

WORKING TOWARDS BEST CANCER CARE

Summer 2010

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## Message from the Director

As the year comes to a close, I think about all the achievements and challenges over the past year and acknowledge the hard work and perseverance by the many people working closely with NEMICS.

This year has brought in a new Chair of the Governance Group, Alan Lilly and a new Program Manager, Kathy Simons. We have had the governance review report tabled and its recommendations accepted. We have worked to jointly shape the strategic direction for NEMICS and are putting the final touches on the Strategic Plan for the next three years.

This year has seen the implementation projects for routine supportive care being rolled out to all of our member health services; one is just beginning and others are at various stages of progress. Good work is being done in this important area of our care.

The NEMICS supportive care directory is now a web-based product that will improve the usefulness and timeliness of the information available for consumers and their families as well as clinicians searching for services to meet their patient's needs.

One last highlight I will mention is the introduction of the web-based multidisciplinary management tool, CANMAP. The directorate staff are working with the chairs of MDMs to introduce this system to help streamline and improve the MDM processes.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and peaceful holiday season and best wishes for 2011.



A/Prof Paul Mitchell

## A new initiative for Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer

In 2011 NEMICS will be partnering with the Victorian and Tasmanian Youth Cancer Network to improve outcomes for adolescents and young adults (AYA) with cancer.

Adolescents and young adults with cancer aged between 15-25 years have unique health needs that affect quality of life, long-term health and engagement in society, education and employment.

The Youth Cancer Network is a federal government initiative administered by CanTeen, which aims to improve the services, support and care for adolescents and young adults with cancer. A total of \$15 million has been allocated for state and national projects.

In line with Victoria's Cancer Action Plan and the Integrated Cancer Services in Victoria and Tasmania, the project aims to:

- develop a sustainable statewide model of care to provide quality, coordinated medical care and meet supportive care needs
- increase participation in clinical trials
- build capacity of the workforce through education and training.

National projects include:

- development of a national minimum dataset
- development of a website listing nationwide services for AYAs
- building workforce capacity by developing a post-graduate certificate program and the establishment of a national network for health professionals
- increasing research into cancer treatments for this group of patients.



Anna Mascitti commences with the AYA project in NEMICS in January.

Anna has worked as a project officer for the past three years and brings great experience to this role.

### NEMICS

c/o Austin Health  
145 Studley Road  
PO Box 5555  
Heidelberg VIC 3084

Directorate Office:  
11 Martin Street,  
Heidelberg VIC 3084

T: 03 9496 3322  
F: 03 9496 3898

[contactus@nemics.org.au](mailto:contactus@nemics.org.au)

[www.nemics.org.au](http://www.nemics.org.au)

## Supportive Care

### Mercy Hospital for Women Supportive Care Project

Mercy Hospital for Women has begun a project to introduce routine screening of patients for supportive care needs and establishing organisation-wide referral processes. This project is funded through a NEMICS Supportive Care grant.



*Marja Steur (L) and Melissa McDonald, ADON  
Mercy Hospital for Women*

In November Marja Steur signed on as project officer for the 12 month project.

Marja has a background in child health, mental health and project management. She comes as a welcome addition to the network of people working in our member health services to embed supportive care in the routine management of cancer patients.

NEMICS Supportive Care Directory is now a searchable web-based directory of a wide range of supportive care services.

The service has been specifically developed to address the needs of people with cancer and their families.

[www.FindCancerCare.org.au](http://www.FindCancerCare.org.au)

## CANMAP Rollout Starts Across the Region

NEMICS is currently working with Austin and Eastern health services to introduce a web-based tool, CANMAP, to help run the growing number of cancer multidisciplinary meetings (MDMs).

CANMAP is a system for:

- submitting patients for discussion, which is possible to do at any computer with internet access via a logon and password
- generating an agenda that is easily sent to all participants of the meeting
- recording the discussion and recommended treatment plan during the meetings
- producing a summary of the discussion and recommendations that is placed into the Medical Record.

Lymphoma/haematology, hepato-biliary/pancreas, head and neck, and lung meetings are the first to be rolled out. It is anticipated that Northern Health meetings will start using CANMAP in 2011. All cancer MDMs within NEMICS health services will have the opportunity to adopt this system.



*CANMAP being used in the Eastern Health Lung MDM*

### Funding Opportunity

The Victorian Cancer Agency has announced a funding round for the first half of 2011

Categories include:

- Early Career Seed Grants
- Supportive Care Capacity Building Grants
- Supportive Care Scholarships

Guidelines will be released on the Victorian Cancer Agency website early 2011

[www.victoriancanceragency.org.au](http://www.victoriancanceragency.org.au)

## Consumer Update

### Consumer Education

The second **Living Well with Prostate Cancer** event was held on 23 November. This session focused on continence and sexual health issues.

A panel including a urologic oncologist, a continence physiotherapist and nurses with expertise in sexual health and urology, presented information about causes, management and resources available to deal with these often unspoken problems for people with prostate cancer.

These sessions are designed to provide men with information that assists and empowers them to better manage their prostate cancer diagnosis. Feedback from the two sessions conducted this year has been very positive and there is much interest for ongoing sessions in 2011.

Thanks to the clinicians involved for their time and expertise. Special thanks to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, Max Shub and Austin Health cancer services for their ongoing contribution and enthusiasm in helping to plan and run these sessions.

### Consumer Participation Plan

NEMICS consumers met in early December to review their engagement with NEMICS over the past year and to start developing the next Consumer Participation Plan 2011 – 2013.

This renewed plan will build on work already done and continue our efforts at increasing the involvement and contribution by consumers in cancer services reform. Consumers currently make an important contribution in identifying areas of service improvement and project planning.

Information gathered during the planning day will be compiled and incorporated into the participation plan. There will be opportunities for feedback from the interested consumers prior to finalisation of the plan.

2011 starting dates and schedules for MDMs across the region are available on the multidisciplinary tab of the NEMICS website

[www.nemics.org.au](http://www.nemics.org.au)

## Partnership Project Updates

### Grampians Regional to Metropolitan Referrals Project

This project is working to improve the transfer of information and the continuity of care for patients from the Grampians region who are transferred for some of their care to metropolitan oncology services.

A transfer/discharge toolkit has been developed by the project team and is being trialled in several sites in metropolitan and Ballarat health services. The toolkit aims to facilitate a complete information exchange between cancer service providers and ensures that rural/regional GPs receive detailed, up-to-date summaries on progress of their patients.

The trial is due to run until February 2011 with the final report due in March 2011.

### PET Project

One aspect of this project is to improve consumer information about PET scanning as a part of their cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Consultation with consumers identified the following needs:

- improved information about PET scans, process and costs involved
- information for those travelling long distances for a PET scan
- detailed information and clearer maps for the location of the Centre for PET at Austin Health.

Information is being developed for:

- Centre for PET website, including downloadable PDF information sheets
- links to NEMICS Supportive Care Directory.

## *Season's Greetings*

The staff at NEMICS thank everyone for their support throughout the year, and wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.

Please note that the office will be closed from 24 December 2010 re-opening 4 January 2011.