

## Western Australian Cancer Statistics, 2009-2013

### Cancer in Aboriginal People

*Note: Throughout this document we use the term Aboriginal Western Australians to include also people of Torres Strait Islander descent.*

The following information is extracted from WA Cancer Registry statistics<sup>i</sup>. Registry statistics pool several years of statistics because:

- Aboriginal people comprise around 3%<sup>ii</sup> of the Western Australian population, therefore the number of new cancer cases and deaths are low compared to non-Aboriginal Western Australians.
- Aboriginality is not always recorded at cancer diagnosis and/or death.

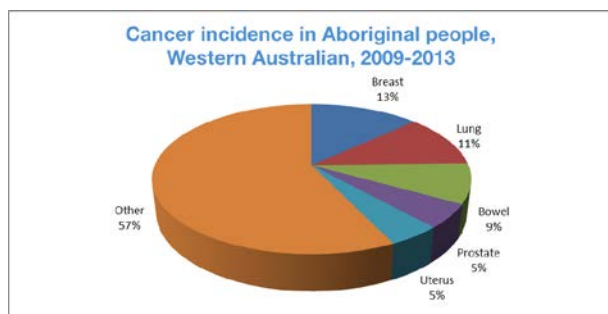
Cancer is the second leading cause<sup>iii</sup> of death in Aboriginal people in Australia.

In 2009-2013, there were 175 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Aboriginal Western Australians<sup>i</sup>. Slightly more women than men were diagnosed with cancer, 93 cases (53%) occurred in women and 82 (47%) occurred in men.

### Major cancer sites

The diagrams (see over) show the major cancer sites for Western Australian Aboriginal men and women (common skin cancers not shown). The top diagram shows new cases that were diagnosed in 2009-2013, and the second diagram shows the number of deaths. Cancer of the breast was the most common cancer diagnosed in Aboriginal women, whereas cancer of the lung was the leading cancer diagnosed in Aboriginal men and the second most common for Aboriginal women.

The bottom diagram shows in 2009-2013 there were 83 deaths from cancer among Aboriginal Western Australians. The most common causes of cancer-related death in Aboriginal men were from lung and liver cancers; and for women were lung and breast cancers.



### Difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cancer rates

Compared with non-Aboriginal people in WA Aboriginal people are more likely to be diagnosed with preventable and more fatal cancers such as lung cancer and primary liver cancer, while melanoma is less common.

### Lung cancer

- Lung cancer is the most common cancer in Aboriginal men, the second most common cancer in Aboriginal women and the leading cause of cancer death in both.
- Lung cancer is the most preventable cancer with smoking the major cause.
- While smoking rates in non-Aboriginal adults in WA is about 12.7%<sup>iv</sup>, it is estimated to be 44%<sup>v</sup> in Aboriginal Western Australians.

### Breast cancer

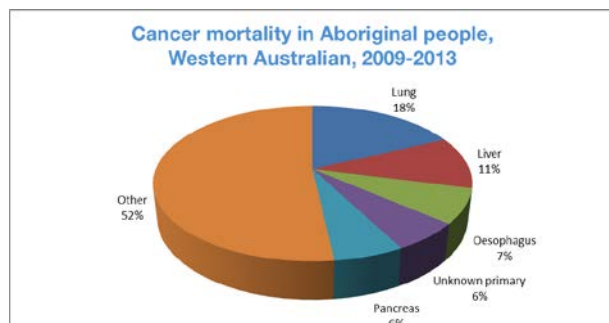
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Aboriginal women in WA, and the second highest cause of cancer death, similar to non-Aboriginal women in WA.

### Bowel cancer

- Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in Aboriginal Western Australians (see below left).

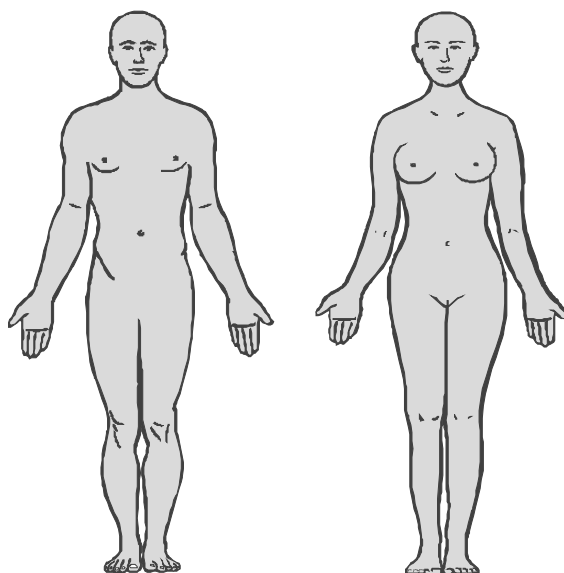
### Liver cancer

- Liver cancer is the second highest cause of cancer death among Aboriginal Western Australians (see below right).
- Long term (chronic) infection with hepatitis B virus is the most common cause of primary liver cancer.



## New cases of cancer in Western Australia, (2009-2013 annual averages)

Rank	Site	%	Cases
1	Lung	13.3	11
2	Bowel	11.4	9
3	Prostate	11.2	9
4	Liver	5.1	4
5	Oesophagus	4.4	4
6	Tonsil/ oropharynx	4.1	3
7	Pancreas	3.9	3
8	Unknown primary	3.6	3
9	Lip, gum & mouth	3.4	3
10	Other	39.6	33
<b>Total</b>			<b>82</b>



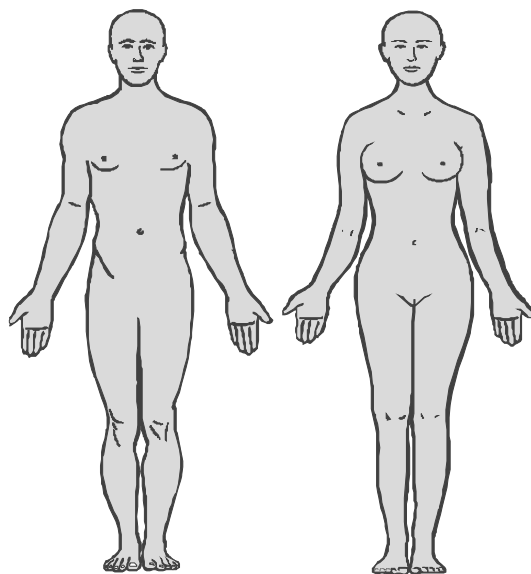
Males

Females

Rank	Site	%	Cases
1	Breast	24.5	23
2	Lung	9.9	9
3	Uterus	8.4	8
4	Bowel	6.4	6
5	Cervix	5.2	5
6	Leukaemia	4.3	4
7	Pancreas	3.6	3
8	Unknown primary	3.2	3
9	Liver	2.8	3
10	Other	31.7	29
<b>Total</b>			<b>93</b>

## Deaths from cancer in Western Australia, (2009-2013 annual averages)

Rank	Site	%	Deaths
1	Lung	18.7	8
2	Liver	8.4	4
3	Oesophagus	7.9	3
4	Unknown primary	7.0	3
5	Pancreas	6.5	3
6	Tonsil/ oropharynx	5.6	2
7	Prostate	5.6	2
8	Stomach	4.7	2
9	Bowel	4.7	2
10	Other	30.9	14
<b>Total</b>			<b>43</b>



Males

Females

Rank	Site	%	Deaths
1	Lung	18.4	7
2	Breast	11.4	5
3	Pancreas	7.5	3
4	Liver	6.0	2
5	Unknown primary	6.0	2
6	Bowel	6.0	2
7	Oesophagus	5.0	2
8	Leukaemia	5.0	2
9	Cervix	4.5	2
10	Other	30.2	13
<b>Total</b>			<b>40</b>

<sup>i</sup> Threlfall TJ, Thompson JR (2015). *Cancer incidence and mortality in Western Australia, 2013*. Department of Health, Western Australia, Perth. Statistical Series Number 101.

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) *Estimates and projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>iii</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014. *Mortality and life expectancy of Indigenous Australians: 2008 to 2014*. Cat. No. IHW 140. Canberra: AIHW.

<sup>iv</sup> Epidemiology Branch, 2015, *Prevalence of Western Australian adults who are current smokers, 18 years and over, HWSS 2002-2014*, WA Department of Health: Perth.

<sup>v</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015. *The health and welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 2015*. Cat. No. IHW 147. Canberra: AIHW.