

Anti-Cancer Council

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CALL FOR CANCER DRUGS INEQUITY TO END

The Victorian Cooperative Oncology Group (VCOG) of the Anti-Cancer Council is calling on Governments to end the inequity of access to anti-cancer drugs which is currently forcing some cancer patients to pay high costs for treatment and forcing some cancer treatment centres to ration drugs.

VCOG has been concerned for a number of years about the inequity and disadvantages caused by the high cost of anti-cancer drugs. This situation is most difficult in regard to drugs that are available in the community through the federally-funded pharmaceutical benefits system but which may be rationed or unavailable for public patients in state-funded public hospitals. Public hospitals have to bear the full costs of the drugs themselves.

The artificial boundary between the two funding systems has led to elaborate cost-shifting strategies within public hospitals to give patients access to the drugs.

Until now there has been a lack of objective information about the various policies and practices that exist in hospitals in Victoria. VCOG's

report describes the situation.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Australia and receives only 6 per cent of direct health system costs. Only \$53m per annum is spent on anti-cancer pharmaceuticals which contrasts with \$715m spent on circulatory diseases (for example, heart disease), \$275m spent on digestive diseases, \$784m spent on respiratory diseases and \$248m spent on nervous system diseases.

Chairman of VCOG, Professor Richard Bell, said it was inappropriate that anti-cancer drugs should be rationed on the basis of cost.

"Drugs for cancer are under-resourced and this forces the two funding systems to clash", Professor

Bell said.

"Good people are trying to do their jobs and treat cancer patients but are forced to circumnavigate a ridiculous set of regulations. It is not fair on the patients or the doctors treating them."

"The situation has existed for a number of years and due to a lack of progress in resolving these problems, the Group has been forced to document it."

"...it was inappropriate that anti-cancer drugs should be rationed on the basis of cost."

MEDICAL PIONEER PAVES THE WAY



Photo courtesy of Monash Medical Centre

Dame Ella MacKnight (1904-97)

Dame Ella MacKnight, renowned obstetrician and gynaecologist, a member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Cancer Council for four years, passed away in May last year. However her memory lives on in a gift of \$50,000 to the Anti-Cancer Council.

Dame Ella paved the way for women entering medicine in the field of gynaecology and 70 years ago was one of very few women to be accepted into the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Melbourne. For many years she worked as a Consultant to the Queen Victoria Hospital and was directly responsible for the formation of the Oncology Department there. As well as holding many honorary positions Dame Ella also served as the Clinical Dean of the Monash Medical School and was a member of the Board of the Victorian Cytology (Gynaecological) Service

It was in recognition of Dame Ella's contribution to the Anti-Cancer Council as well as her tireless devotion to her patients and to all aspects of women's health that this generous donation has been given.

Thanks to the generosity of a family member, Dame Ella will now be remembered annually by the Dame Ella MacKnight Memorial Lecture, the inaugural occasion being held in conjunction with Australia's

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

PROFESSOR ROBERT BURTON



January 1998

Welcome and Happy New Year! 1997 was a year of expansion of the Anti-Cancer Council's activities. To name just three large projects:

- The siting of the new National Cancer Control Initiative (NCCI) in Victoria at the Council under the Director, Professor Rob Sanson-Fisher, and my appointment as Chair of its Management Committee.
- Dr David Hill's appointment as Chair of the Federal Health Ministerial Tobacco Advisory Group (MTAG).
- The launch of the Victorian Cancer Control Research Institute (VCCRI).

1998 should be a year of consolidation.

Our current premises at 1 Rathdowne Street are full, and new staff are expected in 1998. QUIT's activities are increasing as are the programs in the cancer information and support service, behavioural science, epidemiology, and cancer education. These last three are the core of the VCCRI, for which we launched a 'one-off' building appeal at our ball in April 1997. To date we have corporate and trust donations exceeding \$1 million, and we expect to raise all the money needed for the Institute in this way. This is so we can continue to use our regular donors' funds for our essential day to day cancer control work in Victoria.

For the VCCRI, we are exploring either buying an existing building within 5 minutes' walk of the Council, or building on our warehouse site at 23 Rathdowne Street. The VCCRI would be the world's first integrated cancer research institute devoted to the epidemiology and behavioural science of cancer control.

We will be very active on television in 1998. Many of you will have seen the anti-smoking ads produced by MTAG in 1997. Well, they are back on the air, and there is a new one to come. SunSmart is also back on TV with its skin cancer removal ad. All these ads are 'shock' ads targeting young adults, and telling them the truth just as they asked us to. In contrast to these cancer control ads, we hope to see ads for the Anti-Cancer Council which are entertaining, upbeat and 'feel good' go to air early in 1998. They have been made for us by the Frontline team as a gift to the Anti-Cancer Council. We are a very hard working charity with a modest core staff and thousands of volunteers, and these ads show this very well.

Robert Burton
Director

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Breast Cancer Day in October 1998. A speaker of international standing has yet to be confirmed and the lecture will be open to the public.

The relative who established the Fund and who wishes to remain anonymous, hopes that anyone who knew and admired Dame Ella will also contribute. Further contributions will enable us to offer annual studentships to cancer research graduates in Dame Ella's memory.

Donations, which are tax deductible, can be sent to the Dame Ella MacKnight Fund at the Anti-Cancer Council. Any queries should be directed to Joan Hoskins, Community Relations Manager on (03) 9279-1242.

PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE OF EARLY CLINICAL TRIALS

Recent interviews with 21 patients with advanced cancer who consented to take part in very early clinical trials of new cancer drugs revealed that most were glad they had participated. Even those who experienced unpleasant and sometimes unexpected side effects with no improvements in their condition still felt it had been worthwhile.

The study was conducted by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer at the Anti-Cancer Council in conjunction with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute.

The study's main researcher, Anne Gibbs, said that one of the most interesting findings was that patients overwhelmingly participated for hope of benefit, even though they had been told that there was only a very small chance that these early clinical trials would help them. They were prepared to endure severe side effects for even a very slim hope of improvement.

"The opportunity to take part in the trial provided hope, support and a sense of taking control," she said.

CHANGING A GREAT AUSSIE ICON

The Anti-Cancer Council's SunSmart program celebrates a ten year association with the Surf Life Saving Association and the Royal Life Saving Society through the VicHealth-funded Sports and Arts Sponsorship Program this summer.

This sponsorship has seen the image of the traditional bronzed Aussie lifesaver wearing next to nothing, change to one with a compulsory hat, long sleeve shirt, sunglasses and sunscreen.

The long term aim of the sponsorship has been to turn around the "Bronzed Aussie" culture and to present lifesavers as a model of how Australians can enjoy a great outdoor lifestyle while still protecting their skin.

With the ten year mark looming, we evaluated the effectiveness of the sponsorship in changing the organisational culture of the lifesaving movement and the impact of using lifesavers as sun protective role models on Victorian beaches.

Through the requirements of the sponsorship contract, lifesavers are required to



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wear broad-brimmed hats and long sleeved t-shirts while on patrol.

Shade structures are also provided for lifesavers on each patrolled beach as part of the sponsorship agreement.

SunSmart signage is displayed on lifesaver's uniforms and patrol shade shelters to raise awareness of the message and to prompt beach users to adopt sun protective behaviour.

Draft study results indicate that Victorian lifesavers have significantly better sun protection behaviours than their NSW counterparts. Victorian lifesavers were more likely to wear broad brimmed hats, long sleeved t-shirts, sunscreen and use shade shelters on both sunny and cloudy days than NSW lifesavers.

It is encouraging that the SunSmart sponsorship has succeeded in changing the culture of an organisation and behaviours of its members to present a more sun protective role model to the Victorian beach-going public.

COMMUNITY DIRECTORY LAUNCHED BY MINISTER

After months of planning and thanks to generous community support, the first **Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Community Directory** was launched by the honourable Rob Knowles, Minister for Health, at the Anti-Cancer Council in December.

The first edition will be distributed free of charge to all households in Melbourne's western suburbs and with community support, more editions are planned for the entire state.

The directory contains easy-to-read tips on how to reduce the risk of cancer and how to detect cancer.

INFORMATION AWARD

The Cancer Information and Support Service at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria was chosen as one of three finalists in the Victorian Public Health Awards for Excellence in the category of Public Health Infrastructure: Including Policy and Program Development.

Getting to the finals was in recognition of development of the model that includes a database used in the Service. The database, called ACCCIS (A Computerised Consultation and Counselling Information System) provides staff with instant access to information about cancer, current literature and enables links to community resources as they speak with people who contact the service.

The model has been sold to other agencies nationally and internationally.



Suzi Grogan and Robyn Metcalfe of the Cancer Information and Support Service accept the award

FUNDRAISING NEWS

WIN A MARVELLOUS Mazda 626



HELP US TO LEAD THE FIGHT –
SUPPORT OUR RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND
PATIENT WELFARE PROGRAMS

The Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria 1998 Statewide Raffle is now on and there are some fantastic prizes on offer this year. Heading the prize list is the latest Mazda 626 provided through the generous assistance of Mazda (Vic).

1st Prize: **Mazda 626 Luxury Hatchback** 2 litre 4 cylinder automatic, valued at \$39,450 including on-road costs. Sponsored by Victoria MAZDA Dealers.

2nd Prize: **Shopping spree from David Jones Melbourne**, valued at \$5,000.

3rd Prize: **7 nights holiday for two to Cairns**, including airport transfers and accommodation in a one bedroom unit at Novotel Palm Cove Resort. Also includes a Quicksilver outer Barrier Reef trip for two with pick-up and return to Hotel, cruise to Reef Pontoon, snorkelling equipment and buffet lunch plus a Skyrail Kuranda experience tour for two including pick up and return to Hotel, one way trip to Kuranda by Skyrail and one way by scenic train. Valued at \$3,204. Sponsored by Ansett Australia.

4th Prize: **Gift Voucher from Sportsmart** Valued at \$1,000. Sponsored by



Plus 20 consolation prizes of Anti-Cancer Council sunglasses. Valued at \$30 each.

Last year our Statewide Raffle raised \$189,000 which is a record since this event began six years ago. This could not have been achieved without the tremendous support of our loyal volunteers and donors. Tickets are now on sale at \$2 each or a book of tickets for \$20. You could also give a book of tickets to your family or friends to sell.

Every ticket offers the chance to win one of the fantastic prizes and also help support cancer research.

The Raffle will be drawn at the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria on Friday, 3 July 1998 at 12 noon.

\$2 per ticket. Each book contains 10 tickets to sell.

Yes I'd like to help sell tickets for the Anti-Cancer Council

Please send me Raffle Books of 10 tickets to sell to my family and friends.

OR I would like to purchase tickets in my name.

(please state if you wish the tickets registered in another name)

Name

Address

.....Postcode.....

Phone Amount \$.....

My cheque/money order payable to Anti-Cancer Council is enclosed for \$.....

Please debit my: Bankcard Mastercard Visa

American Express Diners

Credit Card No. | | | Expiry Date/.....

Signature.....

Please return your coupon with your money to Community Fundraising, Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, 1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton Vic 3053.

1997 CUP DAY SUCCESS

We raised \$160,000 in a very successful Cup Day appeal this year. Special thanks to our volunteer collectors and TAB patrons and to our sponsors TABCORP, Polaroid and SKY Channel.

REGIONAL TOUR OF CANCER: THE JOURNEY

The 1997 Literary and Art Exhibition "Cancer: The Journey" will be toured to Regional Victoria starting in Mornington Peninsula Gallery from 1 February to 15 March.

STAMP OF APPROVAL

Donors to the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria who do not have a cheque account or credit card, have become concerned about paying \$5 for a bank cheque under changes to the banking system. We are happy to accept books of new stamps in lieu. The stamps are used in our important mass mailouts.

OP SHOP SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The Anti-Cancer Council Op Shop in Bridge Road Richmond is seeking volunteers. Opening hours are from 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9.30am to 12 noon on Saturday. If you can spare a few hours and like other people's bric a brac, call the shop manager, Judy on (03) 9429 3616.

EXTRA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you would prefer to work in Carlton at the Anti-Cancer Council, more volunteers are needed to help with fundraising events, clerical work and our merchandise program.

Contact Joanne or Judy on (03) 9279 1234.

UP TO 50% OFF:

SHOP SALE starts 16 February. Bargains until 31 March.

GOLF UPDATE

Over \$30,000 was raised at the Orix Australia Annual Charity Golf Day held in October at Huntingdale.

The Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria was the recipient charity for the second year in a row and is the largest corporate golf fundraiser on our calendar.

The annual Nigel Gray golf trophy was also held at Huntingdale in November. The team from radio 3AW won this year's cup from a field of 84 participants. Special thanks to De Bortoli Wines, Hotel Sofitel and Brosnan Golf for the auction prizes.

DAFFODIL DAY BULB OFFER

The Anti-Cancer Council is offering bulbs to grow in time for Daffodil Day. Bulb prices range from \$8.98 to \$25.00 per packet. To order bulbs please look for the enclosed brochure or call Dyson's Bulbs on 1800 677 437.

FOR BETTER OR WORSE

A new play by Australian actor, Alan Hopgood, who is a prostate cancer survivor, will be touring suburban and regional Victorian centres this year. Sponsored by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, "For Better, For Worse" is a comedy about cancer with an aim of demystifying the disease. Keep an eye on your local paper for details about when it will visit your neighbourhood.

VOLUNTEERS' CHRISTMAS LUNCH THANKYOUS

Special thanks to these companies who donated goodies for the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria volunteer Christmas lunches: Bakers Delight, Ballantyne's Chocolates, Ferguson Plarre, Glenroy Bakery, Pink Lady Chocolates, Schweppes Cottees, S Smith & Son and Berrivale Orchards.

CYCLE AGAINST CANCER

Richard Allen and his "Cycle Against Cancer" team completed a 16,000 kilometre pilgrimage around Australia just before Christmas and raised a massive \$250,000 for state cancer organisations. Richard, a 35 year old journalist from Melbourne, lost his mother to cancer and decided to take a year off to raise money for the cause and spread the cancer prevention message to school-children. He was joined by a team of dedicated people whose individual efforts often equalled Richard's own.

Sponsors such as Coles Supermarkets, Best Western Hotels, Jayco, Custom Fleet, Avanti Bikes and Macquarie Bank donated cash and in-kind support and the rest of the costs came out of the team's own pockets. Richard and crew, thanks to you all.

As a result of this outstanding effort, a program for schools will be introduced by the Anti-Cancer Council in 1998. The "Cycle Against Cancer" Bikeathon will be run in participating schools in April. For more information, contact Community Fundraising.

DAFFODIL DAY LITERARY & ART AWARDS CALLING FOR 1998 ENTRIES

Anyone who has been affected by cancer directly or indirectly is invited to explore and share their experiences through literary and artistic expression. Selected works will be exhibited during the Daffodil Day celebrations and a book of poetry and prose entries will be published and launched for Daffodil Day 1998.

For entry details call Community Fundraising on 1300 65 65 85.

GENEROUS DONATION FROM ENOSY

On 15 October, 1997, members of the Greek organisation, ENOSY, attended the Anti-Cancer Council to formally present a cheque for \$10,500, being proceeds raised from their third annual Charity Ball. ENOSY Ltd was formed in 1992 and is an association of Greek business people involved in all aspects of the automotive industry. To date ENOSY has donated around \$23,000 and, in addition, sponsored two young doctors from Greece to the 1996 World Cancer Conference.

HAVE A CUPPA FOR AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA!

On Thursday, 28 May it will be time to once again raise your cups for cancer research as part of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. We hope that you will take part in this fun, social event. Help us to raise funds on the day by holding a morning tea, and asking your guests to make a donation for their favourite cuppa.

It's so easy, which is why this event is one of our most popular ways for people to support the cause. Hold a gathering at home, work, your local community centre, at a cafe — invite your friends, family, neighbours or

colleagues along and have fun!

Our generous sponsor Lipton Tea will again be covering our costs and giving samples of tea, so the funds you raise will go where you want them to — towards fighting cancer.

Last year we raised over \$203,000 from gatherings across Victoria, and the 1998 target is \$300,000. But we can't do it without your help! To register for a host kit or to find out more just call the Community Fundraising Team on 1300 65 65 85, fax us a note of your details on (03) 9279 1240 or email us on morningtea@accv.org.au.

Dear Doreen



Doreen Akkerman, Director, Cancer Information and Support Service, answers your questions.

I've heard people talking about 'cancer families'. I've always thought there is a lot of cancer in my family. Does this mean it is a cancer family?

Cancer is very common and one out of three Australians are affected by it. In fact, it is a rare family which has no experience of cancer. As we grow older our risk increases and cancer is the second most common cause of death. Most people who develop cancer do so because of damage to their genes in their own lifetime, not because of what they inherited from their family.

What exactly is a cancer family then?

About one per cent of the population belongs to families in which faulty genes which cause cancer are inherited. They often have several generations of relatives affected by the same type of cancer or cancer is diagnosed at a very early age. We are still at the beginning of knowledge about inherited faulty genes in the development of cancer. The cancers which are presently known to have inherited faulty genes include colorectal cancer, breast cancer and melanoma.

How can I find out whether mine is a cancer family? Is there any way I can be tested?

Familial cancer clinics have been established at several major hospitals. These clinics have multi-disciplinary teams which include a geneticist, a genetic counsellor, surgeon etc. This is because genetic testing is a long, involved process and no matter what the outcome for the individual, familial cancer has a major effect on people's lives.

If you are concerned about whether you

may belong to such a family, collect all the information you can from the family. When was your relative diagnosed? What type of cancer did they have? Which hospital were they treated at? Consult your GP. The Anti-Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20 can also provide you with information.

VICTORIAN CANCER CALL IN FOR BREAST, PROSTATE AND COLON CANCER

As a service for Victorians, the Anti-Cancer Council is coordinating a Victorian Cancer Call In on Monday, 23 March. The call in service is a local call, people can contact it with a clinician on hand to discuss any concerns regarding breast, prostate and colon cancer.

We invite anyone with questions regarding any of these cancers to telephone and discuss them with an expert.

Doreen Akkerman is the Helen M Schutt Trust Fellow.

HELP US MEET OUR FUTURE TARGETS - introduce a friend.

As a valued supporter, you are already more than aware of the importance and magnitude of our task to minimise the human cost of cancer for all Victorians. Our past achievements have only been possible due to the generosity of our supporters and there is a simple way you could help us further — **introduce a friend to the Anti-Cancer Council by giving them this newsletter and donation coupon.**

Passing on your copy of *Anti-Cancer Council News* is an easy way to make others aware of our vital work and to encourage them to join us in the fight against cancer.

If you introduce a new donor to the Anti-Cancer Council they, like all our donors, will receive this newsletter four times a year but only one donation request. We believe multiple requests are both an imposition and a waste of money.

I would like to become a registered donor in the fight against cancer

Please find enclosed my donation of \$ *
to help the Anti-Cancer Council continue its vital work.

Name:

Address:

P'Code:

Please send me more information on how to include the Anti-Cancer Council in my Will.

My cheque made payable to the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria is enclosed or

please debit my credit card for \$

Card type:

Bankcard Mastercard VISA Amex Diners

Credit Card No: _ _ _ _ | _ _ _ _ | _ _ _ _ | _ _ _ _

Signature: Exp Date: _ _ / _ _

Post this coupon with your donation to:

Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, 1 Rathdowne Street, Carlton Vic 3053

* Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible