



**PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP**

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE
THE HON. SUSSAN LEY**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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\$20.5 million to continue funding for McGrath Breast Care Nurses

The Turnbull Government today announced \$20.5 million in new funding for McGrath Breast Care Nurses to ensure ongoing support for people being treated for breast cancer.

Breast cancer is estimated to be the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the most common cancer for Australian women.

It currently affects one in eight Australian women before the age of 85.

This year, it is estimated that more than 16,000 people will be diagnosed - over 15,900 women and 150 men.

The Government's commitment of \$20.5 million over four years from 2017-18 will fund up to 57 of the McGrath Foundation's nurse positions in approximately 55 locations across the country, with most of these working in regional and rural communities.

The McGrath Breast Care Nurses provide physical, psychological and emotional support to people diagnosed with breast cancer, their families and carers – starting from diagnosis and continuing throughout their treatment.

Breast Care Nurses work in a multidisciplinary setting and act as the main liaison between the patient and the specialists who coordinate their treatment.

Since 2013, Commonwealth-funded McGrath Breast Care Nurses have supported around 15,000 Australians and their families.

This new four-year extension to the Government's previous funding agreement with the McGrath Foundation of \$18.5 million will ensure this valuable support and coordination of care continues for patients with breast cancer.

Today's announcement is in addition to the Turnbull Government's 2015 listing of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medications for secondary breast cancer: pertuzumab (Perjeta®), trastuzumab (Herceptin®) and trastuzumab emtansine (Kadcyla®) for HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. Without Government subsidy these medicines would cost consumers more than \$82,700 per person each year to access.

Last month the Government also listed Tamoxifen (Nolvadex-D) on the PBS as a treatment to reduce the risk of breast cancer in women identified with a moderate to high lifetime risk of developing breast cancer.

Further background:

Breast cancer statistics

- In 2012 breast cancer was the most common form of cancer in females (27.3 per cent of female cancer cases) and the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia.
- In 2013, it was the fourth most common cancer causing death (2,892). It is estimated that it will remain the fourth most common cause of death from cancer in 2016.
- Breast cancer affects one in eight Australian women before the age of 85. Of the 122,093 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Australia in 2012, approximately 15,050 were for breast cancer in women.
- With increased five-year relative survival rates in Australia for breast cancer currently at 90 per cent, there is an increasing number of women each year who are diagnosed and treated for breast cancer who are then faced with the consequences of either managing a terminal illness or of surviving the treatment and its side effects.
- It is estimated the incidence of breast cancer will increase over the next four years to over 17,000 Australians in 2020.

McGrath Foundation

- Jane and Glenn McGrath's much-publicised experience with breast cancer led to the formation of the McGrath Foundation.
- The McGrath Foundation also fund, train and place breast care nurses independent of Commonwealth funding.

What Breast care nurses do

- McGrath Breast Care Nurses provide physical, psychological and emotional support to women diagnosed with breast cancer, their families and carers. The support is provided from diagnosis and throughout treatment within a multidisciplinary setting and is based on an evidence-based model of care.
- McGrath Breast Care nurses are specially trained to care for and support patients with breast cancer.

Commonwealth funding

- Through the 2013-14 Budget measure, \$18.5 million was provided to the McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse initiative.
- The Australian Government will continue its support for 57 McGrath breast care nurses across the country
- Over 80 per cent of the Commonwealth funded McGrath nurses are employed in rural and regional Australia.

- The breast care nurses are employed through state and territory health services which provides for clinical supervision of nurses and good access for patients following diagnosis and treatment.
- It is estimated that up to 15,000 people and their families will receive support from a Commonwealth –funded BCN in the current funding period (2013-14 to 2016-17).

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