

OFFICIAL



MARK BUTLER MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE

BIGGEST INVESTMENT IN CANCER NURSES ON RECORD

The Albanese Government is making the biggest investment in cancer nurses on record.

For patients confronted with a cancer diagnosis, the healthcare system can be overwhelming – that’s why the Albanese Government is investing in more cancer nurses and additional care for patients throughout their journey.

The Government is committing \$166 million for a first of its kind Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program, bringing total investment from the 2023-24 Budget to support the implementation of the recently released landmark Australian Cancer Plan to \$735.7 million.

This investment will deliver improved cancer outcomes across Australia, from cancer prevention and early detection through to recovery, treatment, survivorship and end of life care.

This investment by the Albanese Government will have the potential to support the one million people in Australia today who are either currently living with, or have lived with cancer, and those who will be diagnosed in the future.

The Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program will improve equitable access to high quality, multidisciplinary and integrated cancer services for all people with cancer, irrespective of their type of cancer or where they live, through investment in:

- An additional \$74.5 million to support more equitable access to cancer nurses.
 - Building on their well-established model, the McGrath Foundation will recruit 100 new all cancer care nurses in health and hospital services across the country to support all people with cancer regardless of their tumour type. These nurses will be in addition to the existing 148 Commonwealth-funded melanoma, breast and lung cancer nurses who will work together to support all cancers by 2026-27, resulting in almost 250 Commonwealth funded all cancer care nurses by 2027, delivered through the McGrath Foundation.

- An additional \$21.2M (bringing the total funding to \$35.4M over four years to 2026-27) to continue support for existing prostate cancer nurses delivered by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.
- \$49.6 million for a new Cancer Navigation Service led by Cancer Council Australia, connecting people with cancer to information and support relevant to their needs.
- \$32.1 million for telehealth support services delivered by non-government cancer organisations, tailored to the unique needs of people with cancer.
- \$9.4 million to continue the Child and Youth Cancer Hub led by Canteen in collaboration with Camp Quality and Redkite. Funding of \$2.1 million will also support the continuation of vital counselling services provided via Canteen Connect. The Government is also investing \$16.5 million for a Cancer Patient Support Program to fund initiatives that will drive better outcomes for patients in priority populations and those with less common types of cancer.

These commitments are in addition to the \$48.2 million announced today to support implementation of the *National Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer in Australia*.

These investments build on the Government's other significant investments through the 2023-24 Budget to establish a National Lung Cancer Screening Program, support the Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisation sector to support cancer care needs of First Nations people on the ground, and ensure mainstream cancer care services are culturally safe and accessible to First Nations people.

These measures take the Commonwealth's investment in improving cancer outcomes to almost \$2.5b over the next four years, excluding the cost of Medicare services and pharmaceuticals.

Quotes attributable to Minister Butler:

“Cancer nurses are invaluable to patients who are confronting some of their toughest days.

“That’s why the Albanese Government is making the biggest investment in cancer nurses on record, backed by our landmark Australian Cancer Plan.

“More than 164,000 Australians are estimated to be diagnosed with cancer this year and our Government is ensuring they have the support in place to get through their diagnosis, no matter where they live or what their cancer type.

“The Albanese Government is investing in our trusted nursing workforce to provide more comprehensive care to people with cancer and help them navigate the health system.”

Quotes attributable to Glenn McGrath, Co-Founder & President:

“We are incredibly proud to be asked to support in the delivery of the Government’s Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation program.

“When we started the Foundation, we hoped we could make a positive difference to just one family. So, we are truly humbled by this announcement and what it means for Australian families going through cancer.

“My family understands firsthand the incredible difference this care makes, so knowing Australians will soon have access to this care no matter what type of cancer they have, just blows me away.”

Quotes attributable to Elisa Charles, 50 from Sydney’s Northern Beaches:

“Nothing prepares you for the reality of a breast cancer diagnosis. You must absorb a lot of information all at once and make potentially life-altering decisions very quickly.

“My McGrath Breast Care Nurse was a crucial part of my treatment. In addition to providing her knowledge and experience, she offered me emotional support. It’s important to have someone who is well-informed to talk to, especially in those moments when your thoughts go to a dark place.

“I have often wished that everyone diagnosed with cancer could access the same level of support.”

Quotes attributable to Kerry Patford, Chief Nurse, McGrath Foundation:

“Cancer nurses recognise that people don’t just need support with cancer treatment, but also for the way cancer impacts the rest of your life.

“We are incredibly proud of the impact our nurses have had over the past 18 years and look forward to working in partnership with the government to implement this once in a generation opportunity to create equity in cancer care.”