

MEDIA RELEASE**Head and Neck Cancer Australia calls for urgent action on prostheses inequity following independent review****5 June 2026**

Head and Neck Cancer Australia (HANCA) is calling on the Australian Government to act urgently on the findings of the newly released *Independent Review of Cancer Prostheses Equity in Australia*, warning that patients with life-altering facial disfigurement following life-saving cancer surgery continue to face significant barriers to accessing facial prosthetics and urging the introduction of a nationally funded scheme with a clear timeline for reform.

The KPMG-led review, commissioned by the Department of Health, confirms that Australians living with cancer face inequitable access to facial prosthetics, with gaps driven by cost, geography, inconsistent eligibility criteria and a lack of nationally coordinated support.

For people affected by Head and Neck Cancer, these inequities are stark and well-known. Unlike other prostheses, access to facial prosthetics remains fragmented and unsupported by a consistent national funding pathway.

Head and Neck Cancer Australia has been calling for change since 2024 and is urging the Government to commit to a clear and time-bound plan to implement the review's recommendations.

'This report reaffirms what patients and healthcare professionals have been telling us for years, that access to facial prosthetics in Australia depends far too much on where you live and what you can afford,' says Nadia Rosin, CEO of Head and Neck Cancer Australia.

'This is not a matter of cosmetic enhancement, it is fundamental cancer survivorship care which is vital to restoring function, identity and quality of life.'

‘Survivorship care is cancer care, and we are simply calling for equitable treatment,’ said HANCA CEO, Nadia Rosin, noting breast prostheses have been funded since 2008. ‘We will not stop advocating until these nationally recognised gaps are addressed.’

The review report highlights:

- Significant inequities in access to cancer-related prostheses across Australia
- Fragmented programs and schemes, particularly for less common prostheses such as facial prosthetics after Head and Neck Cancer
- Financial and geographic barriers limiting patient access to care (health.gov.au)

HANCA has called for a nationally administered provider reimbursement scheme, underpinned by accreditation and training standards, supported by a modest \$25 million investment over four years. This would close critical gaps in Head and Neck Cancer care - restoring dignity, confidence, and quality of life for people facing profound facial disfigurement following life-saving cancer surgery.

HANCA warns that without swift government action, patients will continue to fall through the cracks. To address this gap the Government must:

- Provide a formal response to the KPMG review and commit to a clear implementation timeline
- Establish a national scheme to deliver equitable access to facial prosthetics for people affected by Head and Neck Cancer
- Allocate targeted funding in the forward estimates
- Ensure transparent reporting and accountability mechanisms to track progress.

While the Government continues to state its commitment to closing the gap and improving outcomes for people affected by Head and Neck Cancer, that commitment must extend

beyond treatment- aligning with the Australian Cancer Plan's priority on equity to ensure all patients can access the survivorship care they need.

It's time to face up to the gap in Head and Neck Cancer care.

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Quotes attributable to Nadia Rosin, CEO, Head and Neck Cancer Australia:

- For people with Head and Neck Cancer, the gap is particularly stark. Access to facial prosthetics remain fragmented, with no consistent national funding pathway, leaving many patients without essential survivorship care.
- This review confirms what patients and healthcare professionals have been telling us for years, that access to facial prosthetics in Australia is inconsistent, and far too often determined by where you live and what you can afford. Financial barriers and geographic inequities have created a sort of postcode lottery for people who have beaten Head and Neck Cancer but are left without parts of their face.
- This is not a cosmetic issue, facial prosthetics are critical cancer survivorship care, restoring a person's function and quality of life following life-saving cancer treatment.
- The Government must commit to a clear plan and timeline to implement system-wide change on a national scale to deliver equitable access to facial prosthetics, it's time to face up to the gap in Head and Neck Cancer care.
- Survivorship care is cancer care, and people recovering from Head and Neck Cancer deserve the same equitable access to prosthetic support as other cancer patients.