

**The Association of Prostate Cancer
Support Groups (SA) Inc.**

P.O. Box 308, Greenacres, S.A.5086.



MEDIA RELEASE: Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, 1-30 September 2005

SUPPORT GROUPS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PROSTATE CANCER

As part of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) would like to acknowledge the hundreds of men and women who form part of the PCFA Support Groups.

Every year in Australia around 12,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer and 2,600 men will die. This startling figure is actually equitable to the number of women who die of breast cancer every year.

Since its formation in 1996, the Foundation has helped establish and develop Support Groups across Australia. Each Support Group meets regularly to discuss the latest developments and treatment options. At the same time the Support Groups provide valuable forums for men – and their carers – to meet and chat with fellow sufferers and survivors.

Most Support Groups print and distribute their own monthly “Newsletters” to their members.

The PCFA receives minimal Government funding and relies on the generosity of the community to ensure that these meetings can continue. Chief Executive Officer of the PCFA, Mr Andrew Giles said, “Our Support Groups provide a valuable and important service. In addition to their regular meetings around the country, the Support Groups play a vital role in the PCFA telephone support program by making themselves available to talk confidentially to men diagnosed with prostate cancer.”

There are now over 65 Support Groups covering every state and territory from Darwin to Hobart and Perth to Sydney. Mr David Swinbourne – a prostate cancer survivor – says that he and his wife Jann found the camaraderie and advice of the local PCFA Support Group vital in the early stage of diagnoses. “My diagnosis came as a complete shock to me and we did not know where to turn. I was also a bit reluctant to really discuss the cancer – especially with other men – but my wife made me go along to the Support Group. It changed my life. Here was a group of men who had suffered from prostate cancer and had survived. It gave me great hope,” he said.

Throughout the September Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, the PCFA Support Groups across Australia are encouraging men and their partners to come along and learn more about this vital men’s health issue.

For more information about the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia’s Support Groups in your local area, please phone the Foundation toll free on 1800 22 00 99 or online at www.prostate.org.au, or the Prostate Support Awareness (Adelaide Group) online at www.psaadelaide.org or write to the Assoc. of P/C Support Groups (SA) Inc., at P.O. Box 308, Greenacres, SA.5086. In S.A. there are Support Groups in Adelaide, Mitcham, the Barossa Valley, Onkaparinga and Port Pirie. They can all be accessed, via links, through the Adelaide group’s web site, www.psaadelaide.org/

Fact Sheet

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA)

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) is a national organisation acting to reduce the impact of prostate cancer on Australian men, their families and the community.

The PCFA has three main aims:

1. To assist men and their families deal with the diagnosis and treatment
2. To fund research
3. To raise awareness about prostate cancer in the general community.

It aims to represent the interests of all men diagnosed with prostate cancer through a nation-wide network of affiliated support groups, with a special emphasis on raising money for research into the disease.

The PCFA advocates that men must first and foremost understand the seriousness of this condition to make an informed decision about testing and treatment.

In January 2002, the PCFA commissioned an Australia-wide poll to determine community awareness of prostate cancer as a comparative to breast cancer. The study showed that 48% percent of Australian men have little or no information regarding prostate cancer and only one in ten were appropriately tested for prostate cancer throughout 2001.

The PCFA is concerned about the low level of awareness of prostate cancer in the Australian community, particularly when compared with the much higher levels of awareness of breast cancer, and is working to remedy the problem.

Support Groups

Approximately 65 support groups Australia-wide are affiliated with the Foundation. These provide support at the grass-roots level through public meetings, telephone counselling and one-on-one visits.

The Support Groups provide accurate and up to-date information about prostate cancer to patients and their families. This includes information packs, videos, newsletters etc on symptoms, diagnostic techniques and treatment options.