



AUSTRALIAN CANCER NURSING AND NAVIGATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the second edition of the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program (ACNNP) Newsletter!

The last quarter has been very busy in the cancer sector. ACNNP service delivery partners and governance members have been working collaboratively to continue planning, establishing and expanding services under the Program.

This newsletter includes exciting updates on new Cancer Care Nurses being placed in health and hospital settings around Australia and the commencement of new specialist support services under the Program. We also share some highlights from the 20 March 2025 Cancer Sector Roundtable.

These newsletters will be distributed quarterly, and we welcome individuals and organisations being added to our distribution list. If you would like to receive future newsletters or have any feedback on how we can maximise the impact of the newsletters, please reach out to ACNNP@health.gov.au. We also encourage you to share the newsletters with your broader networks to help raise awareness about ACNNP services.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Cancer Sector Roundtable

It was inspiring to see representatives from across the cancer care sector coming together for the Cancer Sector Roundtable on 20 March 2025 in Melbourne.

The event featured cancer policy updates from the Department of Health and Aged Care (the 'Department') and Cancer Australia, along with a program update from NACCHO. Presentations from the McGrath Foundation, Cancer Council, and Canteen emphasised consumer engagement and program design within the ACNNP Nursing and Navigation Streams, while Ovarian Cancer Australia and Head and Neck Cancer Australia showcased their services under the ACNNP Specialist Support Stream. The day concluded with the Cancer Nurses Society of Australia outlining their plans to develop a nurse education portal with funding received through the Cancer Patient Support Program (CPSP).

A key takeaway for participants was the importance of involving consumers in the early stages of service design to ensure services truly represent and meet the needs of users.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the event's success. Your dedication and insights are shaping a brighter future for cancer care in Australia.

Evaluation

The Nous Group is nearing the end of stage 1 of the ACNNP and CPSP independent evaluation, with the draft evaluation plan currently under review.

Input for the evaluation plan included consultations with over 80 key stakeholders to guide the evaluation design and approach.

Once the evaluation plan has been finalised, Nous will commence Stage 2 of the evaluation, which will see the collection of qualitative and quantitative data to support monitoring of, and insights into, both programs.

Program Communications and Engagement

The Department continues to explore mechanisms to most effectively raise Program awareness. Health professional engagement will be a priority for 2025, to ensure they can refer patients and their families to access supports available, as early as possible.

Priority population engagement across all streams has continued with presentations to governance members from Lived Experience Australia and the Australian Multicultural Health Collaborative at the recent Roundtable. These presentations focused on designing services that were safe and accessible for those who suffer from poor mental health and how to connect with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Key considerations included:

- Past experiences with the health/mental health system
- Cultural considerations e.g. involvement of family and sensitive topics
- Language and lifestyle barriers, and how these may be eased
- Empowering patients and their support networks

SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICE

In very exciting news, both [Liver Foundation](#) and [Head and Neck Cancer Australia](#) have officially commenced delivering Specialist Support Services. This huge achievement follows extensive consultation from both organisations and guidance from established service delivery partners in the Program.

All 12 service delivery partners are now operating a “baseline” service, with enhancements to continue over the life of the Program, particularly as data insights and consumer feedback are received.

The Specialist Support Service Working Group met on 5 March 2025. Discussions focussed on information sharing and how consumers will move between services, both now and into the future as new services come on board. Consumer members also highlighted the need for consistent and timely communication with the sector, and the importance of engaging with health professionals early. Priorities moving forward will be finalising referral pathways and mapping how consumers will receive support across the Program streams.

ONE MINUTE WITH...

Lisa, Bowel Cancer Australia



Tell us a bit about yourself?

I am the Manager of Bowel Care Services at Bowel Cancer Australia. In my current role, I oversee the coordination of Specialist Support Services for Bowel Cancer Australia as part of the ACNNP. We have a great team of nurses, nutritionists, counsellor, and exercise physiologist that provide unique support to people affected by bowel cancer.

NURSING SERVICE

The McGrath Foundation (McGrath) is set to develop and deliver the Cancer Care Nursing service under the ACNNP, providing *‘clinical, psychosocial and emotional support for free to people and their families across Australia.’*

McGrath will also be developing a comprehensive ‘Find A Nurse’ tool that will have the ability to include information on all specialist cancer care nurses and nursing services employed through hospitals, community services and the cancer sector more broadly. This will include the Commonwealth-funded and other Cancer Care Nurses. The development of this tool will commence in July 2025.

Under the ACNNP, McGrath will transition Commonwealth-funded tumour-specific nurses (melanoma, lung, breast) and recruit an additional 100 cancer care nurses. An EOI process was implemented recently with Health Services invited to inform nurse placements and timing.

As of the end of March 2025, 34 recruitment agreements were in place for the first phase of these new roles. McGrath is working towards a target of almost 250 Commonwealth-funded cancer care nurses in state and territory-funded hospital and healthcare settings by 2026-27.

NAVIGATION SERVICE

Cancer Council has completed its baseline analysis and consultations to improve the 13 11 20 support line, focusing on consistency, equity, and efficiency. Engagement with priority groups and collaboration with ACNNP partners on training and referral pathways is ongoing.

Planning for the digital navigation component has begun, aiming to expand access to cancer information and support through digital channels, including personalised and self-service options. Engagement will commence shortly, to co-design the future state of the service, to best meet consumer needs.

Cancer Hub (Canteen, Redkite & Camp Quality Alliance) continues to help families impacted by cancer with children aged 0-25 years via their 1800 431 312 service. Since its launch in xxx, Cancer Hub has delivered 25,000 occasions of intake, 10,200 occasions of navigation, 7,500 counselling sessions, and 3,300 outbound referrals.

Recent enhancements include updating eligibility criteria, recruiting additional team members, and implementing initiatives to streamline referral pathways.

What are you most excited to see the ACNNP achieve and why?

I'm most excited to see the ACNNP deliver meaningful, person-centred care to **all** cancer patients. I'm particularly passionate about expanding and enhancing the support available to people living with bowel cancer. Every day, I witness the impact that an additional layer of support can have on people's lives. One of the most valuable and rewarding aspects of this program has been the collaboration among organisations that share the same passion to achieve the shared goal to deliver care and support to all cancer patients.

Why is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month so important?

June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month – Bowel Cancer Australia's signature awareness and fundraising event. Bowel cancer claims the lives of 101 Australians every week (5,276 people a year) – but it's one of the most treatable types of cancer when detected early. Since the year 2000, however, the risk of being diagnosed with bowel cancer before age 40 has more than doubled – you are #Never2Young for bowel cancer.

Contact:

www.bowelcanceraustralia.org/

Telephone: 1800 727 336

OTHER NEWS

- The third and final submission period for the Cancer Patient Support Program closes at 2:00pm AEST on 1 August 2025. Funding of between \$400,000 and \$1 million is available for projects that increase equity across cancer types and/or focus on priority population groups. If you are interested in applying for this open competitive grant opportunity, please review the Grant Opportunity Guidelines at Grant Connect – www.grants.gov.au.
- Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia is seeking public comments on the draft *2025 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Early Detection of Prostate Cancer* (Guidelines). The consultation will inform finalisation of the draft Guidelines for the approval of Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council. Submissions can be made online or sent via email. For more information you can visit www.pcfa.org.au/psa-guidelines-review or email research@pcfa.org.au. The deadline for comments is 11.59pm, Sunday, 25th May 2025.
- The Department of Health and Aged Care has engaged a service provider to lead an independent review of cancer prostheses equity in Australia, which is expected to be complete in the second half of 2025.
- National Palliative Care Week is running from 11 to 17 May 2025. Palliative care is holistic care provided to improve the quality of life for people who are affected by a life-limiting illness. Free palliative care education and training is available for all health care professionals. To access course information and resources to build your skills, visit <https://health.gov.au/palliative-care-education>
- Updated [National Cervical Screening Program \(NCSP\) Guidelines](#) have been published and come into effect from April 2025. Key changes have been made to Test of Cure, surveillance and follow-up after Adenocarcinoma in situ (AIS), and guidance on intervals for unsatisfactory tests. To support these changes, training and education has been developed or updated.
- The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is developing a comprehensive healthcare provider learning package launching in mid-2025, featuring a range of CPD accredited online modules, webinars, workshops and a resource toolkit. Supported by GPEx, a specialist training provider for the sector, register to get updates as this learning package comes online at www.gpex.com.au/nbcsp-learning-hub-eoi.
- The National Lung Cancer Screening Program will launch in July 2025. Visit www.health.gov.au/nlcs to learn more about how to prepare for the program.
- VCCC Alliance has been funded under the Cancer Patient Support Program to develop a regional workforce educational support strategy. A project under this strategy has been to implement a National Regional Learning Hub. This is a one-stop education and resource space dedicated to supporting regional and rural health professionals who are passionate about cancer care across the country. Please visit [National Regional Learning Hub | VCCC Alliance Centre for Cancer Education](#) to learn, connect and lead change in regional cancer care.
- All.Can Australia is soon to launch a national survey to bring lived experiences of people impacted by cancer to the forefront of national cancer care decision making. Made possible by funding from the Medicines Australia Oncology Industry Taskforce (OIT), the survey seeks to collect perspectives of Australians who have experienced any type and stage of cancer, as well as their caregivers, to identify key gaps in cancer care treatment and support to shape the future of cancer care in Australia. This new research will build on [existing insights](#) and help shape the direction of All.Can Australia's work, as well as supporting conversations with policy makers and the health industry. All organisations working in the cancer space are encouraged to share the survey with their networks to ensure people affected by cancer can have a voice.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Youth Cancer Awareness Month (April)
- Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month (April)
- World Liver Day (19 April)
- Brain Cancer Awareness Month (May)
- Skin Cancer Awareness Month (May)
- World Ovarian Cancer Day (8 May)
- Australia's Biggest Morning Tea (throughout May and June)
- CNSA and ICCN Congress (18-21 June)
- Men's Health Week (9-15 June)
- National Blood Donor Week (9-15 June)

SPOTLIGHT ON...

RARE CANCERS AWARENESS DAY

Rare Cancers Awareness Day, held on the 26th of June, is asking all Australians to "Be Aware of Rare" and to listen to some of the real-life experiences shared by a few of the estimated 40,000 people diagnosed with a rare or less common cancer each year.

Barriers and isolation experienced by rare cancer patients can be significant. To help support the thousands of people feeling alone in their rare cancer diagnosis, Rare Cancers Australia (RCA) delivers a service to the cancer community that no one else does, in a way no one else does. Support as unique and individual as the person.

RCA's programs support patients from every angle; clinical, emotional, financial, peer and practical – and at no cost to the patient. RCA's Specialist Cancer Navigators facilitate a range of support groups, specifically dedicated to different cancer experiences. The groups are an opportunity for people to have real conversations with others who truly understand the reality of a rare cancer diagnosis. Through the ACNNP, RCA is expanding its offerings including its support groups and specialist telehealth service.

Visit www.rarecancers.org.au for more information on Rare Cancers Awareness Day and RCA support services.