



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **NEW REPORT CARD ON STATE'S BIGGEST CANCER KILLER**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today launched the state's first lung cancer report card which provides a comprehensive picture of the burden of the disease and what must be done to lessen its impact.

Mrs Skinner said lung cancer continues to have an enormous impact in NSW, killing more than 2,500 people across the state each year.

"Lung cancer continues to have a significant impact on the people of NSW, with one in five cancer deaths in this state caused by the disease. It claims more lives in NSW each year than transport accidents, falls and drowning deaths combined," Mrs Skinner said.

"Survival from lung cancer remains lower than for many other cancers. It often grows silently or has symptoms that make it difficult to diagnose. It is also one of the hardest cancers to treat.

"*Lung Cancer in NSW: The Facts* is a red flag to urge the public to be aware of and listen out for the early symptoms of lung cancer.

"The report card will be instrumental in engaging both the community and health professionals to act for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer.

"One thing is clear - lung cancer does not have to be the death sentence it was 20 years ago. Survival rates have improved with advances in treatment and care and key to this is making sure people know that there are actions they can take to improve their outcomes."

The Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor David Currow, said the public has known for half a century that smoking causes lung cancer.

"In the 50 years since the first US Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of smoking, we have known this insidious habit is the leading cause of lung cancer," Professor Currow said.

"This year the US Surgeon General's office has said even those already diagnosed with lung cancer have better survival chances by quitting smoking after diagnosis.

“The *Lung Cancer in NSW: The Facts* report card serves as an important reminder to health professionals and the community that supporting people to quit smoking can help prevent lung cancer, as well as improve survival for those who already have lung cancer. “We must overcome the nihilistic attitudes towards lung cancer if we want to make a real difference.

“People diagnosed with lung cancer should ask their GP to refer them to a specialist multidisciplinary team (MDT), who can provide the best possible care for their specific disease, even if the outlook appears bleak at first,” Professor Currow said.

Mrs Skinner addressed the disproportionate impact of lung cancer in Aboriginal communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those from more socio-economically disadvantaged communities and those from rural and remote NSW.

“We know that some communities are even more affected by lung cancer and, without exception, these are communities with higher than average smoking rates,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Supporting smokers to quit is the single most effective way that we can reduce the burden of lung cancer.”

The *Lung Cancer in NSW: The Facts* report card is available online at [www.cancerinstitute.org.au/lung-cancer](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au/lung-cancer)