World Cancer Day 2018: We can. I can.

World Cancer Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and consider what actions we can all take to tackle this disease.

Australia has very good cancer survival rates but of course we can and must do better – and we’re continuing to strive to do this.

And while medical research, better screening, diagnosis and treatment are vital in the fight against cancer, it’s important to remember that we as individuals can help ourselves to prevent this disease.

That’s why the theme for World Cancer Day this year is “We can. I can.”

We can make lifestyle changes by not smoking, maintaining a healthy bodyweight, eating a balanced diet, cutting back on alcohol, enjoying the sun safely and keeping active.

Cancer Council Australia tells us that at least one in three cancer cases are preventable and the number of cancer deaths could be reduced significantly by improving our lifestyle.

About 16,700 cancer deaths and over 41,000 cancer cases each year are due to smoking, sun exposure, poor diet, alcohol, inadequate exercise or being overweight.

Cancer is the leading cause of disease burden in Australia. It has a devastating social impact on individuals, their families, friends, colleagues and classmates.

The Turnbull Government will continue to help Australia’s best and brightest medical researchers in their fight against cancer with substantial and ongoing funding.

We are proud of our record levels of investment in preventing and finding cures for all cancers.

The mid-year budget update confirmed over half a billion dollars extra for the fight against cancer with additional funding for new medicines, screening and testing.
Just last week, investment in the prevention and treatment of rare cancers and rare diseases received a $69 million boost.

This funding includes more than $26 million for 19 research projects as part of the landmark Medical Research Future Fund’s Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Needs Clinical Trials Program.

This is a significant boost on the $13 million that was originally flagged when we called for applications and reflects the high calibre of medical research that is happening in Australia.

We’ve also established a $100 million fund for an Australian Brain Cancer Mission which aims to double survival rates of people living with brain cancer and improve the quality of life for patients over the next 10 years.

This builds on a commitment of almost $90 million to establish the southern hemisphere’s first proton beam therapy facility in South Australia, the Zero Childhood Cancer initiative and the brain cancer clinical trial AIM BRAIN.

We are also ensuring that medications are within reach of patients when they need them.

Since coming into Government, we have added around $4.8 billion worth of medicines to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for cancer treatment.

The Turnbull Government will continue to play its role with unprecedented investment in health and medical research as one of the four pillars of our Long Term National Health Plan.

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