

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New data reveals widening inequality for Australians living with neuroendocrine cancer

Where you live, and what you earn, could determine your chances of surviving one of Australia's fastest-growing cancers

Release: While it is good to see that current analysis shows a closing of the gap for all cancers combined, for neuroendocrine cancer the gap between those with the best outcomes and those with the worst is widening.

Analysis of newly released Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data shows neuroendocrine cancer has emerged as an outlier among major cancers, with widening disparities linked to socioeconomic disadvantage, regional and remote living, and First Nations status.

Unlike many other cancers, where health outcomes are gradually becoming more equitable, neuroendocrine cancer is moving in the opposite direction.

People living in Australia's most disadvantaged communities are experiencing the highest mortality rates, while people in rural and remote areas are seeing the fastest growth in new diagnoses, even though specialist neuroendocrine cancer care remains concentrated in metropolitan centres.

First Nations Australians are also disproportionately affected, with incidence rates substantially higher than those of non-Indigenous Australians across more than a decade of national data.

"This isn't simply a cancer story. It's an equity story," said Meredith Cummins, CEO of NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia.

"Where you live, how far you are from specialist care, and your socioeconomic circumstances are increasingly influencing outcomes for people diagnosed with neuroendocrine cancer."

Neuroendocrine cancers are frequently difficult to diagnose because symptoms often mimic more common conditions. Many Australians are not diagnosed until the disease has reached an advanced stage, when treatment options may be more limited.

For patients living outside major cities, those challenges are often compounded by the need to travel hundreds of kilometres to access multidisciplinary specialist care.

The data highlights that while overall cancer outcomes in Australia continue to improve, neuroendocrine cancer is following a different trajectory. When benchmarked against all other cancers reviewed, neuroendocrine cancer stands out as a clear equity outlier. The analysis found that it has widening inequities over time, while gaps for all other cancers combined are remaining stable or gradually narrowing.

The findings suggest that Australians affected by neuroendocrine cancer are not benefiting equally from improvements in cancer detection, treatment and survival, with those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage or living further from specialist care facing the greatest risk.

Last year alone, NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia's specialist nurses, counsellors and dietitians delivered more than **75,500 minutes of one-to-one virtual support** to Australians living with

neuroendocrine cancer, helping bridge the gap for patients unable to access specialist services close to home.

"This data reinforces what patients have been telling us for years," Ms Cummins said.

"No Australian should have a poorer chance of accessing specialist care simply because of their postcode."

"These findings are a call to action. Earlier diagnosis, better access to specialist expertise and greater support for rural, regional and disadvantaged communities must become national priorities."

"The Australian Cancer Nurse Navigation Program, which funds Specialist Cancer Nurse, Counselling and Dietician services online for NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia, is key to addressing the inequities. Funding for this is due to expire in June 2027, and without further government commitment, this vital support will be impacted, creating further inequity."

About NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia

NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia is the national charity dedicated to improving outcomes for Australians affected by neuroendocrine cancer through patient support, health professional education, advocacy, awareness and research.

The organisation provides Australia-wide access to specialist neuroendocrine cancer nurses through its free NET Nurse telephone support service, alongside specialist counselling and dietetic services, ensuring patients and families can access expert advice and support regardless of where they live. NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia also delivers education and resources for GPs, nurses and other health professionals to improve recognition of neuroendocrine cancer and support earlier diagnosis and referral to specialist care.

Rates of neuroendocrine cancer continue to rise, yet the disease remains poorly understood and is frequently diagnosed only after symptoms have been present for years. Many Australians are diagnosed when the disease is already at an advanced stage, limiting treatment options and increasing the complexity of care.

The organisation works to reduce these inequities by raising awareness, promoting earlier diagnosis, and ensuring that every Australian, regardless of postcode, income or location, has access to specialist information, support and evidence-based care.

About the Data

The findings in this media release are based on newly released data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) **Cancer Data in Australia** dashboards, including age-standardised incidence and mortality rates by socioeconomic status (SEIFA), remoteness and First Nations status, together with additional analysis undertaken by NeuroEndocrine Cancer Australia.

The full AIHW Cancer Data in Australia dashboards are available at:

[Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Cancer Data in Australia](#)

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