

MEDIA RELEASE



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Tasmania shoulders high cancer burden

The Cancer Council Tasmania says a new report showing regional Australians die more often from cancer than city dwellers reinforces the need for more investment in prevention programs and travel and accommodation schemes.

The Cancer Council Tasmania CEO Lawson Ride says the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report, *Cancer in Australia: an overview 2006*, confirms that cancer incidence and mortality is higher in rural and regional Australia.

"This report highlights once again that the burden of cancer falls particularly hard on Tasmania with its disproportionately large rural and regional population," Mr Ride says.

"It is now well accepted that many people in regional and rural communities find it difficult or impossible to access treatment in the major population centres," he says.

"This situation forced The Cancer Council Tasmania to step in late last year and set up a transport system for cancer patients around Tasmania. At the same time we also organised an accommodation scheme for rural Tasmanians who need outpatient treatment in Hobart."

Mr Ride says the higher rates of cervical cancer, melanoma and smoking related cancers in regional areas are of particular concern. He says people outside metropolitan centres are often not exposed to as many health messages as city dwellers and therefore may lead lifestyles that expose them to higher cancer risk.

One of the few positives in the new report is that country people generally have significantly lower rates of stomach cancer, which is possibly because they eat more fruit and vegetables.

For comment please call Lawson Ride on 0418 129 757

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