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ASIA EDITION

Australia announces first strategic action plan for blood cancers

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The Government will provide more than $600,000 to the Leukaemia Foundation as part of Australia's first National Strategic Action Plan for Blood Cancer.

As part of the 2020/21 Budget, the Australian government will provide more than $600,000 to the Leukaemia Foundation as part of Australia's first National Strategic Action Plan for Blood Cancer.

The National Strategic Action Plan will deliver continued support for people battling blood cancers. This funding will deliver Optimal Care Pathways for blood cancer patients, and enable the Blood Cancer Taskforce to continue its vital work, providing strategic oversight of the implementation until the end of next year.

Optimal Care Pathways will provide wide ranging, evidence-based recommendations for best practice care, from the point of diagnosis, through treatment, survivorship and end-of-life care.

The Blood Cancer Taskforce, made up of representatives from leading Australian haematologists, researchers, and cancer charities, will continue in their roles of coordination of the blood cancer community and implementation of actions in this National Action Plan.

This announcement builds on the $150,000 provided in 2019-20 to establish the expert Blood Cancer Taskforce to develop the National Strategic Action Plan for Blood Cancer.

The plan was developed in consultation between governments, researchers, non-government organisations, health care professionals, industry, patients, carers and advocacy groups.

This commitment adds to the Government's significant investment to combat blood cancer, including more than $310 million for blood cancer research from 2013-2019, through the National Health and Medical Research Council, Medical Research Future Fund and Cancer Australia.

The government has also delivered more than $5 billion for blood cancer medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from 2013-14 to 2018-19.

The government recently provided access to ground-breaking CAR-T cell therapy for several types of Leukaemia and lymphoma.

CAR T-cell therapy uses the body's own immune system to fight cancer. The patients T cells are extracted from the body, genetically reengineered and programmed to recognise and destroy cancer cells, and then reimplanted into the body.

Together with states and territories, the government currently provides access to Kymriah, a CAR-T cell therapy, through specialist hospitals.