

# BLUE SKY NEWS

ISSUE 77 | JANUARY 2021 EDITION

## SEND LOVE

With a PCFA bouquet  
this Valentine's Day

## EARLY DETECTION

Find out what  
we're doing about it

Advocating for change  
**NEW PSA TEST  
GUIDELINES  
NEEDED**

### Lutetium-177

## NEW HOPE FOR MEDICAL WONDER

*Learn more about Lu-PSMA and the Aussie men  
who are beating aggressive prostate cancer*

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Steve Callister and Jeff Dunn

## TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Welcome to the January edition of Blue Sky News, a magazine dedicated to you and other Australian men and families impacted by prostate cancer. In this edition, we turn our focus towards a brighter future for men and families facing prostate cancer, sharing the latest advances in research, treatment, and quality care.

**From all of us at PCFA, thank you for your steadfast loyalty and support** – because of you, the work we do today will save lives tomorrow.

Associate Professor Steve Callister  
National Board Chairman

Professor Jeff Dunn AO  
Chief Executive Officer

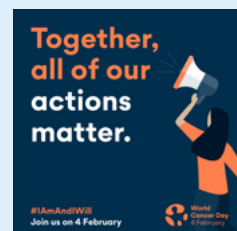
## WORLD CANCER DAY: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

**World Cancer Day takes place on February 4 every year and is a universal campaign to unite the world in the fight against cancer.**

As a Member Organisation of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), PCFA is proud to mark the occasion by calling all Australians to take action against prostate cancer. As President-Elect of the UICC, our CEO Jeff Dunn will play a key role in driving awareness activity to highlight the steps each of us can take to combat prostate cancer.



**Proud member**



For more information, go to [worldcancerday.org](http://worldcancerday.org)



# NEW RESOURCES FOR AUSSIE MEN AND FAMILIES

**Australian men impacted by prostate cancer will soon have access to a comprehensive new suite of prostate cancer resources, available Australia-wide. The PCFA booklets include all the latest information on treatment and care, with a refreshed look and easy readability.**

The resources will be released on February 4 to mark World Cancer Day, following a wide-ranging consultation process. Enhance Research led a three-phase investigation to help inform the update, conducting focus groups, in-depth interviews,

and a quantitative study of nearly 500 people.

“Our research found that men and their loved ones have different needs for information, depending on their relationship to prostate cancer and any pre-existing understanding about the disease,” says Enhance CEO George Zdanowicz.

“Some of the insights surprised us, such as people’s preference for the inclusion of references within materials, to allow easier access to more detailed information when desired. The research also revealed a strong desire for inclusive imagery representing diverse ages, ethnicities, and healthy lifestyles.

“Overall, our conversations confirmed the important role



George Zdanowicz

PCFA resources play in providing an unbiased intermediary for patients and medical professionals, ensuring that patients are provided with high quality evidence-based information that men and their families can rely on throughout their prostate cancer journey.”



➤ For copies of our new materials, go to [www.pcfa.org.au](http://www.pcfa.org.au) phone 1800 22 00 99 or email [enquiries@pcfa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@pcfa.org.au)

Lutetium-177

# NEW HOPE FOR MEDICAL WONDER

Australian researchers are leading the world in high quality clinical trials to test the effectiveness of a new therapy for advanced prostate cancer, known as Lu-PSMA. The early findings provide great hope that we may be getting closer to finding a medical miracle, but what is Lu-PSMA, and how does it work?





Lutetium-177 emits high-energy high-speed radiation to kill prostate cancer cells, using advanced imaging techniques to deliver the therapy, known as Lu-PSMA.

Lu-PSMA identifies prostate cancer cells by a type of protein found on the surface of cells, known as Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA), and targets prostate cancer cells that have spread to other parts of the body, destroying the cancer cells while protecting surrounding tissue from being exposed to radiation.

Professor Louise Emmett, Director of Theranostics and Nuclear Medicine at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, says we could be on the cusp of offering men with terminal prostate cancer a treatment that will significantly improve their survival prospects.

**“Lu-PSMA is a treatment for men with advanced prostate cancer. It is used when the disease has spread and other treatments have failed. PSMA is a type of protein found on the surface of cells on the prostate gland. It also appears in other parts of the body where prostate cancer has metastasized.**

“With findings to be published soon from a number of major clinical trials, we expect to see rapid moves for approval and regulation of Lu-PSMA treatment as a safe and effective therapy. Men with advanced prostate cancer can take great hope from our progress.”

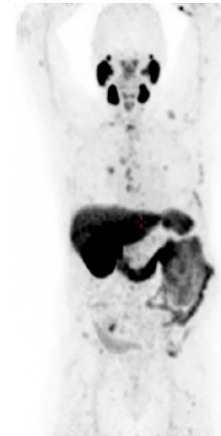
Buderim retiree Tim Pilcher was diagnosed with prostate cancer 21 years ago and underwent treatment with radium-223, docetaxel, and abiraterone when the cancer spread. After exhausting all treatment options, in February 2020 Tim was referred to a palliative care team to help him with his final journey, when one of his specialists decided to try Lu-PSMA. After four cycles his baseline PSA decreased from 400 to 14, and his scans show a huge reduction in his tumours, without any side-effects.

His wife Judi would like to see the therapy made available to all those who need it.

**“Lu-PSMA has given Tim more time and his life has been very much extended. He feels better and looks better than he did over three years ago. I believe everyone should get the best chance, and hope to see the government make this treatment available for other men like Tim.”**



September 2019 – Before Lu-PSMA



April 2020 – After 3 cycles of Lu-PSMA



Tim and Judi Pilcher (centre) with their family

*We were proud to co-fund the TheraP clinical trial into Lu-PSMA and are now advocating to make it available to all eligible men. Your donations provide vital support for our advocacy.*



## NEW MEDICARE GUIDANCE FOR MEN WITH PROSTATE CANCER

Medicare has released new guidance to ensure men with prostate cancer are well-informed of their treatment options, recommending patients consult with a urologist and a radiation oncologist before making decisions about their clinical care pathway.

The guidance is backed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR), the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) and PCFA.

RANZCR President Dr Lance Lawler says the guidance will ensure men can fully explore the best treatment option for their individual diagnosis.

“Best practice is for men diagnosed with prostate cancer to have a consultation with both a urologist and a radiation oncologist so that they can fully understand the advantages and disadvantages of choosing surgery or radiation therapy. They are both equally effective but do cause very different side effects. Patients, surgeons and radiation oncologists together need to inform these decisions

and men must be empowered to have input into their preferences.”

USANZ President Dr Stephen Mark agrees.

**“We support men receiving appropriate information in order to make an informed decision regarding management of newly diagnosed prostate cancer. Some men will be best served by active surveillance, whereas others will benefit from active treatment whether that is surgery, radiation, or radiation with hormonal therapy. Treatment decisions should be individualised based on cancer risk and consideration of potential consequences of treatment.”**

The new guidance aligns with world’s best practice and reinforces Australia’s reputation for delivering world-leading strategies to improve prostate cancer survival outcomes and quality of life throughout survivorship.

➤ To read the new Medicare Benefit Schedule item, go to <https://bit.ly/3kwOKbL>

# PROSTATE CANCER IN OZ

## WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US?

Over the past five years the way we diagnose and treat prostate cancer has rapidly advanced. Today, about 70% of Australian men with low-risk prostate cancer choose active surveillance, which reduces risks of over-diagnosis and mistreatment.

In step with this progress, PCFA has called for a review of the PSA Test Guidelines, to ensure the

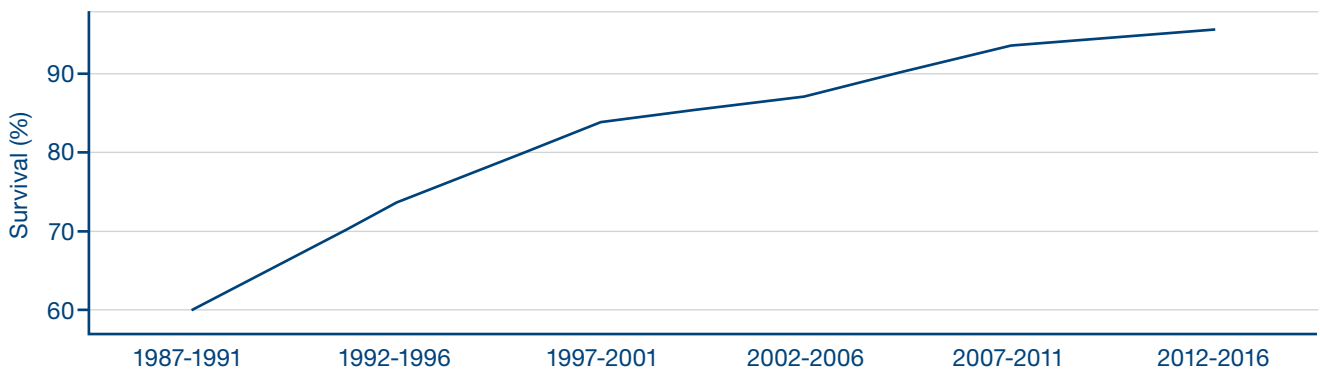
guidelines provide men with the greatest possible prospects of beating the disease.

This data gives you a snapshot of how far we have come, and how far we have to go. Our mission is to ensure prostate cancer can be detected at the earliest stage, when we have a better chance of beating it.

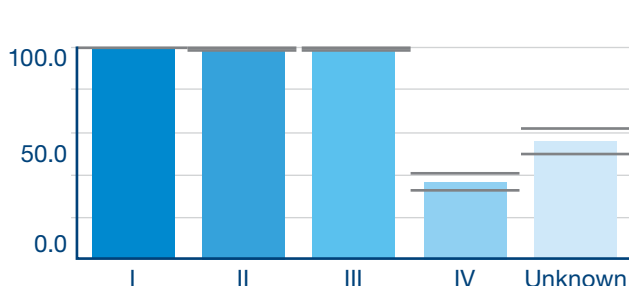
### How can we use this knowledge to reduce the burden of prostate cancer?

This data helps us measure the effectiveness of clinical trials and other strategies for managing prostate cancer, allowing policy makers and practitioners to tailor treatments and strategies for different men. One of our key targets is to increase the number of men diagnosed at Stage I of the disease, so that we can improve overall survival rates.

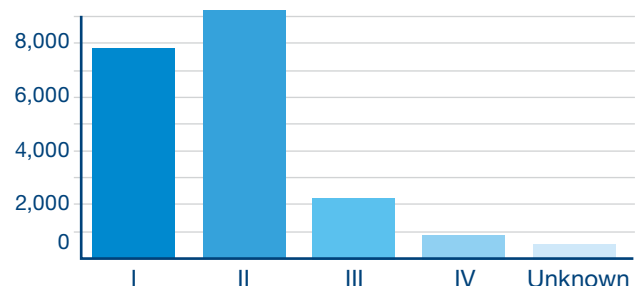
Five-year relative survival



Five-year survival rates by stage at diagnosis



Number of cases diagnosed by stage at diagnosis



**ONLY 36% of prostate cancers diagnosed in Australia are diagnosed at Stage 1, when the disease is easier to beat. Our aim is to change this.**

# BEATING PROSTATE CANCER: NEW PSA TEST GUIDELINES NEEDED

PCFA has called on the Government to fund new PSA test guidelines for early detection of prostate cancer, warning that thousands of Australian men will die avoidable deaths over the next decade if no action is taken.

**Nine News presenter Will McDonald was diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer in July last year, at the age of 42, after developing a pain in his hip. At point of diagnosis the cancer had spread beyond the prostate to his left hip joint.**

A blood test after the onset of symptoms found McDonald had a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) level of 38 – which is alarmingly high.

“I’ve been fortunate... other than the cancer, I was very fit and healthy, which I’ve been told

makes it much better to deal with treatment. My latest scans came back and the cancer appears to be shrinking, so it’s onwards and upwards. I feel confident in my doctors.”

McDonald’s father was diagnosed with prostate cancer in late 2019, at the age of 75.

*“Luckily Dad had a PSA test each year. It was found relatively early. And he’s back to full health. The testing regime is a really interesting issue. The idea of family history is perhaps not explained well enough to young men. My urologist was adamant my slightly older brother needed to go for a full prostate health check immediately after my diagnosis. He’s attached to the navy, so he has a six-monthly check now.*”

“Ideally the hormone blockers, combined with the chemo and some radiotherapy, will get me to remission and keep me there for a long time. I made a choice on day one of my prostate cancer diagnosis, to do everything I possibly can to stay positive, strong and get completely healthy again. I’ve also had some very extensive genetic testing done to look for immunotherapy possibilities.”

Australia has one of the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world, with one in every six Australian men likely to be diagnosed by age 85.

PCFA’s CEO, Professor Jeff Dunn AO, has written to Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt to seek public funding support for a review of Australia’s current





Will McDonald hard at work at the news desk on the same day he underwent his fifth round of chemotherapy in November last year.

PSA Test Guidelines and raise awareness.

“16,741 men will be diagnosed with the disease this year and 3,152 will die. It’s a tragic toll that can be avoided if the disease is diagnosed early. Over the next 15 years the number of Australian men who die of prostate cancer will nearly equal the number of seats at the Sydney Cricket Ground, although many of these deaths are avoidable.

“Detected at its earliest stage, the five-year relative survival rate for prostate cancer is 100 per cent. This means if we catch it out early, we can almost certainly defeat it for good,” he says.

According to Professor Dunn, the current guidelines – published in 2016 – remain

highly controversial and poorly understood by most Australians.

“A recent PCFA survey found that 75 per cent of Australians do not know the guidelines, an alarmingly high level of unawareness that impedes early detection and diminishes population-wide survival prospects.

*“If we can diagnose all men at the earliest stage and ensure they have access to new medicines and care, we can beat this disease. For men with a family history of disease, we need to give much clearer guidance about their risks and screening options.*”

“If we don’t step up and take action, many Australian men will die unnecessarily,” he says.

## KNOW YOUR RISKS & FAMILY HISTORY

If your **father or brother** have ever been diagnosed with prostate cancer, you have **twice the average risk** of developing the disease.

If you have **two or more close male relatives** who have been diagnosed, your lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer increases **five-fold**.

Your risk also increases if you have a **strong family history** of breast or ovarian cancer, especially if a **BRCA1 or 2** gene mutation was involved.



## Restoring prostate cancer services IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

### **A new report has revealed a sharp drop in prostate cancer procedures and services due to COVID-19, with potential impacts down the track.**

The report provides the first breakdown of monthly services by state and territory, with a notable reduction in care delivered to men at risk of prostate cancer.

“The new report shows a notable reduction of 25-41% for both diagnostic and therapeutic services related to prostate cancer during the first wave of the pandemic,” says Professor Dorothy Keefe, CEO of Cancer Australia.

*“This is particularly concerning, as any potential delays in diagnoses and treatment in response to these reductions may lead to more advanced stages of cancer at diagnosis and poorer patient outcomes.”*

Prostate cancer PSA blood testing fell by 41% between March and April 2020. Both MRI and prostate biopsy procedures decreased around 25 per cent for the same time period.

Services for MRI scans of previously diagnosed prostate cancer decreased 25 per cent between March and April.

“The monthly data for some services showed initial recovery in May, with many procedures showing further recovery in service numbers by June 2020. We encourage men to be aware of any persistent changes to their body, and to contact their doctor without delay if they notice anything unusual for them. Most symptoms are due to something less serious than cancer, but if it is cancer, the earlier it is found, the better,” says Professor Keefe.

PCFA is proud to be a founding member of the Continuity of Care Collaboration, working jointly to drive awareness and ensure Australian men and families don't forego essential healthcare because of the pandemic.

➤ To find out more, go to [continuityofcare.org](https://continuityofcare.org)



# KEY NEWS



## CONTINENCE: AGE CAN IMPACT SURGERY OUTCOMES

An international study has found men over the age of 70 are more likely to experience challenges with continence following robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy compared to those in younger age groups. The researchers recommend the findings be discussed with men over 70 when deciding on treatment, to ensure the potential side-effects of surgery are considered.



➔ Read the open access research here: [sci-hub.st/10.1007/s00345-020-03096-0](https://sci-hub.st/10.1007/s00345-020-03096-0)

## WE'RE TAKING ACTION ON OUT OF POCKET COSTS



PCFA has partnered with other leading cancer control organisations to develop a Standard for Informed Financial Consent to improve fee transparency in health care practice. The Standard urges health practitioners to be open about prostate cancer treatment fees and expenses, so that men and their families are aware of the financial impacts and out of pocket costs associated with their care. The move should help to ensure fairer pricing practices.

➔ Download the Standard for Informed Financial Consent here: <https://bit.ly/39n2gwl>

## ADVANCED IMAGING PROVES COST-EFFECTIVE

An Australian study presented at the European Association of Nuclear Medicine 33rd Annual Congress has found that PSMA PET/CT imaging is more effective and less costly than conventional imaging (CT + bone scan). The study was based on the ProPSMA clinical trial, co-funded by PCFA, and revealed a cost per scan of \$1,203 compared to \$1,412 for traditional imaging techniques. The findings add weight to arguments in support of PSMA PET/CT imaging for staging and management of men with prostate cancer in Australia.



➔ View the abstract here: <https://bit.ly/3lEnPvc>



**Tim Stollznow was diagnosed with prostate cancer four years ago, at age 50. His experience inspired him to leave a gift in his Will to PCFA.**



*“My dad had it, my dad’s dad, my dad’s uncle. I thought, ‘It’s just a matter of time’. I told my friends that one day I would get prostate cancer.”*

Tim knows that leaving a gift in his Will can fund research breakthroughs to help save his son and future grandsons from prostate cancer.



# THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT TIMES TO MAKE A WILL



BY ANDREW SIMPSON

The uncertainty and anxiety created by COVID-19 has prompted more people to ask whether they need to update or make a Will. The answer is simple: now is always a good time to do it. If you have a Will, but things have changed since you signed it, then you should update it.

It's important to remember that a Will is never a static document. It should be regularly updated to reflect your current circumstances and wishes. This will help you to stay in control of your estate and ensure your legacy is lasting.

## FIVE MAJOR LIFE STAGES FOR UPDATING YOUR WILL:

### 1 MARRIAGE, SEPARATION, AND DIVORCE

Relationships are an important part of life. They are also a large source of dispute when it comes to administering an estate. If you already have a Will before you get married, then any changes to your marital situation can make parts of it – or the whole document – invalid.

### 2 GROWING YOUR FAMILY

This is another major milestone in your life and that's why it's so important to formulate a plan to make sure your Will takes care of your children and grandchildren, as well as any legacies you'd like to leave to organisations such as PCFA. Ensuring your Will has been reviewed by a solicitor will ensure the Trustee of your Estate is easily able to honour your wishes.

### 3 WHEN YOU BUY A NEW HOME OR ASSETS

Whether you're a first home buyer or a retiree, property is usually the biggest asset that most people have, and typically forms the largest part of your estate. Updating your Will should therefore form an important part of your property buyer's checklist. Likewise, if you buy a business, a boat, or shares on the stock market – make sure your assets are covered in your Will.

### 4 WHEN YOU RETIRE

You've worked hard, and now it's time to enjoy your retirement years. If you don't have a Will, a legal formula will determine where your money goes when you die. If you haven't defined what you would like to do with sentimental items, such as service medals, disputes could arise between your loved ones. A well-considered Will also empowers you to recognise

causes that impacted your life, and benevolent organisations that may have helped.

### 5 IF YOUR HEALTH CHANGES

A major health scare can be overwhelming, and few of us stop to think about our Will. But it can also be a prompt to review your life circumstances and update your wishes to take care of the people and causes you hold dear.

*Leaving a gift in your Will to PCFA can help to fund clinical breakthroughs and treatments that give Australian men and their families what all of us want – more time with our loved ones. Your legacy may fund the breakthrough that helps us beat prostate cancer.*

If you'd like a guide to leaving a gift in your Will, please call our team today on **1800 22 00 99** or email [enquiries@pcfa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@pcfa.org.au)

Andrew Simpson is National Head of Wills and Estate Planning for Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

➔ To learn more, go to <https://pcfa.org.au/gifts-in-wills/>

# ESSENTIAL READING: NEW EDITION OF FACING THE TIGER



**“As the son of a prostate cancer survivor, and a father facing the same risk, I recommend this book to you. It is a powerful reminder that the future is always uncertain, but you’re not alone in the struggle.”** Matt Hayden AM

Of the nearly 230,000 Australian men who are living in the aftermath of a prostate cancer diagnosis, many will experience anxiety and depression, sometimes long-term. Not all will seek help for their mental health needs.

This book provides practical strategies to manage stress and anxiety, improve health and wellbeing, and navigate tough challenges. It shares personal stories from Australian men and their partners in plain-speaking style, revealing the wisdom of others who have already walked the path.



**Buy the new edition for 15% off the RRP**

➤ Go to <https://bit.ly/36m8xqF> and use the promo code **PCFA20**

## AFFORDABLE ACCESS FOR ALL NEW MEDICINES AND THERAPIES KEY TO INCREASED SURVIVAL

This year we’ll be advocating strongly to Australia’s Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee to make new medicines and therapies available to Australian men with prostate cancer.

Garry and his partner Jane are one of thousands of Australian families urgently seeking new treatments.

“We thought ten years ago there will be new treatments and better ways to help live with this, but we haven’t got a cure and it breaks my heart. Now Gary has found out hormone treatment is not working anymore and he has an 80% chance of dying within four to five years. In this day and age it’s just not right. Good men do not need to die from this cancer.”



To find out more and get involved email your story to [enquiries@pcfa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@pcfa.org.au)





## SHOW YOU CARE: SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

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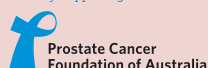
Help love bloom on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021.



# GAZMAN

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# BE A GAME CHANGER

Raise funds today to save  
men's lives tomorrow.



1 in 6 Aussie men will get prostate cancer.  
By hosting a fundraiser for PCFA, you can contribute  
to game-changing research, nursing and support.

Go to [fundraise.pcfa.org.au](https://fundraise.pcfa.org.au) to help.