

February 2018

It is estimated that 134,000 Australians will be diagnosed with cancer this year and that this number will rise to 150,000 by 2020 and to continue to rise thereafter.

As well as an increasing number of new cancer diagnoses, cancer survival has increased due to improved detection and treatment. Currently, 68% of people diagnosed with cancer in Australia live more than 5 years beyond their cancer diagnosis.¹

How many Australians have been directly affected by cancer?

We estimate that there are currently over 1.1 million (1 in 22) Australians with a personal history of cancer, with slightly more women (51%) than men (49%).

How many people will be living with or beyond cancer in Australia in 2040?

We estimate that there will be almost 1.9 million people with a personal history of cancer in 2040;² that is, 1 in 18 Australians will have been diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.

Of these, it is predicted that there will be fewer women (47%) than men (53%).

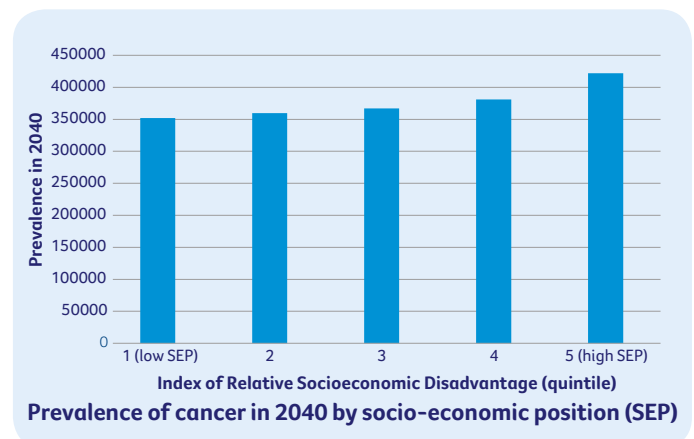
While the majority (64%) of people who have been diagnosed with cancer will have lived more than 5 years beyond diagnosis, a substantial proportion will have been more recently diagnosed and may still be undergoing cancer treatment or surveillance, while others may be living with advanced cancer.

More than half (58%) of Australians with a personal history of cancer will be aged 70 years or older in 2040.

The table opposite shows a breakdown of the predicted numbers of people living with, or beyond cancer by their age in 2040.

Age in 2040	Number of people living with or beyond cancer	% of all people living with or beyond cancer	% of all Australians of that age group
Under 15	6,000	0.3	0.1
15-29	20,000	1.0	0.3
30-39	41,000	2.2	0.9
40-49	107,000	5.7	2.4
50-59	231,000	12.3	5.5
60-69	385,000	20.5	11.4
70-79	553,000	29.4	19.5
80 and over	538,000	28.6	23.7
Total	1,881,000	100.0	

The figure below shows that a greater proportion of people with a personal history of cancer in 2040 will be people of high socio-economic position (SEP) (20% more than people of low SEP), most likely due to earlier detection, better prognosis or being diagnosed with cancers with better survival.



How many people will be living with, or beyond, specific cancers?

The below figure shows the predicted numbers of people living with or beyond cancer from the most common types of cancer.

In Australia, people who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, breast cancer, bowel cancer and melanoma account for 64% of people who have a personal history of cancer.

The number of people living with or beyond a particular cancer reflects both how many people are diagnosed with the cancer, as well as the survival for this type of cancer, which can be strongly influenced by the effectiveness of treatment. For example, breast cancer is currently the most common cancer in women in Australia and the overall 5-year survival¹ for breast cancer in women is 90%. Conversely, lung cancer is the fifth most common cancer diagnosed in Australia and has a 5-year survival¹ of just 16%.

What impact will this have?

With more Australians living many years beyond their cancer diagnosis, there will be increased need for support services and information, particularly for those who may be struggling to cope with the physical and psychological obstacles they face after treatment.

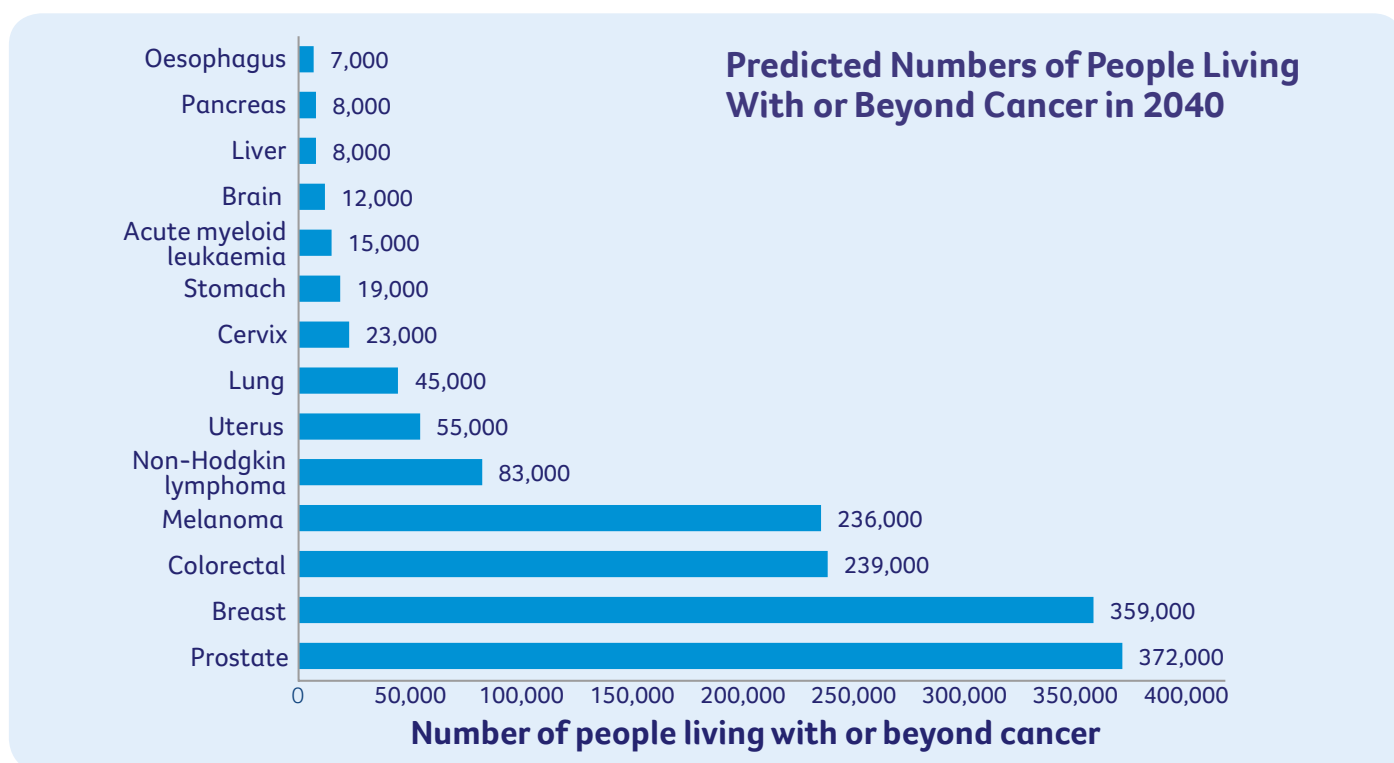
There is strong evidence that post-treatment information and support programs, of which Cancer Council offers many, benefit cancer survivors.

Continued investment in prevention programs will also be vital to tackle the increasing numbers of cancers related to obesity and alcohol consumption, as well as to consolidate the substantial impact of programs such as SunSmart and Quit.

Cancer research will also continue to be as important as ever, particularly that which addresses inequalities in outcomes between population subgroups and between cancer types, with 5-year survival¹ for cancers of the lung, liver, pancreas and mesothelioma still below 20%.

How reliable are these predictions?

The numbers provided above are based on the observed cancer incidence and survival over the last 35 years.² It is difficult to predict how cancer incidence might change over time, particularly if exposure to some known risk factors such as tobacco continues to decrease, while the exposure to others, such as overweight and obesity, increases. Another factor to consider is that improved early detection of cancer (for example, through screening) can lead to increased incidence. Early detection also leads to better survival, as do improvements in treatments for cancer. These possible trends in incidence and survival have not been accounted for in these calculations, which means that the projected numbers are most likely to be underestimates of the numbers that will be observed in 2040.



¹ Relative survival estimate five years after diagnosis. Relative survival is net survival from cancer – the percentage who would have survived if cancer were the only cause of death.

² These numbers were calculated based on data from the Victorian Cancer Registry, which is the most up to date cancer registry in Australia and has collected information on all cancers diagnosed in the state since 1982. The number of cancer survivors in Victoria as at 31 December 2016 was determined by cancer type, sex, age and, for some analyses, time since diagnosis and socio-economic

position, the latter defined for the geographical area (statistical area level 1) of usual residence at diagnosis using the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage from the census closest to year of diagnosis. For each of these categories, the proportion of survivors was calculated relative to the total Victorian population in that category in 2016. These proportions were then applied to the total Australian population for 2016 and 2040 as determined and projected, respectively, by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Population Projections, Australia, 2013 to 2101 [series B]).