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Minister for Health and Aged Care

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Minister for Foreign Affairs
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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Increasing ovarian cancer care and support

As part of Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, the Morrison Government will provide a further \$1 million to Ovarian Cancer Australia for their work supporting those living with ovarian cancer.

Each year in Australia, approximately 1,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Tragically, more than 1,000 will die. While ovarian cancer is more commonly diagnosed in women over the age of 50, it can occur at any age.

Ovarian Cancer Australia's Teal Support Program is built on a psychosocial support case management model, including using telehealth to provide care and support to both ovarian cancer patients and their families.

Women diagnosed with ovarian cancer face extraordinary challenges: it has the lowest 5-year survival rate of all gynaecological cancers (46%) with recurrence rate of up to 70%. The psychological impact of this prognosis is overwhelming and 40% of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer experience clinical levels of anxiety or depression.

Supporting patients and their families now is important, but research remains our best hope of defeating ovarian cancer in the long term.

Since 2011, the Government has invested more than \$71 million for ovarian cancer research through the National Health and Medical Research Council and is the single biggest funder of cancer research in Australia.

In addition, through the Government's \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund, we are supercharging the growth of Australia's health and medical research capabilities.

To date, more than \$16.9 million from the Fund has been invested in ground-breaking ovarian cancer projects, like the work done by Ovarian Cancer Australia.

Our Government also provides funding for a range of other measures to support women with ovarian cancer and their families, including the listing of life-saving and life-changing medications on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

This includes the recent extension of the PBS listing of Lynpara, meaning an additional 300 Australian women with ovarian cancer each year will have access to a medicine that would otherwise cost \$140,500 per course of treatment. Instead, they will pay as little as \$41.30 per script, or \$6.60 with a concession card.

In August 2020, we also saw two new Medicare items become available for genetic testing for BRCA variants. This is in addition to Medicare rebates for gynaecology, oncology, radiology and pathology.

While we have made great progress in tackling this disease, there is more work to be done.

Today, at the Teal Ribbon Breakfast, our Government reaffirms its commitment to ensuring women with ovarian cancer in Australia know more about the symptoms and risks of this condition so they get the treatment, information and support they need both now and into the future.

2021 also marks the 20th Anniversary of Ovarian Cancer Australia. The Morrison Government congratulates OVA on this milestone and commends its work in supporting woman and their families.

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