BreastScreen SA (BSSA) has launched a new advertising campaign, ‘What you see. What we see.’, aimed at boosting the number of women screened in South Australia this year.

The campaign will run for four weeks from mid-March with a second burst of advertising running in July. This will include press advertisements in Messenger papers, radio ads on Mix 102.3 and Cruise 1323, social media and digital screens at major shopping centres.

It is hoped the campaign will encourage more women than ever before to book in for a breast screen, particularly in the northern and southern suburbs of Adelaide where women are in need of extra encouragement.

For more information on the campaign, please visit www.breastscreensa.sa.gov.au.
The BreastScreen Australia program aims to provide women with safe, effective and high-quality care based on current evidence that maximises the benefits of early breast cancer detection while minimising potential harm to women.

In recent years breast density has been associated with breast cancer. On a mammogram, fatty tissue appears black while the remaining breast tissue appears white, or ‘dense’. Women vary in the composition of their breast tissue, and the relative amount of non-fatty areas on a mammogram is referred to as density. About 40% of women in their 50s, and about 25% of women aged 60 and older, have dense breasts. Breasts tend to become less dense as women get older, especially after menopause, as the glandular tissue degenerates and the breasts become more fatty. Other factors that can contribute to breast density are hormones, body mass index and genetics.

Higher breast density is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. High breast density may potentially hide some cancers, interfering with the interpretation of mammograms. Despite this, mammography is currently still the best breast cancer screening test in a population based program for asymptomatic women aged 50 to 74, even those with more dense breasts.

Although women with dense breast tissue have an increased risk of breast cancer, the risk is less than having a first degree relative who is diagnosed with breast cancer before menopause (which doubles the risk), or carrying a gene mutation (where the risk is 10 times higher). We recommend the use of a validated breast cancer risk assessment calculator to determine individual breast cancer risk, such as https://breastcancerrisk.canceraustralia.gov.au.

BreastScreen Australia recognises that in the future, breast density may have a role in determining the frequency and method of an individual’s screening. Further research is required to investigate what this role may be, and BreastScreen Australia supports such research, greater discussion and public awareness of breast density.

BreastScreen Australia’s current position statement on breast density and screening is that breast density should not routinely be reported at screening. BreastScreen Australia does not provide supplemental screening for women with dense breasts. Mammography remains the most effective test for asymptomatic women aged 50 to 74 years for reducing deaths from breast cancer in a population based screening program.

However, extra screening tests may be considered by an individual woman and her doctor, and for those women at high risk, individualised surveillance recommendations may apply. Some possible options include ultrasound, MRI and tomosynthesis (3D mammography). Women who are concerned about their risk of developing breast cancer, or who notice a change in their breasts, should see their GP to discuss diagnostic or management options.

BreastScreen Australia’s Standing Committee on Screening will continue to evaluate any emerging evidence for breast density and provide up-to-date evidence-based information for Australian women.

To read BSSA’s latest position statement on breast density, log on to the BSSA website at www.breastscreensa.sa.gov.au and follow the link under the About BreastScreen SA menu tab.
Sharing their story

Real stories from real women – the human face of breast cancer screening

In late 2016, BSSA embarked on a project to help share the stories of our consumers to help educate the wider community on the importance of breast screening. We’ve engaged with three individuals to start this project, with our ambassador Jane Reilly, cancer survivor Glynis Rosser, and BSSA Senior Medical Officer Dr Di Forbes being the first to share their stories.

Each representative has recorded a short video explaining why they feel breast screening is important for busy women aged over 50. The videos are a valuable and encouraging resource for women who may be considering a visit to BSSA, and can be found on the BSSA website at www.breastscreensa.sa.gov.au.

BreastScreen SA is now looking for more individuals who would like to take part and share their story to help encourage women to have a breast screen – in particular, any GPs or health professionals who can offer a clinical or personal perspective. If you would like to be involved, please contact BSSA’s Promotions and Education Team at BSSAPromoEd@health.sa.gov.au or by calling 08 8274 7102.
Our new online look

BreastScreen SA is currently in the process of restructuring our website to make it more user-friendly and easier to find the information you need, when you need it.

Part of the restructure includes an area dedicated to health professionals, where GPs can visit and obtain information that is critical when discussing options for screening with patients, as well as resources for referring patients for screening mammography.

You will also be able to read the latest news from BSSA, as well as download resources and access the latest research findings for the national breast screening program.

The restructure is expected to be completed by late April 2017, and the website can be found at www.breastscreensa.sa.gov.au.

We are also on the hunt for feedback on the new structure to ensure it provides the tools and resources you need to help patients make an educated decision on breast screening. If you would like to provide feedback, please email us at BSSAPromoEd@health.sa.gov.au.

Strategies for GPs

Building collaborative partnerships with GPs is an important strategy for BSSA. We offer:

- a range of free printed resources, including brochures in 25 different languages, and stickers with which to tag the files of your female clients over age 50
- seminars for health professionals and practice managers – at BSSA or your venue
- personalised contact with GPs via surgery visits
- display materials
- articles for professional magazines/newsletters.

Contact our Medical Officers for more information.