

Cancer Voices Australia NEWS UPDATE

May 2013

The priority issues for CVA focus over the last two months have been:

- **Say No to Gene Patents Campaign**
- **Call for a Review of Chemotherapy Funding**

Say No to Gene Patents Campaign

CVA's campaign is for an Amendment to the Patents Act 1990 to clearly exclude the ability to grant patents over any naturally occurring human genetic material has gathered momentum.

Following our decision to concentrate efforts on legislative change, we have found much public and political support. CVA visits to Canberra (20 March) and subsequent meetings and teleconferences with opinion leaders in the major political parties have indicated strong bipartisan interest and concern. The basic concept is well accepted, and commercial interests' opposing position mainly understood. CVA will:

- continue to circulate CVA's Petition and collect signatures for later tabling in the House of Reps.
- continue to take advantage of media interest and keep the issue in the public mind
- keep tabs on progress by the US Supreme Court decision due in August. Hearings to date show support for eliminating patents on human genetic material; a positive decision would have huge world impact.
- seek to encourage a group of prominent Australian researchers who are willing to counter expected (and unfounded) threats that without patents, research in our country will cease.

Call for a review of Chemotherapy Funding

Minister's announcement of Review

CVA welcomed Mister Plibersek's 4 May announcement, to which we were invited, that there will be a review of how chemo is funded in Australia. This reflects CVA's call to end the messy and opaque processes in place, as evidenced during the Senate Inquiry. CVA has called for consumer participation in this Review.

Senate Inquiry re supply of chemotherapy drugs such as Docetaxel

CVA participated in the Inquiry via two submissions, gave evidence at the 28 March Hearing and responded to debate. The Senate Committee Report (10 May) recommended the Minister's Review include examination of Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (5PCA) with the Pharmacy Guild, as it relates to chemo drugs pricing. CVA supports the report's further recommendation that the 5PCA, supported by \$15.6b public money, is referred to the Australian National Audit Office. CVA regrets the Guild CEO's attack on our peak body, the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia.

Briefing stakeholders

CVA has widened its reach by inviting stakeholders to keep in touch and discuss consumer issues with us. This is possible due to assistance with a growing database, and by interest from cancer organisations.

Communications: Both Facebook and Twitter accounts are closely monitored and regularly updated. Invitations to speak are coming in; from conferences, research groups and cancer organisations. CVA Spokespersons have featured in print, radio and TV coverage, and media releases are distributed about national issues relating to people affected by cancer. CVA website's capacity is being increased.

Matching program for consumer representatives

To lodge a request for a consumer nominee, go to http://cancervoicesaustralia.org/consumer_reps_3.html

POST SCRIPT: Cancer Voices welcomes the Budget addition of \$226m to a range of cancer projects & services
Cancer Voices is the independent, volunteer voice of Australians affected by cancer since 2000

