

Walk to improve cancer outcomes among Indigenous people

Thursday, 8 January 2015

A free walk to raise awareness to prevent, detect, and treat the second leading cause of death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cancer, will be held at Musgrave Park in Brisbane at 2pm on Saturday, 31 January.

The *Walking the Talk Cancer Day* will highlight cancer treatment and care options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the importance of early detection and the need for regular checkups.

Indigenous adult cancer patients report substantial unmet supportive care needs, including provision of transport and appropriate travel arrangements, suitable accommodation for both the patient and their support person and extra psychological support.

The walk will coincide with this year's World Cancer Day on 4 February.

Senior cancer researcher with the Menzies School of Health Research, Associate Professor Gail Garvey said she hoped this year's World Cancer Day theme, 'Not beyond us - highlighting that solutions do exist across the continuum of cancer and they are within our reach', would build on the success of the inaugural walk last year which attracted over 250 participants to help address the health disparities experienced by Indigenous Australians with cancer.

"Although treatment and care for cancer patients has led to improvements in survival, Indigenous Australians are still more likely to die from the disease than non-Indigenous Australians," Assoc Prof Garvey said.

"It is important to identify reasons for lower rates of survival and to ensure appropriate health services are available for, and being utilised by, people with cancer.

"The walk is a great way of raising awareness amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about cancer and the types of services that are available to support them and their families."

Indigenous cancer survivor Mrs Phillipa Cole will speak about her cancer experience at the walk.

"Talking about my cancer experience at the 2015 *Walking the Talk Cancer Day* will encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be aware of cancer, to look for warning signs if they are unwell and to go to a medical service or doctor if they are worried about their health," Mrs Cole said.

"I was lucky because the cancer I had was detected early and treated quickly.

"I work in the health area so I had a good idea of what I needed to do when I was diagnosed with cancer, but unfortunately our community doesn't talk about cancer a lot and we need to start talking about it so we can better deal with it.

The walk will bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to acknowledge community members and their families who have been affected by cancer.

The walk is a joint initiative between the National Indigenous Cancer Action Network (NICaN), Menzies School of Health Research, Cancer Council Australia, Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, Lowitja Institute, Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Service – Brisbane, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Carinity, Musgrave Park Family Fun Day Corporation, Cancer Council Queensland, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Queensland Aboriginal and

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Islander Health Council, Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health and Queensland Police Service.

ENDS

For more information on *Walking the Talk Cancer Day*

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/News_and_Events/Events_Seminars/Current/Walking_the_Talk_Cancer_Day_2015/

Media interviews and photos

Indigenous cancer survivor Phillipa Cole is available for interview.

High resolution photos of the 2014 event and Phillipa Cole are available.

Media contact

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Menzies background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia's only Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 30-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern and Central Australia. We collaborate to create resources, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.

Menzies has established two major Indigenous cancer focused initiatives: The DISCOVER-TT Centre of Research Excellence and a Strategic Research Priority program, STREP-CaCInDA. Menzies has also formed the National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) in partnership with the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, the Lowitja Institute and Cancer Council Australia.

For more information on Menzies cancer research

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Indigenous_Health/Cancer/