



# Nobody Should Navigate Cancer Alone

## CNSA Symposium

*Thursday, 18 June 2026*

*Danielle Spence, CEO, Cancer Council Australia*



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# Acknowledgement of Country



Riki Salam  
FOR  
CANCER COUNCIL

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We honour the enduring cultures, knowledge systems, and healing traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As part of our commitment to equity and inclusion for all people affected by cancer, we recognise the importance of working in partnership to co-design culturally safe navigation and support services that are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of our communities.

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# Cancer care has never been more advanced Yet navigating it has never been more complex

It's not always a linear journey.  
People move **forward**, **sideways** and sometimes **back**.



Different people. Different needs. Different paths.

Our job is to help every person find their way.



# Navigation Service guiding principles



The Navigation Service vision is to **support, inform and empower** all people impacted by cancer.

## Together, we are building a National Cancer Navigation Service

Offered across both person-facilitated and digital channels and is a national service model designed to connect all people affected by cancer with:

- Evidence-based information
- Brief emotional support
- Appropriate support services (both internally and externally)

The service provides information and support to all people affected by cancer across Australia, including tailored options for priority population groups.

## Objectives for the Cancer Council Navigation Service

1

Improve cancer outcomes.

2

Address disparities and inequities in cancer care.

3

Highly skilled and supported workforce.

4

Digital navigation service.

5

Integrated and interoperable.

## Guiding principles

Collaboration runs across all principles for service design and delivery



Privacy and security



Choice and accessibility



Nation-wide consistency



Continuity of story



Safety



Efficient navigation



## What we heard nationally

Through discovery work we heard remarkably consistent themes.

### **People affected by cancer told us:**

"I don't know where to start."

"I don't know who to call."

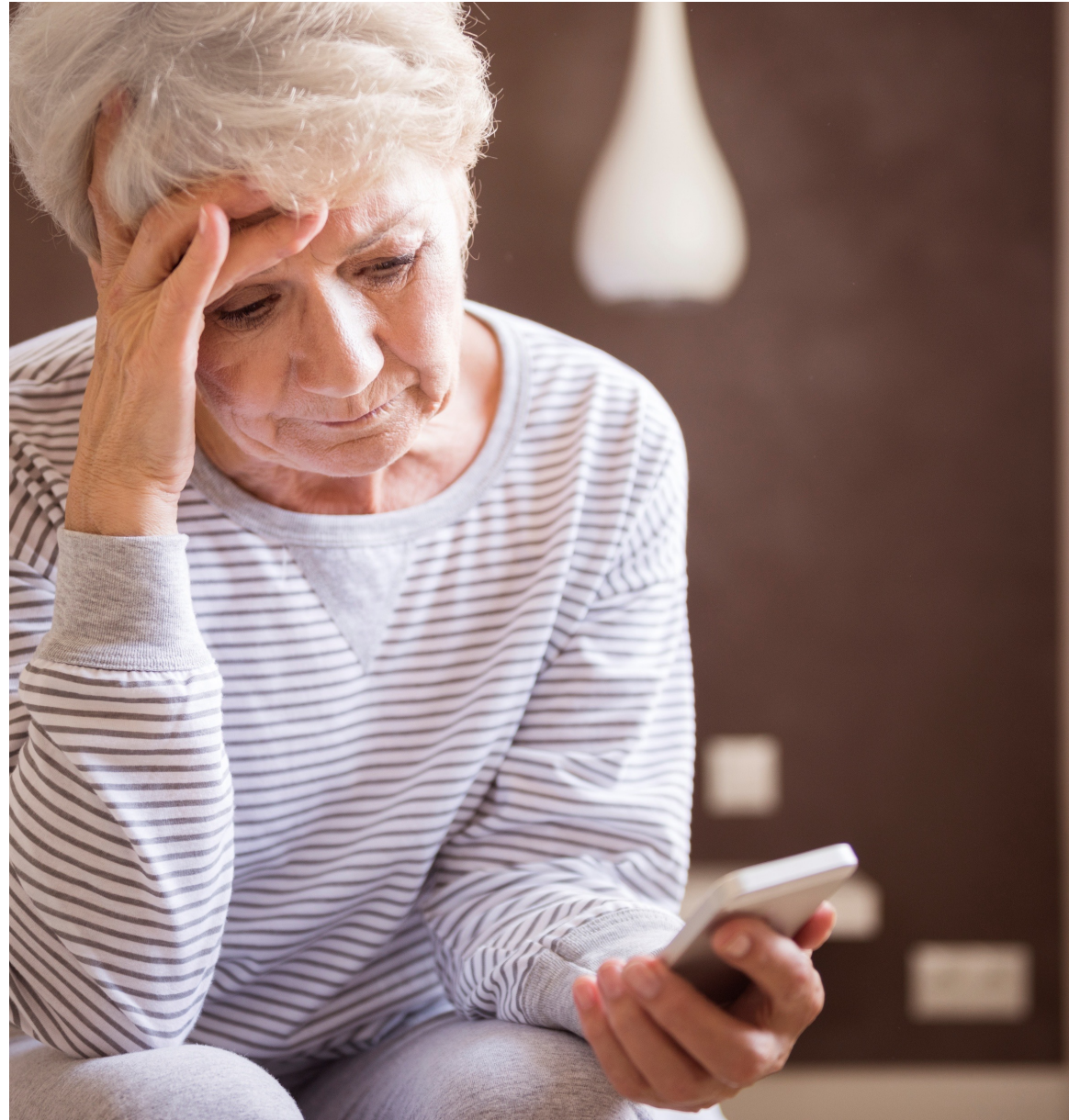
"I don't know what support is available."

### **Carers told us:**

"I became the coordinator."

### **Nurses told us:**

"I'm often the one helping people navigate."



# When navigation is not coordinated

Everyday nurses:

- ✓ Explain complex systems
- ✓ Connect people to support
- ✓ Coordinate care
- ✓ Support carers and families
- ✓ Bridge gaps between services

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# But many people are missing out

**Our research consistently showed:**

People often discover support too late.

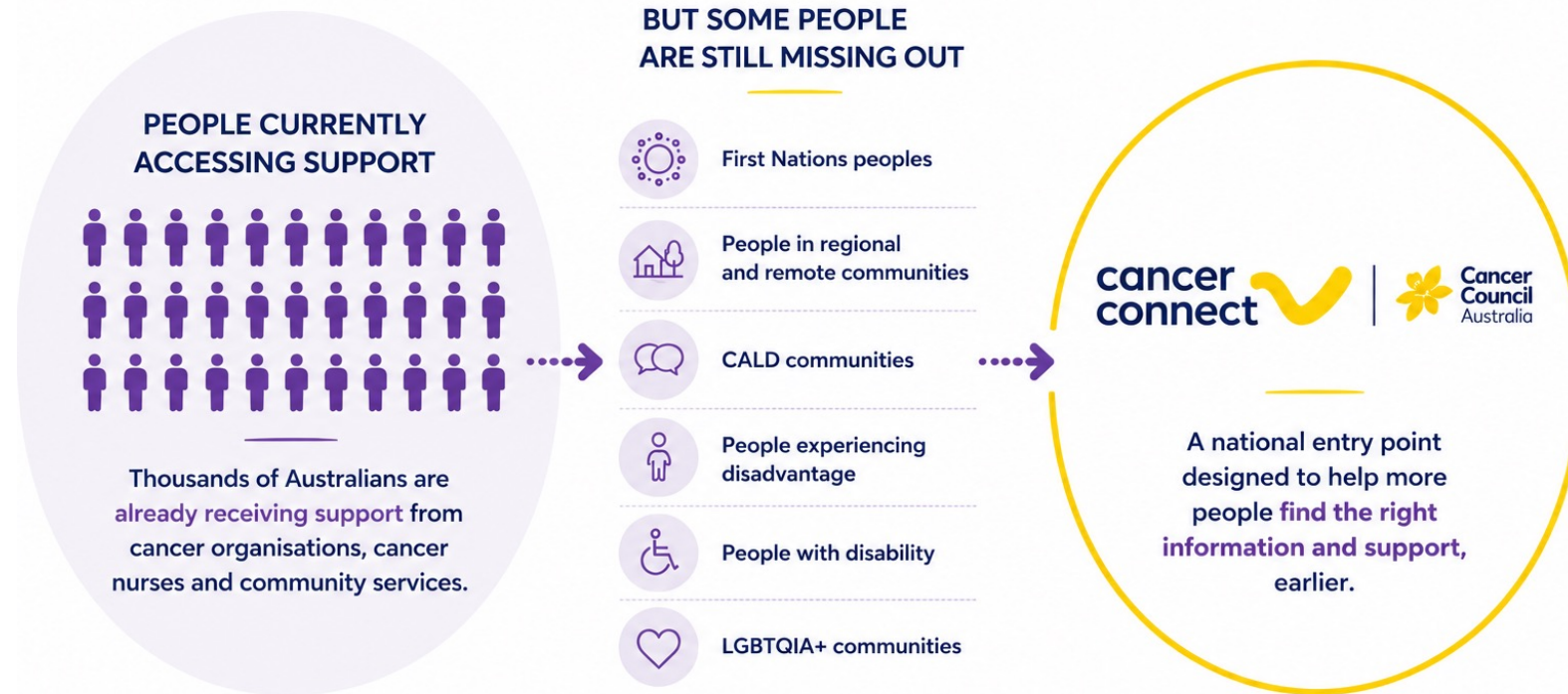
Many told us:

"I wish I'd known about this sooner."

“I wish someone had told me earlier.”



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Cancer Connect is here to **close the gap** and ensure no one is the last to find the support they need.

# When navigation is not coordinated



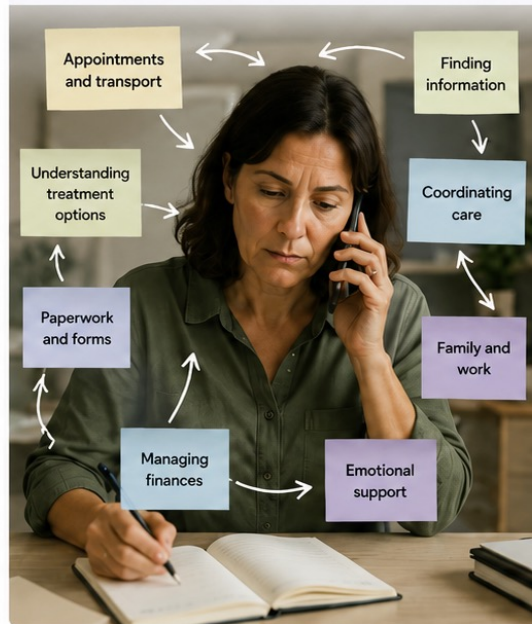
## Patients feel lost

Uncertainty. Anxiety. Isolation.



## Carers become coordinators

Taking on the workload. Carrying the load.



## Nurses fill the gaps

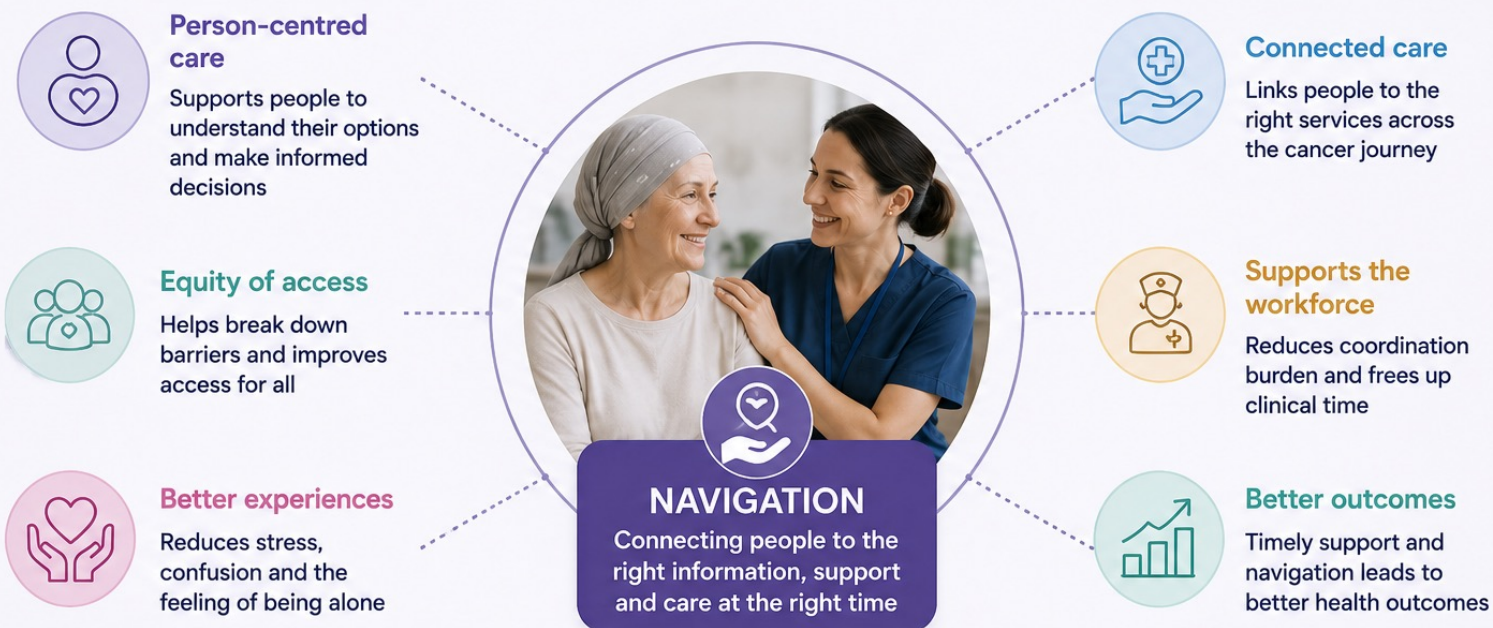
Extra time. Extra pressure. System strain.



**When navigation is not coordinated, everyone carries the burden.** | It impacts patients, carers and the workforce.

# Navigation is not an optional extra

## It is core cancer care



Navigation is the thread that connects people, services and support across the entire cancer journey.



# What effective, coordinated navigation looks like

People can:

- Find the right information
- Access the right support
- At the right time
- In the right way

So, their next step is clearer.

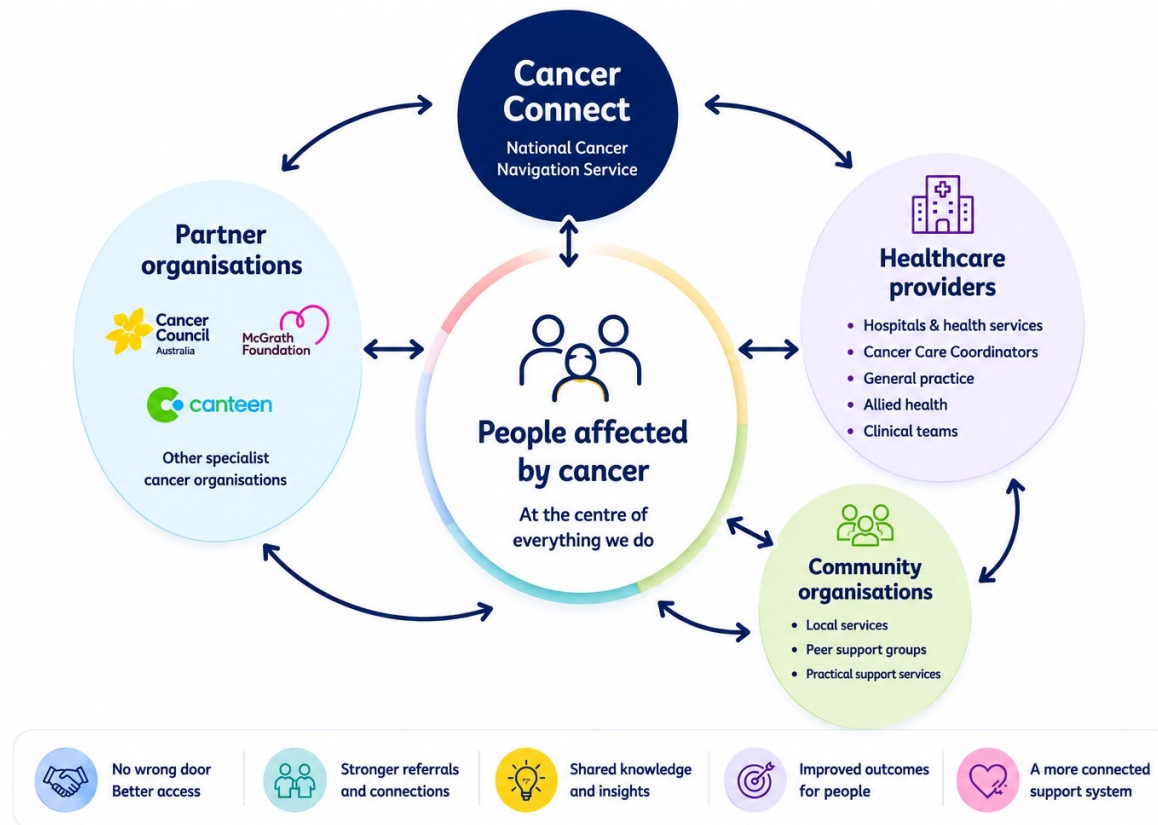


# Navigation doesn't happen in isolation

It relies on:

- healthcare teams
- support services
- community organisations
- carers
- families
- consumers

Working together.



# Reflection

If navigation is everyone's responsibility...

...then we need to start treating it as essential infrastructure...

....not an optional extra.



# Thank you

