



MEDIA RELEASE



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Cancer Council and Clinical Oncological Society welcome \$137 million Coalition cancer plan

The Cancer Council Australia and the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia have welcomed the Coalition's pre-election commitments to establishing a national cancer agency and supporting a range of other measures to reduce the impact of cancer in Australia.

Cancer Council CEO Professor Alan Coates said the Coalition's *Strengthening cancer care* policy contained prevention, early detection and treatment measures consistent with priorities that The Cancer Council Australia recommended to all major political parties in the lead-up to the federal election.

"The commitment to screen every Australian aged over 55 for bowel cancer by 2008 could enormously reduce the impact of Australia's most common potentially fatal cancer," Professor Coates said.

"We are particularly pleased to see Indigenous Australians targeted in this initiative, with recognition of their overall poorer health outcomes factored into age-adjusted screening at 45 years."

Professor Coates also welcomed the commitments to strengthening the cancer workforce and improving the coordination of existing services.

"We have long advocated for improved cancer care in regional areas, where patients have markedly poorer access to treatment and support," he said. "The plan to mentor regional services and introduce more multidisciplinary care will be well received by people in need outside urban centres."

President of the Clinical Oncological Society (COSA) of Australia, Dr Stephen Ackland, said the commitment to a national cancer care agency had the potential to significantly enhance cancer treatment services through improved coordination on a national level.

"The funding for cancer clinical trials capacity building also demonstrates the Coalition's commitment to evidence-based medicine and has the potential to deliver enormous benefits, in terms of patient outcomes and cost savings," Dr Ackland said.

"We also welcome the \$10.5 million to fund 100 new radiation therapy undergraduate places in our universities, as well as the \$3 million towards specialist nurse training, both of which will help treatment services to keep pace with increased demand as our population ages."

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