



Media Release

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An EPICC affair: Australian leadership in cervical cancer recognised with a major Australian Government grant

Australia is stepping up its regional leadership in the elimination of cervical cancer, with the announcement today of a \$12.5 million Australian Government grant to a consortium of leading Australian and international nongovernment health organisations.

The Elimination Partnership in the Indo-Pacific for Cervical Cancer (EPICC) is the largest ever initiative of its kind, leveraging Australian, international and in-country partner expertise to promote the World Health Organization's strategy for the elimination of cervical cancer.

The grant announcement coincides with the launch today of Australia's national strategy for the elimination of cervical cancer, which puts Australia at the vanguard of cervical cancer elimination, with the Australian Government-funded EPICC consortium set up to accelerate parallel progress in the region.

Professor Marion Saville, of the Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer, said that while Australia was on track to be the first country in the world to eliminate cervical cancer, it remained a leading cause of cancer death in women in many neighbouring countries where availability of screening, vaccination and access to treatment was limited and varied.

"Cervical cancer leads to huge global inequities in health outcomes, with countries like Australia on the cusp of reducing it to the status of a rare disease at the same time as it causes a terrible burden for women, families and entire communities on our doorstep," Professor Saville said.

Professor Saville outlined the important practical role that Australian organisations will play in this initiative. "Our centre houses the Australian HPV reference laboratory, and our significant technical laboratory expertise will allow us to provide support to strengthen laboratory services in each country."

"We'll also ensure that we don't lose track of women who get screened through this initiative, by utilising our globally-recognised cancer screening registry platform: canSCREEN. This registry program can be integrated with laboratory systems and will capture screening records in real-time, informing clinical decisions at patient level, ensuring everyone gets the follow-up that they need and supporting program monitoring and evaluation".

Available for comment: Professor Marion Saville, AM, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer.

About canSCREEN

canSCREEN is an award-winning purpose-built registry software solution specifically designed for population health programs. It provides a high-performing, integrated, flexible and automated registry platform supporting cancer screening, prevention and vaccination registration at local, regional and national levels.

The canSCREEN population health screening registry delivers complete screening records in line with program policies and guidelines and can support multiple programs. It supports registry operations and interactions between members of the public, government officials, health professionals and other stakeholders.

For more information <https://acpcc.org.au/services/digital-health/>

About the Australian HPV Reference Laboratory

Launched in November 2021, the laboratory assists a range of stakeholders in the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) to adapt to the changing landscape of HPV-based cervical screening.

As the Australian HPV Reference Laboratory, we provide a wide range of services from supporting national and international Quality Assurance Programs to providing specialist testing and review.

The laboratory works with a range of stakeholders including quality control and HPV assay manufacturers, other laboratories, clinicians, and researchers within Australia and abroad. Together, we strive to monitor and improve the HPV testing process (including laboratory procedures and technologies), to assist in the reduction of HPV-related disease.

<https://acpcc.org.au/services/hpv-reference-laboratory/>

About EPICC

Cervical cancer is a preventable and curable disease, if it is detected early and managed effectively. Yet it is one of the most common cancers in women worldwide and one of the diseases that most reflect global inequities, with nearly 90% of the deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. To guide the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem, WHO developed a [global strategy](#) relying on three major pillar goals that should be jointly addressed:



The Elimination Partnership in the Indo-Pacific for Cervical Cancer (EPICC) is made possible by a \$12.5 million regional aid grant from the Australian Government. It will leverage longstanding local, regional and international partnerships to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer in the Indo-Pacific region, coordinated with other Australian Government-funded and international efforts. EPICC will build on the successes of the Eliminating Cervical Cancer in the Western Pacific (ECCWP) project, funded by the Australian Minderoo Foundation, which has supported the introduction of sustainable elimination policy and practice in Vanuatu and the Western Highlands region of Papua New Guinea.

The EPICC consortium comprises the Daffodil Centre (a joint venture between the University of Sydney and Cancer Council NSW), the Kirby Institute, the Australian Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer, Family Planning Australia, Unitaid and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.

EPICC will focus on the three pillars (immunisation, screening, treatment) of the WHO Global Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer. EPICC is **currently Australian Government funded as a four-year program** that will be co-designed with partner governments to undertake a range of cervical cancer control activities in the Indo-Pacific region, with a focus on **capacity building, sustainability and equity**.

EPICC is a comprehensive proposal with **six priority and complementary areas of work** presented over the page, which address the three WHO pillars of cervical cancer elimination. By tackling cervical cancer, we will be strengthening multiple oncology care services, which will impact on other cancer outcomes

The six key action areas for EPICC

