



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

The Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
Minister for Revenue and Financial Services
Minister for Women
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service

MEDIA RELEASE

6 February 2018

Ground-breaking ovarian cancer project to save lives

The Turnbull Government will provide almost \$3 million to support a new ground-breaking project that helps women identify whether they are at risk of developing ovarian cancer.

We are committed to tackling ovarian cancer and this funding builds on the \$33 million we have already provided for dedicated research related to ovarian cancer since 2013.

The TRACEBACK project will run for four years and identify and then offer testing to women at risk of having the *BRCA* 1 and 2 genes.

Its focus will be on women who have not previously been identified as at risk, in an effort to reduce the incidence of ovarian and breast cancers caused by gene mutations.

We are delighted to be able to announce this new project today at Ovarian Cancer Australia's Teal Ribbon Breakfast — an event aimed at increasing awareness of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian Cancer Australia and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre will partner on the project which will proactively search for and identify women with the *BRCA* 1 and 2 genes mutation, with the hope that cancers caused by these genetic variants can be reduced.

TRACEBACK will involve genetic testing of around 1,500 tissue specimens collected from Australian women diagnosed with ovarian cancer over the past 15 years.

The results will help women understand their risk of developing ovarian and/or breast cancer and allow them to consider taking preventative action.

It is estimated that genetics and family history are responsible for at least 15 per cent of ovarian cancers.

Ovarian Cancer Australia expects to identify nearly 400 *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutation carriers, and estimates that this could prevent more than 2,000 incidences of breast and 800 ovarian cancers.

Approximately 1,500 Australian women were diagnosed with ovarian cancer last year, and it's estimated that more than 1,000 women died.

And from 2009 to 2013 ovarian cancer had the lowest five-year relative survival rate — just over 44 per cent of all the gynaecological cancers in Australia.

However, these statistics do not reveal the real impact of ovarian cancer on those who suffer from it and their loved ones.

The Turnbull Government is committed to tackling cancer and provides support for women suffering from ovarian cancer through Medicare.

Last November we added two new Medicare items for the testing of the BRCA 1 and 2 genes mutation that predispose women to ovarian and/or breast cancer.

We have also moved to ensure medicines to treat ovarian cancer are more affordable, spending more than \$17 million on PBS medicines in 2016–17 for the treatment of ovarian cancer.

(ENDS)