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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Relay funds bring relief for those affected by cancer**

The state's biggest fundraiser, Relay For Life, will fund two desperately needed new cancer services this year.

Launched in Hobart by The Cancer Council Tasmania, Relay For Life 2007 has a statewide target to raise over \$800,000. Relay For Life Tasmania is the only cancer fundraiser anywhere in Australia to raise more than \$1 per head of state population.

In February, the Hobart event alone raised over \$318,000 for The Cancer Council Tasmania's support and information services bringing the cumulative total since it began in 2001 to over \$1.1 million for the southern event.

As well as being a fundraiser, the Hobart Relay is a significant community event and earlier this year attracted 2230 participants in 98 teams for a weekend full of fun, compassion and hope.

Speaking at the 2007 launch today, 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 the appointment of a Nurse Navigator at the Royal Hobart Hospital and a free accommodation trial for patients living over 75km from Hobart.

At a cost of \$50,000 a year, the nurse will provide a first point of contact for Tasmanians newly diagnosed with cancer. The nurse will help negotiate the cancer treatment maze for patients, their family and friends.

"As anyone directly or indirectly affected with cancer knows, the first days following a diagnosis are usually a fog of confusion, and yet there is so much to do and know," Mr Ride said.

"Now, The Cancer Council Tasmania will provide someone to turn to: a nurse to navigate the treatment options, answer questions, organise transport and point the way to the services upon which patients and their families may come to rely," he said.

"Our Nurse Navigator will become a familiar, helpful and friendly face for patients as they progress through their treatment."

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Mr Ride said the accommodation trial at Hobart's Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel would save people from rural and regional areas adding hours of uncomfortable travel each day to the discomfort of outpatient cancer treatment.

"Now cancer patients and their carers can stay in comfortable self-contained units close to treatment, free of charge\*," he said.

"It is important that those on the cancer journey get full physical, emotional and practical support.

"Thanks to the ongoing support shown by Tasmanians for Relay For Life, these long overdue services are now a reality."

Mr Ride also paid tribute to the event's sponsors, including major sponsor IGA, Hydro Tasmania and SMF along with media companies Southern Cross Television and the Tasmanian Radio Network (Magic 107.3, 7LA, 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.

The Cancer Council's support and information services 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:**

- LAUNCESTON – 3-4 March 2007 (St Leonards Athletics Centre)
- PENGUIN – 24-25 March 2007 (Dial Sporting Complex)
- 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**

*\* This is based on two people eligible for the state government's Patient Transport Assistance Scheme that pays each \$33 a day. The Cancer Council Tasmania picks up the difference between this and the self-contained unit price, which is itself subsidised by The Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel.*

**Ends**