

Media release

18 August 2011

Number one killer needs Minister of Cancer

CANGO, a consortia of eight major cancer NGOS including **Prostate cancer Foundation of NZ** , is calling for a Minister of Cancer to be appointed by the incoming government to stop New Zealand's number one killer, cancer.

Dalton Kelly, spokesman for the CANGO alliance said: "Cancer is New Zealand's biggest killer directly affecting close to 30 % of New Zealanders. Twenty-two people die of cancer every day, and a new case is diagnosed every half hour. It's a big election issue, and the new government must take a stand and appoint a Minister of Cancer."

CANGO says that New Zealand falls short on early cancer diagnosis, access to care, and that cancer outcomes for Māori and Pacific people are extremely poor.

"One in three cancer deaths could be avoided by tasking a Minister of Cancer to lead a broad and visionary cancer research strategy, plugging gaps in the cancer workforce, accurately recording and tracking cancer data and improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific people." said Mr Kelly.

CANGO launched its election manifesto today in Wellington, urging support from all political parties.

Mr Kelly said: "Cancer is such an important issue, affecting so many New Zealanders and we need to know that successive governments will put it first, whatever their politics."

CANGO's manifesto also calls for fast-tracking of a nation-wide bowel cancer screening programme, equal access to cancer prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment across the country, and improvements to the cancer registry. It also calls for support for a national cancer research strategy and improvements to how cancer services share information electronically to ensure all systems around the country are linked.

"These initiatives mean more funding, but when you can prevent seven deaths each day by targeting it strategically, it's hard to argue against." said Mr Kelly.

CANGO is an alliance of the eight most prominent cancer organisations, which have been working together for some time to distil the key issues affecting New Zealanders. CANGO members are: The Cancer Society, Leukaemia

& Blood Foundation, Child Cancer Foundation, New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation, Prostate Cancer Foundation, Beat Bowel Cancer Aotearoa, Gynaecological Cancer Foundation, and Hospice New Zealand.

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