

Cancer Australia launches  
the development of the first



Australian Government  
Cancer Australia

# Australian Cancer Plan

Cancer Australia is developing the Australian Cancer Plan (ACP) to provide an overarching national approach to cancer control that meets the needs of all Australians now and in the future.



Cancer is a leading cause of death in Australia and affects the lives of many Australians.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that **145,483 people were diagnosed with cancer in Australia in 2020.**<sup>2</sup> Australia ranks well globally in terms of cancer survival rates and has seen **increasing survival rates across most cancer types.**<sup>2,3</sup> **Despite this, there remain disparities in cancer outcomes across population groups.**

On 22 April 2021, Cancer Australia hosted a Ministerial Roundtable in the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra.

This was the first step in bringing together stakeholders from across the country to develop the ACP. There were 80 diverse leading experts in attendance, representing consumers, peak national clinical bodies, peak cancer and health organisations, industry and private sector representatives, State and Territory Health Departments, jurisdictional cancer clinical representatives, Australian Government representatives, and Cancer Australia governance group representatives and staff.

The Roundtable was opened by the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, who reflected on the importance of building on the many Australian advancements in cancer care to “save, extend and improve the lives of all Australians”.



Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care opening the Roundtable

“This will be an inclusive plan... that must be future focused to address inequities and priorities across the whole cancer journey for key population groups.”

*Professor Dorothy Keefe PSM MD, CEO, Cancer Australia*

The Roundtable heard a range of perspectives from across the Australian cancer control sector on opportunities for the ACP. Ms Leanne Wells, CEO of the Consumer Health Forum of Australia, presented the consumer perspective. Professor Jacinta Elston, Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous) at Monash University and Chair of Cancer Australia’s Leadership Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Control, presented the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, noting “if we get it right for Aboriginal people, we get it right for the whole population”. Mr Richard Vines, Co-Chair of the National Oncology Alliance and CEO of Rare Cancers Australia, presented the NOA Vision 20-30. Adjunct Professor Alison Verhoeven, CEO of the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association presented the value-base care perspective noting “If we’re not all in this together then we won’t have an Australian Cancer Plan”.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015. Australian Burden of Disease series no. 19. Cat. no. BOD 22. Canberra: AIHW. 2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. Cancer data in Australia. Cat. no. CAN 122. Canberra: AIHW. Accessed: April 2021; <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia>. 3. Arnold M, Rutherford MJ, Bardot A, Ferlay J, Andersson TM, Myklebust TA et al. Progress in cancer survival, mortality, and incidence in seven high-income countries 1995–2014 (ICBP SURVMARK-2): a population-based study. The Lancet Oncol. 2019 September 11; 20(11): 1493–1505.

Ms Tanya Buchanan, CEO of Cancer Council Australia, presented the peak group perspective. Professor Grant McArthur, Executive Director of the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, presented the research and data perspective. Professor Fran Boyle AM, President of the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia, presented the professional and clinical trial perspective. Professor Shelly Dolan, Chief Executive of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, presented learnings from international cancer control.

There was strong support for the ACP to set key national cancer priorities and action areas over the next 10 years across the cancer control continuum, while providing scope to cater for the unique needs of specific cancer types and population groups.

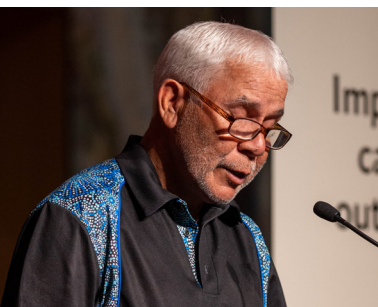
Roundtable participants agreed on the importance of the ACP providing clear national leadership and direction with a focus on reducing inequities across the cancer control continuum and fostering partnerships and collaborations.

Participants agreed the ACP should be: person centred with a focus on understanding what is important to consumers; equity focused and strive for equitable cancer outcomes across all population groups; tumour agnostic with guidance provided across all cancer types and stages; encompassing of the cancer control continuum and considering system enablers; future focused, transformational and ambitious; collaborative and encouraging of system-wide and national cooperation; data driven with a focus on evidence-based approaches and strengthened use of data; and strength based while building on current successes.

**Participants of the Roundtable actively engaged in discussions on the opportunities for an ACP to deliver the greatest impact on cancer outcomes in Australia.**

**These included opportunities to:**

- ▶ Provide national leadership in cancer prevention and align with and reinforce the National Preventive Health Strategy to reduce overall cancer incidence
- ▶ Build the cancer literacy of all Australians, to improve understanding of personal cancer risk factors and to empower behaviour change that reduces risk of cancer
- ▶ Continue to increase cancer screening rates nationally, particularly in populations and areas where cancer screening participation is low or where disparities exist
- ▶ Support the role of primary care providers in investigating suspected cancer early and referring appropriately; adopt new and more accurate diagnostic tests and risk modified screening to pick up cancer earlier
- ▶ Continue to promote value-based healthcare and embed optimal care pathways as the national standard for cancer care
- ▶ Support patients to navigate the system and coordinate their care, across primary, secondary and tertiary settings and between the public and private systems; consider ways to optimise cancer care navigator roles
- ▶ Accelerate implementation of evidence-based, best practice care by setting care standards and establishing processes to translate evidence and clinical guidance into practice
- ▶ Improve access to new cancer therapies and treatments while also reducing the financial burden of cancer on consumers and reduce out of pocket expenses
- ▶ Accelerate the adoption of personalised medicine, better understanding the role of genomics and developing and embedding new models of care
- ▶ Analyse future population and cancer survivorship needs in the development of new community-based models of survivorship care
- ▶ Consider sustainability of specialist palliative care community services to ensure they are available to all who want or need them
- ▶ Expand implementation of virtual care including tele-health, remote diagnosis and virtual consultation
- ▶ Plan future workforce capacity and capability requirements by identifying national trends, addressing current and future skills shortages and planning for future care needs; consider the need for a national cancer workforce strategy
- ▶ Continue efforts to strengthen national data linkage, and reporting of data that relates to cancer stage, treatments and recurrence of cancer at the national level
- ▶ Continue to focus on priority-driven national research funding, targeted to meet the areas of greatest need nationally; increase equity of access to cancer clinical trials
- ▶ Guide development of standardised nationally agreed metrics to measure cancer outcomes and assist with prioritising equitable cancer care across the care continuum.



Ngunnawal Elder Warren Daley delivering the Welcome to Country



Speakers at the Roundtable with Cancer Australia CEO, Dorothy Keefe PSM MD

There was significant interest from participants in ongoing involvement in the development of the ACP and agreement for the process to involve: broad consultation centred on diverse consumer voices; genuine co-design with stakeholders; and the establishment of national governance to support the development of the ACP, ongoing implementation and accountability for outcomes.

**Cancer Australia will develop the Australian Cancer Plan within two years to enable comprehensive and inclusive engagement and consultation with stakeholders across the cancer control continuum.**