

MEDIA RELEASE *For Immediate Distribution* **Date: 18th August 2025**

Professor Urges Australians Not to Ignore Key Symptoms of Bladder Cancer

Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk, urologist and uro-oncologist at the University of Melbourne, the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre has drawn attention to the recent media coverage of US NFL Hall of Famer, Deion Sanders, 57, who has gone public with news of his recent major bladder surgery. “Sanders may well save lives by bringing international attention to a disease that often goes unspoken: bladder cancer,” said Professor Lawrentschuk.

In response to Sander’s public disclosure, Australian charity [Bladdercancer.org.au](https://www.bladdercancer.org.au), of which Professor Lawrentschuk is a co-founder, is urging the public to be aware of the early signs of bladder cancer—particularly haematuria (blood in the urine)—and to seek prompt medical advice. Deion Sanders managed to detect his cancer early, through a regular check-up, which made him eligible for the surgical creation of a new bladder (neobladder). The complex procedures of creating a neobladder from the small intestine are routinely performed by experienced urological teams here in Australia, represented by the Urological Society of Australian and New Zealand (USANZ).

“Bladder cancer doesn’t always get the attention it deserves, yet it affects thousands of Australians each year,” said Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk. “The symptoms can be subtle at first, but blood in the urine—no matter how faint or infrequent—should never be ignored.”

Bladder cancer is not just a smoker’s disease. While smoking is a major risk factor, many people diagnosed with bladder cancer have no history of smoking at all. Other contributing factors can include age, chemical exposure, chronic bladder inflammation, or family history. Early detection leads to far better outcomes.

Deion Sanders’ openness about his surgery is helping break down stigma and raise awareness globally. In Australia, advanced surgical techniques—including radical cystectomy and the formation of neobladders or ileal conduits—are available in major medical centres, offering patients hope for good quality of life after treatment. Tony Moore, the other co-founder of [bladdercancer.org.au](https://www.bladdercancer.org.au), who had such a procedure over a decade ago and is now cancer free, is also urging the public to get checked. “If there is blood in the wee, time to see your GP.”

Professor Damien Bolton, President of USANZ says, “We want Australians to know that expert surgical care is available here. But the key is recognising symptoms early and getting investigated.”

Key Symptoms to Watch For:

- Blood in urine (even once). May look rusty or pinkish.
- Frequent or urgent urination.
- Burning sensation when urinating.
- Lower abdominal or back pain.

Bladdercancer.org.au encourages GPs and healthcare providers to continue educating patients about bladder health and to consider early urological referral where appropriate.

For more information about bladder cancer, support services, and how to get involved, visit:

bladdercancer.org.au

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