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Incoming Parliament must act, as new data reveals that nearly 1 in 2 Australians think the country is unprepared for a rise in cancer diagnoses

Young Australians particularly worried, with 80% of Australians aged 25-34 saying they are concerned by their cancer risk

Cancer Council Australia is calling for the newly elected Parliament to prioritise cancer control and care as new data reveals that nearly 1 in 2 (45%) Australians believe the country's health system is unprepared for what will be a significant rise in cancer cases over the coming years.

Data shows that Australians are significantly concerned about their cancer risk, with 7 in 10 (71%) surveyed saying they are worried about developing cancer in their lifetime. While cancer risk increases with age, the greatest fears are among younger generations: 8 in 10 Australians (80%) aged 25-34 and more than 7 in 10 Australians (79%) aged 35-49 are concerned about developing cancer in their future.

Cancer Council Australia's Director of Cancer Control Policy, Megan Varlow says Australians, particularly younger generations who are worried about cancer, are looking to governments to safeguard their health, and the newly elected Parliament can act on these community concerns today.

"Research shows that more than 4.56 million new cancer cases are projected to be diagnosed in Australia between 2020 and 2044, placing a significant burden on the health system. Whilst nearly half of Australians believe the system isn't prepared for this challenge, if we put the right policies in place today, we can significantly reduce its impact."

"We know that 42% of the total cancer burden is attributed to modifiable risk factors such as overweight and obesity, insufficient physical inactivity and UV exposure – all areas where prevention measures can make a significant difference."

The data also found that 4 in 10 (40%) Australians don't believe the Federal Government helps make it easier to live a healthy life in Australia.

Cancer Council is calling for the incoming Federal Government, supported by the new Parliament, to commit to four key priorities to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians.

- Tackle the rise of obesity to reduce the incidence of 13 types of cancer.
- Invest in skin cancer prevention campaigns towards a future free from skin cancer.
- Increase participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program to save more lives from bowel cancer.
- Provide equitable access to cancer care by reducing the financial burden of cancer through improved services and support.

Ms Varlow says, “Australians deserve to live healthy lives now and into the future. This means having easy access to healthy foods to feed their families. It means living in environments that promote physical activity, like being able to walk to the shops, school or the office. It means feeling confident in looking after their health by protecting their skin from the sun or by taking a cancer screening test.”

“While prevention is key to reducing cancer rates, we need to recognise that nearly 1 in 2 Australians will be affected by cancer in their lifetime. By doing this, we need to ensure those affected have support to feel financially informed and secure into their cancer diagnosis.”

“The 48th Parliament must put cancer control on the agenda to prevent future cancers and support those living with cancer today. This is an opportunity for an ambitious government to create a legacy that will help end cancer for good through its policies.”

-ENDS-

About the survey

This study was conducted by independent market research firm YouGov between 2nd and 9th April 2025. The survey was carried out online, and the sample comprised of 1596 Australian citizens aged 18 years and older. The data has been weighted and is representative of all Australian voters 18+ by age, gender, location, education, income and past Federal election vote.

Contact details

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About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

Find out more at cancer.org.au, or visit our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).