



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

15 June 2010

**One Single, United and Stronger National Cancer Agency**

The Rudd Government plans to create a single national cancer control agency to further strengthen the Government's strategic focus on cancer control and build a better health and hospital system.

The Government today announces its intention to amalgamate the national lead cancer agency, Cancer Australia, with the successful National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre (NBOCC), the Government's expert centre on breast and ovarian cancer control.

From early 2011-12, this planned amalgamation will benefit all Australians who are affected by cancer, and their families and carers, by continuing the Government's focus on cancer research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment through a single national cancer control agency.

This will build on our historic investments in Regional Cancer Centres and leading research and medicines.

At a time when Australia faces an increase in cancer incidence and unprecedented Commonwealth investment in tackling cancer, a strengthened Cancer Australia will help further focus our work in this important area.

The proposed joint agency will have a clear leadership mandate across all cancers, and capacity to better focus on Cancer Australia's responsibilities under the *Cancer Australia Act 2006*.

The benefits of such an approach include:

- The amalgamated agency would allow the time, effort and expense spent on separate reporting requirements and administration to be redirected, so that the maximum resources go to front line cancer programs and research.
- All cancer stakeholders would have one Australian Government agency to work with, regardless of cancer type, and the Government would have one coordinated source of expert advice on cancer care.
- Breast and ovarian cancer patients and their families can be assured that these cancers will remain a priority of the Australian Government as the new Cancer Australia will continue a focus on breast and ovarian cancer as it delivers the Government's broader cancer programs and research priorities.

- The proposed model has proved effective internationally, and will create a more strategic approach to fighting cancer, building on the successes in treating specific cancers such as breast and ovarian cancer.

In order to confirm this strategic direction and to finalise the focus and shape of the newly amalgamated agency, stakeholders will be consulted over a four week period. Close consultation with staff, governance bodies and key stakeholders will be undertaken as part of this process.

A Working Group, chaired by the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, will be established immediately to oversee and advise on the proposed transition. The Working Group will include high level representation from the NBOCC, Cancer Australia, the Department of Health and Ageing, and the Cancer Council Australia.

As an important part of this transition proposal, Dr Helen Zorbas has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Australia with immediate effect. Dr Zorbas will also continue in her role as Chief Executive Officer of NBOCC during the transition period.

Dr Zorbas, a breast physician, has a proven track-record in leading the internationally respected NBOCC, and has been responsible for directing a number of key national projects and programs to improve cancer care.

Her appointment will ensure successful approaches in breast cancer can be adapted to fight all cancers and provide the necessary leadership stability, expertise and experience during the transition period and into the future.

I am pleased that Dr Joanne Ramadge will continue to serve as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Australia, delivering stability, leadership and expertise during the transition.

Professor Ian Olver, Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Council Australia, has been appointed as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the NBOCC. Professor Olver was temporarily appointed to this role in March this year, but will now continue this role through the proposed amalgamation transition period. Dr Bill Glasson will continue to serve as Chair of the Cancer Australia Advisory Council.

The amalgamation will not involve any involuntary staff redundancies. The skilled and experienced staff of Cancer Australia and NBOCC will be essential to a successful stronger new agency and are encouraged to be constructively engaged through this transition process.

Stakeholders and consumers can provide their comments on the amalgamation to the Working Group via the email [cancerconsultation@health.gov.au](mailto:cancerconsultation@health.gov.au) by 15 July 2010.

**For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220**