



**CANCER**

**PRIORITY #1**

Cancer priorities for the  
2021 State election



**Cancer  
Council**  
WA

# Affecting one in every two Australians, cancer is our community's number one health priority.



This is why the next WA Government and its elected representatives need to continue working with Cancer Council WA to more effectively prevent and treat this disease, and compassionately support those whom it affects.

Only with the support of the next government can we make the huge inroads that are now within our reach, and improve the health outcomes for thousands upon thousands of West Australians.

The following issues have been identified as key areas of urgently needed support. **We urge you to take action and lend your voice to these priorities.**

## Give skin cancer the priority it deserves

Skin cancer is the 'forgotten cancer', yet it is Western Australia's most common type of cancer. For this reason, it must be a major focus for Cancer Council WA and the next WA Government.

We know over exposure to UV can damage our skin and cause skin cancers including deadly melanoma.

When it comes to UV, we also know that the more our children and young people are exposed, the more skin damage they accumulate, which directly increases their risk of skin cancer later in life.

This risk is entirely preventable.

For many children, families and communities, it's hard to be SunSmart when there are so few well-shaded facilities and public places, including schools.

That's why we need our government and elected representatives to lead the state with a comprehensive plan to prevent skin cancer. Specifically, we call for the following:

- Shade provision needs to be included in local and state planning regulations for all new public facilities (including schools), all redevelopments of infrastructure and parks.
- Schools (primary and high school) need to introduce minimum standards for SunSmart policies that ensure school uniforms include the requirement for a truly SunSmart hat, and no other.
- WA Government to invest \$2.2M per year to increase funding for SunSmart public education campaigns reminding our community of the serious health effects of UV exposure.
- WA Government to invest in research that helps us monitor the impact of policy on reducing exposure to UV radiation.





## Invest in cancer prevention

Cancer prevention saves lives and money. Cancer Council WA urges the WA Government to implement a comprehensive approach to preventing cancer among the WA community, including:

- Implementing the objectives and strategies of the WA Sustainable Health Review and State Cancer Plan 2020-2025.
- Protecting children from the marketing of unhealthy food and drink and alcohol products.
- Increasing access to smoke-free environments, including making prisons, and all outdoor eating areas of liquor licensed premises 100% smoke-free.
- Stopping the alcohol industry pushing cheap alcohol products on people who are vulnerable.
- Strengthening planning regulations to consider public health impacts and mitigate cancer risks within local communities.
- Continuing to deliver highly successful public education campaigns (that are the envy of other states/territories and countries) on tobacco, alcohol, healthy weight, and increasing participation in effective screening programs.
- Addressing inequality and disparity in cancer outcomes for people living in regional and remote WA through increased funding of the Find Cancer Early Program.
- Developing the skills and capacity of Aboriginal Health Professionals through the provision of accredited cancer education courses.
- Providing the necessary protections so that West Australians can go to work knowing that they aren't increasing their risk of cancer.

## Greater investment in clinical trials

Thanks to clinical trials, the most effective treatments are helping more people survive their cancer. Clinical trials are vital for translating the discoveries made in research laboratories in WA and around the world into new treatments for people with cancer. In many cases, participants are able to access tomorrow's best treatments today through taking part in clinical trials.

It's not okay that many cancer patients miss out on the chance to participate because of where they are being treated, or because of the small number of trials supported in WA.

The WA Government needs to increase investment in clinical trials to double the number of trials and double the number of participants.

This means:

- Increasing clinical trial workforce (including more data managers and trial nurses).
- Investing in clinical trial infrastructure (including biobanking and sample processing).
- Ensuring more clinicians have time to conduct clinical trials research.
- Creating a targeted communication campaign so more West Australians know to ask about their eligibility for a cancer clinical trial.

## Reduce financial burden for cancer patients and carers

Prioritise reducing the financial burden for cancer patients and their carers during an already difficult time by:

- Capping parking fees at cancer treatment centres and hospitals to \$5 per day for both patients and carers. Parking is a big issue for all cancer patients and their carers/families. Many people expect some out of pocket expenses for investigations and treatments but certainly should not have the large financial burden of parking fees over a sustained period of time whilst undergoing treatment or hospitalisation.
- Addressing the lack of transparency with fees and charges that lead to significant out of pocket expenses. All doctors/specialists, health care providers and treatment centres to provide full and transparent details of the cost of the person's cancer treatment. The Standard for Informed Financial Consent (Cancer Council Australia, 2019) that is currently voluntary should become a compulsory adjunct to best practice in patient care and information.
- Increasing the accommodation subsidy from the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme to be more in line with commercial rates. Current subsidy rates are \$60 per night for eligible applicants and \$75 per night for an eligible applicant travelling with an approved carer. This rate has not increased for 12 years and is inadequate for country patients travelling to Perth for treatment, resulting in significant out of pocket expenses.

## Enhance cancer care navigation

Cancer Council WA urges the WA Government to provide funding to establish Cancer Care Navigators to assist and support patients across the varied service providers - public, private, rural and metropolitan providers. Nobody should have to journey through the experience of cancer without full support, guidance and professional advice at every step.

## Support the mental health and wellbeing of people living with cancer

Baseline mental health is trending ever down, particularly in recent times, so imagine the added trauma of a cancer diagnosis. Cancer Council WA is asking the WA Government to commit to an increased staffing allocation for the WA Psycho-Oncology service.

Further, in line with the WA Sustainable Health Review and State Cancer Plan 2020-2025 objectives and strategies, inequities in care and outcomes for country people need to be reduced. An investment of \$1.3M over four years to Cancer Council WA will provide Cancer Support Coordinators in the Goldfields, Kimberley and Pilbara and associated psychosocial services - counselling, peer support and mind and body programs.



Sign the petition at  
[cancerpriority1.com.au](https://cancerpriority1.com.au)