Impact Report: **February 2023**

*** Please note that this report includes the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed ***

Our best-read story during February explored the notion of “COVID hegemony” to explain the normalisation of widespread infection, with Dr Blair Williams arguing that the current framing of the pandemic must shift from “living with COVID” to “living safely with COVID”.

Other topics on our radar this month were political donations, harmful marketing, the constitutionally enshrined Voice, refugee health, the NSW election, greenwashing and other climate change news.

In closing the #HealthyCOP27 series, Amba-Rose Atkinson calls for climate solutions that are First Nations-led. “To salvage the future of the planet and humanity, we must challenge existing systems of colonialism, capitalism, and extractivism that fuels climate change,” she writes.

We presented a vision for Australia’s new Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, and investigated the health sector’s role in addressing injustices such as the preventable death in a Victorian prison of Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman Veronica Nelson.

Don’t miss our two-part series on what the pandemic has meant for musicians, reported by Alison Barrett and Yolngu musician Yirrmal, who writes: “Music should make you feel something or else it’s not doing its job.”

During February our articles and contributors featured in the BMJ, The Guardian, and publications by the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association and others. During the month, the offices of 236 Members of Parliament across all jurisdictions opened our weekly Croakey News bulletin.

Here is how our readership tracked in the first two months of 2023 compared with the first two months of 2022.

**1 Jan – 28 Feb, 2023:** 50,332 visitors to the website + 2,607 visitors to Croakey stories at Apple News. Total: 52,939 visitors.

**1 Jan – 28 Feb, 2022:** 37,534 visitors to the website + 9,100 visitors to Croakey stories at Apple News. Total: 46,634 visitors.

Our warm thanks to everyone who contributed to Croakey this month.

**Social Media Impressions**

We record our social media analytics using Buffer. The figures below are for total impressions across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. See our latest readership figures [here](https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/).

| **This month:** 336,532 impressions | **This year:** 587,228 impressions |

We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to Elders, past, present and future.
Week ending 2 February: This week’s bulletin highlights the many ways in which unequal power structures are a barrier to improving equity, health and justice.

From the scandal of political parties accepting donations from the fossil fuels, tobacco, gambling and alcohol industries to governments’ denial of the impact of COVID-19, our stories demonstrate how those in positions of power often resist changes that would undermine their influence and authority.

The preventable death in a Victorian prison of Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman Veronica Nelson is yet another example of the violent nexus between colonisation and incarceration. We examine the health sector’s role in addressing these injustices.

We also highlight strategies for change, including policies to support a more diverse media landscape, suggestions for challenging “COVID hegemony”, and calls to improve regulation of trans-fats in our food supply.

As we await the outcomes from National Cabinet’s meeting tomorrow and the release of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report, we take a comprehensive look back at previous reform efforts – remember the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission?

Meanwhile, there’s been a warm reception for the Government’s announcement of funds to support people with lived experience of mental ill-health in driving reform.

Climate scientist Professor Will Steffen, who died this week, was a stellar example of speaking truth to power. We join with health leaders, scientists, politicians and others around the world in warmly acknowledging his contributions.
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**Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service @thevalsmob • Feb 2**

"Why the health sector must engage with the coronial findings into the death of Veronica Nelson"

#JusticeForVeronicaNelson #PoccumsLaw #SpringSt

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**Mukesh Haikenwal @DrMukeshH • Feb 1**

So many “great expectations” from Friday’s National Cabinet, worth revisiting excellent commentary from @CroakeyNews 4/10/22. Coalition on Health, axed 2 bone Medicare, #justAGP care, struggling hospitals, overrun Emergency demands real $ & change

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**Lesley Russell Wolpe @RussellWolpe • Feb 1**

The 2020-2025 Addendum to National Health Reform Agreement has Fed/State commitments (+ $100m funding) to address healthcare reforms (including prevention, primary care, health literacy, data). Why is this ignored/not built on as Premiers push for more?

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**John Mendoza @johnm0919 • Feb 2**

"It’s one thing to have a voice it’s another to be listened to.

@RosenbergSeb

Indeed. Consumer, carer & community voices have been advising on #mentalhealth reform for 30 yrs but largely ignored.

Real reform needs more.

@tminhхо

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**Simon Katter @SimonKatterl • Feb 2**

Comments with @kerryhawkins @GCIcallister @katiedanser25 @VMIAC and @RosenbergSeb on the new independent national consumer and carer peaks.

Thanks for covering @AllisonSBarnett and @CroakeyNews.

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**Sebastian Rosenberg @RosenbergSeb • Feb 1**

Really interesting takes (plus mine) on the new consumer and carer mental health peak bodies, here: croakey.org/welcome-announ... Getting this right is a vital element in shifting from Business as Usual planning and reporting, @NMHC @IanHickie @MarkButler_MP

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**VMIA @VMIA • Feb 3**

In this article by @CroakeyNews, our CEO Craig Wallace shares VMIA’s response to the welcome announcement that the #government is investing $8.5M to support people with lived experience of mental illness in driving mental healthcare #reform.

buff.ly/4OdoM #equity

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**Croakey popular posts**

- Rethinking COVID hegemony
- Welcome announcement puts people with lived experience in the driver’s seat
- Wrapping reactions to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report
- As deadline looms, public health experts urge Government to act on trans-fatty acids
- Remember the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission? Here’s a pointed refresher
- Why the health sector must engage with the coronial findings into the death of Veronica Nelson

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Making news

A tweet by Melissa Sweet was included in an article at The Conversation, ‘Discriminatory impact on First Nations people: coroner calls for urgent bail reform in Veronica Nelson inquest’.

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre included a Croakey article on COVID prevention in its latest newsletter, and the AHHA bulletin also linked to several articles.

Croakey Professional Services

We published the final article in a series profiling the 25-year achievements of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, ‘Amid momentum for change, now is the time for system reform to embed cultural safety’, with an e-publication to come.
Week ending 9 February: We join with readers in acknowledging the devastating impact of the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, and call on agencies and governments worldwide to work together to support survivors and affected communities.

Meanwhile, the messy and often frustrating process of policy reform is a key theme of our bulletin this week.

We acknowledge the positives of a government willing to take action on long neglected issues, such as Medicare reform, while also examining obstacles to progress.

Continuing our coverage of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report, we bring two reports following a National Press Club debate on health reform yesterday.

Croakey managing editor Alison Barrett details the United Nations Secretary-General’s calls for 2023 to be a year of “game-changing climate action”, and also covers the Climate Inequality Report 2023.

To mark Safer Internet Day, we report on research released by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and VicHealth, highlighting the harmful impact of digital marketing. And there’s a new report from Cancer Council WA, ‘Junk food in sport: it’s just not cricket’.

Psychiatrists Dr Michael Dudley and Professor Louise Newman call for a Royal Commission into Australia’s immigration detention policy to investigate the costs and human rights impacts.

Don’t miss this week’s ICYMI column covering changes to COVID-19 vaccine recommendations, the historic blocking of Clive Palmer’s coal mine proposal, National Cabinet’s commitment to the Voice, and the toxic impacts of the oil and tobacco industries (along with some positive news on a soft drink tax).
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Making news

Listen to Croakey editor Jennifer Doggett speaking on The Guardian podcast.

https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
Week ending 16 February: Catastrophic flooding. Then a devastating cyclone, followed by an earthquake. Our thoughts are with our neighbours in Aotearoa/New Zealand who are still to fully measure the consequences of the recent disasters they’ve experienced.

As many Australians face dangerous heat conditions in coming days, our bulletin puts a timely focus on disaster preparedness.

We also feature calls to put the voices of people with lived experience at the centre of policy decisions and reform, whether in mental healthcare, Long COVID or via a Voice to Parliament.

Charles Maskell-Knight takes a deep dive into new national data on bulkbilling rates; you may be surprised by some of his findings.

The commercial determinants of health are in focus as Communications Minister Michelle Rowland comes under pressure to resign over gambling industry donations. Meanwhile, Cancer Council WA calls for more effective regulation of alcohol marketing.

Melissa Sweet covers a new report investigating greenwashing by some of the world’s wealthiest companies, and suggests the health sector has something to learn from this analysis.

We report on the welcome announcement of permanent visa pathways for refugees, but highlight that much more is required for many others.

Key health issues are raised by the Public Health Association of Australia NSW Branch ahead of the NSW election. Bookmark #NSWVotesHealth2023 for upcoming articles.

The #ICYMI column includes notable new publications, as well as some everlasting Valentine’s offerings.

Don’t miss a new report celebrating the achievements of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) and the organisation’s Elders and members. You can download it here.
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[Image of Croakey popular posts]

- Governments warned over legal risk on the removal of COVID protections
- New data reveals significant variation in access to bulk billing
- Children's ballet is no place for the marketing of alcohol
- People with lived experience must be central to mental healthcare reform
- Politicians to face a grilling on these key health issues ahead of New South Wales election
- Minister under mounting pressure to resign over gambling industry donations

[Quote]

Near-term thinking is making the problems we face today more intractable, divisive and dangerous. My message to politicians and decision-makers: Don’t focus solely on what may happen to you today – and rather, look at what will happen to all of us tomorrow – and act.

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

[Quote]

The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and balking expedience of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

NZ Climate Minister James Shaw, quoting Winston Churchill
Week ending 23 February: We explore the many intersections between health and other fundamental human rights, including the right to a safe environment, whether in a health service or prison.

Our stories also underline the right to have voices heard and concerns addressed. Contributors examine why this is especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for people with disabilities, and for rural communities whose livelihoods are under threat from extreme weather.

In closing the #HealthyCOP27 series, Amba-Rose Atkinson calls for climate solutions that are First Nations-led. “To salvage the future of the planet and humanity, we must challenge existing systems of colonialism, capitalism, and extractivism that fuels climate change,” she writes.

As the world marks the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, a new report calls for Russia’s sustained attacks on healthcare facilities and health workers to be investigated as war crimes.

Meanwhile, the health sector has been encouraged to engage with concerns about Australia’s human rights record. Senior public health experts, drawing upon their experiences of previously working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, make some suggestions for a National Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The CDC is also covered in the The Health Wrap, as is the importance of the arts for health and wellbeing, and the latest on social prescribing.

Our ICYMI column reports on global efforts to regulate digital platforms, the costs of climate disruption, long COVID and also brings some timely, if provocative, advice for health ministers and policymakers.

Don’t miss the latest stories in our ongoing series previewing health issues and the NSW election.

Leading the bulletin is a fresh take on health reform by Jennifer Doggett. What do teachers have in common with general practitioners?
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#HealthyCOP27 series

This week we published the final article in the #HealthyCOP27 series.

As part of the project, the Croakey team and wider networks maintained an active Twitter presence using the hashtag #HealthyCOP27.

An analysis prepared by Tweetbinder found 688 tweets were sent using the hashtag during the period of the project, from 2 August, 2022 – 27 February, 2023, with 171 Twitter accounts involved. The estimated economic value of the hashtag was $31,303.61.

A summary of the key findings follows below.
Also of note

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**Croakey popular posts**

- What can Australia learn from the United States when establishing the new Centre for Disease Control?
- New South Wales election serves up little for disabled people
- Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in the health system
- Policy, people and prospects: reflections on climate action and the unaddressed reality of stolen land
- Lessons from the frontlines: on teaching and general practice
- As climate disruption intensifies, how to protect the health of rural, regional and remote communities?

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**Croakey popular posts**

- Governments warned over legal risk on the removal of COVID protections
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**Quotable**

Hospitals are the most expensive part of the health system and consistently more money goes to hospitals than to primary care. Yet we have long known that a higher ratio of primary to hospital care means more patient satisfaction, better outcomes, and lower costs.

*Dr Richard Smith*

Source

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https://www.croakey.org/impact-and-readership/
Week ending 3 March: This week at Croakey we’re showcasing the power of engaged and committed communities in driving societal changes.

Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras celebrate what can be achieved when diverse communities come together to challenge oppression, systemic injustice, stigma and discrimination.

We report on important policy and research news for LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing, as well as Pride in Medicine – the doctors, medical students and allies who marched together at the parade.

Less glamorous – but also important – are the processes involved in changing government policy and legislation, such as Senate inquiries and departmental consultation processes.

Holly Brennan OAM reports on a current Senate inquiry into universal access to reproductive healthcare, arguing that reproductive choice needs to be embedded throughout our health and wider systems.

Jennifer Doggett investigates challenges facing the Urgent Care Clinics, and also highlights the importance of the consumer voice in the current debate over pharmacist prescribing.

Charles Maskell-Knight analyses new Medicare data providing important details about access to bulkbilled services, while Dr Sebastian Rosenberg investigates whether the NDIS is an oasis or mirage for psychosocial care.

We also bring a compelling #longread on how powerful corporate interests – in this case milk formula companies – evade regulation and undermine health and wellbeing.

Don’t miss our two-part series on what the pandemic has meant for musicians, reported by Alison Barrett and Yolngu musician Yirrmal, who writes: “Music should make you feel something or else it’s not doing its job.”
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Quotable

Approving coal and gas projects now is like signing a death certificate for the planet.

Professor Fiona Stanley