

melanomat<sup>tas</sup>

ABN 45516715670

## Submission for Exposure Draft of White Paper

May 2015

### The Facts

- Every year, more than 12,500 people are diagnosed with melanoma and 1 person dies every 6 hours. It is our most common cancer between the ages of 15-39.<sup>1</sup>
- The mortality rate of Australian men over 60 years diagnosed with melanoma is increasing.
- Melanoma the fourth most commonly diagnosed form of cancer in males in Tasmania and the third most commonly diagnosed form of cancer in females.<sup>2</sup>

### Tasmanian Cancer Registry Statistics

#### C43. Melanoma of the Skin, Tasmania<sup>3</sup>

	2009	2010	2011
Cases	277	295	268
Incidence per 100,000 (a)	48.4	50.1	44.8
Deaths	34	30	43
Mortality per 100,000 (a)	5.6	4.9	6.7

### How Tasmania compares

The incidence of melanoma in Tasmania is fourth behind Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.<sup>4</sup>

### Public Health Burden of Melanoma in Tasmania

A diagnosis of metastatic melanoma (stages III and IV where it has spread through the body) has devastating implications for patients, families and the Tasmanian community as a whole.

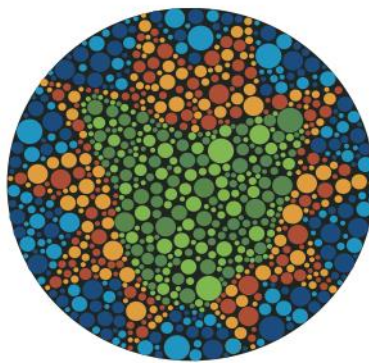
<sup>1</sup> Melanoma Patients Australia, 2014, The real cost of Australia's national cancer, p 7

<sup>2</sup> Stokes B, Albion T, Otahal P, Venn A. Cancer in Tasmania: Incidence and Mortality 2011. Menzies Research Institute Tasmania, Hobart, July 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Stokes B, Albion T, Otahal P, Venn A. Cancer in Tasmania: Incidence and Mortality 2011. Menzies Research Institute Tasmania, Hobart, July 2014.

<sup>4</sup> AIHW Australian Cancer Database 2011, AIHW National Mortality Database  
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It is an insidious disease with patients often suffering physical, psychological and financial distress for many years often from a young age.

Treatment of advanced melanoma is complex, associated with extremely unpleasant side effects and is relatively ineffective. While melanoma is generally curable if detected and treated early, due to the aggressive nature of advanced disease, there is only a five per cent chance of survival over five years for someone diagnosed at Stage IV. The median survival is between 6-10 months.

Metastatic melanoma imposes huge costs for families as well as the Tasmanian government and society. These are in the form of health care and research costs; productivity loss; the cost of informal care; and the loss of healthy life to individuals.

Support for patients and their families is a critical part of the Multi-Disciplinary Care approach as is the importance of prevention and early detection to reduce the financial and non-financial burden.

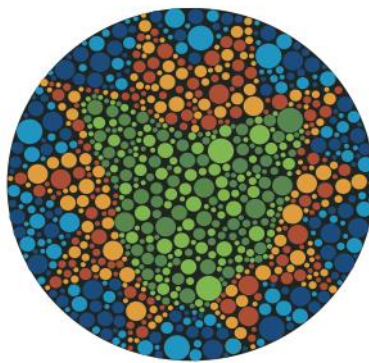
It is well documented and accepted that multidisciplinary care represents best practice in terms of treatment planning and care for cancer patients. Effective multidisciplinary care assures:

- improved treatment
- improved team communication and support
- improved coordination of patient care
- reduced service duplication
- increased opportunities for recruitment into clinical trials
- consideration of patients physical and emotional needs.

## **Melanoma Tas recommendations for the Exposure Draft of White Paper**

### **2.2.2 Integrated Cancer Services**

- For dedicated Cancer Care Coordinators – Skin Cancer be employed to work across the Southern Integrated and Northern Integrated Cancer Centres (2 x 0.5 FTE). They would be based out of the established cancer centres in Launceston and Hobart.
- Melanoma Tas to form part of the Multi-Disciplinary Team approach to provide peer support and education around treatment options for Melanoma and be based out of the Integrated Cancer Centres in the North and South.



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#### **2.4.1. The Importance of Preventative Health and Improving Health Literacy**

- The vital role of preventative health is no more visible than in the case of Melanoma. While melanoma is highly curable if detected and treated early, it can spread rapidly and be life threatening if left untreated. A diagnosis of Metastatic Melanoma brings burden to the Tasmanian community.
- Increased risk of melanoma comes from short, intense periods of exposure to UV radiation. Commonly this could occur through sun baking, while using a tanning bed and during sporting participation or viewing (Cancer Council Victoria 2012). Sunburn at any age also increases risk of skin cancer, with repeated episodes of sunburn and blistering in childhood and adolescence significantly increasing the risk for future melanoma (Melanoma Institute Australia 2014a).
- Whilst Cancer Council's Sunsmart Program has been effective in raising awareness in the early childhood and Primary School communities, there is still a high level of risk taking amongst adolescents and young adults with regard to UV exposure. There is still work to be done in educating the community around UV levels, protection, early detection – particularly in males over 60 years of age and new and emerging treatments of melanoma that were not available until recently.
- Melanoma Tas seeks to work collaboratively with the Tasmanian Government and other partner organisations such as Cancer Council Tasmania to address these needs and reduce the incidence and impact of Melanoma in Tasmania.

**By working together, we can achieve community improvement in preventative care and ultimately the health of the Tasmanian community**

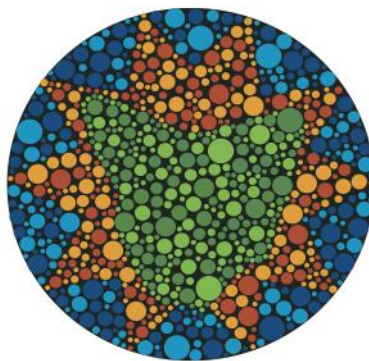
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