

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAM

Aims

The aims of the National Program were developed by the National Advisory Committee and form part of the agreement between the Commonwealth and all participating States and Territories. These aims are to:

- ensure that the Program is implemented in such a way that significant reductions can be achieved in morbidity and mortality attributable to breast cancer.
- maximise the early detection of breast cancer in the target population.
- ensure that screening for breast cancer in Australia is provided in dedicated, accredited Screening and Assessment Services as part of the National Program for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer.
- ensure equitable access of eligible women to the Program.
- ensure that services are acceptable and appropriate to the needs of the eligible population.
- achieve high standards of program management, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability.

Objectives

- After five years, a 70 per cent participation rate in the National Program by women in the target group (50-69 years) and access to the Program for women aged 40-49 years and 70-79 years.
- All women in the Program re-screened at not more than two yearly intervals.
- To achieve agreed performance outcomes to minimise recall rates, retake films, invasive procedures, 'false negatives', and 'false positives', and maximise the number of cancers detected, in particular, the number of small cancers detected.
- Referral to appropriate treatment services and the collection of information about the outcome of treatment.
- Funding by the National program through State Co-ordination Units of only Screening and Assessment Services accredited according to agreed National

Accreditation Guidelines, and the monitoring and review of those guidelines by appropriate National and State Accreditation Committees.

- Recognition of the real costs to women clients of participation in the Program, and the minimisation of those costs, including the provision of services at minimal or no charge, and free to eligible women who would not attend if there were a charge.
- Information about mammographic screening and the implementation and outcomes of the National Program available in easily comprehensible and appropriate forms in a variety of forums and to women and health-care providers in particular.
- Patterns of participation in the Program which are representative of the socio-economic, ethnic and cultural profile of the target population.
- Services provided in accessible, non-threatening and comfortable environments by staff with appropriate expertise, experience and training.
- Appropriate service in that counselling, education and information is provided as an integral part of the Program, sensitive procedures for notification of recall are in place, and the time between initial screen and assessment is minimised.
- High levels of participation in the development and management of the Program by members of significant professional and client groups.
- The collection and analysis of data sufficient to monitor the implementation of the Program, to evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency, and to provide the basis for future policy and program development decisions.⁴³⁸

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