

MEDIA RELEASE

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**NATIONAL
BREAST AND OVARIAN
CANCER CENTRE**

Breast
Cancer
Network
Australia



NEW HEALTH PACKAGE TO HELP RURAL WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER

The Federal Government today announced a special funding allocation of \$2.71m for programs supporting women in rural areas diagnosed with breast cancer.

The Hon Warren Snowden MP, Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural & Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery, announced the funding at Breast Cancer Network Australia's national Summit. The Summit brings together more than 200 representatives from breast cancer support groups around Australia gathered to share their stories, hear from experts in the field and strengthen their voice as advocates for change.

The joint project between leading breast cancer organisations, National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre (NBOCC) and Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) aims to:

- target gaps in the provision of information and supportive care for rural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, families and health professionals;
- improve access to information about the latest advances in breast cancer treatment and care; and
- explore, develop and implement innovative ways, through technology, to provide support networks for rural and Indigenous women, including providing locally tailored information.

Women in rural areas diagnosed with breast cancer face additional challenges due to limited access to targeted health care, isolation, lack of support, and limited opportunities for collaboration with other women or groups.

NBOCC and BCNA are pleased to be partnering on this important initiative through joint government funding.

BCNA will focus on improving social support networks using technology, creating interactive web based information services and strengthening capacity to provide support to rural women with breast cancer.

CEO of BCNA Lyn Swinburne said: *"A breast cancer diagnosis is always difficult to deal with but women in rural areas face additional challenges. We are delighted to be working with the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre to deliver stronger support for women in rural Australia and their families."*

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NBOCC will focus on providing rural health professionals with access to the latest evidence-based information, linking families through an online video communication tool when women travel away from home for treatment, and improving knowledge and skills of Indigenous women and health workers.

Dr Helen Zorbas, CEO, NBOCC said: “Approximately 30 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia live outside a major metropolitan centre. We look forward to working closely with BCNA, as well as rural health providers, Indigenous health workers and women affected by breast cancer to overcome barriers to improved information, health care delivery and support.”

Funding for the supporting women in rural areas diagnosed with breast cancer extends to the end of June 2011.

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Media Contact: For further information please contact: Julie Reilly, BCNA Media Coordinator 0417 545 986 or Erin Sharp NBOCC Media Officer 0458 900 777.

Further information and resources can be found at www.bcna.org.au or www.nbocc.org.au

Breast Cancer Network Australia is peak national organisation for Australians personally affected by breast cancer.

National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre is funded by the Australian Government and works with consumers, health professionals, cancer organisations, researchers and governments to improve care and cancer control in breast and ovarian cancer.
