

Why BreastScreen SA?

What every GP should know



Our mission

To extend the lives of South Australian women and enable simplified treatments for breast cancer with early detection of the disease through a compassionate screening mammography service.

BreastScreen SA (BSSA) is the South Australian component of BreastScreen Australia, the national breast cancer screening program.

Our aim is to detect breast cancer early to enable simpler treatments and a more positive outcome.

Screening mammography is currently the most effective tool for the early detection of breast cancer in asymptomatic women aged 50 to 74 years. Population-based breast screening programs involve the taking of mammograms (breast X-rays) of women every two years.

Women aged 50 to 74 are invited to attend BSSA for free two yearly screening mammograms. Women who fit the BSSA criteria for a strong family history of breast cancer are invited annually.

In one of the largest case-controlled trials of breast cancer screening, Professor David Roder and colleagues have shown that BSSA participants had much higher survival expectations from breast cancer than non-participants. For women who have a breast screen every two years, the

magnitude of the survival advantage has been estimated to be 41%.

Despite the enormous benefits of screening, some women do not participate in mammographic screening, others let attendance lapse and some are referred to external providers.

General Practitioners have a key role in informing and encouraging their patients about the benefits of breast cancer screening through BSSA.

While symptomatic women can access mammography through a range of providers, for routine screening of asymptomatic women BSSA is a proven quality service provider (see overleaf). This important information can assist GPs when engaging in conversations with their patients about breast cancer screening.

BreastScreen SA is staffed by trained female radiographers and specialist radiologists. The Assessment Clinic – where women who require further tests are assessed – is run by a specialist multi-disciplinary team made up of breast surgeons, radiologists, radiographers, medical officers and nurse counsellors, ensuring women receive the very best possible care.

BreastScreen SA was awarded four-year accreditation status from BreastScreen Australia's National Quality Management Committee – the longest period of accreditation within this rigorous system – demonstrating the program's commitment to providing a high-quality service to the women of South Australia.

For bookings and more information

Call 13 20 50 or visit www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au



Government of South Australia
SA Health

Key BSSA features every GP should know about

Mandatory double reading

Every screening mammogram at BSSA is blind read by two independent radiologists. Discordant cases progress to a third read.

This is important because...

Screen detected breast lesions are subtle. Double reading improves cancer detection. Some lesions are only highlighted by one of the two readers. Without routine double reading, diagnosis of some screen detected lesions may be delayed.

Routine access to prior mammograms

Our data management system routinely presents the client's prior screening mammograms for comparison with the current BSSA mammogram.

This is important because...

Sometimes it is only this comparison that highlights slight changes over time, providing a clue to the nature of a subtle breast lesion. This routine availability of prior images improves the accuracy of screen reading.

Only specialist breast radiologists

We employ only radiologists with a declared particular focus on breast imaging. These specialists are sought after and are also employed by many public and private providers in South Australia.

This is important because...

A dedicated specialist workforce improves client outcomes and program performance.

Ongoing radiologist exposure to a large reading volume

BreastScreen Australia's mandatory accreditation standards require that BSSA radiologists read a minimum of 2000 screening mammograms each year.

This is important because...

Continuous exposure to a large number of screening mammograms ensures radiologists maintain and continuously improve their diagnostic skills.

Performance monitoring and evaluation

Accountability and performance monitoring are embedded in the design of the BreastScreen Australia program. Our accreditation standards require continuous monitoring of program and individual reader performance data.

This is important because...

Direct individual feedback and a range of team quality assurance activities enable our multidisciplinary staff to maintain high quality diagnostic standards. They also alert us quickly to possible emerging issues.

A system of invitations, reminder letters and follow up

Our client information system allows us to ensure clients are invited on time for their next screening mammogram. We follow up with reminders if the client does not respond to the first invitation.

This is important because...

Adherence to a two yearly schedule of mammographic screening optimises early detection. We keep track of when each client's next mammogram is due, so she does not miss out. We make allowances for women's busy lives by reminding them of delayed appointments.

Free screening and assessment services

Our state of the art screening and comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment services are made available to clients completely free of charge.

This is important because...

Economic opportunity should not be a barrier to accessing high quality healthcare.

Multidisciplinary care

Women who require assessment are cared for by a team of dedicated specialists. These include nurse counsellors, medical officers, mammographers and sonographers and radiologists, pathologists and breast surgeons.

This is important because...

We provide services in a calm and caring environment with skilled counsellors on hand to support clients and their families. High calibre, dedicated multidisciplinary care improves clinical decision making and the outcomes for our clients.