

11 March 2026

New insights highlight opportunities to improve lung cancer outcomes in Gippsland

Gippsland PHN has released its latest Health Insights Paper – Diagnosing Lung Cancer Early, offering a unique regional perspective into this serious and often aggressive form of cancer.

The paper provides a snapshot of Gippsland-specific lung cancer health data, statistical insights and important local viewpoints, highlighting the challenges and barriers faced by individuals in our community when it comes to seeking diagnosis and treatment.

Key insights

- Between 2019–2023, Gippsland had the third-highest lung cancer mortality rate among Australia’s PHN regions, with the highest rates seen in Latrobe (60% higher than the rest of Australia), followed by East Gippsland (53% higher)
- Gippsland has the highest rate of current smokers of all Victorian PHN regions, with 17% of the population identifying as a smoker, compared to an average of 14% throughout the rest of Victoria
- Between 2021–2023, lung cancer-associated deaths were 29% more likely among Gippsland residents, compared to the rest of Victoria
- In Australia, 90% of lung cancer cases in men and 65% of cases in women are estimated to be attributable to smoking
- Consultation undertaken by Gippsland PHN revealed smokers were not always aware of screening and support services available to them, adding to treatment participation barriers in the region
- Many people cannot afford to access health care for treatment and diagnosis due to increasing gap fees for primary care, specialist appointments and diagnostic services

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said while lung cancer remains one of Australia’s leading causes of cancer death, we know that more than 65% of cases can be successfully treated when detected early.

“Detecting lung cancer early is critical and this paper will provide Gippsland’s primary healthcare workforce and community with information and resources about free screening services available for eligible people, and smoking cessation support that can lead to prevention, early diagnosis and improved treatment outcomes in our region,” said Ms Proposch.

Gippsland PHN supports improved lung cancer outcomes through:

- Promoting the [National Lung Cancer Screening Program](#)
- Working with health professionals to strengthen the primary care system through continuous improvement initiatives, education, [training and events](#)
- Providing information to healthcare providers to connect patients with the right specialists

The [National Lung Cancer Screening Program](#), which commenced on 1 July 2025, aims to detect lung cancer early to improve treatment outcomes and reduce mortality. People aged 50–70 who have no symptoms and currently smoke or have quit within the past 10 years may be eligible. Those interested can speak with their doctor, who can assess their suitability and provide a referral for the free scan.

To learn more about the program, visit the [National Lung Cancer Screening Program webpage](#) for information about eligibility, what to expect during screening and how low-dose CT scans work.

Access the full Health Insights Paper – Diagnosing Lung Cancer Early via the [Gippsland PHN website](#).

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