

# emale

IMPROVING MALE HEALTH & WELLBEING

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**SPECIAL  
CANCER ISSUE**

## AMHF Funding announced

The Australian Men's Health Forum (AMHF), the peak body for implementing a social approach to improving male health in Australia, was received a four year funding package from the Federal Government. An announcement of the funding was made by Greg Hunt, Minister for Health at the official launch of Men's Health Week at Parliament House on 13<sup>th</sup> June in Canberra. This event was organised by the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre to mark the start of Men's Health Week in Australia.

In attendance was the Opposition spokesperson for Health Catherine King, Professor John MacDonald, Director of the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, AMHF President Julian Krieg and two AMHF Board Members Jonathan Bedloe from Tasmania and Kim Hopkins from NSW.

The Men's Health Week launch speech was delivered by the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove. He spoke eloquently on the importance of improving male health and actively engaged with attendees after the formal proceedings listening intently to individuals and their roles in male health programs.

The announcement of the funding for AMHF also included renewed funding for the Men's Information and Resource Centre (MHIRC) as well as Andrology Australia. The Opposition spokesperson for Health Catherine King emphasised the bipartisan support for men's health. There were also a significant number of politicians present from both major parties and some independents' as well.

AMHF has been the peak body for improving male health in Australia since 2001 and is managed by a dedicated volunteer board who administer the organisation with limited resources. The major source of funds supporting AMHF is from the biannual Australian Men's Health Gathering which incorporates the Australian Men's Health Conference and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Male Health Convention. Various commercial, government and not-for-profit organisations assist in sponsoring the gathering.



**New AMHF Development Officer Glen Poole**

AMHF also has close links with the peak men's health organisations in all states and territories, plus other organisations and individuals throughout Australia who work towards improving male health and wellbeing.

The new funding allows for the creation of the organisation's first paid positions including a new position of Development Officer which has been filled by Glen Poole, well known for his work in the men's health field in the UK and over the last two years in Australia where Glen now resides.

AMHF does not deliver health services, but rather provides opportunities to bring together its membership and other interested parties to share knowledge and best practice concepts and information to better address the health and wellbeing of all Australian men and boys.

**AMHF is currently conducting a survey to help establish priorities for position papers and other AMHF activities. I would encourage all **emale** readers to complete the survey [here](#).**

For more information on AMHF visit the [website](#)

## Cancer diagnosis more common than weddings in Scotland



A CANCER diagnosis is now one of the most common life-changing events in Scottish life, with more cases confirmed in the last year than marriages or first births. Figures from Macmillan Cancer Support showed there were 31,467 cancers diagnosed in 2015 — excluding non-melanoma skin cancer — compared with 29,691 marriages and 23,695 women giving birth for the first time.

The charity said it remains the disease or condition people in Scotland most fear, ahead of other conditions such as Alzheimer's. The research is part of a new campaign, titled Life with Cancer, which the charity hopes will remove some of the fear around diagnosis and highlight support available.

Trisha Hatt, Macmillan's partnership manager in Scotland, said: "This research highlights that for many people, cancer will be a fact of life "Survival rates from the illness are increasing, and even those with incurable cancer often live for many years.

"This report is about highlighting what life with cancer really looks like for a lot of people — looking after their children, seeing friends and even going to work. "Most people say they want to keep life as normal as possible after treatment. That's why it's vital they get the support they need to deal with the emotional, practical and financial problems cancer can cause."

Mette Baillie, who is originally from Denmark but has lived in **Edinburgh** since 1991, was diagnosed with breast cancer in May last year. The 46-year-old wedding dress designer said she struggled at first but has since found "huge support". "My sister died of colon cancer 14 years ago and when you have had an experience like that it flavours what you think about cancer," Baillie said. "Being diagnosed with cancer affects all aspects of your life. I run my own business and have worked many years to get it to the level it is today. The fact of just leaving it was really upsetting.

"I decided that I would work as much as I could and not really tell anyone I had cancer. I felt there was a huge stigma to it and I didn't want people to say: 'You can't work, you have to stay at home.' I wanted to make that decision myself. "I had huge support from the people I work with and it felt really good I could carry on with some sort of normality in my life.

"It feels nice now I'm on the other side — every day I have more energy and it just feels amazing." Doctors and scientists are unaware exactly what causes many cancers, but there are factors which increase the risk such as smoking, a poor diet and lack of exercise. Treatment is more effective if the disease is diagnosed early and people are advised to take part in **NHS** screening programmes. In Scotland there are screening programmes for bowel cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer.

SOURCE [Bridget Morris](#) Journalist

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 M 0417 772 390 E [greg@menshealthservices.com.au](mailto:greg@menshealthservices.com.au) W [www.menshealthservices.com.au](http://www.menshealthservices.com.au) Cover Photo taken by Sophie Tyler of Family Hotel Newcastle Manager and his best friend.

## Busting top cancer myths

Google ‘cancer’ and you’ll be faced with millions of web pages. And the number of YouTube videos you find if you look up ‘cancer cure’ is similarly vast. The problem is that much of the information out there is at best inaccurate, or at worst dangerously misleading. There are plenty of evidence-based, easy to understand pages about cancer, but there are just as many, if not more, pages spreading myths.

And it can be hard to distinguish fact from fiction, as much of the inaccurate information looks and sounds perfectly plausible. But if you scratch the surface and look at the evidence, many continually perpetuated ‘truths’ become unstuck.

This article set the record straight on 10 cancer myths we regularly encounter. Driven by the evidence, not by rhetoric or anecdote, we describe what the reality of research actually shows to be true.

### MYTH 1: CANCER IS A MAN-MADE, MODERN DISEASE

It might be more prominent in the public consciousness now than in times gone by, but cancer isn’t just a ‘modern’, man-made disease of Western society. Cancer has existed as long as humans have. It was described thousands of years ago by Egyptian and Greek physicians, and researchers have discovered tell-tale signs of cancer in a 3,000-year-old skeleton. While it’s certainly true that global lifestyle-related diseases like cancer are on the rise, the biggest risk factor for cancer is age. The simple fact is that more people are living long enough to develop cancer because of our success in tackling infectious diseases and other historical causes of death such as malnutrition. It’s perfectly normal for DNA damage in our cells to build up as we age, and such damage can lead to cancer developing. We’re also now able to diagnose cancers more accurately, thanks to advances in screening, imaging and pathology.

### MYTH 2: SUPERFOODS PREVENT CANCER

Blueberries, beetroot, broccoli, garlic, green tea... the list goes on. Despite thousands of websites claiming otherwise, there’s no such thing as a ‘superfood’. It’s a marketing term used to sell products and has no scientific basis. That’s not to say you shouldn’t think about what you eat. Some foods are clearly healthier than others. The odd blueberry or mug of green tea certainly could be part of a healthy, balanced diet. Stocking up on fruits and veg is a great idea, and eating a range of different veg is helpful too, but the specific vegetables you choose doesn’t really matter.

### MYTH 3: ‘ACIDIC’ DIETS CAUSE CANCER

Some myths about cancer are surprisingly persistent, despite flying in the face of basic biology. One such idea is that overly ‘acidic’ diets cause your blood to become ‘too acidic’, which can increase your risk of cancer. The proposed answer: increase your intake of healthier ‘alkaline’ foods like green vegetables and fruits (including, paradoxically, lemons). This is biological nonsense. True, cancer cells can’t live in an overly alkaline environment, but neither can any of the other cells in your body. Blood is usually slightly alkaline. This is tightly regulated by the kidneys within a very narrow and perfectly healthy range. It can’t be changed for any meaningful amount of time by what you eat. And while eating green veg is certainly healthy, that’s not because of any effect on how acid or alkaline your body is.

### MYTH 4: CANCER HAS A SWEET TOOTH

Another idea we see a lot is that sugar apparently ‘feeds cancer cells’, suggesting that it should be completely banished from a patient’s diet. This is an unhelpful oversimplification of a highly complex area that we’re only just starting to understand. ‘Sugar’ is a catch-all term. It refers to a range of molecules including simple sugars found in plants, glucose and fructose. The white stuff in the bowl on your table is called sucrose and is made from glucose and fructose stuck together. All sugars are carbohydrates, molecules made from carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. Carbs – whether from cake or a carrot – get broken down in our digestive system to release glucose and fructose. These get absorbed into the bloodstream to provide energy for us to live.

When it comes to offering diet tips, research shows that the same boring healthy eating advice still holds true. Fruit, vegetables, fibre, white meat and fish are good. Too much fat, salt, sugar, red or processed meat and alcohol are less so.



## Busting top cancer myths

### MYTH 5: CANCER IS A FUNGUS – AND SODIUM BICARBONATE IS THE CURE

This ‘theory’ comes from the not-very-observant observation that “cancer is always white”. One obvious problem with this idea – apart from the fact that cancer cells are clearly not fungal in origin – is that cancer isn’t always white. Some tumours are. But some aren’t. Ask any pathologist or cancer surgeon. Proponents of this theory say that cancer is caused by infection by the fungus candida, and that tumours are actually the body’s attempt at protecting itself from this infection. But there’s no evidence to show that this is true.

### MYTH 6: THERE’S A MIRACLE CANCER CURE...

From cannabis to coffee enemas, the internet is awash with videos and personal anecdotes about ‘natural’ ‘miracle’ cures for cancer. And we only hear about the success stories – what about the people who have tried it and have not survived? The dead can’t speak, and often people who make bold claims for ‘miracle’ cures only pick their best cases, without presenting the full picture. This highlights the importance of publishing data from peer-reviewed, scientifically rigorous lab research and clinical trials. This is the standard to which all cancer treatments should be held.

### MYTH 7: ... AND BIG PHARMA ARE SUPPRESSING IT

Hand in hand with the idea that there is a cornucopia of ‘miracle cures’ is the idea that governments, the pharmaceutical industry and even charities are colluding to hide the cure for cancer because they make so much money out of existing treatments. Whatever the particular ‘cure’ being touted, the logic is usually the same: it’s readily available, cheap and can’t be patented, so the medical establishment is suppressing it in order to line its own pockets. But, as we’ve written before, there’s no conspiracy – sometimes it just doesn’t work. It simply doesn’t make sense that pharmaceutical companies would want to suppress a potential cure. Finding a highly effective therapy would guarantee huge worldwide sales.

### MYTH 8: CANCER TREATMENT KILLS MORE THAN IT CURES

Let’s be clear, cancer treatment – whether chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery – is no walk in the park. The side effects can be tough. After all, treatments that are designed to kill cancer cells will inevitably affect healthy cells too. And sometimes, sadly, treatment doesn’t work. We know that it’s very difficult to treat late-stage cancer that has spread throughout the body, and while treatment can provide relief from symptoms and prolong life, it’s not going to be a cure for very advanced cancers. We know we still have a long way to go until we have effective, kinder treatments for all types of cancer. And it’s important that doctors, patients and their families are realistic and honest about the best options for treatment, especially when cancer is very advanced. Balancing quality and quantity of life is always going to be an issue in cancer treatment, and it’s one that each patient must decide for themselves.

### MYTH 9: WE’VE MADE NO PROGRESS IN FIGHTING CANCER

This simply isn’t true. Thanks to advances in research, long-term (10+ years) survival from cancer has doubled in the UK over the past 40 years, and death rates have fallen by 10 per cent over the past decade alone. By definition, these figures relate to people treated at least 10 years ago. It’s likely that the patients being diagnosed and treated today have an even better chance of survival. There’s still a long way to go. There are some cancers where progress has been much slower – such as lung, brain, pancreatic and oesophageal cancers. And when you lose someone you love to cancer, it can feel as though no progress has been made at all. That’s why we’re working so hard to beat cancer sooner, to make sure that nobody loses their life prematurely to the disease.

### MYTH 10: SHARKS DON’T GET CANCER

Yes they do.



## Do men need women more than women need them?

**Single men are less interested in marriage and commitment than single women. Ironically, once married, females are more likely to break that commitment.**

While the gap is closing, self-reports of Australians divorcing suggest around 69 per cent of marriage break-ups might be initiated by the wife. It's a pattern that has held true in Europe, the US and Australia since the 1940s. So, do men need women more than the other way round? Some of the suggestion for this comes from the fact that men's health and wellbeing seem to benefit more from marriage. Men who are married tend to be healthier than those who aren't, says a recent Harvard University publication. Studies indicate married men have less heart disease. However, the same doesn't hold true for married women, who experience little difference to their single peers.

Men also fare worse when they lose their partner. A 2012 American study found the death of a spouse increased men's risk of dying by an average of 27 per cent, compared to 15 per cent for women. Separated men are also more likely than separated women to jump back into a new relationship according to a 2015 Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) report.

**But an even more telling statistic: Of the roughly 13 per cent of Australians who live alone, 76 per cent of the women preferred this arrangement compared to 56 per cent of the men.**



In the provocatively titled 2012 book, *The End of Men*, Hanna Rosin suggests that men – increasingly locked out of the workforce and absent from the domestic sphere – are becoming less useful to women. Regardless of outside employment, women do proportionally more childcare and housework when they cohabit with men. The average Australian woman performs between five and 14 hours of unpaid domestic work a week, according to 2016 Census data. The average Australian male spends less than five hours on the chores.

Andrew King, a practice specialist in group work and community education at Relationships Australia, says, “Instead of making assumptions about how the relationship works, everything [family responsibilities, household tasks] needs to be negotiated now. The person is wondering, what value will the relationship bring?”

With a less of a power base in the information age, Mr King says men who don't master communication within their relationships are making themselves redundant. “In a very communication rich and savvy world, communication is probably one of the most prized assets.

“Relationships are critical for everyone. However, women are much more likely to have ongoing friendship networks and interest areas. This helps them redefine and redevelop their lives and prosper better when living independently of men, or as life changes.” Casualisation of the workforce and technological change continues to erode traditional male roles with repercussions for relationships. In fact, AIFS data reveal a strong association between living alone and lower income and education for men, but not women.

Mr King suggests men strive to create meaning beyond an intimate partner and work. “Men who can redefine their life and their connection with generativity [finding meaning in caring for something external to oneself] in older years will function just as well as women.”

Source: Linda Moon

## NATIONAL MALE SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE



### NATIONAL MALE SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE 2017

**“TOGETHER WE CAN STOP MALE SUICIDE”**

Wednesday 9th & Thursday 10th November 2017

Holiday Inn, 18-40 Anderson St, Parramatta NSW

[For an update list of speakers visit the new website](#)

#### BOOK TICKETS TODAY

Tickets to the conference are available via [Men's Health Services](#). [Link to Registration Form](#)

**Ridiculously Early Bird (Before 31st July):** \$397 for both days or \$199 per day

**Early Bird (Before 30th September):** \$447 for both days or \$224 per day

**Full Price (from 1st October onwards):** \$497 for both days or \$250 per day

Contact Glen Poole at [StopMaleSuicide@gmail.com](mailto:StopMaleSuicide@gmail.com)

# WELL CLINIC

The Well Clinic is the first executive health service in this country to adopt a more modern evidence-based model - a response to mounting evidence relating to the ineffectiveness of the traditional annual "physical"/"executive health check". Preventive health specialists in the U.S. are now championing more comprehensive, holistic, and individualised health checks based on solid preventive health evidence - rejecting those unnecessary, ineffective, and often expensive examinations and tests (e.g. treadmill stress testing) that endure in the executive health sector. In keeping with this rationale the Well Clinic therefore does not offer different categories of health checks to choose from, as companies and clients should not be expected to have the medical knowledge to know what should or shouldn't be included in their health assessments.

Instead our clients all receive as comprehensive an annual evaluation as is clinically applicable to their own individual requirements - and all at the same price regardless of the complexity of their health problems. And in an age of ever-increasing international travel, clients also receive a personalised travel health report - including vaccination recommendations - to assist in future overseas travel planning. Being fully online, paperless and teleconsult equipped, the Well Clinic caters to clients located anywhere in Australia with internet access. So make a decision that may literally impact the rest of your life by visiting us at [www.wellclinic.com.au](http://www.wellclinic.com.au), or email any enquiries to [contact@wellclinic.com.au](mailto:contact@wellclinic.com.au).

## get in early program launched



# get in early don't miss out on life

## MEN'S HEALTH BOWEL CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network in conjunction with Men's Health SERVICES will be running a number of FREE **get in early** men's health education sessions in the Penrith and Hawkesbury areas, starting in August.

The dates for these sessions are:

August 14 – 19 (Penrith), October 30 – November 3 (Penrith) and November 20 -24 (Hawkesbury).

The sessions run from one to one and a half hours and often cover other men's health issues that the men attended would like to talk about.

**If you would like a FREE **get in early** session for your group, service, organisation, sporting club or Men's Shed just contact Greg Millan on 0417 772 390 or email [greg@menshealthservices.com.au](mailto:greg@menshealthservices.com.au) for information on how to make a booking. **get in early** [website](#)**

New research by Cancer Council NSW has estimated the benefits and cost-effectiveness of Australia's National Bowel Cancer Screening Program between 2015 and 2040. Currently, only around 40 per cent of those who are eligible for bowel screening participate in the program.

At this current level of participation, the program is expected to prevent 92,200 cancer cases and 59,000 deaths between now and 2040.

If just 20 per cent more Australians participated in the program, 83,800 lives could be saved between now and 2040.

Cancer Council strongly encourages Australians aged 50-74 years to take part in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program when they are sent the test kit.

“90 per cent of bowel cancers can be cured if detected early. Finding bowel cancer early can therefore substantially improve your chance of surviving the disease.”

## Support Glen Donnelly's Birthday Dive



Do you have a problem with your body? I do. And MANY, many males do too. But do they talk about it? Do they even realize it half the time? NO. They don't! Because they're men - and males don't 'do that'. So they silently suffer. My name is Glen Donnelly and here's what we're going to do about it. I've started a GoFundMe fundraiser at [gofundme.com/BirthdayDive](https://gofundme.com/BirthdayDive) where on my 30th birthday I'm going to jump out of an airplane nude and skydive playing the violin at 15,000 feet. This birthday dive in my birthday suit will set a Guinness World Record for the Highest Musical Performance in Free-fall, and we're going to video the whole thing for social media.

I'm baring my body because in 2013 I had a mental breakdown over my classical music career in London. I was playing in the London Symphony Orchestra on an amazing viola from the Royal Academy of Music's iconic instrument collection, but for ten years straight I was silently sucking in my tummy 24/7 after one day at age 18 a fellow musician pointed to my tummy and said it was looking 'tubby'. An instant body shame grew inside me like a tumor, and after ten years of what became a default tension in my body I had devastating performance anxiety on the musical stage. At the peak of my career I ended it all, and came back home with my tail between my legs. In a place of desperation I radically decided to start living life on MY terms. I discovered nude swimming in the ocean and social nudity as the only way to start loosening up the physical and mental tensions that were gripping my body, and reverse ten years of what prevented me from even being able to change in front of other guys in the male dressing room before concerts!

I found a tool to finally overcome the tensions that were ruining my career and now I want to help others. I've moved mountains inside me and now I want to do it to the world.

### **Help me move mountains for other people.**

Donate to the world's crazy first nude violin skydive, so that this epidemic can be trumpeted (and violined) in the media and that we can as a society start getting real about our bodies once more! Thanks to the toxic culture around media, entertainment, fashion, and porn, our young people are hating their bodies more than ever with the numbers for women in the UK as high as 91%.

**But the statistic that should ring way more alarm bells but isn't being addressed, is men - males in Australia are FOUR TIMES more likely than females to go undiagnosed and suffer psychologically as a result!**

We need to do something about this silent epidemic. We need to change things. So join my ROAR with this Guinness World Record and let's do something real.

**Read about the THREE PROJECTS we're going to commission that will take REAL action on this issue.**

**Support this campaign by DONATING and SHARING this post with your friends, and together -**

**LET'S END THE SILENCE! [gofundme.com/BirthdayDive](https://gofundme.com/BirthdayDive)**