

13 May 2019

Jodi Joyce
By email: bjjb_99@yahoo.com

Dear Jodi,

Thank you for your feedback and interest in the BreastScreen NSW program. I understand you have been working with BreastScreen WA and wish you well with this work and your ongoing recovery.

I'd like clarify a couple of points you have raised via our Facebook page and hope that this addresses any concerns you may have about the program.

Women aged 50-74 are invited to have free two-yearly mammograms with BreastScreen NSW. Invitations to screen and advertising and promotion is targeted towards women aged 50-74 because the risk of breast cancer has been found to increase with age, and screening mammography is known to be effective in reducing breast cancer deaths in this age group¹. In 2014, the International Agency for Research on Cancer assessed the evidence relating to cancer-preventive effects of different methods of screening for breast cancer for women of different age groups. They found only limited evidence that screening mammography reduces breast cancer mortality for women aged 40-49 years of age².

BreastScreen Australia's policy in relation to screening for women aged 40-49 states that the size of the benefit in terms of deaths prevented, balanced against the possible downsides for women, is insufficient to actively encourage women aged 40-49 year into the program³. However, despite not being actively invited, all women over the age of 40 are eligible to attend BreastScreen NSW. We recommend women in the 40-49 age group consult with their GP about their screening options and select the screening method that is right for them.

We will continue to be guided by current evidence and the BreastScreen Australia program.

Yours sincerely,



Naomi Combe
Program Manager

¹ Department of Health. BreastScreen Australia. Accessed 26 February 2019
<http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/policy>

² Breast-Cancer Screening - Viewpoint of the IARC Working Group. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmsr1504363>

³ Department of Health. BreastScreen Australia. Accessed 26 February 2019
<http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/internet/screening/publishing.nsf/Content/br-policy-40-49>