



## MEDIA RELEASE

### New cancer initiative identifies common ‘pain points’ that impact patient outcomes

**8 August 2019:** A unique cancer collaboration has launched new research that puts the spotlight on potential waste and inefficiencies experienced by cancer patients regarding their diagnosis, treatment, psychological support and medical costs. International and local insights point to crucial opportunities to improve outcomes and experiences for Australians diagnosed with cancer.

The research was coordinated by the Australian chapter of the global initiative [All.Can](#), which has been operating locally since 2018. It represents the first opportunity to compare the lived experience of Australians with cancer to that of patients in ten other countries.<sup>1</sup>

All.Can is the first international, multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to tackling inefficiency in cancer care across 13 countries, with more due to join.

All.Can defines inefficiency in cancer care as anything that does not focus on what matters most to patients. All.Can Australia is focused on ensuring funding and resources are directed to solutions that support patient-centred care. The **international All.Can patient survey**<sup>1</sup> was used to understand key areas of inefficiency and potential opportunities for improving cancer care from the patient perspective.

There were 850 Australians affected by cancer who participated in the global survey, which revealed key insights about their experience with diagnosis, treatment, support and out-of-pocket costs (snapshot below).

- Delays in initial diagnosis and managing ongoing side effects were identified by Australians with cancer as the biggest causes of inefficiency.
- One in eight respondents (12%) whose cancer was detected outside of a screening programme waited over six months to be diagnosed.
- Half (50%) of the respondents reported not receiving enough support to deal with ongoing symptoms and side effects during and after treatment.
- 41% of the respondents reported not receiving enough understandable information about the signs and symptoms indicating that their cancer might be returning or getting worse.

A key similarity between each country participating in the survey revealed that patients identified ‘diagnosis’ as the area that caused the most inefficiency. Another common area was the need for psychological support. In Australia, 64% of respondents reported that they needed some sort of psychological support during or after their cancer care; however, 35% said it was not available. The majority of the 4,000 international survey respondents (69%) shared the same experience.<sup>1</sup>

The [All.Can Australia](#) Steering Committee – which consists of 15 representatives from cancer organisations, patient advocacy groups, biopharmaceutical industry, oncologists, nurses, pharmacists, hospitals, health economists, universities and health insurance – said the survey data also reveals important information about patient access to clinical trials. In Australia, 77% of respondents said they were not asked to be part of a clinical trial and 86% said they would have liked to have had this opportunity.



**Professor John Zalberg**, who is the **Co-Chair of the All.Can Australia Steering Committee and Head of the Cancer Research Program, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine School of Public Health at Monash University and a consultant medical oncologist at Alfred Health**, said this research puts the spotlight on key areas that impact the value patients get out of their care.

“The feedback we have received through this global survey highlights a need to look at ways to identify why people are experiencing delays during their ‘diagnosis’ phase. This was identified as a major inefficiency across all involved countries and can impact a patient’s understanding of their condition, treatment options and outcomes,” said Professor Zalberg.

“This data also provides us with an opportunity to explore ways we can improve how and when we provide information and support to patients during the various stages of their cancer care. A quarter of respondents (28%) said they were not provided with enough understandable information about their cancer care and treatment and 35% did not feel involved enough around decisions regarding their treatment. We also can’t ignore the gap in psychological support that is not only affecting Australians with cancer, but patients globally.”

**Richard Vines**, who is the **Chief Executive Officer of Rare Cancers Australia and Co-Chair of the All.Can Australia Steering Committee**, says insisting on improving patient outcomes and maximising the resources we commit to cancer care is crucial to driving better patient experiences in the longer term.

“Systemic wastage in cancer care is in no patient’s interest. This survey data helps us understand where the gaps are according to patients and health system stakeholders. We can use these findings to help identify efficient solutions which provide the most benefit to patients,” said Mr Vines.

“Our Steering Committee will be building future initiatives taking into consideration the key areas identified by this research. If we are able to connect with key players in our health system to address these common patient pain points, we may be able to drive greater efficiencies and better outcomes for patients.”

The All.Can Australia Steering Committee will continue to review future project opportunities that explore the key stages of the patient journey. The aim is to leverage the international and local research findings to undertake work that will address specific areas of inefficiency.

Those wishing to stay updated on All.Can news in Australia are encouraged to follow [@AllCanAustralia](https://twitter.com/AllCanAustralia) or the global [@AllCanGroup](https://twitter.com/AllCanGroup) on Twitter.

For more information about the All.Can initiative in Australia, visit [www.all-can.org/national-initiatives/australia/](http://www.all-can.org/national-initiatives/australia/)

**ENDS**

Issued by Palin Communications on behalf of the Australian All.Can Steering Committee. Palin Communications is the secretariat for the Australian All.Can initiative and provides administrative support to the Steering Committee.

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### **About All.Can**

*All.Can is an international, multi-stakeholder initiative involving patients, clinical, academic and industry experts, as well as policymakers. All.Can aims to help define better solutions for sustainable cancer care and improve patient outcomes in the future. All.Can is made possible with financial support from Bristol-Myers Squibb (main sponsor), Amgen, MSD and Johnson & Johnson (sponsors) and Varian (contributor), with additional non-financial (in kind) support from Intacare and Goings-On.*

*The All.Can Australia initiative is currently funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb Australia.*

*None of the content of All.Can discussions or activities is specific or biased to any specific treatment or therapy.*

### **References**

1. "Patient insights on cancer care: Opportunities for improving efficiency. Findings from the international All.Can patient survey". Commissioned by the All.Can initiative. Access via <https://www.all-can.org/>