

Media Release

EMBARGOED FRIDAY 19 AUGUST

Australian sports broadcaster Bruce McAvaney to light up the night skies for a cause in his blood!

- **Bruce McAvaney to lead Australians impacted by blood cancer in virtual lantern lighting ceremony**
- **Registrations now open for Leukaemia Foundation's Light the Night to unite Australian blood cancer community in evening of hope**
- **Blood cancer on the rise, registering for Light the Night a simple way Australians can show support and solidarity for blood cancer community**

Legendary sports broadcaster, Bruce McAvaney will be fronting an event close to his heart as he prepares to host the Leukaemia Foundation's annual Light the Night event in Blood Cancer Month (September).

Diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL) in 2014, Bruce is widely known as one of Australia's greatest sporting commentators, but what many don't realise is that he is an inspiration to an entirely different community in Australia – the blood cancer community.

For 15 years, this community has come together for Light the Night as thousands of Australians impacted by blood cancer, from every corner of the country, light up the night skies from their backyards, loungerooms and hospital wards. This year and for the first time, Bruce will guide them through the virtual lantern lighting ceremony as they tune in online on Friday 30 September.

Having lived for almost eight years with CLL, Bruce says his journey in many ways is just beginning and credits the support he receives to helping him navigate his diagnosis and treatment for blood cancer.

"I feel so lucky to be under the care of a strong team of blood cancer specialists and an extended family who are concerned about me physically but also emotionally. I also have a canine best friend, Frankie, who rarely lets me out of her sight.

"So many of us face health challenges but we are not alone, although sometimes it might feel that way. Support is the important thing and Light the Night provides an opportunity for every Australian impacted by blood cancer, to come together and support each other on this very special night.

"When we see those lanterns glowing, it's a bit like holding hands through the darkness. We think of those who have blood cancer and those of us who are supporting loved ones who are

fighting it, and those too who have lost loved ones. And those who work tirelessly to get the better of it. We may not be physically together, but we're certainly joined in spirit."

This year's Light the Night is shaping up as one of the most important yet as blood cancer incidence and mortality in Australia continues to rise. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) recently released their Cancer Data in Australia 2022 report, confirming that more than 53 Australians will be diagnosed with blood cancer every day this year, an increase from 50 people daily in 2021.¹

The report also demonstrated that when combined, blood cancers are one of Australia's deadliest cancers with 1 in 3 people diagnosed with blood cancer not surviving 5 years after their diagnosis.

Leukaemia Foundation CEO Chris Tanti said that with the growing number of Australians impacted by a blood cancer diagnosis, evenings like Light the Night present a moment in time where people can find comfort in the fact that they are not alone and enable them to connect with others impacted by the disease.

"Patients, their families, carers and friends, and members of the medical and research communities will stand united during Light the Night in support of a future free of blood cancer. We're proud to have Bruce joining us this year and sharing his personal story, as together we stand with all Australians impacted by blood cancer," Mr Tanti said.

Registering for Light the Night is a simple way that every Australian can visibly show their support for people living with blood cancer and thanks to the online virtual format of the lantern lighting ceremony, no matter where you live, or how you've been impacted by blood cancer, everyone has the opportunity to participate and create their own special Light the Night experience.

The Leukaemia Foundation's Light the Night event on Friday 30 September is now open for registrations. To sign up and register your event, go to lightthenight.org.au and gather your loved ones to join in the virtual lantern ceremony at nightfall.

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For all media enquiries please email media@leukaemia.org.au.

Available for interview:

Chris Tanti, CEO, Leukaemia Foundation

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/cancer/cancer-data-in-australia/contents/summary>



With an extensive background in the health sector, Chris joined the Leukaemia Foundation in February 2021 and brings a wealth of knowledge to the organisation. Chris began his career in social work and in clinical settings as a psychotherapist working across acute and public mental health before transitioning into management some 25 years ago. He has since held national and international senior executive positions including CEO of Australia's National Disability Services and leading mental health organisation, Headspace. Chris is located in Melbourne and available for interviews via phone or online video platforms.

About the Leukaemia Foundation: The Leukaemia Foundation stands with Australia to help cure and conquer blood cancer – with care. Together we are attacking every blood cancer, from every direction, in every way we can. We stand beside every Australian to be their voice and their someone-to-turn to, fighting to get them access to the best care. We also accelerate research that is delivering rapid advancements in blood cancer diagnosis and treatments. Plus, we provide services and support that empower people living with any blood cancer to live well after diagnosis. You can learn more about the Leukaemia Foundation and blood cancer at leukaemia.org.au