

**10 January 2011**

**Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is February 2011**  
**Aiming To Save the Lives of Australian Women & Raise Vital Funds**  
*A Touch of Teal – Touching and Saving the Lives of Women Diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer*

On February 1, Ovarian Cancer Australia will launch its annual Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, designed to inform Australian women of the symptoms of ovarian cancer, create a deeper understanding of the impact ovarian cancer has on women and their loved ones, and raise vital funds for support programs and research to help save lives.

Ovarian Cancer Australia, who will be celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011, is the country's only national organisation delivering ovarian cancer awareness and support to women and their families affected by the disease and is a partner of a national research program working toward diagnosis and treatment for ovarian cancer.

Paula Benson, Chair of Ovarian Cancer Australia welcomed the recent announcement by Dr Orla McNally (Member of Ovarian Cancer Australia's Medical & Research Advisory Group) for ovarian cancer to have a higher public profile to raise greater awareness of the disease and generate vital funds to aid in providing better treatments, support services, and research to improve outcomes for women with ovarian cancer.

"This year more than 1200 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and sadly, around 800 will die from the disease," said Ms Benson.

"With the only means of early detection being to recognise the symptoms, our priority in 2011 is to ensure every woman understands that there is no early detection test for ovarian cancer; that a Pap smear does NOT detect the disease and that only knowing and identifying the symptoms, can aid in early detection that can save lives," Ms Benson said.

Paula Benson went on to say, "Currently, 75% of women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the advanced stages and don't live beyond five years. And yet, if diagnosed early, the majority of those women can survive.

"With one in 77 Australian women developing ovarian cancer in their lifetime, and one woman dying from this devastating disease every 11 hours, the message to all Australian women is clear - learn the symptoms of ovarian cancer today – Don't leave it until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour!" Ms Benson said.

Women who might be concerned about symptoms can visit Ovarian Cancer Australia's website and download a free symptom diary to track what they are experiencing so they can better communicate their symptoms to their GP.

"For those women who are experiencing symptoms and are not comfortable with the diagnosis, we encourage them to keep a record of their symptoms using Ovarian Cancer Australia's symptom diary and seek a second or even a third opinion to resolve any concerns they may have.

"In addition to our awareness initiatives, in 2011 we also aim to create a deeper understanding within the community of the impact that ovarian cancer has on women and their loved ones.

"We'll achieve this and awareness of the symptoms through our new fundraising initiatives *Afternoon Teal™* and *Touch of Teal* events as well as generating Teal Ribbon sales to fund support programs that help women and their families whose lives have been touched by the disease," Ms Benson said.

With teal being the international colour for ovarian cancer, Ovarian Cancer Australia's new awareness and fundraising initiatives include an Afternoon Teal™, Touch of Teal events and the sale of Teal Ribbons to fund support programs to help women and their families whose lives have been tragically touched by the disease.

By purchasing a Teal Ribbon for \$2 and wearing a 'Touch of Teal' throughout Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, people and organisations will be supporting women touched by ovarian cancer.

Ovarian Cancer Australia's Afternoon Teal™ Ambassador, Jean Kittson is urging all Australians to get behind this initiative to support women with ovarian cancer and their families. By hosting an Afternoon Teal™ during February or on Teal Ribbon Day – Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February - we can all raise funds and at the same time learn the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

"Your event can be as simple or elaborate as you like. It could be a High Teal in the garden with your girlfriends on a lazy Sunday afternoon, or an Afternoon Teal™ at work or at a neighbourhood picnic at the beach or in the park," Ms Kittson said.

"Whatever activity you do with family, friends and colleagues this February, make it a Touch of Teal or Afternoon Teal™ event and help raise funds that will touch the lives of women who have been touched by ovarian cancer," she said.

To register your Touch of Teal or Afternoon Teal™ event today and directly touch the lives of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer and their families, in a very positive way please visit: [www.ovariancancer.net.au](http://www.ovariancancer.net.au) or call 1300 660 334.

You can also purchase your tax deductible Teal Ribbons from Chemmart and Napoleon Perdis stores or from Ovarian Cancer Australia or, when you book a package or tickets to see a concert or show anywhere in Australia during February through [showbiz.com.au](http://showbiz.com.au), Showbiz will purchase your Teal Ribbon on your behalf.

### Teal Ribbon Day is Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February!

For more information about ovarian cancer and Ovarian Cancer Australia:

Phone: 1300 660 334

Email: [admin@ovariancancer.net.au](mailto:admin@ovariancancer.net.au)

Website: [www.ovariancancer.net.au](http://www.ovariancancer.net.au)

**ENDS**

**Ovarian Cancer Australia is grateful to our partners for your support!!**



Alex Perry

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**Contact Insight Communications for more information, photographs or to arrange an interview.**

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**We are able to offer a number of interview and photo opportunities including:**

- \* A number of Ambassadors nationally including:
  - \* Alice Burton - NT
  - \* Patricia Bailey - TAS
  - \* Jean Kittson – National *Afternoon Teal*™ Ambassador and NSW & ACT Ambassador
  - \* Meshel Laurie - QLD
  - \* Nicole Livingstone - Patron and Founder – Ovarian Cancer Australia
  - \* Natasha Stott Despoja - SA
  - \* Lisa Scaffidi - WA
  - \* Madeleine West - VIC
- \* Survivors of ovarian cancer - nationally
- \* Medical experts on ovarian cancer, current treatments and research developments
- \* Paula Benson – Chair of Ovarian Cancer Australia & ovarian cancer survivor
- \* Professor Michael Quinn - Gynaecological Oncologist, The Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Melbourne
- \* Karen Livingstone – Founding Director – Ovarian Cancer Australia

## JOURNALIST NOTES

### Ovarian Cancer Disease Facts - Overview

- \* There is no early detection test – a Pap smear does NOT detect ovarian cancer
- \* 1 in 77 Australian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer in their lifetime
- \* Knowing the symptoms is the only means of early detection
- \* Early detection may save your life!
- \* In 2011, more than 1200 Australian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- \* More than 800 will die from the disease – that’s 1 woman every 11 hours
- \* 75% of women are diagnosed in the advanced stages and will not live beyond 5 years
- \* Ovarian cancer is the 6th most common cause of cancer death in Australian women
- \* Ovarian cancer can affect women of all ages – girls as young as 7 have been diagnosed. But the risk of getting ovarian cancer increases with age. The average age for an ovarian cancer diagnosis is 64
- \* The majority of Australian women DON’T know the symptoms of ovarian cancer but almost all women with ovarian cancer suffer symptoms
- \* To ensure a good chance of survival it is essential that ovarian cancer is caught in the early stages
- \* If found in the early stages, the majority of women will be alive and well after five years
- \* Awareness of symptoms is the principal means of early diagnosis to save lives!
- \* Continuity in healthcare may help GPs to diagnose ovarian cancer symptoms

### Disease Symptoms

Every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer which may include:

- \* Increased abdominal size or persistent bloating
- \* Unexplained abdominal or pelvic pain
- \* Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly
- \* Needing to urinate more often or urgently or a change in bowel habits
- \* When these symptoms are new and persist for more than two weeks, see your GP and ask them to consider the possibility of ovarian cancer
- \* Ovarian cancer can only be confirmed at the point of surgery. If ovarian cancer is suspected, a GP will recommend tests which can suggest if ovarian cancer is a possibility, these include the CA125 test, and a trans-vaginal ultrasound, but these tests cannot be used to screen for, or diagnose ovarian cancer



## Ovarian Cancer Australia's One-Stop-Shop Website

A hub of information about ovarian cancer dedicated to raising awareness of the disease and providing information and support options for women diagnosed and their families including:

- \* Symptoms of ovarian cancer
- \* Reducing your risk
- \* How ovarian cancer is treated and locating a gynaecological oncologist near you
- \* Support groups in each state
- \* Tips and advice for carers, family and friends of women with ovarian cancer
- \* Links to relevant support and information organisations
- \* Research organisations in Australia and research news
- \* Clinical trials and how to join a trial
- \* Personal stories of women diagnosed
- \* Online forum
- \* Fact sheets including:
  - o Early menopause
  - o Coping with chemotherapy
  - o Complementary therapies
  - o Staying well

## About Ovarian Cancer Australia

Ovarian Cancer Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation providing support and advocacy for people affected by ovarian cancer, and is the peak body for ovarian cancer awareness and prevention in Australia.

In 2011, Ovarian Cancer Australia will be celebrating its tenth anniversary. It is the country's only national organisation delivering ovarian cancer awareness and support to women and their families affected by the disease and is a partner of a national research program working toward diagnosis and treatment for ovarian cancer.

### Ovarian Cancer Australia's Vision Is To Ensure That:

Every Australian woman knows the symptoms of ovarian cancer and everyone affected by ovarian cancer feels personally supported and well informed about the latest treatment and research.

### Ovarian Cancer Australia's Mission Is To:

- \* **Support** women with ovarian cancer, their families, friends and carers with compassionate support programs and practical resources.
- \* **Educate** communities and individuals about the disease and increase their awareness of symptoms and the latest treatment, research and clinical trials from across Australia.
- \* **Advocate** to improve outcomes, treatment and quality of life for women with ovarian cancer.

For more information about Ovarian Cancer Australia or ovarian cancer, or to make a tax deductible donation or purchase Teal Ribbons (minimum quantity of 5 at \$2 each) please contact Ovarian Cancer Australia. Phone: 1300 660 334 - Email: [admin@ovariancancer.net.au](mailto:admin@ovariancancer.net.au) - Website: [ovariancancer.net.au](http://ovariancancer.net.au)

### Ovarian Cancer Australia Exists To:

- \* Save women's lives by raising awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer
- \* Educate communities and individuals about the disease and the latest treatment and research
- \* Support those touched by ovarian cancer with compassionate programs and practical resources
- \* Be the voice of ovarian cancer awareness and prevention in Australia



## **Awareness Is The Key To Saving Lives - We Raise Awareness By Promoting:**

- \* Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is February
- \* 2011 Teal Ribbon Day is Wednesday 23 February
- \* Teal is the international colour representing ovarian cancer – Purchase a Teal Ribbon

## **Why We Raise Funds - ‘How do donations make a difference?’**

Donations will help fund Ovarian Cancer Australia’s awareness programs and support services for patients and their families. These include:

- \* Community awareness campaigns and campaign materials
- \* Resilience Kits – a free resource for women with ovarian cancer
- \* Support Groups
- \* Rural and Regional Tele-Support Service
- \* Online forum
- \* Support materials for Family & Friends of women affected by ovarian cancer

## **Medical Research**

Ovarian Cancer Australia also supports the Australian Ovarian Cancer Study, the only national collaborative research program between clinicians, scientists, patients and advocacy groups aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer.

## **Ovarian Cancer Facts & Figures**

### **How Many Women In Australia Have Ovarian Cancer?**

- \* 1 in 77 Australian women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime. Each year around 800 Australian women will lose their battle with ovarian cancer – that’s one woman every 11 hours

### **Is There A Test For Ovarian Cancer?**

- \* No! There is NO early detection test or screening program for ovarian cancer. A Pap smear does NOT detect ovarian cancer. This is why awareness of the symptoms is critical to Australian women

### **Facts About Ovarian Cancer In Australia**

- \* This year more than 1200 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer – 3 every day; and around 800 will die from the disease – one every 11 hours
- \* There is no reliable early detection test for ovarian cancer
- \* The majority of Australian women do not know the symptoms of ovarian cancer but many women who are diagnosed frequently report four key symptoms
- \* Ovarian cancer is the 6th most common cause of cancer death in Australian women

### **What Are The Symptoms Of Ovarian Cancer?**

The four most frequently reported symptoms from women diagnosed with ovarian cancer are:

- \* Increased abdominal size or persistent bloating
- \* Unexplained abdominal or pelvic pain
- \* Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly
- \* Needing to urinate more often or urgently or a change in bowel habits



## Additional Symptoms

Other symptoms that have been commonly reported by women with ovarian cancer include:

- \* Vague but persistent stomach upsets such as wind, nausea, heart burn or indigestion
- \* Vaginal bleeding
- \* Weight loss or weight gain
- \* Excessive fatigue

When these symptoms are new and persist for more than two weeks, see your GP and ask them to consider the possibility of ovarian cancer. If your GP suspects ovarian cancer they need to refer you to a gynaecological oncologist.

## How Is Ovarian Cancer Diagnosed?

- \* Ovarian cancer can only be confirmed at the point of surgery. If ovarian cancer is suspected, a GP will recommend tests which can suggest if ovarian cancer is a possibility, these include the CA125 test, and a trans-vaginal ultrasound, but these tests cannot be used to screen for, or diagnose ovarian cancer.

## What Is The Life Expectancy For A Woman Diagnosed With Ovarian Cancer?

- \* 75% of women are diagnosed in the advanced stages and will not live beyond 5 years.
- \* If diagnosed early, the majority of those women will survive. Which is why awareness and early detection is so important.

## How Is It Treated?

- \* Treatment for ovarian cancer usually involves surgery and chemotherapy. Radiotherapy is also used on occasion.

## Who Is At Risk Of Developing Ovarian Cancer?

Factors that are considered to increase the risk of ovarian cancer include:

- \* Age – women over the age of 45 are at greater risk of developing ovarian cancer. However, it affects women of all ages - ovarian cancer has been diagnosed in girls as young as 7.
- \* Never having taken the contraceptive pill
- \* Having few or no pregnancies
- \* A high-fat diet, being overweight and smoking
- \* A history of cancer in the family, especially ovarian, breast or some bowel cancers (approximately 10% of all ovarian cancer cases are due to an inherited gene fault and these are found in 1 in 500 people in Australia)
- \* Being of Ashkenazi Jewish descent



## Ovarian Cancer Australia Awareness & Fundraising Initiatives

### About Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

- \* Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is an international campaign to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and to ensure that every woman knows the symptoms of the disease
- \* In Australia, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is held in February. Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is also a time when Ovarian Cancer Australia encourages fundraising activities from the community, volunteers and friends to raise vital funds to support programs and resources for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- \* Our primary fundraising and awareness icon is our Teal Ribbon

### The Teal Ribbon

- \* 2011 Teal Ribbon Day is Wednesday 23 February
- \* The Teal Ribbon is the international ribbon for ovarian cancer awareness
- \* Tax-deductible Teal Ribbons are available from Chemmart and Napoleon Perdis stores or from Ovarian Cancer Australia or, when you book any ticket or package to see a concert or show anywhere in Australia during February through [showbiz.com.au](http://showbiz.com.au), Showbiz will purchase a Teal Ribbon on your behalf.



### Touch of Teal

- \* Teal is the international colour representing ovarian cancer. In 2011, Ovarian Cancer Australia is inviting the community to add a 'Touch of Teal' during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (February) to help raise awareness of the disease
- \* We hope that Australians will add a touch of teal to their wardrobe to raise awareness of the disease and its symptoms

### Afternoon Teal™

- \* Throughout February, Ovarian Cancer Australia is asking the community to host an 'Afternoon Teal™' to raise money and awareness
- \* Details of how to host an Afternoon Teal™ are available on [www.ovariancancer.net.au](http://www.ovariancancer.net.au)

