

Get NSW Back in Front



NSW CANCER ACTION PLAN

STEPPING UP THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER IN NSW



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Cancer is now Australia's leading cause of death among 45 –64 year olds and causes more premature deaths than cardiovascular disease.¹

In NSW in 2004, there were 34,092 new cases of cancer - 19,160 in men and 14,932 in women, with 12,686 deaths from cancer - 7,126 men and 5,560 women. One in two men and one in three women can expect to be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The numbers of cancer cases are also rising mainly due to population ageing and growth.²

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition believes more can be done to reduce the incidence and death rates for several major cancers.

Early detection and new and more effective treatments have improved outcomes for people with cancer over the past few decades, but more needs to be done.

Whether they are patients, carers or health professionals; people deserve to have access to reliable and authoritative information about cancer including risk factors, treatment options, clinical trials, and location of treatment and support services.

More people need to know about the importance of screening for cancers such as breast cancer, bowel cancer, prostate cancer and gynaecological cancers and they should be helped to access those services.

Better access to early treatment is also a vital aspect of recovery, with multi-disciplinary care, proven to be most effective. Timely access to on-going support and essential resources such as prostheses are also very important.

More needs to be done to address the workforce shortages – such as in qualified radiotherapists.

More should also be done to help people give up smoking, particularly groups of people who are specially vulnerable and who have much higher smoking rates such as younger people.

And more attention needs to be paid to the person with cancer rather than simply treating he or she as 'a patient', with cancer survivors actively engaged in decision-making.

It is time to step up the fight against cancer in NSW.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Australia's Health 2006', Canberra, p. xiii.

² Cancer Institute NSW, 'Annual Report 2005–2006', *NSW Government*, p. 5.

THE NSW LIBERAL/NATIONALS COALITION

CANCER ACTION PLAN

Our Cancer Action Plan includes the maintenance of the quarantined cancer budget administered by the Cancer Institute NSW, which will be held accountable for its expenditure. Our Action Plan is multi-faceted, including:

1. An additional \$20 million for BreastScreen NSW to increase breast cancer screening rates

A fall in breast cancer deaths has been attributed to early detection and improved treatment.³

We will promote the value of breast cancer screening among women of all ages, and ensure BreastScreen NSW is adequately funded to enable women between 40 and 79 years of age to have mammograms.

To ensure greater screening rates and early detection of breast cancer we will commit an additional \$20 million for up to 200,000 additional mammograms over the next four years.

2. An additional \$20 million for the Cancer Institute to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of all cancers, with a particular focus on:

- **gynaecological cancers**, increasing the understanding, knowledge and effective treatment of patients with gynaecological cancers.
- **prostate cancer**, working with organisations such as the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) to help raise awareness about prostate cancer and the steps men should take to reduce the impact of the disease.

3. An additional \$2.4 million to increase access to radiotherapy

Radiotherapy is an essential component of cancer treatment and is used for both curative purposes and in reducing pain for people with advanced cancer.

Radiotherapy is a comparatively cost-effective and safe treatment and has made a significant contribution to improving cancer cure rates since it was introduced in the early twentieth century.

However, not everyone who could benefit from radiotherapy is receiving it, and those who do are waiting long periods before receiving treatment.

A review of NSW cancer services in 2005 found that *'There is an immediate need to provide extra positions for new radiotherapy graduates to complete*

³ Ibid, p. 22.

*their Professional Development Year (PDY) or internship to be funded by the Cancer Institute NSW.*⁴

But despite this, the government provided only 55 PDY placements in public radiotherapy centres for 70 students this year with another thirty estimated to have missed out on places over the last three years.⁵

To address this problem we will provide 15 additional Professional Development Year places per year for radiotherapy students in the public health system in NSW.

We will also ensure radiotherapy services are located where they are needed.

4. An additional \$10.4 million for measures to reduce smoking

We will commit an additional \$10.4 million to target a reduction in the overall smoking rate by one per cent per annum.

To achieve this we will allocate resources to help those with highest smoking rates to quit the habit, including those identified by the Cancer Council of NSW such as young people aged 16-34.

We will also establish a regularly updated and published database that shows smoking rates by population groups and geographical areas. This will act as a benchmark against which cessation programs can be measured.

5. Better access to information and treatment

We will work in partnership with expert clinicians, support organisations and consumer groups such as Cancer Voices NSW, the Breast Cancer Action Group and CanTeen Australia to provide better access to information and treatment.

Issues that have been singled out for further investigation and attention include:

- The need for an easily accessible and authoritative source of information about cancer and its treatment.
- Better access to best practice care which includes screening, multidisciplinary care teams, more care co-ordinators, provision of treatment and follow-up plans, support services such as home care, psychosocial and rehabilitation help.
- The establishment of comprehensive cancer centres in strategic locations to give easier access to best practice cancer care regardless of where patients live.

⁴ Working Party for the Cancer Services Brief, 'NSW Cancer Services Review – A Discussion Paper', March 2005, p. 22, retrieved 1 February 2007 from http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au/cancer_inst/news/pdfs/NSWCancerServicesReviewADiscussionPaper.pdf.

⁵ Prof Jim Bishop, Chief Cancer Officer of NSW, in answer to question at Budget Estimates Hearing September 8 2006 http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au/cancer_inst/news/pdfs/NSWCancerServicesReviewADiscussionPaper.pdf

- Further reform of Isolated Patient Transfer Accommodation and Assistance Scheme to assist country patients who must travel for treatment.
- Attention to the special needs of children, adolescents, country people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young adults.
- Better access to prostheses for women who have had mastectomies and to treatment and lymphoedema garment fitting for those who need it.
- Adoption of the principles of cancer consumer participation wherever decisions affecting them are made.
- More palliative care services.
- Recognition of Charter of Cancer Consumer Values.

COSTING AND FUNDING

A total of \$60 million in additional funding will be provided for these initiatives.

	2007-08 \$Mil	2008/09 \$Mil	2009/10 \$Mil	2010/11 \$Mil	TOTAL \$M
Increased breast cancer screening	5	5	5	5	20
Increased Cancer Institute Budget	5	5	5	5	20
15 additional radiotherapy places	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	9.6
Reducing incidence and impact of smoking	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	10.4
TOTAL	15	15	15	15	60

This funding will be provided by cutting expenditure on identified waste and expenditure in the bureaucracy, including a recruitment freeze on Sydney bureaucrats and the rationalisation of the structure of the NSW government.