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MEDIA RELEASE

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Relay-funded bus to bring relief for those affected by cancer

The state's biggest fundraiser, Relay For Life, will fund a desperately needed cancer patient transport service on the North West Coast.

The new service was announced today by The Cancer Council Tasmania at the launch of the Penguin Relay For Life event 2007.

The Cancer Council Tasmania, has an ambitious statewide target to raise over \$800,000 from Relay For Life in 2007. The Tasmanian event series is the only cancer fundraiser anywhere in Australia to raise more than \$1 per head of state population.

In March, the Penguin event alone raised around \$150,000 for The Cancer Council Tasmania's support and information services.

The fundraiser is a significant North West community event and earlier this year attracted 948 participants in 46 teams for a weekend full of fun, compassion and hope.

Speaking at the 2007 launch, The Cancer Council Tasmania CEO Lawson Ride said money raised at Relay events made a real difference to the lives of those one in three Tasmanians affected by cancer.

Mr Ride used the launch to announce a free bus service for cancer patients travelling from the North West to treatment at the Launceston General Hospital's Holman Clinic.

"Patient transport systems have been wound back in recent years to the point where many cancer patients who urgently need treatment either don't qualify for existing services or live outside their operating areas," Mr Ride said.

"Many patients either have no transport or feel too unwell to drive and so rely on the kindness of carers or friends to get them to their extended chemo and radiation treatments. In some cases people have declined treatment rather than deal with transport problems that sap their vital energy," he said.

"To overcome these problems, The Cancer Council Tasmania has set up a volunteer-operated patient transport system get people to treatment without all the hassles and at no cost.

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“Thanks to the ongoing support shown by Tasmanians for Relay For Life, this long overdue service is now a reality on the Coast.”

Mr Ride paid tribute to the event's sponsors, including IGA, Hydro Tasmania and SMF along with media companies Southern Cross Television and the Tasmanian Radio Network represented on the North West Coast by 7BU and 7AD.

Relay For Life 2007 in Hobart will take place on the weekend of 24-25 February at the Domain Athletics Centre. For more information or to register a team call 1300 65 65 85.

In its seventh season, Relay For Life in 2007 will expand to a four-event series with the addition of an east coast Relay at St Helens.

Other Cancer Council support and information services funded by Relay For Life include the Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20, Cancer Connect and its four Cancer Support Centres in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

Other Tasmanian Relay For Life dates:

- HOBART – 24-25 February 2007 (Domain Athletics Centre)
- LAUNCESTON – 3-4 March 2007 (St Leonards Athletics Centre)
- EAST COAST – 31 March/1 April 2007 (St Helens Sports Complex)

For comment please call Lawson Ride on 0418 129 757 or Cathie Shirley, Director, Fundraising & Communication on 0438 081 869

Photo Opportunity

The Cancer Council's newly purchased Toyota Hi-Ace 12 seater commuter bus to be used to transport NW Coast patients to and from treatment in Launceston will be at the launch bearing its “Transport 2 Treatment” logo

Ends