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| Victorian cancer plan 2020–2024 |
| Consultation summary |

# Introduction

Under the *Improving Cancer Outcomes Act 2014* the Victorian Government is committed to preparing a statewide cancer plan every four years.

The *Victorian cancer plan 2020–2024* will continue to take forward the long-term vision of the current plan to improve cancer outcomes for all Victorians and will identify priority actions for the next four years.

The Department of Health and Human Services undertook public consultation to inform development of the *Victorian cancer plan 2020–2024* through a series of facilitated workshops and online consultation via the Engage Victoria platform.

This paper provides a summary of the consultation process, responses and an overview of the general themes that emerged.

# The consultation

Between 7 October and 31 October 2019, facilitated face-to-face workshops were held in Warrnambool, Geelong, Mildura, Ballarat, Albury, Shepparton, Bendigo, Traralgon and Melbourne. Almost 300 representatives from the cancer control sector, prevention and population health sectors, researchers, people affected by cancer and interested community members attended the workshops.

Between 7 October and 4 November 2019, 199 online survey responses were received through the Engage Victoria platform.

In addition, 14 email submissions were received during the consultation period.

# General themes identified from consultation

The face-to-face workshops, online consultation and email submissions have generated a wealth of useful feedback.

Below are some general themes that have emerged:

* A call for increased focus on improving equity of access to services and reducing unwarranted disparities in cancer outcomes, recognising the specific needs of priority populations and cancer types.
* Opportunities for increased promotion of regular physical activity and healthy diet and reduction of smoking, alcohol consumption and sun exposure to reduce cancer risk and improve outcomes in alignment with the *Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019–2023*.
* Support for implementing the Optimal Care Pathways with a continued focus on monitoring compliance with the pathways.
* Opportunities to improve participation in cancer screening programs and early detection by developing workforce capability and system capacity.
* Recognising the critical role of allied health across the cancer care continuum and identified issues of access to allied health and supportive care services.
* Opportunities to improve health literacy to support symptom recognition and diagnosis and to improve education of advance care plans, palliative care and end-of-life care skills.
* A call for improved care coordination across the care pathway as a key strategy to improve patient wellbeing and experience.
* Recognition of the importance of health services research and implementation science in improving the quality, accessibility and value of cancer care and promoting the systematic uptake of research findings.
* Support for improving access to clinical trials and advanced therapies for all patients, with particular emphasis on improving access for priority populations and cancers.

# Responses to online survey

Of the 199 responses received to the online survey hosted on Engage Victoria, 52 per cent of respondents identified as a consumer, 27 per cent as a clinician, 10 per cent as a health service representative, 8 per cent as a research professional and 23 per cent as ‘other’. A proportion of respondents selected more than one category.

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of each of the suggested actions presented in the [*Victorian cancer plan 2020–2024: Consultation paper*](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/cancer-care/victorian-cancer-plan) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/cancer-care/victorian-cancer-plan>. Responses are summarised against each action area in the tables that follow.

## Prevention

Relative ranking of the importance of proposed focus areas for prevention from consultation paper. Priority given to "improve the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents by increasing physical activity, decreasing excessive alcohol consumption and decreasing the prevalence of overweight or obesity".

## Screening and early detection

Relative ranking of the importance of proposed focus areas for screening and early detection from consultation paper. Priority given to improve early detection of cancers by training GPs and health professionals in screening and early detection and by strengthening referral pathways.

## Treatment

Relative ranking of the importance of proposed focus areas for treatment from consultation paper. Priority given to "support the regional cancer centres in delivering appropriate accessible high quality and safe cancer care across the regions".

## Wellbeing and support

Relative ranking of the importance of proposed focus areas for wellbeing and support from consultation paper. Priority given to "Expand end of life care skills and advance care plan education across the cancer workforce".

## Research

Relative ranking of the importance of proposed focus areas for research from consultation paper. Priority given to "improve patient access to cancer clinical trials in areas of unmet need for patients with rare and low survival cancers, young adults and regional Victorians".

# Next steps

All feedback is being carefully considered in developing the next Victorian cancer plan.

We look forward to releasing the final plan in mid-2020.

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