

## CANCER FACTS

# Cancer in Australia<sup>1</sup>

- An estimated 145,483 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in Australia in 2020 (excluding keratinocyte or non-melanoma skin cancers such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma).
- Keratinocyte cancers are the most frequently occurring cancer in Australia, but the least life-threatening. In 2015, based on the number of services including treatment for multiple lesions, it is estimated that around 938,991 keratinocytes were treated nationally<sup>2</sup>. A secondary analysis of recently published Australian data suggests that around 320,972 people were treated for keratinocyte cancers in 2018<sup>3</sup>.
- Apart from keratinocyte cancers, the most common cancers diagnosed in Australia in 2020 were breast (13.7%), prostate (11.5%), melanoma (11.1%), colorectal (bowel) (10.7%) and lung cancer (9.1%).
- One in two men and women were diagnosed with cancer before the age of 85.
- Three out of every 10 deaths in Australia were due to cancer.
- About 48,099 people were expected to die from cancer in Australia in 2020, an average of 132 deaths each day.
- Lung cancer (18%) was the leading cause of cancer-related deaths, followed by colorectal (11%), pancreas (6.9%), prostate (6.6%) and breast cancer (6.3%).
- The number of deaths due to cancer has steadily increased over time, due mainly to population growth and ageing, however, the death rate (number of deaths per 100,000 people) has fallen by 28 per cent between 1982 and 2020.
- Seven out of every 10 cancer patients will survive at least five years after diagnosis.
- The overall five-year relative survival for cancer has increased from 50.5 per cent (1987–1991) to 69.2 per cent (2012–2016), and survival rates have improved for many common cancers across this timespan.
- There were 1,228,905 cancer related hospitalisations reported in Australia during 2016–2017<sup>4</sup>, accounting for one in 10 hospitalisations.
- In 2008–09, it was estimated that cancer cost the Australian health system more than \$4.5 billion (7 per cent of total health system expenditure on chronic disease)<sup>5</sup>.

For more information about cancer in Australia, please contact Cancer Council's Information and Support Line on **13 11 20**, or visit Cancer Council Australia's website **cancer.org.au**.

1. Cancer data in Australia (web report), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Last updated 02 Jun 2020 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/contents/summary>
2. Fransen M, Karahalios A, Sharma N, English DR, Giles GG, Sinclair RD; Non-melanoma skin cancer in Australia. Med J Aust 2012; 197: 565-568. doi: 10.5694/mja12.10654. (<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2012/197/10/non-melanoma-skin-cancer-australia>)
3. Pandeya N, Olsen CM and Whiteman DC, The incidence and multiplicity rates of keratinocyte cancers in Australia. Med J Aust 2017; 207 (8): 339-343. || doi: 10.5694/mja17.00284 (<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2017/207/8/incidence-and-multiplicity-rates-keratinocyte-cancers-australia>)
4. Cancer Data in Australia 2019, Last updated 21 Mar 2019 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/contents/summary>. Cat. no.CAN 123. Canberra: AIHW
5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013. Health system expenditure on cancer and other neoplasms in Australia, 2008–09. Cancer series no. 81. Cat. no.78. Canberra: AIHW.

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