



Increasing access to health and aged care: a strategic plan for the nurse practitioner workforce (the Plan) – Consultation Draft

10 February 2023

This submission has been prepared jointly between Cancer Council Australia (Cancer Council), the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA), and Cancer Nurses Society of Australia (CNSA).

Cancer Council is Australia's peak national non-government cancer control organisation and advises the Australian Government and other bodies on evidence-based practices and policies to help prevent, detect and treat cancer.

The Clinical Oncology Society of Australia is the peak national body representing health professionals from all disciplines whose work involves the care of cancer patients.

Cancer Nurses Society of Australia is the peak national body for cancer nursing and strives to promote excellence in cancer care through the professional contribution of cancer nurses.

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging.



Cancer Council, COSA and CNSA appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Consultation Draft of the *Increasing access to health and aged care: a strategic plan for the nurse practitioner workforce* (the Plan) by submitting a paper alongside our responses to the short form survey. This paper provides additional comments and important points for the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care's (the Department) consideration.

Cancer Council, COSA and CNSA support the Department's position as detailed in the Consultation Draft of the Plan, that the role of Nurse Practitioners is particularly important and contributes positively to our health system and the health of all Australians. This is especially the case for cancer.

The implementation and success of the Plan is particularly important, and timing is critical. Cancer Australia is leading the development of the Australian Cancer Plan which will set out the key national priorities and action areas over the next 10 years to improve outcomes for Australian's affected by cancer. It is anticipated that the Australian Cancer Plan will cover the continuum of care including prevention, early diagnosis, treatment, supportive and palliative care, and survivorship, while providing for the unique needs of specific cancer types and populations. Nurse Practitioners play a vital role across the spectrum of cancer control and it is important for action from both the Nurse Practitioner Plan and the Australian Cancer Plan to align and complement each other as together they can build the case for more Nurse Practitioners in cancer and progress toward this enhanced workforce across the next 10 years.

Cancer Council, COSA and CNSA appreciate that the Appendix of the Plan's Consultation Draft, which details the evidence, research, and stakeholder feedback it has built upon to form the Plan's outcomes and actions and note that the Appendix captures most of the main points covered in our 2021 submission. That submission highlighted some of the barriers facing Nurse Practitioners working across the cancer continuum from prevention and early detection through to treatment, survivorship and/or end of life care, and proposed some solutions for consideration in the next 10-year plan. It included contributions from the CNSA's Cancer Nurse Practitioner Special Practice Network with over 70 members who work across inpatient and/or outpatient settings in a variety of specialty areas (medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, malignant haematology, and palliative care) with either adult and/or paediatric patient population. As highlighted in our previous submission, while there have been pockets of success in enhancing the Nurse Practitioner workforce in cancer care, the lack of system-wide planning, development pathways and sustained funding remains an ongoing challenge.

Accordingly, Cancer Council, COSA and CNSA would like to see ongoing commitment from the Australian Government towards supporting the role of Nurse Practitioners, through Commonwealth funding and effort, in conjunction with appropriate levels of input from the State and Territory governments, to ensure successful implementation of the Plan. We remain extremely interested in the progression of the Plan and ask that the Department continues to include CNSA, COSA and CCA in those processes.