



## **It's time for your next breast screen**

### **Welcome once again to BreastScreen NSW**

BreastScreen NSW is a free breast cancer screening program available to women aged 40 years or more and especially for women aged 50 to 69 years. This brochure explains why it is important to have a breast screen (screening mammogram) every two years.

### **Why should I have another breast screen?**

Breast cancer cannot be prevented and can develop at any time. About 1 in 11 women in NSW develop breast cancer at some time in their lives. Research has shown that screening for breast cancer can reduce the number of deaths from the disease.

Even if your last breast screen was normal, it is important to be routinely screened so that if breast cancer has developed, it will be detected early. Your risk of developing breast cancer increases with increasing age. Evidence indicates a breast screen every two years is effective in detecting breast cancer early in women aged 50 to 69 years.

A breast screen can detect breast cancer at an early stage long before you or your doctor would be able to notice any change to your breasts. The earlier breast cancer is detected the greater the treatment options available to a woman.

### **Why should I continue to go to Breast Screen NSW?**

BreastScreen NSW is part of BreastScreen Australia, a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory program with high quality standards which services are required to meet. These standards apply to clinical and operational aspects of the service.

All breast screens are taken by specially trained radiographers and must be viewed by at least two specialist doctors. The services understand the importance of confidentiality and are sensitive to your needs as a client.

A breast screen at BreastScreen NSW is free. If you require follow up tests at BreastScreen NSW, these are also provided for free.

### **What will happen at my next visit?**

When you have made an appointment to attend a BreastScreen NSW service you will be sent a consent form and an information sheet.

At your appointment you will be asked about any change to your breasts that is or is not normal for you and then your breast screen will be taken.

If no signs of cancer are visible on your breast screen you will receive your result letter about two weeks after your appointment. The BreastScreen NSW service encourages you to nominate your doctor so that they will also receive a result letter.

## **Is a breast screen safe?**

Each breast screen uses a very low dose of radiation. Compression of the breast during a breast screen is vital so that the clearest possible pictures can be taken.

Some women find the compression uncomfortable and a very small number find it painful. Occasionally the compression can result in breast tenderness or bruising but this does not last very long.

If you found the breast screen uncomfortable or painful last time, or if your breasts are generally tender, please let the radiographer know before your breast screen is taken.

## **What if I have had breast cancer in the past?**

It is very important that you see your doctor or breast specialist for a regular check up as required.

## **What else can I do?**

- Have a screening mammogram at BreastScreen NSW every two years if you are aged 50 to 69 years.
- Have a clinical breast examination by your doctor or women's health nurse once a year.
- See your doctor immediately if you notice any unusual changes in your breasts, such as lumps, pain or nipple discharge, even if your breast screen has been normal.

## **How do I make an appointment?**

Phone 13 20 50 for an appointment at the BreastScreen NSW service nearest you. If you still have periods and your breasts become tender at this time, we recommend that you come along just after your period. Also, if you have breast implants, please say so when you make your appointment so that we can allow for a longer appointment time.

**Early detection is your best protection!**