

RELEASED: Wednesday 16 March 2016

ABC puts our health in focus

The ABC will put Australia's health under the spotlight with a week of dedicated programming

For more than 80 years, the ABC has been telling uniquely Australian stories and producing content that helps us understand our society, our future and each other. **OUR FOCUS** is a new initiative that sees the full breadth of the ABC storytelling come together to start a national conversation on important issues and events that connect us all.

In a week of special programming, **OUR FOCUS, Health** will put Australia's health under the spotlight with a week of dedicated programming across TV, Radio, News and Digital. We will surface questions such as: How healthy is our health system? What are the recurring national problems, like obesity, melanoma, substance abuse and mental health?

With advances in medicine, costs of treatment, and our ever-aging population, how will we as a nation face the demand ahead? What challenges do we face with a system that needs to cater for everything from the most remote Indigenous community to the busiest city hospital?

The ABC will play a valuable role in exploring this complex topic and will lead the national conversation on this important subject. Join the discussion as the ABC puts **OUR** health **IN FOCUS**.

For more information visit our dedicated site at abc.net.au/health or join the conversation with the hashtag **#ABChealth**

FRIDAY 18 MARCH

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| ABC TV | 5.30pm | The Drum |
| ABC News 24 | 6.30pm (AEDT) | |

The Drum will explore how Australians are taking control of their health using new technologies and alternative therapies. The doctor's office is no longer the first and last stop for patients. They're increasingly collecting, sharing and analysing their own data and seeking out personalised treatment plans. A more nimble healthcare system that better caters to patients' needs is developing. And Australian experts are leading the way. Panelists include: Director of the Brain and Mind Centre at Sydney University; Prof. Ian Hickie AM; and author of New York Times bestseller *Cure: A Journey into the Science of Mind over Body*, Jo Marchant (London). Sarah Dingle will be guest host.

SATURDAY 19 MARCH

ABC News 24 **11.30am (AEDT)** **Australia Wide**

Australia Wide explores the city/bush divide when it comes to accessing healthcare. ABC Medical reporter Sophie Scott visits a busy GP practice in the Upper Hunter in NSW to find out how doctors are dealing with the challenges of providing good medical care in regional and rural Australia. We meet an indigenous female doctor from Scone and look at how her chronically ill patients access regular treatment.

SUNDAY 20 MARCH

ABC TV **10.30am (local)** **Australia Wide**

(Repeat) **Australia Wide** explores the city/bush divide when it comes to accessing healthcare. ABC Medical reporter Sophie Scott visits a busy GP practice in the upper Hunter in NSW to find out how doctors are dealing with the challenges of providing good medical care in regional and rural Australia. We meet an indigenous female doctor from Scone and look at how her chronically ill patients access regular treatment.

ABC RN **5.00pm** **All in the Mind**

What are the limits of mind body medicine? Lynne Malcolm takes a rigorous look at the science behind the idea that the mind can heal the body.

AUSTRALIA PLUS **www.australiaplus.com**

In collaboration with ABC's Regional division, **Australia Plus** looks at migrant doctors & medical professionals in rural and urban Australia.

MONDAY 21 MARCH

ABC RN **9.00am** **Life Matters**

From March 21 – 25, **Life Matters** speaks to the unsung health workers at the frontline of keeping Australia alive.

ABC RN **5.30pm** **Health Report**

RN's *Health Report* looks at how to plan for a good death through an advance care directive.

AUSTRALIA PLUS **www.australiaplus.com**

Australia Plus takes a linguistically diverse look at the how, where and what of staying healthy.

OPEN DRUM **abc.net.au/news/thedrum/**

What's in a postcode? You have told us about the challenges you face accessing healthcare in your region – dealing with issues from mobile black spots to lack of intersex-appropriate care. The best of these audience pieces collected in a special interactive news feature for health week.

TUESDAY 22 MARCH

ABC TV **8.00pm** **Catalyst Special: Back Pain**
ABC's flagship science program takes a look at the all too common medical complaint, back pain.

ABC TV **8.30pm** **Keeping Australia Alive – Episode 2**
Keeping Australia Alive is a documentary event capturing the Australian health system in one snapshot - telling the story of who we are, what we value and how we live and die. It's a series about us, and the Australian health system. It is a snapshot of what happens over a single day in our unique health service, stretched from one end of the continent to the other. This landmark series will confront and surprise with real stories of what makes up Australia's massive system of care and service, which we often take for granted. What do we discover when we dissect the health system as a whole – slicing through its layers, its wonder, its horror, its enormity, all on one selected, ordinary day?

ABC TV **10.00pm** **Creatives: Michelle's Story**
Michelle's Story follows the dramatic events in the life of talented Australian dancer, Michelle Ryan, who danced for Meryl Tankard's Australian Dance Theatre, famed for its ground-breaking choreography. Michelle relates the heart-wrenching story of her shock MS diagnosis, its tragic fallout and the slow path to rehabilitation as she works with disabled dancers as Artistic Director of Adelaide's Restless Dance Theatre. Intimate access to Michelle is captured by the acclaimed choreographer Meryl Tankard, making her directorial debut on the ABC.

AUSTRALIA PLUS **www.australiaplus.com**
Australia Plus spends a day in the life of an international medical student in Australia on rounds.

WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH

ABC RN **11.00am** **Earshot: A Real Emergency**
Our relationship with emergency medicine is an odd one. We watch it dramatised on the TV, and while we don't want to end up in the ED, we like to know it's there, just in case. James Vyver finds out what it's really like to work in an emergency department. Listen now: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/a-real-emergency/7210472>

AUSTRALIA PLUS **www.australiaplus.com**
Australia Plus takes a look at the linguistically diverse community's perspective and needs in regard to Community Health in Australia.

FRIDAY 25 MARCH

AUSTRALIA PLUS **www.australiaplus.com**
Australia Plus investigates Australia's contribution to health in sport in the Asia Pacific region.

ANY TIME ON ABC iview

ABC iview will join the conversation by providing a comprehensive collection of stories from the ABC TV archives, including **Changing Minds, The Agony of the Body, Kids on Speed, The Ugly Face of Disability Hate Crime, Jono: Love Me Love My Face, I'm Having Their Baby, Dying For Clear Skin** and **How Fat Works: Inside The Body Beautiful**.

Plus there's a selection of popular health bases stories - covering everything from the best ways to burn fat, to dealing with mid-life crisis – from programs including **ABC News, The Weekly with Charlie Pickering, Australian Story, Q&A, Catalyst, Four Corners, Tonic**.

abc.net.au/health

As well as being a comprehensive overview of the week's content across all ABC platforms, the site will present two online exclusives:

Staying alive: what those working at the coal face want you to know

Based on ABS causes of death data, we'll be speaking to seven health experts from different parts of the country on the one thing they wish Australians knew that could help keep them, and their loved ones, alive.

Where we die

Around half of all Australians die in hospital, and a significant number of these deaths will happen in intensive care – the place that even intensive care doctors consider to be the worst place to die. This feature will look at where Australians die, what are the factors that determine whether people do and don't get to die in the circumstances they want and the steps we can all take to get the death we'd prefer.

ABC Open

ABC Open producers from Longreach, Canberra, Ballarat, Alice Springs, Kalgoorlie and Wodonga will follow up on some of the stories presented in the documentary series **Keeping Australia Alive**. Visit **open.abc.net.au**

ABC Local Radio

ABC Local Radio will provide additional editorial coverage supporting the **OUR FOCUS** on Health initiative, with topical health stories and discussion around programming and special guests as well as regular contributors including Dr Norman Swan.

For further information contact:

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