



The Hon Mark Butler MP

Minister for Health and Aged Care
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Butler,

Request for Meeting: Urgent Need for National Focus on Brain Cancer

We are writing on behalf of Australia's brain cancer community to respectfully request a meeting to discuss the urgent and long-overdue need for transformative national action on brain cancer.

Although classified as a less common cancer, brain cancer has among the **highest mortality rates per incidence** of any cancer and imposes a disproportionately high burden on patients, families, society and the health system. It results in a wide and complex range of physical, cognitive, psychological and social impairments—arguably the most severe of all cancers. These impacts place significant strain not only on families but on public systems including the NDIS, healthcare, aged care and disability supports.

Despite Australia's world-class and equitable healthcare system, outcomes for brain cancer remain among the worst. For patients diagnosed with high-grade brain cancer, median survival is still just 14 months—a figure unchanged in decades. In stark contrast, cancers such as breast cancer have seen significant improvements due to long-term, coordinated national investment and strategy.

Today, our community is coming together to change this. A national alliance of researchers, clinicians, patients, families and advocates is developing the inaugural **Australian Brain Cancer Landscape**—a landmark document highlighting the burden, complexity and systemic neglect of brain cancer in Australia. It outlines the urgent need for action across three pillars:

- **Research:** Targeted, translational research that matches the biological complexity of brain tumours
- **Clinical Care:** Equitable access to best-practice multidisciplinary treatment across metro, regional and rural settings
- **Support Services:** Comprehensive care models that respond to the long-term, life-altering impacts on patients and carers

Australia has the scientific talent, community commitment and proven policy capability to lead globally. Our healthcare and medical research systems have delivered international breakthroughs—from the Gardasil vaccine to high-impact cancer programs. The Australian Brain Cancer Mission is a powerful precedent of what can be achieved when government, philanthropy and community unite.

However, brain cancer remains significantly underfunded. The pharmaceutical industry has retreated from brain cancer due to its biological complexity and clinical trial challenges. Without government leadership, momentum is stalling, and lives continue to be lost.

The economic cost of inaction is rising. Brain cancer patients require more intensive long-term care, access the NDIS at 4–5 times the rate of other cancers, and experience profound social and workforce dislocation. The cost of care is high—but the cost of not curing brain cancer is even higher.

We respectfully request a meeting to discuss our work and explore opportunities for collaboration to co-develop a **National Roadmap for Brain Cancer**—one that drives coordinated national investment in research, clinical care and survivorship. With government leadership, we can deliver measurable outcomes and hope for the thousands of Australians impacted by this devastating disease.

Those requesting this meeting include:

- Professor Richard Scolyer AO, Co-Director, Melanoma Institute Australia; 2024 Australian of the Year
- Professor Mike Fay, Chair, Mark Hughes Foundation – Brain Cancer Research
- Gail O’Brien AO, Director, Chris O’Brien Lifehouse
- Craig Cardinal, Chair, Brain Tumour Alliance Australia (BTAA); Chair, Australian Brain Tumour Collaborative (ABTC)

We would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this matter at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Cardinal

Chair, Brain Tumour Alliance Australia & Australian Brain Tumour Collaborative (ABTC)

The ABTC represents a group of nine organisations dedicated to improving outcomes for Australians living with brain tumours.

