Putting the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Framework into practice

Panellists: Prof Jacinta Elston, Prof Helen Zorbas AO, Prof Tom Calma AO, Dr Mark Wenitong, and Mr Matthew Cooke. More panellists to be announced shortly.

Cancer Australia partnered with Menzies School of Health Research to develop an evidence-based, nationally agreed strategic framework to guide future cancer control efforts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This was informed by a comprehensive review of the available evidence and extensive consultations across Australia.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Framework is designed to complement and enhance national, jurisdictional, regional and local efforts to improve cancer outcomes for Indigenous Australians, including cancer plans, policies and strategies. It sets out priority areas for action, allowing flexibility for jurisdictions, communities and organisations to address them in ways that suit their local context.

Seven priority areas are identified:

1. Improve knowledge, attitudes and understanding of cancer by individuals, families, carers and community members (across the continuum)
2. Focus prevention activities to address specific barriers and enablers to minimise cancer risk for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples
3. Increase access to and participation in cancer screening and immunisation for the prevention and early detection of cancers
4. Ensure early diagnosis of symptomatic cancers
5. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by cancer receive optimal and culturally appropriate treatment, services, and supportive and palliative care
6. Ensure families and carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer are involved, informed, supported and enabled throughout the cancer experience
7. Strengthen the capacity of cancer related services and systems to deliver good quality, integrated services that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The development of the Framework engaged people across sectors in a collaborative and meaningful way. The seminar will build on this momentum by inviting a panel of key representatives across the cancer control and Indigenous health sectors to share insights and engage with participants around opportunities to put the Framework into practice.