The Tyranny of Distance: Overcoming Financial Disadvantage in a Vast Land

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Cancer Council NSW
Where is New South Wales?
Bigger than France and the UK together
## Facts and figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td>241 000 km²</td>
<td>551 000 km²</td>
<td>801 000 km²</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>59 million</td>
<td>61 million</td>
<td>6.7 million</td>
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<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>245 persons km</td>
<td>111 persons per km²</td>
<td>8 persons per km²</td>
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Distribution of population

1600 people per square km in Sydney leaves 3 per square km for the rest of the state.

Less than 1 person per square km in many remote areas.
Distances in New South Wales

Broken Hill

- Sydney

1160km

1 ½ hrs

12 hours
It’s very very big!
Support Services by the Cancer Council

- Telephone Helpline with Cancer Nurses
- Support Groups
  - Face to face
  - Telephone
  - Online
- Practical Support
  - Transport
  - Accommodation
  - Home help
Printed information
Financial challenges for cancer patients

- Reduced income (through stopping work)
- Diagnostic costs (some not covered by Medicare)
- Private vs Public Treatment (some health insurers don’t cover full costs of cancer)
- Distance to travel
- Accommodation at treatment centres
- Additional family commitments
Three ways to make change

- Advocacy
- Information and support
- Practical help
Advocacy to government

DISTANCE SHOULD NOT EQUAL DISADVANTAGE
$33 won’t get you a night in a dog kennel
Advocacy

• Improvements to government subsidy for travel and accommodation
  ✔ reduced qualifying distance,
  ✔ increased reimbursement costs
  ✔ reduced bureaucracy

• Radiotherapy located nearer to home

• Early access to superannuation for people with terminal disease
Direct Financial Aid

- Financial Assistance - $250 through social workers: 1900 payments in 2011/12
  - Utility bills
  - Petrol vouchers
  - Food vouchers
- Debt Counselling
- No Interest Loan Scheme – up to $1800 (funded by National Australia Bank)
Pro Bono Professional Support

• **Legal Services (1100 referrals in 2011/12)**
  - wills
  - powers of attorney
  - guardianship
  - access to superannuation
  - employment issues

• **Financial Planning (566 referrals in 2011/12)**
  - mortgage renegotiation
  - credit card debt reassignment
  - support with benefit claims

• $7.2m in real cost of support
Travel and Accommodation

- **Transport to treatment**
  - funded community partnerships
  - driver training
  - volunteer drivers
  - three bus services
- **Affordable Patient and Carer accommodation**
  - jointly owned/managed patient lodges
  - advocacy through multi agency interest groups
Conclusion

• Listen to what patients and carers tell you
• Find partners who want to work with you and help them to understand cancer issues
  ✓ lawyers
  ✓ financial planners
  ✓ banks
  ✓ other community based groups
  ✓ transport providers
• Advocate to state and federal government
MELBOURNE WELCOMES
23rd World Cancer Congress
3-6 December 2014