

Health care in the Land Down Under

*Featuring Anna Candler,
Australian citizen & business owner*



This time on Code WACK!

How does Australia's healthcare system work and why is it considered one of the best in the world? What are some of the ways the Australian healthcare system, which they call Medicare, and private health insurance differ from ours?

An Australian citizen, Anna is founder and CEO of [The Circular Water Company](#) in Sydney. Through frequent visits to family in the United States, particularly in Maryland, she's gained firsthand insight into the stark differences between the Australian and American healthcare models. *This is the first episode in a two-part series.*

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We welcome you from the 'land down under!' Thank you for joining us to talk about Australian health care. First, tell us a bit about yourself.

"Well, I'm from sunny downtown Sydney. It's a glorious spring day today. I am the business founder of a company called [The Circular Water Company](#) and we work at helping what they would classify as global south countries get away from being dependent on imported bottled water and converting waste plastic into roads.

"I founded the company in 2019 and we're going through an equity raising stage and we're starting with our first country, which is Timor Leste otherwise known as East Timor sort of hangs off the east of Indonesia." - **Anna Candler**

Australia is one of some 30 countries in the world that has a single payer or Medicare for All-type healthcare system. How does it work and what do you like best about it?

"It's weird because it's been - in some shape or form - been around since 1975. It used to be called Medibank and then it was called Medicare in 1984. And, and I have to say that even in my sixties, I don't remember what it was like before 1975.

"It is something that is just universal in Australia. It's accepted that a federal government and state governments are responsible for health and responsible for the health of the citizens and we just accept that rather like the British system, the National Health Service, that it is something that you pay for in your taxes and the government supplies to absolutely everybody. There's no ifs, buts, whys or wherefores." - **Anna Candler**

What do you like best about it?

"It's simple. You have a standard basic care for everything. You pick your own doctor, to a certain extent you pick your own hospital. There is a

private healthcare network which you access if you pay [for] private health insurance.

“But when push comes to shove, if I'm in a car accident, it doesn't matter, you know, it's not a matter of whose insurance you've got, what insurance you've got, everybody will be treated the same.

“So private health insurance gives you access to some additional benefits, some dental, some optical, some physiotherapy and for what would be classified as elective surgery. You need your knee replaced, you need your hip replaced. The elective type surgeries where you decide you really want to pick your own hospital and you really want to pick your own surgeon or specialist, then you would probably end up in the private healthcare system.

“But if it was a standard, *“I have a heart attack tomorrow morning,”* [they] wouldn't care what insurance level I have, the ambulance will come, they'll take me to hospital and that's the end of the question.” – ***Anna Candler***

Helpful Links

[International Health Care System Profiles: Australia](#), The Commonwealth Fund

[The Australian health system](#), Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care

[Australia's Healthcare System](#), Health Direct

[Australian healthcare satisfaction much greater than the US](#), Compare the Market

[Waiting Times for Elective Surgery in Australia - Public Vs Private System](#), Health Insurance Fund of Australia Limited

[U.S. ranks last in health care compared with nine other high-income countries, report finds, **NBC NEWS**](#)

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Biography: Anna Candler

Anna Candler, through frequent visits to family in the United States, particularly in Maryland, has gained firsthand insight into the stark differences between the Australian and American healthcare models.

Her personal experiences, including needing medical care while traveling in the US, have highlighted the disparities in cost and access between the two systems.

As a passionate observer of global healthcare practices, Anna brings a fresh perspective to the debate about healthcare reform and universal access in the United States.

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