

Media Release

Breast
Cancer
Network
Australia



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New online resource to support people with metastatic breast cancer

A new online resource has been launched to support the 9,000 Australian women and men estimated to be living with metastatic breast cancer on World Cancer Day.

Metastatic breast cancer occurs when the cancer spreads from the original site in the breast to another part of the body, such as the bones, liver, lungs and more rarely the brain. Approximately 3,000 Australians will die from metastatic breast cancer this year.

Women and men diagnosed with metastatic disease face additional challenges compared with people diagnosed with early breast cancer but often have less access to information and support specific to their individual needs.

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) and Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) today released a new online resource designed to support people living with metastatic breast cancer as well as their families, carers and friends to coincide with World Cancer Day.

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan said development of the resource was supported by a grant from the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) through the *Seeding Progress and Resources for the Cancer Community: Metastatic Breast Cancer Challenge* initiative.

“The project’s goal was to empower those living with metastatic breast cancer to make informed care choices based on an accurate understanding of palliative care and its benefits,” Ms Callaghan said.

“Women with metastatic breast cancer can benefit from early palliative care interventions. Research has shown that many women are reluctant to access palliative care feeling it signals that they are giving up on life. To the contrary, palliative care can assist people with metastatic breast cancer to live as well as possible, for as long as possible,” Ms Callaghan said.

The resource is an online questionnaire that asks people a series of simple questions. For people living with metastatic breast cancer it then produces information tailored to their answers to help them better understand how to live well following their diagnosis. The resource also directs people to palliative care support services in their area.

“This online resource introduces palliative care to women and men living with metastatic breast cancer in a way that changes the common perception that palliative care is only for end-of-life care. We want people to know that it is a much broader supportive care service that can offer practical, physical and emotional support at any time after a metastatic breast cancer diagnosis,” said BCNA CEO Christine Nolan.

“The resource is available free of charge for people to use across the country, no matter where they live. The questions can be answered from the comfort of their own home, in their own time,” Ms Nolan said.

“The role of Breast Cancer Network Australia is to provide reliable and evidence-based information and support to everyone affected by breast cancer, and this resource is a wonderful example of a one that has been designed with people’s health and wellbeing at the centre.”

The toolkit can also generate tailored information for relatives, friends and carers of people living with metastatic breast cancer. The entire resource is also downloadable and printable.

‘Living well with metastatic breast cancer’ is now available at:

<http://palliativecare.org.au/living-well-with-metastatic-breast-cancer>

Media contacts

PCA media contact: Grace Keyworth, 0422 040 576

BCNA media contact: Penelope Davies, 0409 385 358

About Palliative Care Australia

Palliative Care Australia is the national peak body for palliative care. Palliative Care Australia represents all those who work towards high quality palliative care for all Australians. Working closely with consumers, our Member Organisations and the palliative care workforce, we aim to improve access to, and promote the need for, palliative care.

About Breast Cancer Network Australia

Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) is the peak national organisation for Australians personally affected by breast cancer, and consists of a network of more than 130,000 individual members and 300 Member Groups. BCNA works to ensure that Australians affected by breast cancer receive the very best support, information, treatment and care appropriate to their individual needs. For more information visit www.bcna.org.au.

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palliativecare.org.au

