

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Cancer Patients Welcome Primary Care Strategy**

12 June 2008

John Newsom Chair of Cancer voices Australia says the comprehensive review of primary care and Medicare, announced yesterday by Minister Roxon, is a decision of major potential importance for the health and treatment of cancer patients in rural and remote areas.

"We welcome the Government's recognition that the current system often works poorly in rural and remote communities and in low income areas," John said.

There is considerable evidence that people with cancer who live in rural and remote areas, experience greater problems and concerns associated with travel for treatment and follow up than those patients who reside in urban or regional cities with greater access to cancer services. This is also evidenced by figures which show current Medicare expenditure per person lags well behind the national average in spite of health outcomes being poorer overall in those areas.

We need to ensure that the skills of all health professionals are made available to people regardless of where they live, John added.

In its recent submission to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission CVA argues that health professionals should adopt a team approach as far as possible and ensure that patients have ready access to the right treatment with minimal red tape. The world's best practice cancer care is Multidisciplinary Care and is acknowledged internationally as the best and most effective way to treat cancer.

'This approach already exists in some rural and remote areas, but there is insufficient investment in its infrastructure and staff.

With offices and members in each state we welcome to opportunity to be involved in this review.' John added.

Cancer Voices Australia is the national consumer organisation representing Australians affected by cancer. It aims to ensure the voices of people affected by cancer are heard at a national level.

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