Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

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AUSTRALIAN CANCER NURSING & NAVIGATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

ACNNP@health.gov.au

WELCOME

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program (ACNNP) Newsletter! We have exciting news in this edition about the launch of Cancer Council's new *Cancer Connect* Service and some resources available through the Cancer Patient Support Program (CPSP). We have also updated the information about each of our service streams to ensure readers can gain a better understanding of the types of support available under the Program and how they can be accessed. Read on for more information about Rare Cancers Australia's Specialist Support Service, the Cancer Hub and the McGrath Foundation's Cancer Care Nursing Service.

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 (or information you'd like to hear about), 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

We continue our focus on Program awareness and service integration. Ensuring health professionals and consumers are aware of the supports available under the Program and how to access these supports is critical for the Program to improve the wellbeing of people impacted by cancer. While we explore opportunities to promote the Program, we also welcome feedback from readers on potential avenues or stakeholder groups that should be prioritised.

All ACNNP partners are collaborating to ensure services across Nursing, Navigation and Specialist Support are well connected, to improve the consumer experience. This includes working to understand the supports available through each organisation, developing efficient referral pathways and understanding how the Program works together to provide wraparound support for anyone impacted by any cancer.

We are also prioritising connections between the ACNNP and CPSP to ensure resources developed under the CPSP can benefit as many individuals and health professionals as possible.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICE SPOTLIGHT ON...

RARE CANCERS AUSTRALIA

Rare Cancers Australia (RCA) provides free, national telehealth support for people affected by rare and less common cancers. These cancers account for around one in four cancer diagnoses and have some of the poorest outcomes. Support is available regardless of diagnosis or location, with around one-third of those supported living in regional or rural Australia.

Support from every angle

Every patient and carer is connected with a dedicated Specialist Cancer Navigator – an experienced nurse, social worker or counsellor – who provides personalised information, guidance and support from diagnosis through treatment and life beyond cancer:

- Emotional: informal counselling, regular check-ins and referrals
- Practical and financial: support navigating treatment logistics and costs
- Peer support: one-on-one connections and 11 specific support groups
- Clinical: assistance accessing genomic testing, clinical trials and medicines

Complementing clinical care

RCA helps to close the gaps in supportive care by providing the time-intensive support and coordination often needed beyond clinical appointments. Each navigator supports more than 400 families annually to understand their options, access services and navigate life with cancer, helping reduce pressure on oncology teams.

To help health professionals recognise, refer and support rare patients, the RCA Education Hub continues to expand its offering of webinars, modules and resources. To support equitable care, RCA provides culturally safe services, interpreter access and multilingual resources.

Working together for wrap-around care

RCA partners across the cancer sector to provide coordinated, multidisciplinary support tailored to each person and family. This includes connecting people with the counselling and financial support of Cancer Council Australia; the supportive services of the CancerHub; and the disease-specific expertise of fellow ACNNP organisations. RCA also links patients with local housing, legal and family violence support services when needed, and shares education and a Community of Practice with McGrath Foundation and CNSA.

How to refer

Anyone can refer – patients, carers, family or health professionals – by phone on 1800 257 600, by email at support@rarecancers.org.au, or online through the RCA website. Specialist Cancer Navigators contact patients within 48 hours.

NURSING SERVICE UPDATE

MCGRATH FOUNDATION

The McGrath Foundation continues to roll out the McGrath Cancer Care Nurse Program. McGrath Cancer Care Nurses support people from the time of a cancer diagnosis and throughout their treatment. McGrath Cancer Care Nurses work closely within the multidisciplinary team to provide expert clinical nursing care, as well as advocate for psychosocial, emotional and practical needs to be met.

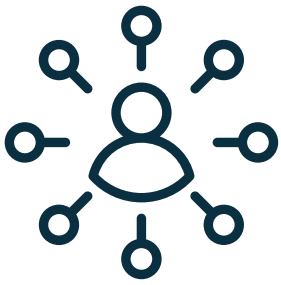
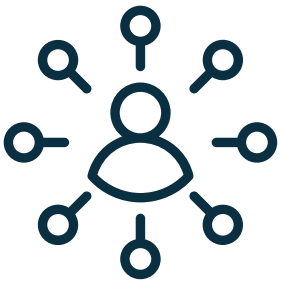
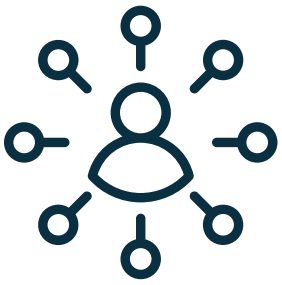
Applying a holistic understanding of health, McGrath Cancer Care Nurses work in partnership with a wide range of healthcare providers across the health sector to ensure patient centred care. This includes ongoing assessment of patient needs through the use of validated nurse assessment tools and referrals to the relevant ACNNP partner organisations and other support organisations from the initial nurse consultation.

Referrals to McGrath Cancer Care Nurses can be made by members of the treating team or via patient self-referral, where a McGrath Cancer Care Nurse position is established in that region. Patients and providers can locate available McGrath Cancer Care Nurses through the Find a Nurse Directory on the McGrath Foundation website, noting that availability is dependent on current nurse placement locations.

There are now 83 McGrath Cancer Care Nurses placed under the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program. These Nurses are supporting a wide variety of cancer types, including lung, gastrointestinal and genitourinary. McGrath Cancer Care Nurses have now been placed in every state and territory.

The McGrath Foundation recently delivered a series of workshops to support implementation of the McGrath Model of Care across their existing workforce. These workshops focused on effective service delivery and service mapping in line with the Model. The McGrath Model of Care is publicly available and can be accessed by all interested stakeholders via the McGrath Foundation website.

Building on this work, the McGrath Foundation is currently co-designing a specialised Model of Care for haematological cancers. This Model will reflect the unique needs of people diagnosed with blood cancers and is expected to be released in the second half of 2026.

NAVIGATION SERVICE UPDATE

CANCER HUB

Cancer Hub: Supporting families through every stage of cancer

Cancer Hub — delivered by Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite — provides coordinated support for children, young people and families when a child or parent/carer is diagnosed with cancer.

Every family's experience of cancer is different, and Cancer Hub is designed to connect people with the right support at the right time. Through a single point of access, families can access tailored support without needing to navigate multiple services independently. The Cancer Hub team works alongside families to understand their circumstances and connect them with the most appropriate assistance across the three partner organisations, and beyond.

For parents and carers, support may include guidance on talking to children about cancer, managing the impact of treatment on family life, navigating financial pressures and accessing services within their local community. Children and young people can access age-appropriate information, counselling, peer connection opportunities and programs that help them build resilience and maintain social connections during a challenging time.

A key strength of Cancer Hub is its ability to coordinate support across organisations and sectors. In addition to connecting families with services provided by Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite, the team works closely with other Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program (ACNNP) organisations, healthcare providers and a wide range of community services nationwide. This collaborative approach helps ensure families can access the right support at the right time, regardless of where they live or the complexity of their circumstances. Cancer Hub also assists families with practical needs that can arise during treatment, including coordinating transport, accommodation, financial support and referrals to community services.

Equitable access is a key priority for Cancer Hub. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members play an important role in helping ensure support is culturally safe, responsive and grounded in trust and understanding. They work alongside children, young people and families to identify their needs and connect them with appropriate supports throughout their cancer journey.

The service also recognises the unique challenges that can be experienced by multicultural families and those for whom English is a second language. Navigating healthcare, education, community and financial support systems can be particularly complex during a cancer diagnosis. To help reduce these barriers, Cancer Hub team members are trained in the use of interpreter services and provides translated information and resources through its website, helping families access support in a way that is accessible, inclusive and meaningful to them.

By bringing together the expertise of Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite, Cancer Hub offers families a seamless pathway to support throughout treatment, recovery and, where needed, bereavement. This collaborative approach helps ensure families feel informed, connected and supported, no matter where they are in their cancer journey. At the heart of Cancer Hub is a simple goal: ensuring no child, young person or family has to face cancer alone.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

CANCER CONNECT NOW AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER

In June 2026, the Australian Cancer Navigation Program reached an important milestone with the national release of Cancer Connect, a key initiative within the Program's navigation stream.

Cancer Connect is a national navigation service designed to help people affected by cancer find trusted information, services and support throughout their cancer experience. Available online and working alongside Cancer Council's 13 11 20 Information and Support service, it brings together evidence-based information about different cancer types, a national Service Finder, and pathways to practical, emotional, financial and peer support.

Cancer Connect helps people understand what support is available and connects people with trusted services including through the Cancer Council and other support organisations. Cancer Connect makes it easier for people affected by cancer to find the right support at the right time.

The service reflects extensive collaboration across the cancer sector, including consumers, healthcare professionals, community organisations and government stakeholders. Feedback gathered throughout the design process has helped shape the service, with a strong focus on accessibility, equity and ensuring people can access the support that best meets their needs.

Cancer Connect represents an important step towards delivering the Australian Cancer Plan's vision for person-centred, integrated navigation and improved consumer experiences. While this initial release provides a strong foundation, the service will continue to evolve, with additional functionality, content and service enhancements introduced over the coming year.

Did you know?
The Cancer Connect Service Finder includes hundreds of cancer support services from Cancer Councils and partner organisations across Australia, helping people find practical, emotional, financial and peer support closer to home.

Health professionals are encouraged to explore Cancer Connect and consider it as a trusted resource to support people affected by cancer.

Find out more: connect.cancer.org.au

Request a call back: https://connect.cancer.org.au/request-support

ONE MINUTE WITH...

CAROLYN SMITH - CONSUMER MEMBER ON THE ACNNP EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP AND CHAIR OF THE ACNNP CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP

Tell us a bit about yourself?

My professional background is as a policy advisor, regulator and senior leader in the Australian Public Service, primarily in aged care and health. I am now a consumer representative and advocate in health and aged care. I have a particular focus on bringing my lived and professional experience to cancer consumer advocacy at both national and local levels, including governance groups for the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program, the Cancer Australia Advisory Council and the Cancer Consumer Reference Group for Canberra Hospital. I was successfully treated for throat cancer in 2019 and have become an active part of the head and neck cancer community. I have been on the Board of Head and Neck Cancer Australia (HANCA) since 2020 and am now the Deputy Chair.

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

Being diagnosed with cancer is an overwhelming and distressing experience. As well as all the immediate treatment issues people are working through with their clinical team, it is very difficult to know where to go to get information and support. Support can be highly variable depending on where you live, which cancer you have or for certain population groups. The Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program is a large investment to improve access to navigation and supportive care. I am committed to ensuring we take a person-centred approach to program delivery which focuses on increasing equitable access. As a former head and neck cancer patient, I was thrilled to see HANCA funded to deliver a helpline to support patients.

Why is Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month so important?

Over 5,600 Australians are diagnosed with a type of head and neck cancer every year. There is no screening so early detection is key. This July HANCA is encouraging people to start a conversation about signs and symptoms like a sore throat or mouth ulcer that doesn't go away. HANCA is seeking to:

- Raise awareness of Head and Neck Cancer
- Encourage people to seek medical advice when symptoms persist
- Support people affected by Head and Neck Cancer
- Reduce stigma and isolation
- Help more Australians access information and support

Contact HANCA

Telephone: 1300 424 848
Website: https://www.headandneckcancer.org.au/
Submit an enquiry: https://www.headandneckcancer.org.au/contact/#

CANCER PATIENT SUPPORT PROGRAM (CPSP)

We are delighted to share some of the resources that are being developed under the Commonwealth funded Cancer Patient Support Program. 24 projects have been funded as a total value of $16.5 million. We looking forward to sharing more projects with you in future newsletters.

BRAIN TUMOURS ONLINE

Introducing Brain Tumours Online

Brain Tumours Online (https://braintumoursonline.org) was co-designed, developed and evaluated with support of an MRFF Brain Cancer Survivorship grant in 2021-2024. It was led by Prof Kate Drummond (Head of Neurosurgery at Royal Melbourne Hospital), and a multi-disciplinary team of health care professionals, researchers and people with lived experience of primary brain tumours (patients and carers). It is now a public website providing trusted evidence-based information, an engaging webinar program, and a way to connect via a social media community.

In 2026, with support of the CPSP grant, we are increasing awareness nationally of Brain Tumours Online, implementing feedback to strengthen accessibility, usability and functionality, and also expanding the scope to include information for people with brain metastases – cancer that has spread to the brain from other primary cancers such as melanoma, breast cancer or lung cancer. For more information or interest in sharing Brain Tumours Online within your networks, please contact the project team on bt-online@unimelb.edu.au or sign up for the newsletter via the website: https://braintumoursonline.org/contact-us

GATHER MY CREW

Extending cancer care beyond the hospital

For many people with cancer, the greatest challenges don't happen in hospital. They happen at home. The free Gather My Crew app helps patients coordinate practical support from family, friends and community, including meals, transport, household tasks and appointments, while keeping everyone connected and informed.

Thanks to the Cancer Patient Support Program, Gather My Crew has developed a dedicated cancer pathway within the app. Co-designed with cancer clinicians, patients and carers, it provides tailored education, practical guidance and resources to help people navigate cancer together.
By referring patients to Gather My Crew early, cancer clinicians can help reduce the burden on patients and carers, strengthen support at home and make it easier for families and friends to provide meaningful, coordinated care throughout treatment and recovery.

Learn more, access referral resources or download the app at www.gathermycrew.org.au - and look out for us at conferences as we work to spread the word.

OTHER NEWS...

AUSTRALIAN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER NETWORK (ACCN) INNOVATIONS SHOWCASE

Cancer Australia, in partnership with the South Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network (SACCaN), will convene the third ACCN Innovations Showcase on 10 September 2026 at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

With the theme Networked excellence in action, the Showcase will highlight examples of integrated cancer care across the continuum, including the important role of navigation in networked comprehensive cancer care.

Free registration will open shortly. Visit ACCN Innovations Showcase 2026 | Cancer Australia for more information.

MELANOMA PATIENTS AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES ITS NEW MODEL OF CARE

Funded through the ACNNP, Melanoma Patients Australia's new model of care provides an evidence-informed framework for delivering high-quality, patient-centred, specialist melanoma telehealth nursing and community support. The navigation framework translates Melanoma Patients Australia's model of care into practice and illustrates how they aim to complement the care provided by primary and secondary care.

Melanoma Patients Australia's model maximises the contribution of specialist nursing, navigation and supportive care into an integrated service model that empowers patients while strengthening collaboration across the health system. While this model was developed specifically for melanoma care, it's potential significance can extend beyond a single tumour stream.

Information about Melanoma Patients Australia's new model of care including downloadable guides for Patients and Health Professionals can be accessed on the Melanoma Patients Australia website at: https://melanomapatients.org.au/model-of-care/.

OCP TEMPLATE CONSULTATION

Cancer Australia is reviewing and updating the Optimal Care Pathway (OCP) templates.

We encourage you to have your say on the draft OCP templates through the Cancer Australia Consultation Hub.

Public consultation is now open and will close 7 August 2026. Further information is available on the Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network forum

BRAIN CANCER PATIENT SUPPORT

Peace of Mind Foundation Australia works alongside healthcare professionals, cancer care navigators to support Australian's and their families navigate the challenges of brain cancer.

As Australia's leading specialist brain cancer support charity, eligible patients and their families can access assistance with everyday living expenses, travel and accommodation costs, wellbeing support initiatives. We encourage health professionals to refer a patient at any stage of the disease who may need support from diagnosis through to bereavement.

In addition, Peace of Mind Foundation offers specialised brain cancer education and training opportunities for healthcare professionals, helping to build knowledge, confidence and capability in supporting patients and families affected by this complex disease. Our aim is to complement clinical care by reducing some of the pressures associated with a brain cancer diagnosis and helping patients focus on their health and wellbeing.

For more information visit www.peaceofmindfoundation.org.au/.

VON HIPPEL-LINDAU (VHL) SYNDROME RESOURCE HUB

NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia (NECA) is pleased to announce the launch of a dedicated Von Hippel-Lindau (VHL) syndrome resource hub on our website, designed to support individuals and families affected by VHL. Newly available resources include a "Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Professional" guide and access to VHL Specialist Registry.

Coming soon, the hub will also feature a VHL screening checklist, an optional diary/logbook to help track scans, tests, and appointments, as well as dedicated information booklets for both patients and healthcare professionals. These resources have been developed to help people living with VHL navigate their care, stay informed, and support discussions with their healthcare team.

VHL Resource Hub: Von Hippel-Lindau (VHL) Syndrome | NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Professional: VHL Questions to ask | NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia

VHL Specialist Registry: Von Hippel-Lindau Specialist Registry | NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia

NURSING GUIDELINES - ADVANCED LIVER DISEASE & HEPATOCELLULAR CARCINOMA

In 2025-2026, the Australasian Hepatology Association (AHA) completed a review and contemporary practice update of the Nursing Guidelines for the care of persons with advanced liver disease and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). Please access the AHA nursing guidelines through the AHA website - AHA Nursing Guidelines. They are all endorsed by Liver Foundation.

The guidelines can be used in nursing practice in cancer settings as a direct, evidence-based framework for delivering consistent, high-quality care to people with advanced liver disease and HCC. In practical terms, nurses can use these guidelines as a guide to standardise assessment, guide clinical decision-making, improve patient education, and support safe, coordinated care across settings.

Given that up to 90 per cent of people with HCC have underlying liver disease requiring concurrent management with their cirrhosis and cancer, it is important to be aware that nursing best practice guidelines for the treatment of people with hepatitis B and hepatitis C were also updated and a new nursing guide for Metabolic Dysfunction Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD) was launched in June 2026.

Funding for the guideline updates was received from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing through a partnership with the Liver Foundation.

END OF LIFE ESSENTIALS

End of Life Essentials has a new Understanding Patient Mental Health at the End of Life Module which helps health professionals build confidence in responding to mental health concerns. It also highlights the importance of self-care and supporting colleagues, recognising the emotional impact of caring for people at the end of life.

Newly published article: 'They Need to Hear You Say It': Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives on Barriers and Enablers to End-of-Life Discussions With Adolescents and Young Adults With Cancer - PubMed

My Learning - Health Practitioner Education - Health Professionals CareSearch's updated My Learning modules show you how relevant evidence can help your clinical practice. Modules include:

- Supporting new staff to palliative care
- Finding clinical guidance with CareSearch
- Supporting carers

THE AUSTRALIAN REAL WORD CANCER EVIDENCE NETWORK — PAN CANCER INITIATIVE

Every Australian touched by cancer has a story about what worked, what didn't, and what mattered most. But without consistent ways to capture those experiences and outcomes, we can't see the full picture. Or act on it.

The Pan Cancer Initiative, a national partnership between Movember, Cancer Australia, and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, is working to change that.

Putting patients at the centre of measurement

A foundational achievement has been establishing a nationally agreed Core Outcome and Experience Set, defining what matters most to patients during cancer care. Developed through a rigorous process involving people with lived experience alongside clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and sector representatives, it ensures cancer services are asking questions that genuinely reflect what patients go through.

Technology that works for people, not just systems

Knowing what to measure is only the first step. The program has developed a freely available digital platform enabling health services to routinely collect patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient-reported experience measures (PREMs), ensuring more patients are heard.

Raising awareness of what matters

In late 2026, a campaign co-developed with the Pan Cancer Consortium, cancer sector, and patient advocacy groups will build community awareness of the value of PROMs and PREMs.

Looking ahead

The program will explore a national reporting capability for patient-reported cancer data and develop a web-based resource for men navigating prostate cancer, built with input from lived experience. For more information, visit pancancer.movember.com

KEY DATES

JULY

- Dry July
- Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month
- 1st - 7th - Kidney Health Week
- 5th - 12th - NAIDOC Week
- 26th - 31st - National Pain Week
- 27th - World Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Day
- 28th - World Hepatitis Day

AUGUST

- 1st - World Lung Cancer Day
- 3rd - 9th - National Stroke Week
- 8th - Dying to Know Day
- 9th - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 13th - Cancer Nurses Day
- 28th - Wear It Purple Day

SEPTEMBER

- Blue September (Prostate Cancer Awareness Month)
- Blood Cancer Awareness Month
- Gyneacological Cancer Awareness Month
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- 7th - 11th - Women's Health Week
- 8th - World Physio Day
- 10th - R U OK Day
- 21st - 27th - Dementia Awareness Week
- 29th - World Heart Day