

Media release

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**Number of Australians living with or beyond cancer  
to surge 72% by 2040:  
1 in 18 Australians will have a personal history of cancer**

The number of Australians living with or beyond cancer is expected to increase by a staggering 72% in the next 22 years Cancer Council has revealed today, in a report released ahead of World Cancer Day (4 February).

The report shows that the increase in the number of Australians living with and surviving cancer will lead to almost 1.9 million Australians living with a personal history of cancer by 2040. That's an increase from 1 in 22 Australians today, to 1 in 18 in the next 22 years.

Experts say this rise in the number of Australians living with or beyond cancer can be attributed to the country's growing and ageing population, as well as increasing cancer survival rates thanks to better prevention, early detection and research.

Professor Sanchia Aranda, Cancer Council Australia CEO and President of the Union for International Cancer Control, said that while survival rates are improving, the figures highlight some unique challenges for cancer control, management and support services for the future.

"While the majority (64%) of the 1.9 million Australians who have been diagnosed with cancer by 2040 will have lived more than five years beyond diagnosis, a substantial proportion will have been recently diagnosed and will be undergoing treatment, and others may be living with advanced cancer. The data also highlight the fact that the poorest members of our community have lower survival rates, reinforcing the need to pay greater attention to cancer in harder to reach populations."

The research released today shows there will be more men (53%) living with or beyond cancer than women, and that more than half (58%) of people who have been diagnosed with cancer in 2040 will be aged 70 years or older.

Professor Aranda said that the new figures highlighted the increasing need for support services for people affected by cancer, particularly for older Australians.

"Looking ahead to a future when almost 2 million Australians will be living with or have survived cancer, Cancer Council will continue to work with the community to support our survivors. Many older cancer survivors will be living with the long-term effects of cancer and its treatment

alongside other chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease, that will together substantially impact the quality of their survival.”

Associate Professor Roger Milne, Head of Epidemiology at Cancer Council Victoria said that prostate, breast, bowel and melanoma were the common cancer types that would contribute the most to the increasing number of people who have a personal history of cancer.

“A priority for cancer control into the future is to address the stark inequity in outcomes by cancer type and between different demographic groups. Investment in prevention programs must remain a priority as 1 in 3 cancers are preventable and significant improvements in survival can be achieved by increasing participation in national screening programs, particularly bowel screening.”

Professor Aranda encouraged anyone needing support or information about cancer to call Cancer Council’s 13 11 20 Information and Support service.

“Whether it’s helping people today, or being there for those who need us tomorrow, we’re here for all Australians affected by cancer. From the moment you’re diagnosed, through your treatment and beyond, we are here. Every minute, every hour, every day.”

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### **About Cancer Council**

Cancer Council is Australia’s leading cancer charity working across every aspect of every cancer. Every day, we support families affected by cancer when they need it most, speak out on behalf of the community on cancer issues, empower people to reduce their cancer risk, and find new ways to better detect and treat cancer. With your help, we’re getting closer to a cancer-free future every day.