

Cancer Voices Australia

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cancer voices **australia**

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Attn. Admin. of the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grant Scheme

To whom it may concern:

**ANAO Review of the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants (ROHPGs):
Cancer Voices Consumer Comment**

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the ANAO Review of the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants (ROHPGs) which provides capital funding for radiation oncology services outside Medicare funding.

Cancer Voices Australia wishes to express its support, in the best interests of Australians affected by cancer, for the continued maintenance of the ROHPG Programs.

We believe it's essential that investment in infrastructure for cancer treatment by more effective and efficient machines as well as newer technologies that are associated with them, is continued.

We are aware of the large cost of new equipment to provide sound radiation oncology, as well as the need to ensure machine reliability and replacement as machines age.

As we know, cancer incidence is increasing and more Australians die of cancer than of any other cause – having just “pipped” heart diseases. We also know that access to radiation oncology, despite recent investment, is still well below the optimal level of 52% of cancer cases. Cancer Voices sees support via ROHPGs as being essential to not only maintain best practice levels and outcomes, but also to meet the expected increase in demand. We note this demand will be both from growth in population and its aging, and also due to this effective and efficient mode of cancer treatment being more frequently prescribed.

Regarding “*patient access to service and affordability*”: more and better equipment will ensure that good radiation oncology services are available to all cancer patients. We are aware of some of the larger gap payments which occur in the private sector, and have been engaged in advocating that all patients are made aware of those gaps up-front, and that they can be treated in the public system at no cost with equal outcomes. The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Radiology has agreed to include in its recently updated Code of Ethics. We see this is another compelling reason for the ROHPG Scheme to continue.

Cancer Voices has been advised that the ROHPGs operate to minimise any differences between public and private services, which is obviously important to cancer patients, and of course to their outcomes. We also support the separation from the MBS funding mechanism, which allows for greater flexibility and responsiveness to changes in technology and demand.

We trust that the Review will take into account our considered support for the ROHPG Scheme.

Yours sincerely



Sally Crossing AM
Convenor

21 October 2015

Cancer Voices Australia is the independent, 100% volunteer voice of people affected by cancer, working to improve the cancer experience for Australians, their families and friends. We are active in the areas around diagnosis, information, treatment, research, support, care, survivorship and policy. To achieve this we work with decision-makers, ensuring the patient perspective is heard.

Cancer Voices facilitates the Australian Cancer Consumer Network of 30 consumer related groups, and has led the cancer consumer movement in Australia since 2000.

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