

Have your say on the Lung Cancer Screening enquiry

On 1 August 2019, the Minister for Health, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, invited Cancer Australia to conduct an **enquiry into the prospects, process and delivery of a national lung cancer screening program for people at high risk of lung cancer in Australia.**

Cancer Australia is seeking input and submissions from all Australians with an interest in lung cancer to help inform the enquiry.

Why is the enquiry being held?

The enquiry is being held to investigate the feasibility of a national lung cancer screening program for people at high risk of lung cancer in Australia. Cancer Australia will submit a report to the Minister for Health on the prospects, process and delivery of such a program.

The enquiry recognises the need for continuing effort to reduce deaths from lung cancer in Australia. Lung cancer is a common cancer in Australian men and women and the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Australia.

More than half of all cases of lung cancer are diagnosed at an advanced stage, when the likelihood of effective treatment is lower. Early detection and treatment of lung cancer is critical to improve outcomes.

The enquiry will examine the potential contribution that screening of people at high risk of lung cancer could make to reducing deaths from lung cancer in Australia.

Lung cancer in Australia

- In 2019, 12,817 people are estimated to be diagnosed with lung cancer in Australia (8.9% of all new cancer cases)
- In 2019, 9,034 people are estimated to die from lung cancer (18.1% of all cancer-related deaths)
- Five-year relative survival (2011-2015) for lung cancer is low compared to all cancers combined (17.4% vs 68.9%).

Cancer Australia 2019

Australia's screening programs

Population-based cancer screening is a key component of the Australian Government's 10-year National Preventive Health Strategy. The Strategy is designed to keep people healthier and out of hospital by providing a better balance between prevention and treatment of health conditions (Department of Health 2019).

The Australian Government currently funds three well-established population-based cancer screening programs. National cancer screening programs are available for breast, cervical and bowel cancers and are offered to all individuals in defined target groups based on evidence of greatest benefit (Department of Health 2018).

What will the enquiry consider?

The enquiry will focus on 'targeted' screening for lung cancer in Australia. Targeted screening is defined as 'screening of selected high-risk groups' (Department of Health 2018). International clinical trials of lung cancer screening have focused on lung cancer screening with low-dose CT of high-risk groups such as current and former cigarette smokers.

The enquiry will review the potential benefits and harms of lung cancer screening for Australians at high risk of lung cancer and the implications of such a program for the Australian health system. This will include consideration of:

- current and projected incidence and burden of lung cancer in Australia
- potential benefits and harms of lung cancer screening
- population(s) who could benefit most from lung cancer screening (who would be the focus of a lung cancer screening program)
- the clinical pathway for lung cancer screening and assessment and the workforce and infrastructure needed to support the pathway
- infrastructure and technology
- cost effectiveness of lung cancer screening for people at high risk of lung cancer in Australia
- methods to encourage participation and facilitate access to lung cancer screening for specific population groups
- communication needs for the community, screening participants and health professionals.

In addition to considering the process for lung cancer screening, the enquiry will consider patient-related issues, such as stigma, that may affect participation in a lung cancer screening program.

The enquiry will also consider the critical role of research in improving health care treatment and outcomes, and ways to incorporate new and emerging evidence into the program over time.

Have your say

Cancer Australia is undertaking a public consultation process through the Consultation Hub, to seek views and input across all sectors of the Australian community on the Lung Cancer Screening enquiry.

The consultation is being held to seek feedback from members of the public, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people affected by cancer, health professionals, clinical colleges, researchers and research institutes, cancer organisations, peak bodies and governments.

Submissions are also invited from population groups and those that may benefit most from lung cancer screening for reasons such as remoteness, language, culture, age or mobility.

All interested stakeholders are invited to have your say.



Questions to consider

You may find it helpful to consider the following questions to help frame your submission, or choose to answer the questions directly by going to our [Online survey](#).

1. What, in your opinion, are the most important issues that should be considered for a screening program for people at high risk of lung cancer?
2. If a national lung cancer screening program were introduced for people at high risk of lung cancer, what do you think are the best ways to engage and recruit them to participate?
3. What do you see as the practical challenges and opportunities in delivering a national lung cancer screening program for people at high risk of lung cancer in Australia?
4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about lung cancer screening or the enquiry?

References

Cancer Australia 2019. National Cancer Control Indicators (NCCI). Accessed July 2019; <https://ncci.canceraustralia.gov.au>

Department of Health 2019. Australia's Long Term National Health Plan <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australias-long-term-national-health-plan>

Department of Health 2018. Australian population based screening framework. [http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/16AE0B0524753EE9CA257CEE000B5D7/\\$File/Population-Based-Screening-Framework.pdf](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/16AE0B0524753EE9CA257CEE000B5D7/$File/Population-Based-Screening-Framework.pdf)