

#Embracing the Challenge

Cancer experts, patient advocates, industry and political leaders prepare to debate the true value of oncology

Canberra. Australia is riding a wave of emerging innovative and ground-breaking diagnostic technologies and cancer treatments but how do Australian patients gain timely and affordable access to them when the Government is under pressure to reign in its health spending?

These are the pressing issues to be debated this weekend, at the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) of the peak body for cancer clinicians, the Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA).

Government backbencher and breast cancer patient, Peta Murphy MP, will join the Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, leading oncology experts and patient advocates in Melbourne for the highly anticipated *“Embracing the Challenge: Advancing Cancer Care”* PCPA conference.

More than 170 medical and radiation oncologists, haematologists (Consultants and Advanced Trainees) and cancer nurses, will spend two days unpacking the latest cancer care developments, from precision medicine and molecular testing, Theranostics and CAR T-cell therapy to the importance of prehabilitation and optimising psychosocial and supportive care for patients.

Participants will be asked to consider **“the true value of oncology”** and when is the price of access is too high? CEO and founder of Rare Cancers Australia, Mr Richard Vines, will argue that more needs to be done to improve access and affordability to these exciting but expensive game-changing developments, such as Comprehensive Genome Profiling, that allows researchers to identify Australians with rare or untreatable cancers and direct them into clinical trials.

In a panel discussion on **“empathy and access – why both matter”**, delegates will hear the unique perspectives of politician-now-patient, Ms Murphy with her oncologist, Dr Richard de Boer.

Should oncologists offer the best and latest cancer care treatment, even if they believe it will put their patient under immense financial pressure? Joining this important debate will be the CEO of the Breast Cancer Network of Australia, Ms Kirsten Pilatti and Senator Ruston, who will also share her expectations of next week’s 2023-2024 Federal Budget.

President of the PCPA, Associate Professor Christopher Steer, said the 2023 ASM’s central themes of access and affordability were very timely, coming just days before the Government hands down its second Federal Budget.

“Australians with cancer, are already struggling with the soaring cost of living and they should not have to choose between their mortgage or rent and a life-saving diagnostic technology or treatment,” A/Professor Steer said. “We all need to come together and work closely with Government and the biopharmaceutical industry, to find a way over these existing barriers of unacceptable regulatory delays and increasing costs. Our patients deserve no less.”



More details about the PCPA ASM 2023 *“Embracing the Challenge”* can be found [here](#).

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About Us

The [Private Cancer Physicians of Australia \(PCPA\)](#) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the improvement of the health system for all cancer patients, but particularly for private cancer patients in Australia. Our mission is to promote and work towards a health system that provides high quality, fair, integrated cancer treatment