

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANCER TREATMENT ADVISORY GROUP WELCOMES GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE CARE IN AUSTRALIA

- **Multi-disciplinary teams will ensure more Australians have access to better cancer treatment**
- **Lung cancer screening will catch one of Australia's deadliest diseases**
- **Support and investment in primary care givers must include cancer care education**

Sydney, Australia – 10th May – The Radiation Therapy Advisory Group (RTAG), a leading advocate for cancer patients and radiation therapy in Australia, welcomes the budget announcement to strengthen Medicare measures that enhance the accessibility and affordability of healthcare. As the Government reiterates its commitment to patients and caregivers, RTAG urges a focus on improving accessibility to best practice cancer treatment.

While the Government continues to work to address the national cost-of-living crisis, policymakers must remember that cancer is one of the leading causes of death in the country, that is why it is early detection and treatment is a vital. We applaud the Government's efforts to provide flexible funding for multi-disciplinary team-based models. Currently, 20% of Australian cancer patients who should receive radiation therapy, in line with best practice care, do not receive it. Multi-disciplinary tumour boards are one way to help ensure cancer patients have access to the best possible treatment.

Providing \$263.8million for lung cancer screening is a positive step in addressing one of Australia's most prevalent cancers. As we improve the ability to diagnose lung cancer earlier, it is equally important to ensure patients receive personalised and effective treatment. Presently, almost half of lung cancer patients who require radiation therapy do not receive it. Long term Medicare reform should increase the utilisation of radiotherapy and promote the use of digital technologies, such as AI, in treatment planning and delivery.

RTAG works closely with care providers, so we are encouraged that the Government recognises the need to support and invest in a broad range of healthcare professionals to provide more comprehensive care. It is estimated there will be over 233,000 new cancer cases each year by 2040, requiring a greater number of clinicians and awareness of how to manage the disease.

While the Government's \$2.2 billion package aims to address immediate challenges in primary care, we believe that investing in education for GPs and nurses about best practice cancer care will be an important factor in improving the coordination between healthcare providers across the care continuum, particularly in rural, remote and indigenous communities.

We stand ready to work with the Government and healthcare providers to find solutions that will ensure all Australians have access to the best practice care. RTAG urges the Government to consider the importance of radiation therapy in treating cancer patients and make effective cancer treatment a priority in the National Cabinet meeting on health reform later this year.

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About The Radiation Therapy Advisory Group

RTAG is an alliance of cancer patient advocates, health care providers, medical technology vendors and oncology professionals.

RTAG is comprised of people and organisations who are aligned in their desire to raise the profile of radiation therapy and ensure it is adequately funded by government.

The Group provides highly informed advice to government and to the general public about radiation therapy and associated health policy issues.

RTAG's initial focus is on highlighting the radiation therapy 'gap' that is clearly evident in regional and rural Australia. **RTAG** also offers advice and information on a range of relevant issues to the sector and how it affects cancer patients and communities.