

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 17 & 19 October 2012**

**Question: E12-355**

**OUTCOME 1: Population Health**

**Topic: BREASTSCREEN AUSTRALIA PROGRAM**

**Type of Question: Hansard Page 35, 19 October 2012**

**Number of pages: 2**

**Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells**

**Question:**

Obviously there have been advocacy and awareness activities that have been undertaken under the banner of this program. Can you specify those (in relation to Indigenous communities)? Can you direct me to where that information is?

**Answer:**

BreastScreen Australia is delivered locally by state and territory governments, which includes responsibility for undertaking educational and promotional activities to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's participation in the program.

State and territory governments undertake significant work to increase the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, however disparity still exists when these rates are compared to those for non-Indigenous women. This is evidenced by recent data, published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in October 2012, which states that in 2009-2010, participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 50-69 years of age was 36.2 per cent, compared with participation of non-Indigenous women of 54.9 per cent.

States and territories have undertaken a range of initiatives targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including:

- Working closely with Aboriginal Liaison Officers from local Area Health Services, as well as Aboriginal Health Workers and Women's Health Workers to organise appointments and provide support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to attend for breast screening within their local community. This includes providing assistance to complete documentation, organising consecutive appointments and arranging transport to attend for screening as required.

- The development of specific, culturally appropriate resources to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women with information regarding breast cancer risk, screening and early detection, and to increase awareness of the importance of breast cancer screening through biennial screening mammograms.
- Providing a culturally appropriate environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to participate in screening, including:
  - providing a dedicated mobile unit at Aboriginal specific sites;
  - scheduling “block bookings” or consecutive appointments for Aboriginal women to allow them to attend the site at the same time; and
  - providing community transport to Aboriginal women who may be unable to attend screening sites.
- BreastScreen Queensland’s 4WD digital mobile service, which has provided improved access to free breast cancer screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women by visiting areas in the Cairns Hinterland, Cape York, the Torres Strait Islands and allowing additional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in other rural and remote areas of North Queensland to be visited in the future.
- Providing education and training sessions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s organisations, Aboriginal Health Workers and women’s health educators to help ensure equity of access to both information and services.
- Attendance at health expos held by local health and community agencies, giving jurisdictions the opportunity to provide information to the local Indigenous community about breast screening and the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to have a mammogram every two years.