data were reported by 104 countries in 2023 and 110 countries between 2016 and 2023." *Source: World Health Organization*

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Tobacco

[Debunking tobacco industry misinformation](#)

"This report was created in partnership by UNDP and the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC. It provides evidence-based guidance to help governments identify and counter misinformation disseminated by the tobacco industry. It highlights the industry's long-standing tactics to distort facts, obstruct tobacco control measures, and undermine tobacco control. The product categorizes common myths promoted by the industry—such as claims that tobacco control harms economies, reduces tax revenue, or leads to illicit trade—and systematically refutes them with empirical data and global experience. It emphasizes that strong tobacco control policies contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, aligning with the SDGs.

The piece underscores the importance of safeguarding public policy from industry interference, in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. By strengthening multisectoral coordination, transparency, and accountability, governments can effectively prevent industry influence and advance global health objectives. The publication concludes that debunking misinformation is not only critical for protecting health but also for promoting social justice, environmental sustainability, and equitable development outcomes." *Source: United Nations Development Programme and World Health Organization*

[Supporting tobacco cessation through chat: digital Channels Toolkit](#)

"This open-source toolkit provides a comprehensive guide for implementing mTobaccoCessation intervention on chat-based platforms. Designed to be adaptable for diverse contexts, it offers core content and resources tailored for digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, and others. The toolkit includes step-by-step instructions on setting up and localizing the Quit Challenge—a 42-day program that motivates individuals to quit tobacco, identify triggers, and develop lasting habits. It also features guidance on privacy, data protection, content adaptation, marketing strategies, and ways to reach vulnerable populations. By leveraging mobile messaging technologies, this toolkit aims to expand access to effective cessation support worldwide." *Source: World Health Organization*

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Environment and Health

[Mapping climate change and health indicators](#)

"This review sheds light on how countries are measuring the health impacts of climate change. It examines the indicators countries are using in their vulnerability and adaptation (V&A) assessments, as well as in their Health National Adaptation Plans (HNAPs). The review analyzed 31 reports from 22 countries—15 V&As and 16 HNAPs—spanning all WHO regions. These documents, published by members of the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), were available on the ATACH website between January 2015 and November 2024.

The review found wide variation in how countries track climate-related health risks, though common patterns also emerged. Indicators were grouped into key areas linking climate change to health: hazards, exposures, vulnerabilities, health outcomes, impacts on health systems, future climate and health risks, and enabling factors such as policies and resources. In total, 3,880 indicators were recorded. After eliminating overlaps and merging similar ones, the researchers identified 1,684 unique indicators.

The findings suggest countries are making significant progress in tracking health risks from climate change. The review notes that a shared set of core indicators—developed in consultation with countries and experts—could help strengthen future assessments and adaptation planning worldwide." *Source: World Health Organization*

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