

Submission  
No 444

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO  
HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES IN RURAL,  
REGIONAL AND REMOTE NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** The Kaden Centre

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## **About The Kaden Centre**

The Kaden Centre is a not-for-profit organisation based in Newcastle NSW. We provide evidence-based, targeted exercise programs to people experiencing all stages of cancer and chronic health conditions, aiming to promote survivorship, reduce morbidity and improve quality of life.

The Kaden Centre is staffed by AHPRA registered physiotherapists and exercise physiologists who have specific training in the provision of care to people diagnosed with cancer or a chronic health condition. Our allied health professionals work closely with other health services, including GP's, local hospitals and private specialists in the community.

The Kaden Centre is actively engaged in knowledge translation to ensure people with cancer and chronic health conditions are accessing the most up to date evidence-based exercise focused interventions. Emerging research indicates this will likely minimise dependence on tertiary healthcare services, reduce health inequities associated with the condition and improve general wellbeing.

The Kaden Centre is also participating in multiple research projects to contribute to the newly emerging evidence base for exercise oncology.

## **Introduction**

The Kaden Centre is thankful for the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry into health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW.

Our submission relates to the Terms of Reference as they relate to oncology treatment in rural, regional and remote NSW.

- (i) The access and availability of oncology treatment in rural, regional and remote NSW.

As Director of The Kaden Centre and survivor of multiple cancers, I would like to thank the government for the work they are currently doing to improve health outcomes for people at risk of and diagnosed with cancer and/or chronic health conditions. In particular I would like to note the benefits associated with the The NSW Cancer Plan, noting the focus on improving cancer outcomes, building research capacity, strengthening knowledge translation and improving the quality of life for people with cancer.

Cancer is the leading burden of disease in Australia, and one-third of all cancer patients live in rural or remote areas, where the gap in available care and services remains significant and disproportional.

Postcode has a notable impact on a person's survivorship, with remote and rural cancer patients having a 35% increased risk of dying within 5 years of diagnosis, compared to those who live in metropolitan areas.

Research shows that in remote and rural areas there are:

- Higher incidences of cancer
- A shortage of diagnostic and treatment centres
- Lower quality of cancer services
- A lower rate of physical activity

Targeted exercise for cancer patients is a cost-effective and evidence-based approach to reducing some of these inequalities. Current evidence indicates that the integration of exercise oncology in the cancer treatment protocol can:

- Increase survivorship by 30-60%
- Reduce treatment side effects
- Increase treatment tolerance, enabling the completion of treatments
- Reduce mental ill-health
- Improve quality of life outcomes

The Clinical Oncology Society of Australia recommends that exercise should be embedded into standard practice in cancer care, being included as an adjunct therapy to counteract the adverse effects of cancer and its treatment. Their position statement clearly recognises the benefits of exercise in cancer care, stating that "best practice includes referral to an accredited exercise physiologist and/or physiotherapist with experience in cancer care".

In 2016 Deloitte's economic assessment found that the overall benefits of accredited exercise physiologist interventions in cancer care was estimated to be \$6,562 per person. This figure incorporates the averted losses associated with reduced quality of life, reduced consumer productivity and necessary health system expenditure.

### **Recommendations**

Given the evidence that supports the inclusion of targeted exercise to reduce expenditure and improve outcomes for people with cancer or a chronic health condition, The Kaden Centre welcomes the opportunity to outline a number of recommendations for the NSW Government. These are particularly relevant to people living in rural and remote NSW, as they represent cost-effective measures to minimise geographical health inequalities, reduce the burden on tertiary health services and promote increased survivorship.

- 1) Enable access to exercise physiologists/physiotherapists in cancer care, through hospital and community-based settings in rural and remote NSW.
- 2) Adopt an upscaled Kaden Centre Model to be rolled out statewide, with a particular focus on rural and remote areas of NSW.
- 3) Formally recognise Exercise Oncology as an adjunct therapy in mainstream oncology and biomedical services.
- 4) Expand the availability of Telehealth Exercise Oncology programs to rural and remote areas of NSW.
- 5) Support ongoing knowledge translation initiatives to ensure best practice service provision in cancer care.
- 6) Support ongoing research into the role of targeted exercise to reduce health care expenditure and improve health outcomes for people with cancer or a chronic health condition.

Yours Sincerely

Suzanne Clark-Pitrolo  
Managing Director

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