

26 January 2022

Dr Steven Kennedy PSM
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
Parkes ACT 2600

Dear Dr Kennedy

2022-23 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge this submission to the Federal Treasury ahead of the 2022-23 Federal Budget.

This is a joint submission by the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF) and the Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group (ANZGOG).

OCRF is Australia's leading charity dedicated to funding research into the cause, detection and treatment of ovarian cancer. Established in 2000, the foundation is funded entirely by private philanthropy and receives no government funding. OCRF contributes to research programs conducted by major medical institutes and assists them to access Federal funding via the Medical Research Future Fund. Over more than 20 years, OCRF has directly invested more than \$22 million of privately sourced funds into promising and innovative ovarian cancer research, supporting the efforts of some of the nation's leading research institutes.

ANZGOG is the peak national gynaecological cancer research organisation for Australia and New Zealand. Its purpose is to improve the outcomes and quality of life for women with gynaecological cancers through conducting and promoting cooperative clinical trials and undertaking multidisciplinary research into causes, prevention, and treatments of gynaecological cancer. ANZGOG has more than 1,150 members in clinical oncology, laboratory research and allied health specialties. We actively share our learnings to improve clinical and research practice and working to drive excellence in clinical research. ANZGOG's research has changed clinical practice both locally and globally.

Each year, more than 1700 Australian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, with more than 1000 women dying each year of the disease. For many women, treatment is too late, as there is presently no early detection test, as with breast and cervical cancer.

In the forthcoming Budget round, we are seeking direct funding support for a ***National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program***. This Program is based on the Zero Childhood Cancer Project, which has shown that a systematic national approach delivers significant improvements in treatment and health outcomes for children and young adults with similarly complex, high-risk cancers.

Program budget

The OCRF and ANZGOG proposal seeks total funding of **\$155.4 million** over a **four-year** period. The bid comprises the following components:

- \$73.9 million in molecular profiling for every woman diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- \$1.5 million in research to develop next generation precision medicine through functional profiling techniques
- \$20 million per annum (\$80 million over the four years) in competitive funding to be made available each year to support the attraction of precision medicine research in ovarian cancer

We believe that the ***National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program*** would deliver significant cost savings in other funding programs within government.

First, we believe the economies of scale attained in the proposed testing program would achieve more than **\$3.9 million savings** ahead of the current test program, while lower costs of clinical trials recruitment would deliver between **\$1.0 million to \$1.2 million** in savings.

Second, OCRF and ANZGOG consider that the use of molecular profiling and similar screening programs as part of a ***National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program*** would potentially avoid the prescribing of high-cost therapies to patients for whom benefit would be limited or ineffective over time. Treatments for ovarian cancer have not shifted significantly over the last thirty years and do not necessarily recognise the complex combination of different cancers involved, sometimes leading to unintentional misdirection of funding to ultimately ineffective treatment programs.

An improved patient selection under the ***National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program*** would enable significant savings on high-cost therapies, ranging from between **\$40.7 million and \$81.4 million** over the four-year period.

In addition, the ***National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program*** would have the capacity to attract substantial private industry support for clinical trials. It would also create

professional opportunities in specialist research, leading to the creation of between 380 to 400 additional jobs over the initial four-year period.

Finally, we believe that the proposed **National Ovarian Cancer Precision Medicine Research Program** would elevate the profile of Australian ovarian cancer research. It would build on the nation's demonstrated leadership in precision medicine research through the International Cancer Genome Consortium.

Further detail, including a benefit-cost analysis of the proposed funding model, is attached. This comprehensive bid has been prepared on the best available evidence to demonstrate the potential benefits.

We would be pleased to arrange a more detailed briefing for Treasury on the benefits of the program and would welcome the opportunity to not only discuss the proposal more fully but to assist Government in further developing the model and its potential implementation.

If you require further information, we can be contacted on 0414 181 303 (Lucinda) or 0400 333 118 (Alison).

Yours sincerely



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Improving life for
women through
cancer research