

Annual report 2023–24



Acknowledgements

In the spirit of unity and respect, BreastScreen Victoria acknowledges the First Peoples of these lands and waterways. We recognise their deep connection to the earth and the importance of holistic wellbeing as we embark on our shared journey of breast health.

There are many terms to describe Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria. This includes First Nations People, Sovereign Nations, Indigenous Australians, Traditional Owners etc. In this report, to be inclusive and respectful, we have chosen to use the term Aboriginal.

BreastScreen Victoria is committed to ensuring we offer a welcoming, safe and accessible service for all eligible Victorians.

BreastScreen Victoria gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and the Victorian Department of Health.

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Copies of this report are available at:

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Financial Report

The BreastScreen Victoria Inc. Financial Report for the Year ended 30 June 2024 has been produced as a separate document. Copies are available at www.breastscreen.org.au

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Overview

At BreastScreen Victoria, we save lives and reduce the impact of breast cancer through early detection.



From our Chair

On behalf of BreastScreen Victoria's Board, I am pleased to present our 2023–24 Annual Report. BreastScreen Victoria achieved remarkable growth in the number of clients accessing our life-saving program this year, reflecting the impact of our Service Expansion Plan 2022–26. We also embarked on our first Innovation Strategy which is designed to optimise the service we provide to clients across every aspect of the program and support us to achieve ongoing uplift in screening numbers.

In a record high for the program, we screened 282,878 clients in 2023–24. Victoria's breast screening participation rate continues to improve, as we work towards achieving 55 per cent participation by 2026. This growth can be attributed to several factors including our Service Expansion Plan 2022–26, innovation projects and a return to normal operations after the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, we credit this outstanding achievement to the commitment and hard work of all our teams across the program.

As we near the end of our 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, we delivered key initiatives that will drive our agenda for the next Strategic Plan. These included our first Reconciliation Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. The plans will help us to embed a systematic, organisation-wide approach to providing equitable and inclusive services and workplaces for BreastScreen clients and employees. We are grateful to our partners including the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, our Reading and Assessment Services, consumer advisory and working groups, and disability sector organisations for their generous guidance and support.

This year we maintained our strong focus on research and innovation in the early detection of breast cancer through screening. Our research trials using tomosynthesis and artificial intelligence for breast screening have contributed to the national and international evidence base and will inform future changes in breast screening to save more lives. We are also proudly taking part in the BreastScreen Australia National Policy and Funding Review which is considering recent advances in breast screen research and technology and exploring how to integrate new evidence and best practices into the program.



The Board and I express our deep thanks to the Australian and Victorian Governments for their continued support of BreastScreen Victoria. I would also like to thank the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP for the support to trial the first Mobile Women's Health Clinic in Victoria. This service will expand our mobile breast screening service to provide a broader range of women's healthcare to women of all ages in rural Victoria.

I am grateful to my Board colleagues for their shared contributions of time, knowledge and skill over the past year. On their behalf, I thank outgoing members Dr Wayne Lemish and Tim Staker and welcome new members Dr Jocelyn Lippey and Alistair Lloyd.

Finally, I would like to thank CEO Rita Butera, the Executive team, staff and partners. I am privileged to work alongside and support our dedicated, talented and client-focused One BreastScreen Victoria team. We look forward to achieving even greater growth and improvements in breast screening services for Victorians in the coming year.

Dr Elisabet Wreme
Board Chair

From our CEO

The past year has been a period of significant growth and innovation for BreastScreen Victoria. We've significantly recovered from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and I'm immensely proud of the outcomes achieved by the One BreastScreen Victoria team in every aspect of our program. In this report, we'll share the key initiatives that have shaped our year, the valued contributions of our staff, consumers and partners, and our vision for continued expansion and improvement in breast screening services for Victorians.

Like every part of the health system, BreastScreen Victoria experienced challenges returning to normal business and service levels after COVID-19 with the continued impacts of workforce shortages. Even so, our team has come back strong with fresh ideas and a steadfast commitment to delivering the best possible program for our clients. Together, they delivered a record number of screens for clients, launched several new strategies and action plans, and achieved many innovations and improvements in the experience of our clients. All while meeting the highest possible standards of care.

As part of our Service Expansion Plan 2022–26, we made breast screening available to thousands more women across Victoria by opening four new permanent screening clinics and sending our mobile screening services to new locations.

Our new five-year Innovation Strategy enabled us to deliver new ways of working and tools that respond to our clients' needs, such as extending clinic opening hours, enabling digital consent for screening, and a trial to report breast density to clients and GPs. This strategy also underpins work to test novel technology within our program such as using artificial intelligence and a new automated image quality review system for our radiographers.

We have made a strategic and concerted effort to hear the voices of more consumers in our program this year. A highly skilled and diverse group of consumers have worked alongside us in our planning, community engagement and policy activities and in delivering major projects such as our new clinics, the Reconciliation Action Plan and the Disability Action Plan. Thank you to every consumer involved in our program for generously sharing your time and expertise with us.



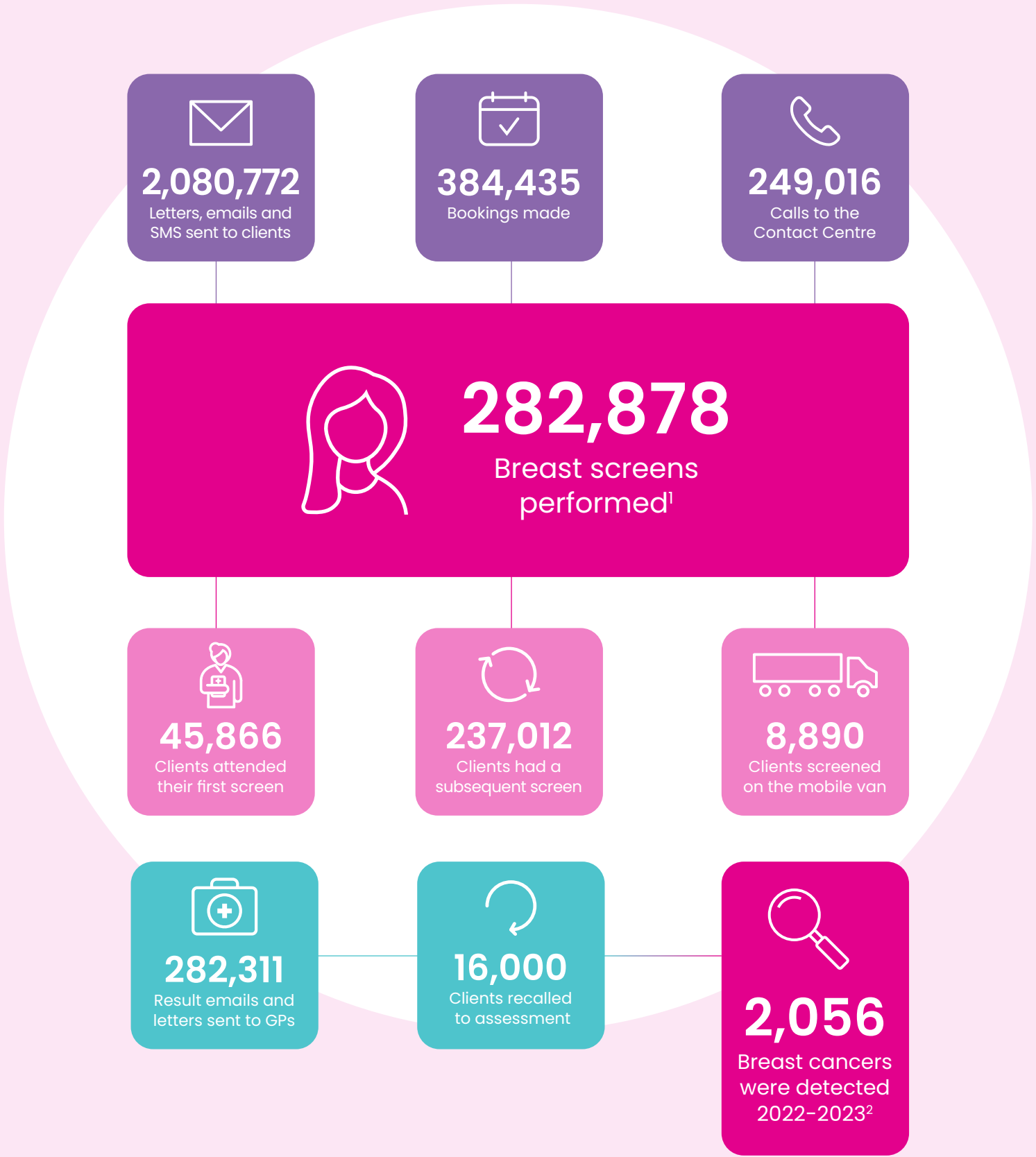
We are excited to have received funding this year from the Victorian Government to deliver a pilot project in 2024–25 to expand our mobile screening service to offer broader women's health services. This innovative project will help women in rural Victoria to access much-needed services close to home.

I would like to thank the BreastScreen Victoria Board, in particular our Chair, Dr Elisabet Wreme for her support during the year and to all Board members for their ongoing contribution and support for the Executive Team.

I would also like to thank every member of the One BreastScreen Victoria team for their determination, compassion and hard work. We cannot underestimate what can be achieved when we work together with a common purpose.

Rita Butera
Chief Executive Officer

2023–24 at a glance



2023–24 Financial highlights

	2023–24	2022–23
Breast screens	282,878	266,571
	\$	\$
Screening, reading and assessment costs	42,218,687	38,480,713
Coordination Unit costs	16,439,565	14,497,559
Special Projects	4,383,936	3,148,503

¹ This figure includes 2,403 Victorian clients who screened in NSW.
² Information about diagnosed cancers is collected in the six-month period following a referral from BreastScreen Victoria, and reported from the previous financial year to ensure all diagnoses are captured within this period. Of cancers diagnosed, 1,634 were invasive cancers and 422 were ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS).

Our purpose

As a population-screening program, we save lives and reduce the impact of breast cancer through early detection. Our network of services and dedicated staff work as one team to provide high-quality and inclusive care.

Breast screening is known to be most effective in reducing breast cancer deaths and the impact of treatment among women aged 50 to 74 years. Since the BreastScreen Australia program began in 1991, the mortality rate from breast cancer has decreased significantly across Victoria and Australia. Even over the last reporting period, there's been a 4% decrease in mortality.



Our values

Our values are what we stand for. They describe how we work together to provide a high-quality and inclusive service to our clients. Our values also reinforce BreastScreen Victoria's strategic goals and contribute to our everyday decision-making.

Caring

We **care** about our clients by showing them kindness, empathy and consideration so they feel confident about their breast screen and share their experience with others.

Respect

We treat our clients and each other with **respect** by listening and being fair and courteous so we can better understand each other.

Teamwork

We work together as a **team** by collaborating, sharing effort, and supporting one another to achieve our shared purpose as One BreastScreen Victoria Team.

Inclusion

We are **inclusive** of our clients and colleagues by providing a safe space and removing barriers to participation so that everyone feels welcome in our service and organisation.

Strategic Plan 2021–25

BreastScreen Victoria's Strategic Plan 2021–2025 brings together our Screening Services, Reading and Assessment Services, Mobile Screening Services and BreastScreen Coordination Unit with a shared vision

and purpose to reduce the impact of breast cancer and save lives through early detection. Our Strategic Plan is guided by four focus areas that guide our work and unite us with a shared vision and purpose:

Client First

Clients come first in everything we do and we seek their contribution to the planning and delivery of a service that delivers a high-quality experience.

Goals

- 1.1 Our clients are satisfied with the service they experience at BreastScreen Victoria and continue to return to screen.
- 1.2 There are a broad range of opportunities throughout our network of services for consumers and clients to contribute feedback that informs our work.
- 1.3 Consumers and clients are actively engaged in the development and design of our programs and services.
- 1.4 We contribute to research that leads to improvements to the breast screening model.

One BreastScreen Victoria Team

Our Screening Services, Reading and Assessment Services and BreastScreen Coordination Unit work as one cohesive and integrated team with a shared vision and purpose focused on delivering the best possible health outcomes.

Goals

- 2.1 There is an alignment of values and purpose across the BreastScreen Coordination Unit, Screening Services, Reading and Assessment Services and all those involved in providing our service.
- 2.2 Our workforce is engaged and shares knowledge across all parts of our service.
- 2.3 BreastScreen Victoria is a place where people want to work – this includes our Screening Services, Reading and Assessment Services and the BreastScreen Coordination Unit.
- 2.4 We collaborate and have smart ways of working across all aspects of BreastScreen Victoria.

Our focus areas

A High Quality Service

Continuous quality improvement is central to our work, ensuring the delivery of high-quality and evidence-based services that meet the needs of our clients throughout their experience with our service.

Goals

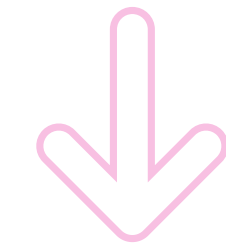
- 3.1 BreastScreen Victoria delivers a high-quality and effective service in line with National Accreditation Standards.
- 3.2 We have systems in place to share information and to drive quality improvement.
- 3.3 We collect and use the data and evidence required to continuously improve our service and the way we work.
- 3.4 We have reliable and effective technology in place across all aspects of our service.

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

We support diverse communities who may be less likely to come to BreastScreen Victoria so they can understand the importance of screening and improve their access to a culturally safe and inclusive service.

Goals

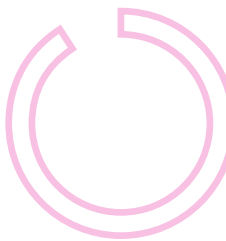
- 4.1 We gather evidence to understand the experiences of diverse consumers and clients.
- 4.2 BreastScreen Victoria is an inclusive service that is culturally safe and accessible to all consumers and clients.
- 4.3 Our diverse community understand the importance of population-based breast screening.
- 4.4 We collaborate with partner organisations to help us reach and engage diverse community groups.



49%

49% decrease in breast cancer mortality in women aged 50 to 74 since 1991.¹

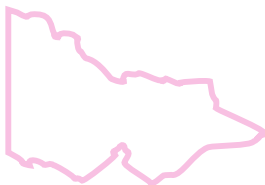
Reporting period 1991–2020



92%

Australia now has one of the best breast cancer survival rates in the world – 92% after 5 years.¹

Reporting period Jan 2015–Dec 2019



31%

BreastScreen Victoria diagnoses 31% of all breast cancers in Victoria.²

Reporting period Jan 2022–Dec 2022

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) BreastScreen Australia monitoring report 2023, catalogue number CAN 155, AIHW, Australian Government

² Victorian Cancer Registry. Cancer in Victoria, 2022. Cancer Council Victoria, 2023

Our focus areas

Four focus areas guide our work and unite us with a shared vision and purpose.



Client First



Rita Butera, CEO and Luke Neill, COIO with staff at the opening of the new Swan Hill BreastScreen Victoria clinic

Record screening numbers and reduced wait times

As the number of people eligible for breast screening continues to grow across Victoria, we have seen strong demand for our services. We're pleased to report that more women can access our life-saving program at four new screening sites which opened this year in Caulfield, Swan Hill, Maryborough and Ocean Grove. More weekend appointment hours were introduced at many clinics to help reduce barriers to participation for our busy clients. With this major investment in new clinics and extended operating hours, we delivered a record number of screens in 2023–24 and achieved the lowest-ever average wait time for appointments. These new clinics will help us achieve our goal of screening an additional 36,000 eligible Victorians every year by 2026–27.

Mobile vans visit new locations and help busy clinics catch up

Our mobile screening vans screened 8,890 clients and visited several new locations this year. With permanent clinics opening at Swan Hill and Maryborough, we could send mobile vans to other towns including Phillip Island, Warburton and Apollo Bay. These locations were chosen because our data showed that these communities are underscreened. The mobile vans also provided extra screens to reduce client waiting times at our busy fixed clinics by visiting Warrnambool, Echuca, Frankston, Mill Park and Gisborne. Clients who visit the mobile vans expressed positive feedback about the quality of the service they received and the convenience of being able to screen close to home.



Nina (mobile van) parked up at a mobile service site ready for clients

Living in a country town (Apollo Bay) and having the breast screen bus come to our area was so good as it's usually a 2-hour drive for a breast screen.

BreastScreen Victoria client

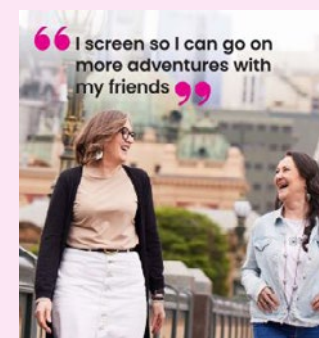
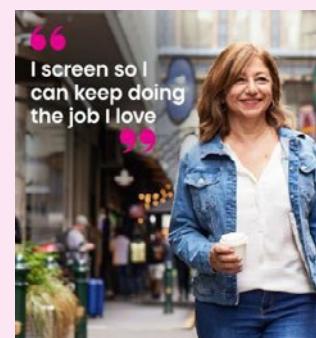


Geelong Reading and Assessment Centre with refreshed signage

Our new brand is appearing right across the state

In January 2024 we began a statewide project to refresh signage at every BreastScreen Victoria clinic. While the main goal of this work is to replace ageing signage and showcase our modern and inclusive new brand, we are also reviewing signage at every clinic – both permanent and temporary – and making changes to improve wayfinding for clients. This includes reviewing clinic maps to ensure they are as clear and consistent as possible.

We are busy progressing signage plans for all clinics and are on track to complete the project on schedule next financial year.



Screen for Life campaign

This year we commenced our Screen for Life campaign. It is part of a three-year communications strategy designed to educate and inform women on the importance of breast screening, particularly among first-time screeners and underscreened groups. The campaign encourages women to think about and celebrate the many reasons why they screen for early detection of breast cancer.

Client First



Rita Butera, CEO wrapping up our quarterly meeting with the Consumer Advisory Group

Putting consumer voices front and centre

We have 2,500 members on our Consumer Network, and our Consumer Advisory Group meets each quarter to discuss strategy, planning and policy. We also recognised the need for specific engagement groups related to projects and community segments and established an Aboriginal Consumer Advisory Group, Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and Disability Action Plan Working Group.

Collectively, they ensure consumers' voices are included in our decision-making process.

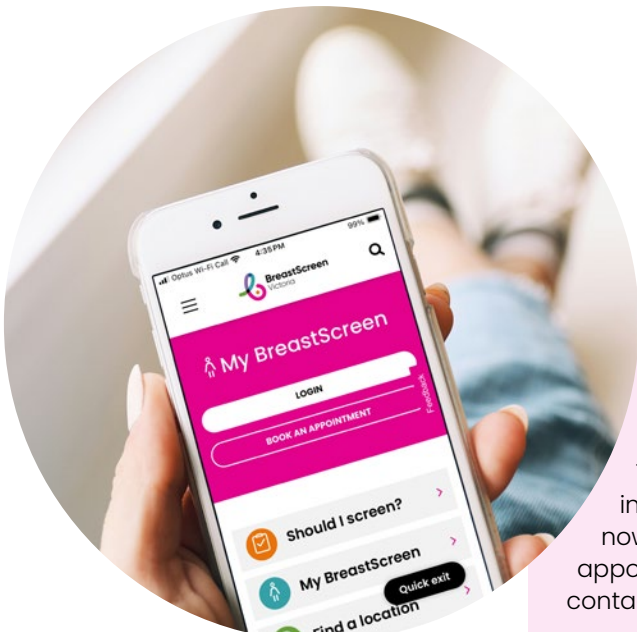
New clinic openings, resource reviews and media activities have all benefited from consumer insights, ensuring our services are responsive and reflect our clients' needs. We recorded a 33 per cent increase in the number of consumers involved in engagement activities with an overall satisfaction rating of 4.7 out of 5.

Many consumer network members shared feedback in our annual evaluation survey. One consumer said: "The efficiency, the successful community engagement and the determination to improve in so many areas is inspiring."

Client voices – we hear you and we are taking action

Our client feedback solution allows us to better understand their interactions with us within 24 hours of attending our service.

We hear this feedback and are grateful to every person who takes the time to share it with us. Importantly, we act on this feedback as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. We have also strengthened accountability by implementing a new incident management system for all complaints and negative feedback. Response rates including complaints and compliments are reported to our Board.



A convenient new way to cancel appointments and save calendar reminders

This year we introduced new features to make client interactions with us streamlined and easier. Clients can now cancel a screening appointment by replying to their appointment reminder SMS, rather than contacting our client contact centre or going online.

During a three-month trial of this new function, almost 3,000 clients cancelled an appointment by SMS and 57 per cent rebooked their appointment within three months. This reduced failure to attend and late cancellation rates and reduced calls to the client contact centre.

We also introduced the 'add to calendar' capability which is a handy reminder for clients booking online via MyBreastScreen. Clients can add their booking details to their electronic calendar of choice.

The calendar option was great, online portal made easy and convenient as I was able to book at a time that suited me.

BreastScreen Victoria client

Client First

Burgundy Street exceeds its milestones

The Burgundy Street clinic which opened in February 2023, has exceeded its screening target this year. This reinforced the importance of providing a permanent clinic in this community to meet demand.

Over the last 12 months the clinic has offered in-language group bookings to multicultural clients and trialed several priority projects including a Rainbow screening session for the LGBTIQ+ community. In total over 8,000 clients have attended Burgundy Street for a breast screen and gave great feedback about the clinic's staff, location and flexible opening hours.

Great staff, very efficient, great location in Heidelberg, quick and easy.

BreastScreen Victoria client



Clients can now give consent with the click of a button

This year, we introduced a new digital consent option to make the screening process faster when clients arrive. Before, they had to print the form at home or sign it at the clinic. This wasn't efficient for clients or staff, so we added a digital consent checkbox to MyBreastScreen, the system clients use to book appointments, register for screenings, check their results, and update details.

Now, clients can give their consent with just one click, saving both time and paper. Around 135,000 clients have already used this feature, and we expect even more will in the future. It's all part of our ongoing efforts to make breast screening easier and more environmentally friendly.

Booking an appointment online was an easy process. I could choose the date and time that suited me and I could fill out the paperwork online as well which meant I wouldn't have to complete it when I arrived at the centre.

BreastScreen Victoria client



One BreastScreen Victoria Team



Panel discussion at BreastScreen Australia Conference (left to right): Georgina Marr, CIO, Lorena Gibson, Communications Manager, Rita Butera, CEO and chairing Claire Pales, Director, The Secure Board.

Towards Tomorrow – 2024 BreastScreen Australia Conference

The 2024 BreastScreen Australia Conference theme was 'Towards Tomorrow', focusing on the future of the national program. This event was a terrific opportunity attended by around 50 BreastScreen Victoria staff. This included our CEO, Rita Butera, members of our Board, radiographers, radiologists, program managers, nurses and many more from across the program.

Our Victorian team featured heavily in the conference program, showcasing the leadership, innovation, and client focus of our workforce in all areas of breast screening. This included panels and chairing sessions and a keynote panel presentation by BreastScreen Victoria on managing cybersecurity risks in the Victorian program. We were pleased one of our posters was awarded Best Abstract Poster for 'Use of Automated Image Quality (IQR) software in BreastScreen Victoria', developed by Sue Macaulay, Director of Quality and Clinical Care, State Radiographer Sarah Mills and Project Lead Kathryn Smyth.



Dr Sonja Hood AM, Scanlon Foundation CEO and President of the North Melbourne Football Club



Maroondah BreastScreen radiographers

Putting staff ideas and feedback into action

Staff engagement and feedback are important parts of our culture at BreastScreen Victoria so we were pleased to offer two workforce surveys in late 2023 – a services survey for clinic staff and the annual public sector People Matter survey for Coordination Unit staff. 165 people responded from all our regions and across clinical and administrative roles. This feedback is informing a detailed Workforce Action Plan.



New operational dashboard for Reading and Assessment Services

BreastScreen Victoria's Reading and Assessment Services (RAS) are responsible for delivering screening results including reading images and operating assessment clinics for further tests. Monitoring data to ensure these services are client-focused, timely and high-quality is a core function of RAS teams. However, this data was fragmented, with each region accessing multiple reports and maintaining Excel spreadsheets to monitor service delivery. The RAS Program Managers led a project to develop a new RAS operational dashboard to provide all the key data in one place. The dashboard supports Program Managers and their teams in operating an efficient and effective service and streamlines business tasks, such as forecasting clinic appointment requirements.

One BreastScreen Victoria Team

Relationship team focuses on client experience and support for services

This year our Relationship team travelled around Victoria to visit our 51 screening, reading and assessment services. This team works closely with our service partners to ensure they can meet the demand for appointments and make our program the best it can be. The client experience is a focus during site visits, including ease of parking, way-finding signage and overall accessibility. The team works with services to design practical solutions to challenges that can be applied across multiple locations.



Melinda Goss, Relationship Manager, Tamara Hatzl, Capacity Management Coordinator and BreastScreen Victoria staff during a site visit

Dr David Speakman honoured for outstanding contributions to cancer care

In late 2023, Dr David Speakman, one of our State Clinical Directors, was awarded the prestigious Tom Reeve Award for Outstanding Contributions to Cancer Care by the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA). COSA presents the award to a national leader in the cancer field each year.

“It is a great honour to receive this award, named for Prof Tom Reeve, who helped drive equity in cancer care across Australia by championing clinical guidelines and pathways. Prof Reeve was also integral to creating the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre,” Dr Speakman said when presented with the award.

New radiographer site supervisors’ meetings

Feedback in our 2023 workforce survey led to new quarterly meetings for BreastScreen Victoria’s radiographer screening site supervisors. The meetings provide supervisors with updates on relevant projects and allow radiographers from different clinics across Victoria to meet each other which nurtures support and engagement between clinics and improves client services.



Flexible mammogram reading locations mean greater efficiency

In February 2024 we launched the ability for radiologists to read breast screens from any location, thanks to an initiative of our Innovation Strategy. This means radiologists now have the flexibility to read breast screens from any location with suitable equipment and internet speed including their home office, hospital, clinic or another secure location. Previously, breast X-ray images could only be read from Reading and Assessment Services and limited satellite locations.

Radiologist, Dr Mohit Gupta has been reading from home since the project’s launch.

“I am extremely satisfied with reading remotely from home,” Dr Gupta says. “I can read at my own times and work in my own environment without any distractions. Not only can I read more efficiently, resulting in a better turnaround time, I strongly believe that it will have a positive effect on quality too.”



A radiologist making the most of flexible mammogram reading locations

Better client outcomes result from improved technology

A technology boost this year is supporting best practices in delivering for our clients. The rollout of the Microsoft 365 platform has improved information access and enabled cloud calling, streamlining communication channels. The project has also strengthened our cyber security by enabling multi-factor authentication to ensure organisational and client information is secure. Microsoft 365 tools are also being used to standardise mammography unit quality assurance record-keeping across all sites in BreastScreen Victoria. This ensures consistency in recording and gives our staff better visibility of equipment performance to ensure it is at its best to service our clients.

One BreastScreen Victoria Team

Staff milestones



Gay Stevenson Nurse Counsellor, Grampians



Wendy Nieuwerth Chief Radiographer, Gippsland
Associate Professor Jennifer Cawson Radiologist, St Vincent's
Tracey Purcell Data Clerk, St Vincent's
Louise (Mary) Mattmann Receptionist, Monash
Rowena Hoffman Nurse Counsellor, Monash



Helen McKenzie Data Manager, Grampians
Liz Lovell Data Clerk, Maroondah
Heather Valeri Data Clerk, Maroondah



Sharon Coles Manager Client Contact, BCU
Pamela Fincher Client Contact Officer, BCU
Jayne McGaw Client Contact Officer, BCU
Monique Warrillow Radiographer, St Vincent's
Melanie McFaul Data Manager, Grampians
Monaliz Barrie Designated Radiographer, Grampians
Najumah Kimmie Radiographer, Monash



Julia Ayoub Governance, Risk and Compliance Officer, BCU
Vicki Bervanakis Accounts Payable and Office Manager, BCU
Cerryn Deane Learning and Development Specialist, BCU
Andy Quan PACS Administrator, BCU
Elizabeth Knight Nurse Counsellor, Bendigo
Tanya Holland Nurse Counsellor, Bendigo
Kath Blackmore Nurse Counsellor, Grampians
Tennille Usher Mammographer, Grampians
Jennifer Parkes Sonographer, Maroondah
Nicole McDonald Radiographer, Monash
Margaret Agetzis Data Clerk, Monash
Judith Chin Radiographer, Monash



Pamela Fincher Client Contact Officer, BCU, 15 years
Patricia Thompson Client Contact Officer, BCU, 14 years
Denise Levy Echuca Radiographer retired after 52 years as a radiographer and 12 years at Bendigo
Jenni Clohesy Administration Support, Bendigo, 23 years
Dr Arlene Mou Radiologist, North Western, 30 years
Jenny O'Connor North Western, 36 years
Dr Patsy Robertson Radiologist, North Western, 30 years
Lynda Shea Data Manager, Geelong, 30 years

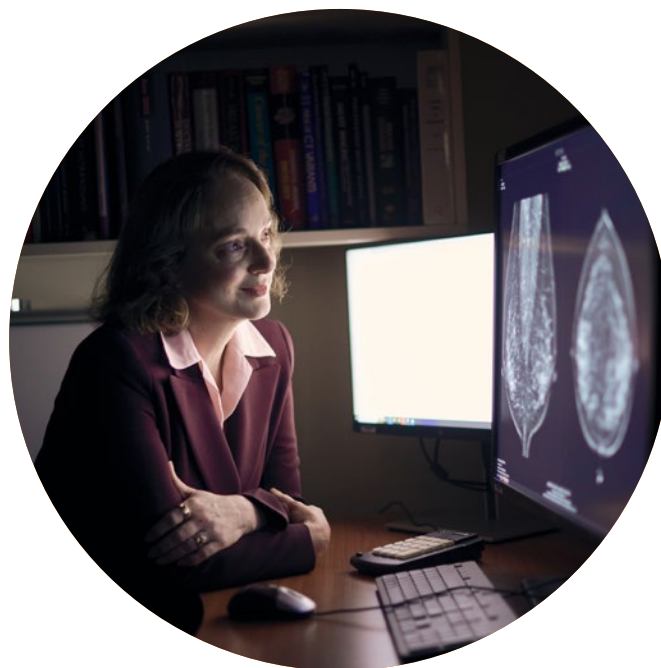
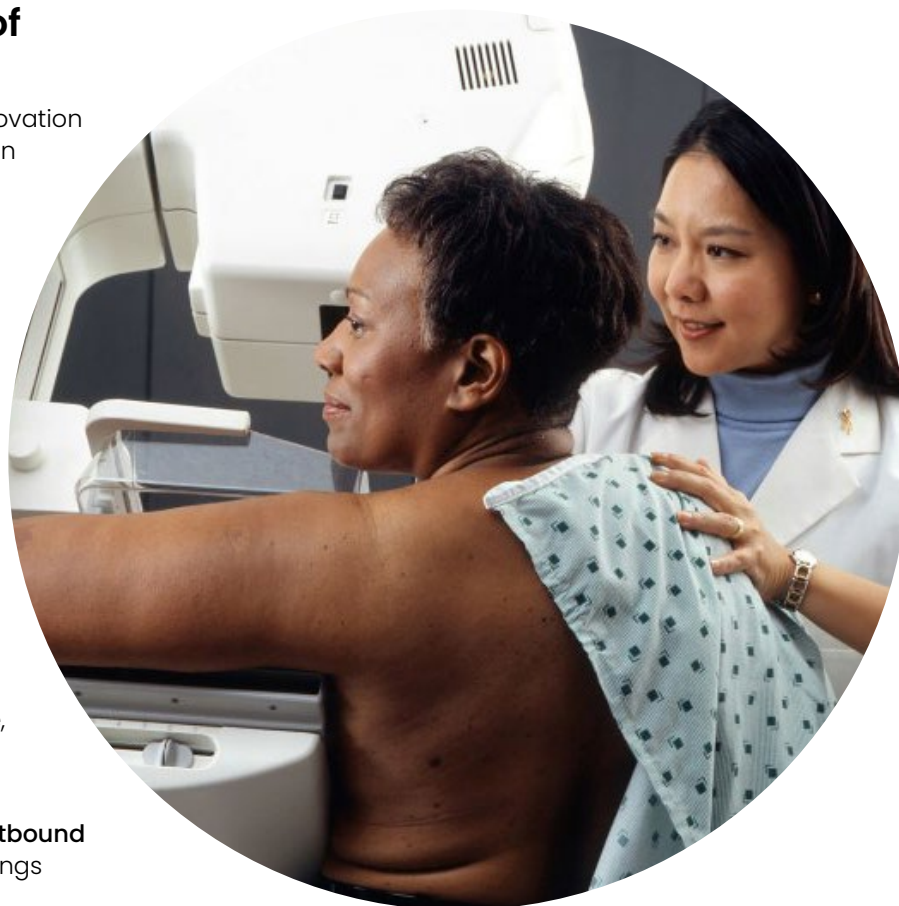
A High Quality Service

Reflecting on the first year of our Innovation Strategy

In June 2023, we launched our five-year Innovation Strategy which aims to position BreastScreen Victoria as a world-leading breast cancer screening service. It includes three priority action areas: Growth, Optimise and New Evidence.

This year, we progressed activities to increase screening participation, enhance the efficiency of core business operations and test new technology within our program. Some highlights included:

- **Digital consent** – clients can now complete their registration form online, saving time on the day of screening.
- Introducing the option for clients to tell us their **preferred name and pronouns** to provide a safe and welcoming service, particularly for non-binary and transgender clients.
- Commenced a review and update of **outbound client correspondence** to increase bookings and engagement.
- Rolling out our **automated image quality review system** for all radiographers to ensure that the quality of client images meets the National Accreditation Standards.
- Progressing a randomised clinical trial to use **artificial intelligence** as a second breast screen reader.
- Introducing **remote breast screen** reading to give radiologists greater flexibility and provide faster results to clients.
- Starting a trial to report **breast density** to clients and GPs.
- Implementing an **electronic assessment system** and processes at Gippsland Reading and Assessment Service.
- A collaborative review of the Radiographer Training Centre with Monash Health to **increase the capacity to train more radiographers**.
- Commencing the **capital redevelopment** of the North Western Reading and Assessment Service to enhance client care and experience.



Dr Helen Frazer, Clinical Director of St Vincent's BreastScreen and BreastScreen Victoria at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne. Photograph by Eugene Hyland.

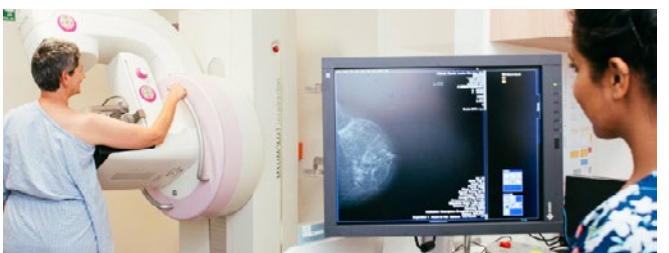
2024 BreastScreen Victoria Quality Awards

In recognition of our culture of continuous improvement, this year we introduced the first BreastScreen Victoria Quality Awards to celebrate the outstanding work of our reading and assessment services and screening clinics. Teams were invited to submit any quality activity that positively impacts service delivery and our clients for an award.

We are proud to announce that the Geelong Reading and Assessment Service, led by Clinical Director Dr Linda West, won the inaugural BSV Quality Award for their outstanding work on Post-Biopsy Hematoma Care. This award recognises their commitment to continuous quality improvement by reducing biopsy-acquired hematomas and enhancing follow-up care after an increase in cases was noted in mid-2023. Congratulations to Dr Linda West, Designated Nurse Counsellor Melissa Crone and her team for their dedication to delivering a high-quality, client-focused service.



Melissa Crone, Designated Nurse Counsellor, Linda West, Program Director and Chief Radiologist with staff from Geelong and BCU at the Quality Awards



Breast density reporting

Breast density reporting commences

We began a staged rollout of breast density reporting, starting with one screening clinic in 2024. Research shows that high breast density can mask the appearance of cancers on a mammogram, making them harder to see. This is because dense tissue and cancers both appear white on a mammogram.

Clients involved in the project receive information with their screening results about how dense their breasts are and what this means for them. In deciding what to do about breast density, it should be considered alongside other risk factors for breast cancer including age, family history and lifestyle factors. In addition, we have been providing GPs with information through several channels to help them understand breast density and care for patients who request or may require a more comprehensive risk assessment.

BreastScreen services achieve re-accreditation

The National Quality Management Committee (NQMCC) awarded these services four-year re-accreditation in 2023–24:

- Bendigo Reading and Assessment Service
- North Western Reading and Assessment Service
- Burgundy Street Screening Clinic
- Mobile Screening Service
- BreastScreen Coordination Unit

The NQMCC survey team commended all the services for the excellent standard of care they provide. Congratulations to all staff involved in achieving re-accreditation this year.

A High Quality Service



Dr Jill Wilkie Clinical Director and Designated Radiologist at Bendigo BreastScreen

Automated quality improvement software boosts image quality

This year we completed the statewide implementation of automated quality improvement software that provides objective feedback to radiographers on the quality of positioning and the adequate use of compression when they take mammograms. This feedback assists radiographers to improve their technique.

The software also compares results against benchmarks from over 2,000 mammographers globally. Previously, image quality review was done manually by the Designated Radiographers at the Reading and Assessment Services. The reports allow for more timely image quality information for individual staff and targeted quality improvement plans when needed.

"You can see your progress and how you are rated in your teams and globally. Not having to wait for managers to assess and improve images as you go is a big help to mammographers," said Heather Berman, a radiographer at Casey Screening Clinic.



Best practice governance reduces accreditation preparation time

This year we have undergone a major process of reviewing, writing and implementing standard operating procedures and training material. This work has delivered valuable improvements to BreastScreen Victoria's governance and best practices. Our Designated Radiographers reported that this work has helped reduce the amount of preparation time for accreditation.

The review included:

- A suite of standard operating procedures, training manuals, van management and troubleshooting guides for our mobile screening services.
- Screening and assessment training and standard operating procedure manuals for our receptionists.
- A screening and assessment standard operating procedure manual for our radiographers.

Training our consumers for better client outcomes

We were excited to partner with the Health Consumers Centre to deliver training sessions to support consumers who sit on committees that are responsible for overseeing quality improvement across our program. The training resulted in improved clinical governance and better quality and practical approaches.

Cyber security improvements

Keeping our clients and workforce safe is a top priority for BreastScreen Victoria. This year, our Cyber Security Improvement Program made several important enhancements to protect client and organisational data, as well as our technology systems.

We increased the mandatory password strength across all our channels including client access to MyBreastScreen, our online portal for clients. We also added a feature to notify clients when the password on their MyBreastScreen account is changed so that they can identify any activity they did not initiate. Multi-factor authentication was introduced for online bookings, adding a further layer of security for our clients' data.

We conducted cyber security simulation exercises with our Board, Executive, Management and IT team to test and improve our processes for responding to a cyber incident; this will be an ongoing process. Mandatory cyber security training was introduced for all employees which will help to ensure our workforce remains our strongest line of defence against cyber-attack.



Providing the latest equipment for screening and assessment

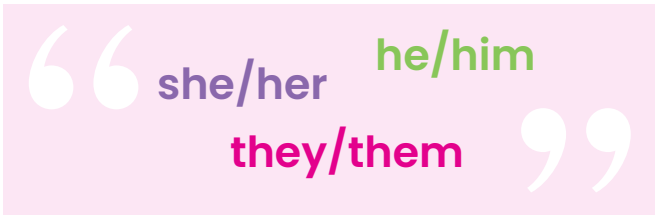
This year we replaced 15 ageing mammography and ultrasound units across 12 screening sites and reading and assessment services. The new equipment for screening sites delivers an improvement in image quality and less time spent on maintenance.

At our reading and assessment services, the new equipment enables a faster time to acquire a tomosynthesis image – which in turn leads to a better experience for clients.

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

Welcoming clients by their preferred name and pronouns

Part of providing a welcoming, respectful and inclusive health service includes addressing clients by their preferred title, name and pronouns. To support this we introduced this capability in our booking system in March 2024. This has been an empowering inclusion for some of our clients, particularly those who are non-binary or transgender.



Rainbow Tick accreditation

Since 2019, our mobile screening service and Coordination Unit have been Rainbow Tick accredited – a prestigious accreditation that recognises an LGBTIQ+ friendly workplace and service. We are preparing for re-accreditation in November 2024 and are guided by a Quality Improvement Plan to ensure we achieve it. This plan lists specific actions that we take to ensure everyone belonging to LGBTIQ+ communities feels welcome and safe, whether they are staff or a client.

We proudly show our support by taking part in popular community events such as the Midsumma Pride March, celebrating the International Day Against LGBTIQ+ Discrimination (IDAHOBIT) and visiting Daylesford's ChillOut Festival where we had great conversations with the community about breast screening.



Liesel Oliver, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist at the ChillOut Festival

We launched our vision for reconciliation

In mid-2024 we launched our first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Guided by the cultural knowledge and experiences shared by Aboriginal consumers and partners, the plan aims to remove barriers, increase breast screening rates and ensure that Aboriginal women have fair and inclusive access to a culturally safe breast cancer screening service. The plan was developed in consultation with our RAP Working Group, co-chaired by Aunty Esmai Manahan, a Yorta Yorta and Gunditjmara woman, and through conversations with many Aboriginal women across Victoria. We also engaged Caroline Martin, a direct descendant of the Briggs family and Custodian of Boonwurrung Country to support us with the consultation. The plan includes four pillars of inclusion: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.



Rita Butera, CEO next to artwork by Kedeasha Jackson, a Wemba Wemba, Ngiyampaa, and Wiradjuri artist, as part of our journey towards Reconciliation.

Developing our first Disability Action Plan

This year we launched our first Disability Action Plan. The plan ensures that we address the barriers that people with disability face when interacting with us.

We worked closely with consumers with disability, our staff and service partners, and organisations in the disability sector to develop the plan. It aims to enhance employment opportunities for people with disability and increase breast screening participation rates for clients with disability.

During consultation with community members, we heard a clear message; that much has been achieved and that our service still has a way to go in catering to the needs of people with disability, but there is an immense willingness and motivation to learn and adjust where needed.

Annie Fisher, a member of our Consumer Advisory Group and the Disability Action Plan Working Group, said: "I can clearly see the priority BreastScreen Victoria places on providing equitable access to the service. From executives to service staff, the organisation is willing to seek feedback and listen to advance the rights of people with disability."



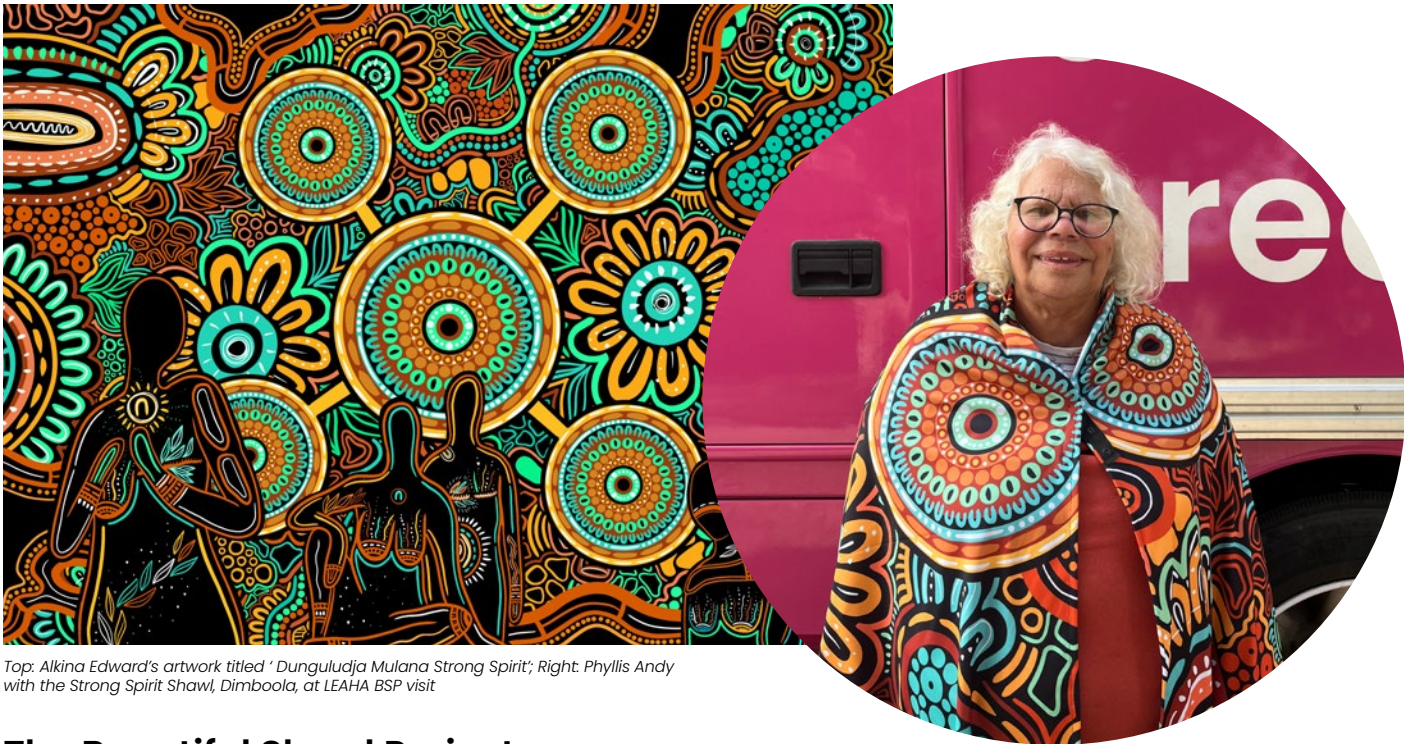
Nicole Laurie, Director Communications & Client Engagement, Liz Kelly, Board Member, Rita Butera, CEO, Ricki Spencer Consumer – Disability Action Plan Working Group, Catherine Langford, Director Clinical Operations Monash BreastScreen, Jill Evans Clinical Director Monash BreastScreen at the Disability Action Plan launch

Supporting newly arrived refugee women to screen

This year we renewed our Partnership Agreement with AMES Australia which has been in place since 2018. AMES provides settlement support to refugees and newly arrived migrants. Together, we work to increase breast screening participation amongst newly arrived refugee women.

AMES identifies eligible women, provides them with information about screening and refers them to BreastScreen Victoria for an appointment. In 2023–24, 81 clients were referred to our program through this partnership.

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion



Top: Alkina Edward's artwork titled 'Dunguludja Mulana Strong Spirit'; Right: Phyllis Andy with the Strong Spirit Shawl, Dimboola, at LEAHA BSP visit

The Beautiful Shawl Project

We are thrilled that The Beautiful Shawl Project, delivered in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) has been announced as a finalist in the 2024 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. The project is in the running to win the award for excellence in Aboriginal health and wellbeing.

Since 2018, The Beautiful Shawl Project has worked with 30 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other Aboriginal-led services to bring

cultural screening shawls and accessible breast screens to their Communities. This year, three additional ACCOs and one health service joined the project. Thank you to the VACCHO and all the participating ACCOs, services and Communities for making this project an ongoing success. This year 25 group bookings were held and 406 Aboriginal women had a breast screen. Of those who took part, 160 were new to the program and 115 were overdue for their screen.

Dame Phyllis Frost Centre MSS visit

To support women in prison to access a breast screen, we partnered with Western Health to bring our mobile screening service to the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in June 2024. The staff at the Centre were fabulous and before the visit, information about our program was shared with women. Over two days 33 women were screened, 28 for the first time.

We would like to thank the Bendigo BreastScreen team for their work supporting reading for the visit. We are now continuing this work with plans to screen at a second prison in 2025.



Nepalese women attend a group booking

Multicultural Project

This year we renewed our Partnership Agreement with We are pleased that our successful Multicultural Project has been announced as a finalist in the 2024 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards in the excellence in multicultural health category. The project increases access to breast screening for women from multicultural communities.

Our Bilingual Engagement team engages with women in their language to provide a culturally safe and inclusive service. This includes engaging women who have never screened through community outreach activities and contacting overdue clients via in-language SMS and phone calls to book appointments. Women are supported at their screening appointments via in-language group screening sessions. This year we held 79 group bookings – 459 clients from 13 different language groups had a breast screen. Since 2021 over 3,500 multicultural women have booked an appointment, many of whom shared that they would not have had a breast screen without receiving information in their preferred language.

I am so glad to do my breast screening with my friends together. The screening process was very easy and every staff is so friendly. Especially with the help from the Chinese staff who made the appointment for me and also helped us to communicate with the staff in clinic during the screening. I may not have the confidence to make booking in English if I have not received a call in Chinese. Thank you so much.

Mrs Zhang, BreastScreen Victoria client



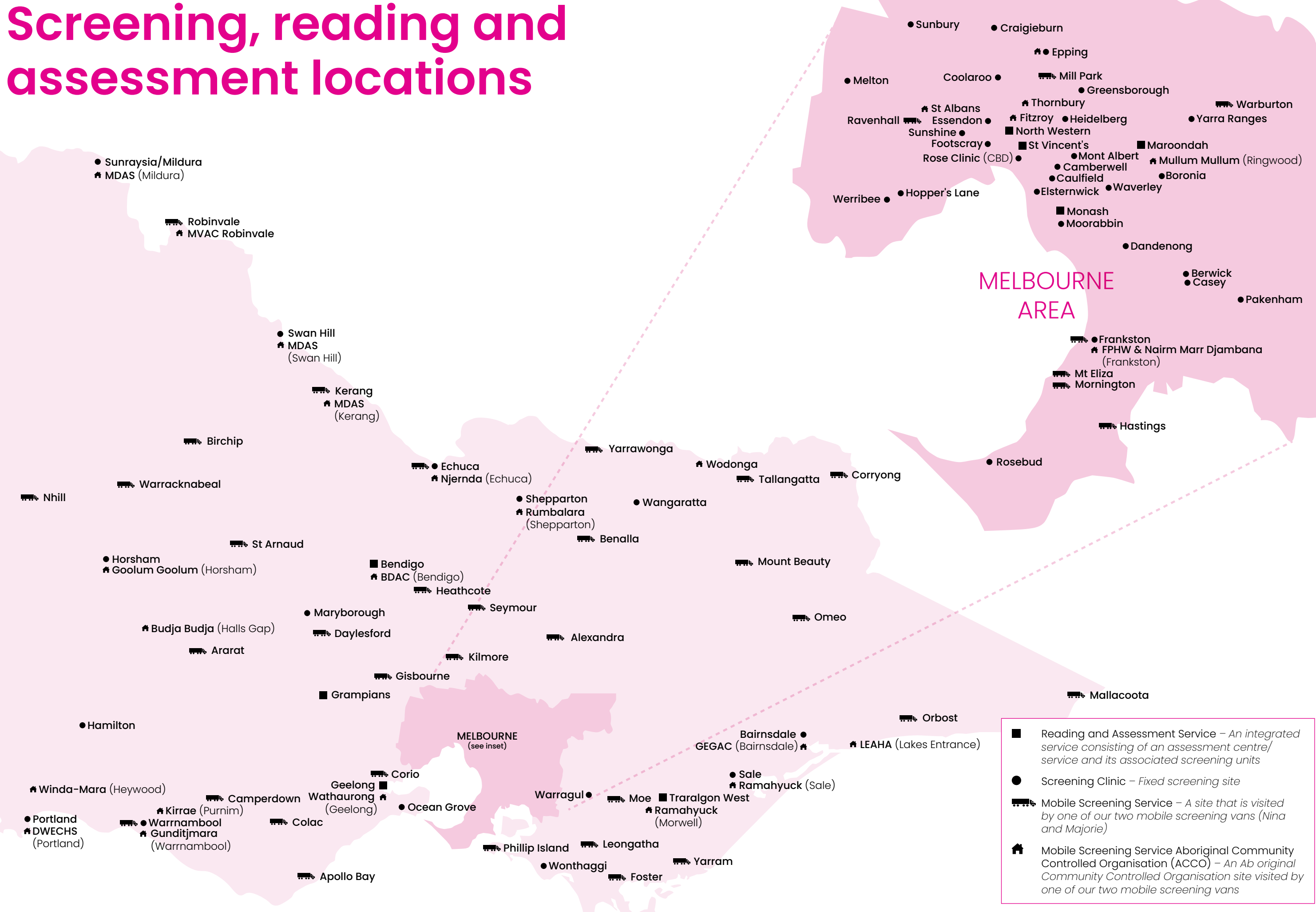
Mai Nguyen, Bi-Lingual Client Contact Officer at the St Albans Giong Festival

Our services

Our dedicated services staff work hard to provide clients with high-quality care at every stage.



Screening, reading and assessment locations



Bendigo region



Bendigo RAS achieves re-accreditation

The Bendigo BreastScreen Reading and Assessment Service (RAS) was awarded another four-year accreditation by the National Quality Management Committee in March 2024. A successful 2023 Accreditation Survey highlighted the team’s efforts in areas such as invasive cancer detection and engaging under-screened populations including Deaf and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Sue Macaulay, Director of Quality and Clinical Care, said:

“The survey team recognised Bendigo BreastScreen as a high-performing, high-quality, client-focused service which strives for excellence, is committed to quality improvement and meets the vision of ‘excellent care, every person, every time’”.

Learning about the breast cancer journey after diagnosis

In October 2023, Bendigo RAS delivered an education session to increase staff members’ knowledge about the client’s journey after a diagnosis of cancer at BreastScreen. Two local breast surgeons and a radiation oncologist spoke about treatment pathways including surgery, hormone therapy and radiation therapy.

Reaching out to the Karen community in their language

Karen refugees from Myanmar are the largest non-English-speaking population in Bendigo. Bendigo BreastScreen decided to try a new, more direct way to reach eligible Karen clients beyond its in-language education sessions and group bookings.

A Karen interpreter from Bendigo Health called newly arrived Karen people referred by the Bendigo Community Health Service and current clients who were overdue for their breast screen. Of the 26 women the interpreter called, 15 attended for a breast screen, most of whom were very overdue for their screen.

Engaging clients back into the program after a long time is challenging so the new strategy was a great success. The service also plans to expand this initiative to other multicultural communities in the Bendigo region.

Early detection of DCIS helps prevent invasive breast cancers

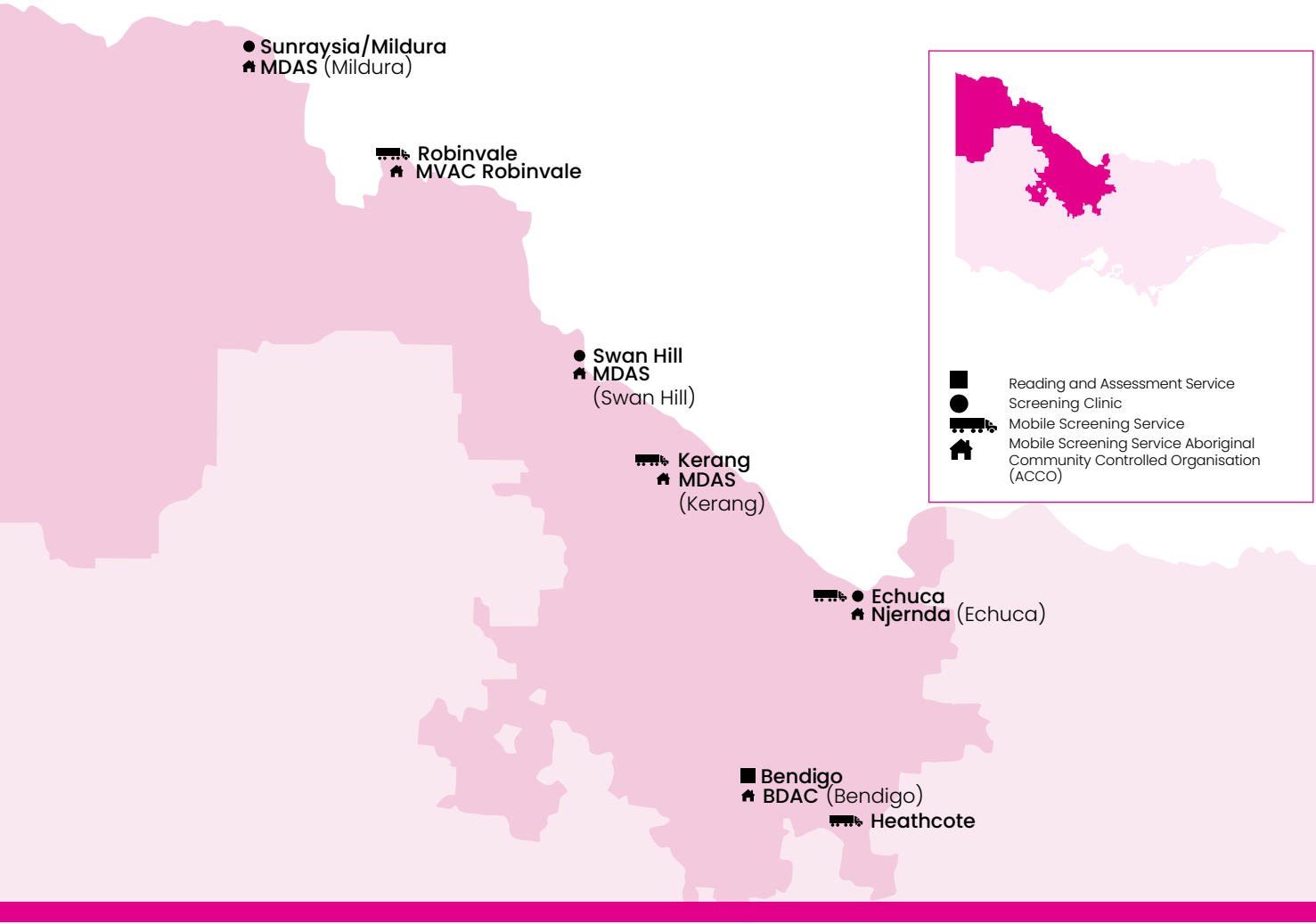
This year the service implemented a quality initiative to improve its ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) detection rate. The service trialed strategies including:

- upgrading the radiologists’ screen reading monitors from 5 to 12 megapixels
- activities to improve image quality
- undertaking a case review of all DCIS cases detected over 5 years.

As a result, the DCIS detection rate stabilised above the National Accreditation Standard benchmark. Most importantly, clients diagnosed with DCIS can access early treatment to ensure it does not progress to invasive breast cancer.

This has given me more confidence to address and respond to the client’s specific concerns and questions with clarity and helping the client feel less anxious, gain more knowledge and feel more empowered to ask questions going forward after leaving BreastScreen.

Nurse Councillor



Rita Butera, CEO and Luke Neill, COIO and staff at the opening of the new Swan Hill BreastScreen Victoria clinic

New Swan Hill clinic

In March 2024, a new breast screening clinic opened at Swan Hill District Health. Clients from Swan Hill and surrounding towns previously relied on visits from the mobile screening van. Now they have access to breast screening year-round.

“Very professionally run breast screen at Swan Hill Hospital, easily accessible for local ladies instead of waiting for the travelling breast screen van.”

– BreastScreen Victoria client

Creating a calm and welcoming ambience

After last year’s relocation, Bendigo BreastScreen focused on creating a welcoming and calming atmosphere in its new clinic. The team introduced an array of complementary therapies, including aromatherapy, music, plants, colour and art therapy. Returning clients have noticed a positive difference in the ambience and told clinic staff what a difference it made to their experience.

It was a very warm and pleasant atmosphere, which made the experience feel more ‘safe’ to me.

BreastScreen Client

Grampians region

Helen McKenzie retires after 26 years

Helen McKenzie, Data Manager at Grampians BreastScreen is retiring after 26 years providing exceptional service to women in the Grampians region and the BreastScreen program. Helen is a highly valued member of the Grampians team, and they will miss her happy demeanour, knowledge and outstanding data management skills.



Grampians Health staff take time out for lunch and a breast screen

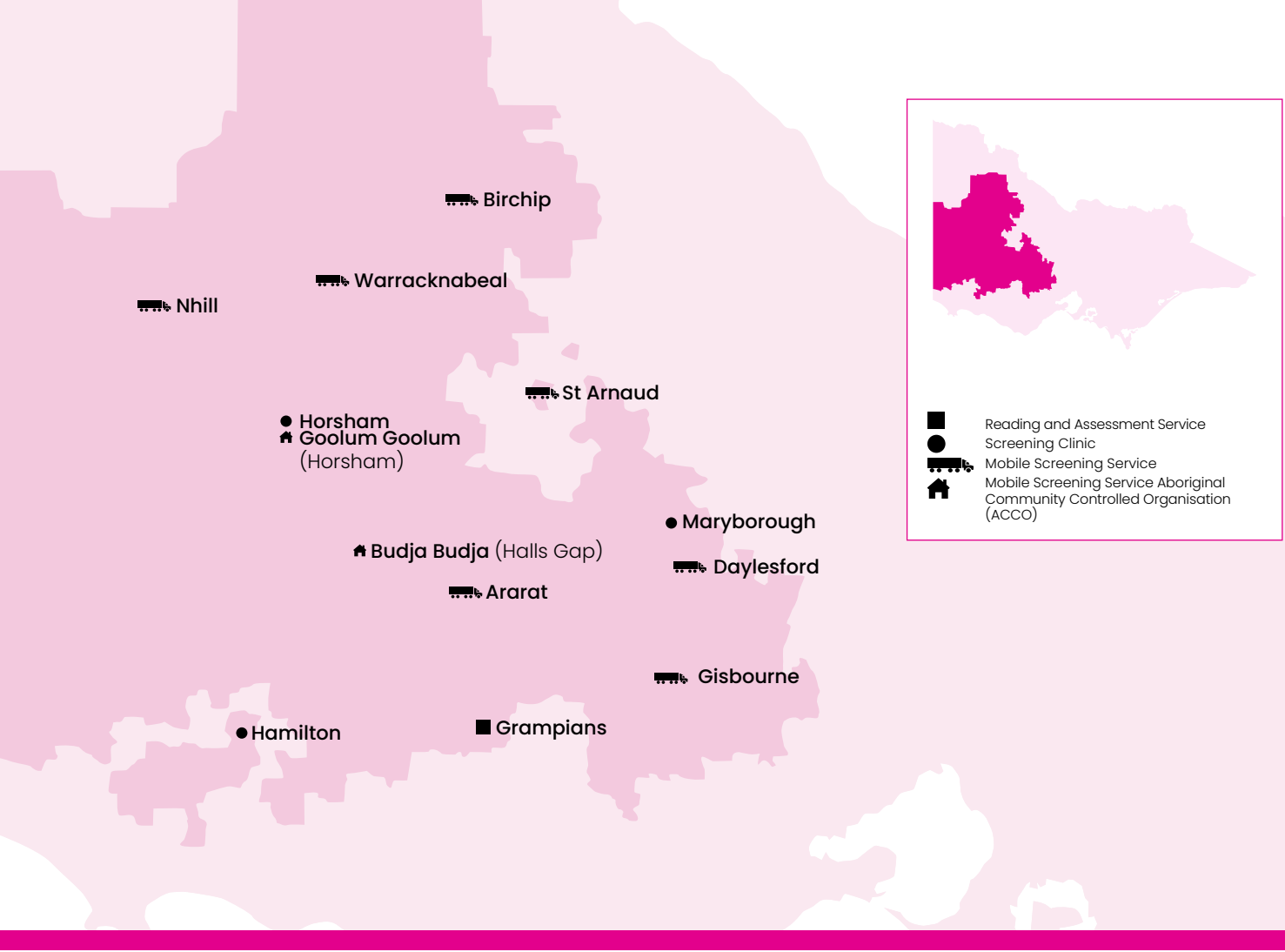
Grampians BreastScreen celebrated Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October 2023 with a lunch for their colleagues and friends from Grampians Health. Screening appointments were offered just for Grampian Health staff so that people who are usually very busy caring for others could take some time to look after their own health. One client who screened for the first time said she was extremely grateful after being called back for assessment and then receiving an all-clear result. Well-known Ballarat bakery The Little Cupcake kindly donated cupcakes for the event. Thank you to the catering team at Grampians Health who also provided pink-frosted cupcakes for clients to enjoy throughout the whole month. Following the success of this event, Grampians BreastScreen is planning to repeat this special screening session for Grampians Health staff members in October 2024.

Optimising clients' experience of recall to assessment

This year, the team at the Grampians Reading and Assessment Service (RAS) worked hard to improve its processes and the physical environment to deliver the best possible experience for its clients. This included visiting other BreastScreen sites to see what practices work well elsewhere that could be adopted in Grampians.

The team has been continuously reviewing the client workflow and processes in the assessment clinic to make sure clients experience minimal waiting time and are kept well informed throughout the day on clinic flow. Behind the scenes, this involved planning changes with the surgeons, nurses, radiographers and sonographers to reduce bottlenecks in the clinic. More nurses were rostered into the clinic, and an additional radiographer shift was added to allow appointments to be held during the lunch hour. The team also adjusted when and how clinical equipment and space are used to maximise their benefit for clients.

The clinic was refurbished and redesigned to create a more comfortable and spacious environment. Sustainability was a key focus, with materials, equipment and furniture being recycled, reused or repurposed wherever possible. The clinic is now much more client-friendly and includes new artwork, a new reception desk and upgraded furniture in the waiting area, all of which improve the client experience.



Building strong connections in the community

Grampians BreastScreen has focused on raising its profile within Grampians Health by creating an intranet page and networking with staff. This strong connection with Grampians Health and other local healthcare services also assisted the team in raising awareness about its services and the importance of breast screening in the local community. A new community-facing webpage has been developed on the Grampians Health Ballarat website and Ballarat Community Health invited Program Manager Mary-Anne Gould to several local events to speak to community members.

The team has also built a strong and trusting relationship with the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative. Grampians BreastScreen invites Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who have signed up for a group booking to share a meal in the clinic on the day and to yarn about health and wellbeing whilst waiting for their breast screen.



Rita Butera, CEO and staff at the opening of the new Maryborough BreastScreen Victoria clinic

New BreastScreen clinic at Maryborough

Opening a new clinic at Maryborough increased the number of permanent breast screening clinics in the Grampians region from three to four this year. It is a welcoming and bright new facility in the Maryborough Hospital precinct. Tamara, the mammographer on the ground in Maryborough, is doing an excellent job of keeping the service running single-handed with great support from her reception team as well as from hospital staff and supporters.

North Western region

Jenny O’Conner retires after 36 years

Jenny O’Connor retired after 36 years of service with North Western BreastScreen. Jenny joined the team as a nurse and worked across multiple roles in the service including ultrasound, the assessment nursing team, reception and data management. The team appreciated her ability and willingness to help in all areas and wish her well in her retirement.



North Western Reading and Assessment Service (RAS) redevelopment begins

BreastScreen Victoria secured funding to undertake a major redevelopment of the North Western Reading and Assessment Service (RAS). The service screened and assessed the largest number of clients in its history during 2023–24; this building project will increase service capacity and improve the service experience for clients living in this growing region.

A working group including senior staff and a consumer collaborated with architects to redesign the clinic’s layout. This will optimise the space to improve clinic workflow and provide a more comfortable waiting area for clients. The new interior design will focus on creating a warm and calming environment.

With plans finalised, the project is out to tender for a builder and work is expected to begin in October 2024. The service looks forward to a fresh new environment for its clients and staff once the project is complete.

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service’s new St Albans clinic takes part in The Beautiful Shawl Project

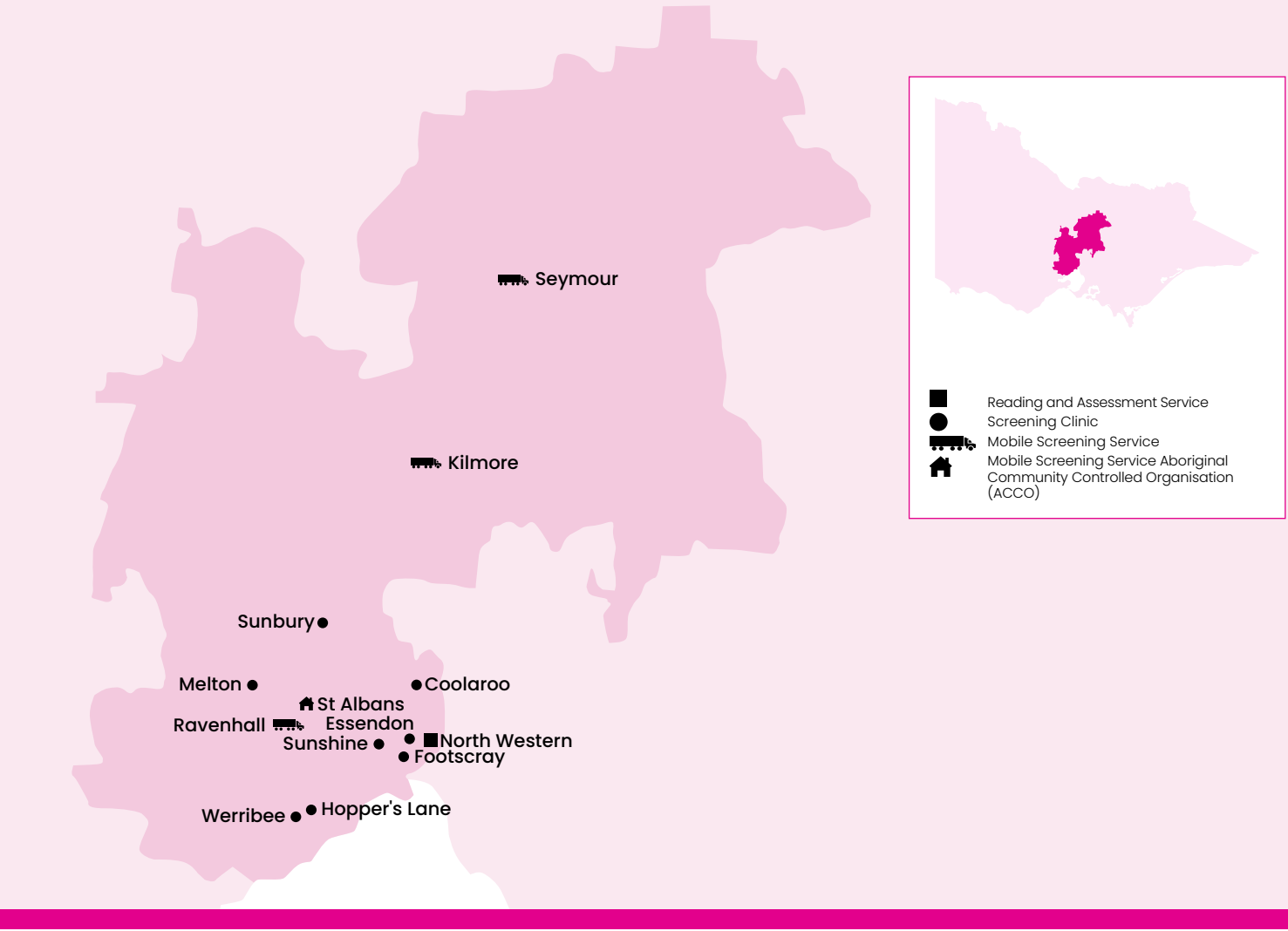
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) opened a brand-new clinic in St Albans in June 2023. The mobile screening service visited the new clinic in August 2023 as part of The Beautiful Shawl Project. During this visit, 25 VAHS clients had a breast screen. Most of these clients were first-time screeners and about 20 per cent were overdue for their breast screen.



Deidre Atkinson with her new shawl

North Western RAS achieves re-accreditation

North Western RAS was awarded a further four years of accreditation by the National Quality Management Committee (NQMC). The NQMC commended the service for its commitment to providing access for clients with mobility issues, a high standard of mammography image quality, and excellent teamwork. Congratulations to the whole team on this fantastic outcome.



Mobile screening service visits Gisborne

This year the mobile screening service visited Gisborne to help meet demand for the growing number of eligible clients living in the North Western. 250 more women were able to have a breast screen during this visit from the van, and it helped to reduce wait times at the nearby Sunbury Screening Clinic.

PROSPECT trial published in *The Lancet*

PROSPECT, a clinical trial co-led by North Western BreastScreen’s Clinical Director Dr Allison Rose, was published in *The Lancet* in December 2023. PROSPECT studied women with early invasive breast cancer, 87 per cent of whom were diagnosed through BreastScreen. The trial used MRI in combination with a review of pathological features of the breast tumour to find truly localised cancers that can be treated with breast-conserving surgery.

The research findings suggest that breast MRI may be effective at identifying women with early-stage breast cancer who do not need radiotherapy. This may lead to better treatment options for women, such as reducing the cost, time and side effects of radiotherapy.

St Vincent's region

Farewell to Mr Anthony Hyett

After 20 years of service, dedicated breast surgeon Mr Anthony Hyett retired from St Vincent's BreastScreen Reading and Assessment Service (RAS) and private practice this year. Mr Hyett was professional, compassionate and kind to all his clients. The St Vincent's team thanks him for his valuable contribution to the health of Victorian women and wishes him well as he pursues his passion for travel in retirement.



Sarah Mills, State Radiographer with staff and Consumers at the opening of the Caulfield clinic

New screening clinic opens in Caulfield

The new Caulfield clinic opened in December 2023 and began screening at full capacity in January 2024. The clinic is in a newly renovated space upstairs in Caulfield Hospital offering a friendly and supportive space for clients.

Dr Jennifer Chong wins Consultant of the Year prize

Dr Jennifer Chong, Acting Clinical Director at St Vincent's RAS, was awarded the prestigious St Vincent's John Billings Prize for Consultant of the Year in December 2023. The prize is awarded to a staff member who has made an exceptional contribution to the learning and supervision of junior medical staff throughout the year.

This achievement recognises Dr Chong's hard work and dedication to the field of radiology. Her colleagues praised her exceptional care for staff and patients, kindness, and dedication to helping others.

Speaking about the award, Dr Chong said: "It was an honour to accept the John Billings Prize as a representative of the entire team at St Vincent's RAS. Truly it has been everyone, from nurses to administration, surgeons, radiographers and radiologists, who have created such a nurturing and safe space to work, learn, teach and inspire each other and future generations."



Dr Jenny Chong – Consultant of the Year

● Shepparton
▲ Rumbalara (Shepparton)
■ Benalla



■ Reading and Assessment Service
● Screening Clinic
■ Mobile Screening Service
■ Mobile Screening Service Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)

● Craigieburn
▲ Epping
■ Mill Park
● Greensborough
● Heidelberg
Thornbury ▲ Fitzroy
St Vincent's Rose Clinic (CBD) ● Camberwell
● Caulfield
● Elsternwick

Trauma-informed care training

Clients who have experienced trauma can face significant barriers when seeking healthcare. Some people can feel vulnerable, distressed or unsafe if they are asked to remove clothing or to be touched for a test or examination. To increase staff understanding of these clients' needs and equip them to provide a safe and sensitive breast screening experience, 12 St Vincent's BreastScreen radiographers took part in a Trauma-Informed Care training program delivered by Blue Knot. We hope to extend this important program.



Radiographer training day

Service improvements

- ✓ Volpara Image Analytics implemented and training delivered for radiographers.
- ✓ Senior Radiographers undertook the Clinical Supervisor Training Workshops at the Radiographer Training Centre.
- ✓ A new accessible mammography chair ensures the screening experience is accessible, comfortable and safe for clients with a disability.
- ✓ New chairs at St Vincent's RAS which provided added comfort and an inviting environment.

Monash region

Dr Jane Fox receives an AM

Dr Jane Fox was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her ‘significant service, particularly as a breast surgeon, researcher and educator’ at the 2024 Australia Day Honours ceremony. Dr Fox is the BreastScreen Designated Surgeon for Monash Health. She is committed to multidisciplinary care for patients with breast cancer and helping patients understand their illness and treatment options. Her clinical research in breast cancer early detection and treatment has led to lifesaving improvements for women.

Dr Fox said: “Working in oncology, it is a privilege to engage so deeply with individuals... helping them regain their equilibrium and autonomy at vulnerable moments.”



Research on using AI to read breast images published

In November 2023 Dr John Waugh, Senior Radiologist at Monash BreastScreen and colleagues, published a paper in European Radiology on the findings of a study called “Performance of artificial intelligence in 7533 consecutive prevalent screening mammograms from the BreastScreen Australia program”. This study compared performance of AI to radiologist reading in Round 1 clients and concluded it performs at least as well as radiologist in finding cancers, and may also contribute to decreasing recall rates. This indicates that AI may well have a role in reducing workload for radiologists and improving reading performance.

Dr Waugh, the lead researcher for this study, said: “This innovative study showed how AI could match the detection performance of a whole group of expert radiologists as well as find some breast cancers that they missed. Clearly AI’s careful implementation in the future has enormous potential for screening services and their clients.”

MP visit to Waverly BreastScreen

Monash BreastScreen also welcomed Mr Mullahy MP, Member for Glen Waverley and Parliamentary Secretary for Women’s Health Kat Theophanous during a visit to the Waverley screening clinic. They met with Martin Keogh (former acting CEO Monash Health), Dr Jill Evans and the team. During a clinic tour, the team talked about the importance of making breast screening an accessible and welcoming service for clients from diverse backgrounds and with different needs.



Increasing training capacity for radiographers

This year, the Radiography Training Centre (RTC) led a major project supporting BreastScreen Victoria’s workforce strategy to increase training capacity for radiographers. Monash Health runs the RTC and offers radiographers academic and clinical training, workshops and upskilling opportunities. This project aimed to increase in-person and online training access for new and experienced BreastScreen radiographers.

A new online clinical module was developed to streamline education and improve the experience for radiographers completing clinical training in mammography. Radiographer workshops were revised to target important and emerging learning needs, such as mammography positioning and soft skill development, and bring groups together for best-practice learning.



Enhancing screening accessibility & comfort for clients with a disability

Monash RAS delivers an individualised screening and assessment model for clients with disabilities to ensure their unique needs are met and to obtain the best breast screen images possible. This includes scheduling additional support to enhance accessibility and comfort for clients with a disability. The team are passionate about providing inclusive healthcare, reflected by the positive feedback from clients:

I’m a disabled lady but was treated no differently to any other woman.

BreastScreen Victoria client

Staff don’t care about my speech or disability. I’m treated with the utmost respect.

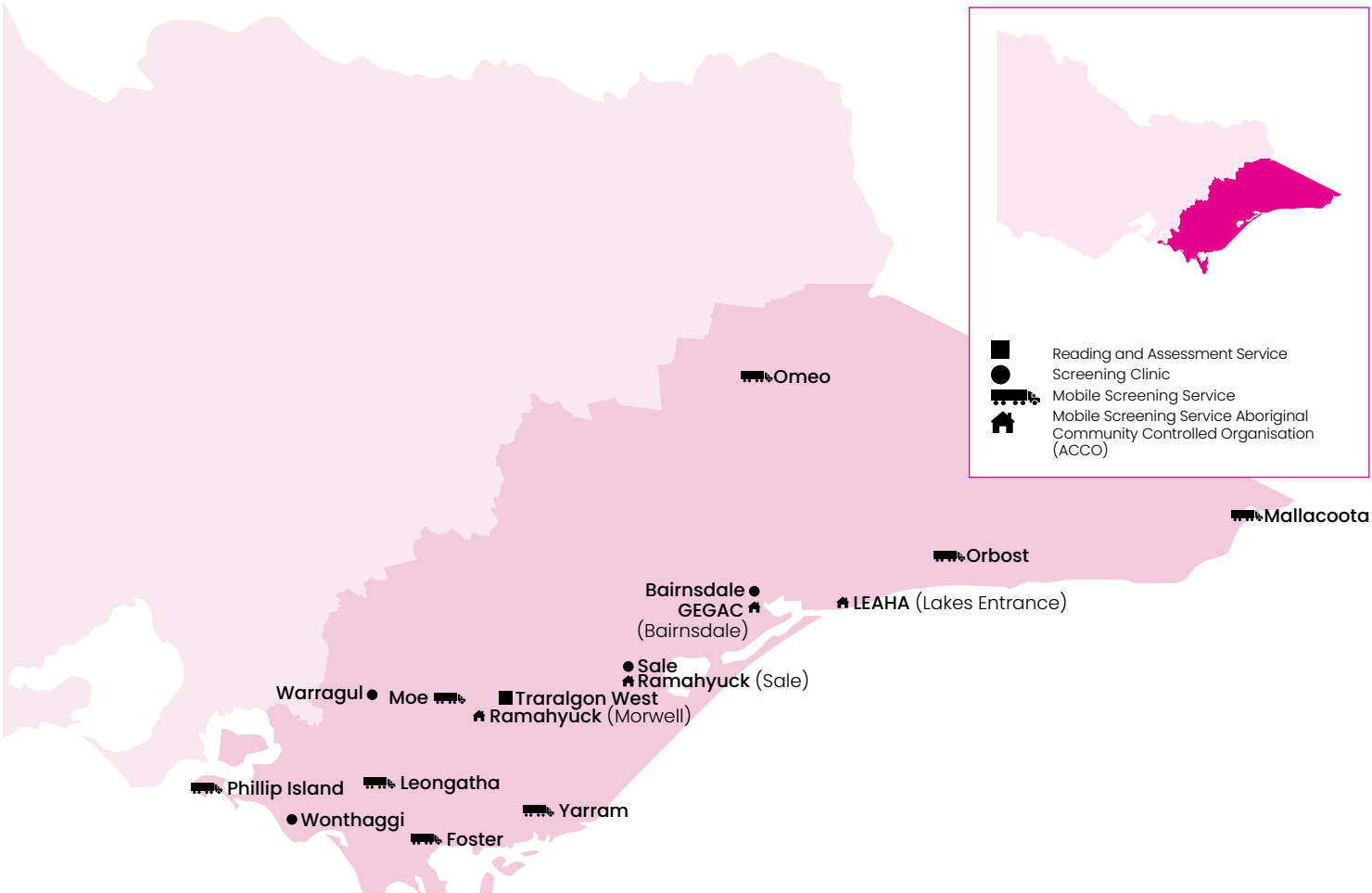
BreastScreen Victoria client

Gippsland region

Wendy Nieuwerth celebrates 30 years of service

Congratulations Wendy Nieuwerth, Gippsland Chief Radiographer, for 30 years of dedicated service to BreastScreen Victoria. Almost every part of the program has benefitted from Wendy's expertise. She started working in the program at Northern Hospital in 1992 where she became the mammography supervisor. Wendy helped set up the Preston BreastScreen clinic and train new staff when it opened in 1994. She went on to manage multiple breast screening clinics across Melbourne and began teaching mammography students, which she continues to do casually.

Wendy left Melbourne for the green pastures of Gippsland in 2011 where she worked at the Gippsland BreastScreen Reading and Assessment Service (RAS), eventually being appointed as the Chief Radiographer in 2023. Thank you, Wendy, for your unwavering commitment to the BreastScreen program and the health of Victorian women.



2024 Mother's Day Classic

A sea of pink at the Gippsland Mother's Day Classic

There was no sleep-in on Mother's Day for the 457 runners and walkers taking part in this year's Mother's Day Classic. Participants started at Toongabbie or Traralgon and made their way along the beautiful rail trail, meeting in a sea of pink at the railway station in Glengarry.

Kelly Giersch, Manager at Gippsland RAS was the guest speaker for the event. She talked about the importance of regular breast screening and encouraged women who were overdue or had never screened to make an appointment.

Kelly said, "There were several people who approached me after my talk to let me know that they were diagnosed through Gippsland RAS. They thanked me and my team for the care and support they had during their assessment and subsequent diagnosis. It really makes me proud of the work that we do, and I am incredibly grateful to lead the Gippsland BreastScreen team."

Scholarships for Gippsland team members

Manager Kelly Giersch, Chief Radiographer Wendy Nieuwerth and Nurse Counsellor Coordinator Bernie Henderson received scholarships from the Gippsland Regional Integrated Cancer Service to attend the 2024 BreastScreen Australia Conference in Canberra. They learned about the latest research and policy developments in Australia's breast screening program, such as breast density reporting and using artificial intelligence for reading mammography images.



Radiographers take part in joint professional development

In June 2024, our radiographers from across the Gippsland region came together for a joint professional development workshop. It was the first time the imaging team had been back on site together since COVID-19 began.

Radiographers took part in a Trauma-Informed Care workshop run by the Blue Knot Foundation. Radiographers were upskilled to provide sensitive care to clients who have experienced physical, mental or emotional trauma. Trauma can make some clients feel vulnerable or distressed during healthcare appointments, such as a breast screen.

The Blue Knot Foundation are expert in providing education and support to organisations like BreastScreen Victoria to understand trauma and work in a trauma-informed way. With over 50 radiographers and nurse counsellors taking part in Blue Knot workshops from across the state, the training was well received and has provided valuable information for our team to support our clients.

Remote reading hastens results for clients

Gippsland RAS was one of the first BreastScreen services to introduce remote reading of breast screen images. Remote reading enables timelier image reading which in turn benefits Gippsland clients who receive their results more quickly.

Service improvements

- ✓ Electronic records management system was implemented to digitise client records and achieve efficiencies.
- ✓ Interactive screens were introduced for telehealth appointments which assist surgeons explain clinical results to clients and helps clients understand the next steps for them. Feedback from clients has been positive.
- ✓ The new Phillip Island mobile screening service site was well received and appointments were fully booked.

Maroondah region



Maroondah staff with Del Morgan, McGrath Foundation Nurse at the Health4Her race day

Raising funds to support Health4Her

Shades of Pink and Eastern Health Foundation hosted a race day at the Yarra Glen Races in February 2024 to raise funds for Phase 3 of the Health4Her Study. The study is a collaboration between Maroondah BreastScreen Reading and Assessment Service (RAS), Turning Point and Monash University, with funding from VicHealth and Eastern Health Foundation.

The study's main objective is to test whether a short alcohol literacy program delivered to women during their breast screen appointment improves their knowledge of alcohol as a breast cancer risk factor. This phase of the study will investigate whether knowing about this risk changes women's alcohol consumption.

Maroondah RAS presents world-leading breast screening research

This year the team's cutting-edge research has been accepted for presentation at:

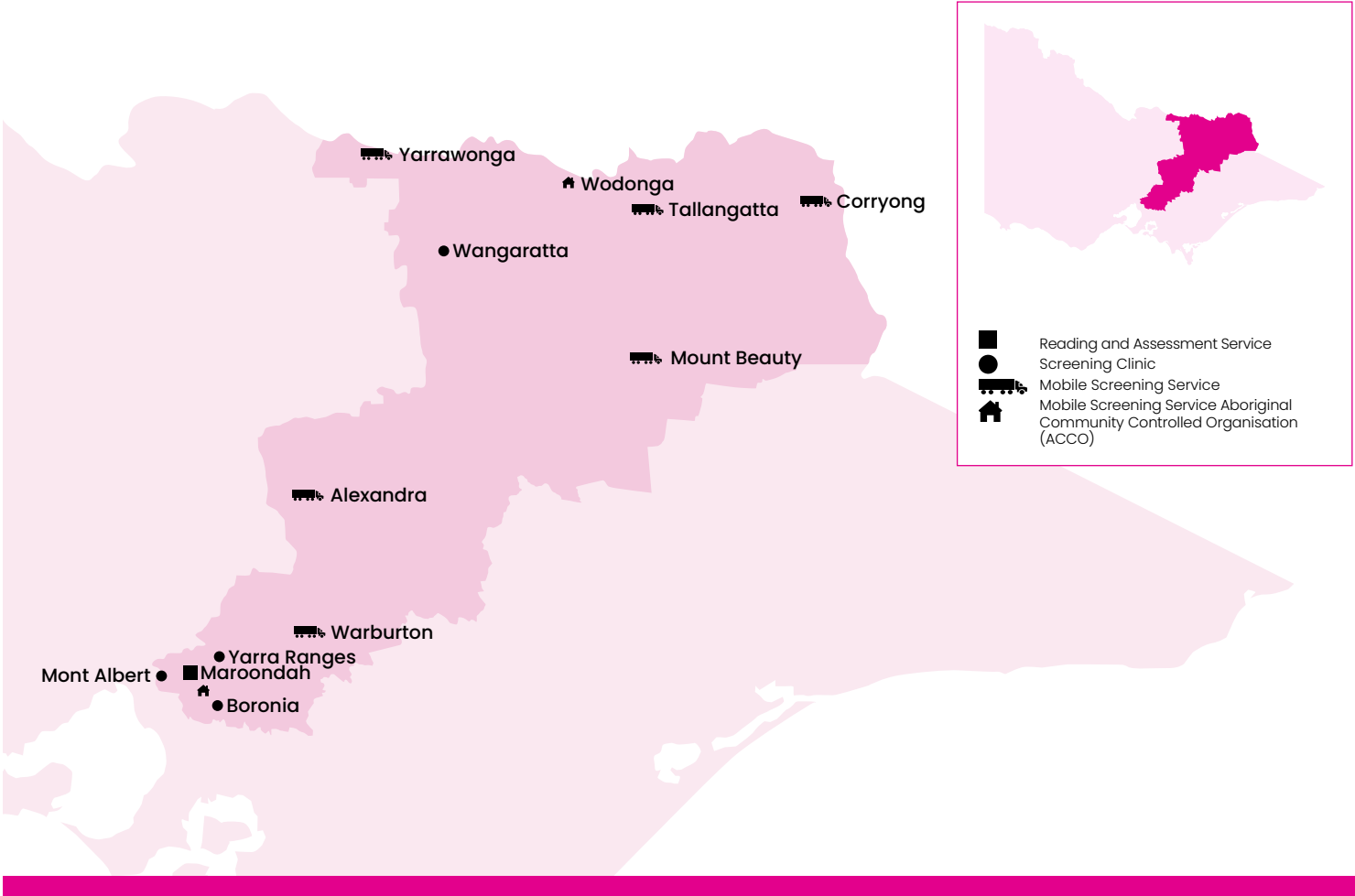
- The European Society of Breast Imaging conference in Valencia, Spain in October 2023
- The VCCC Alliance Conference in Melbourne in September 2023
- The European Congress of Radiology in Vienna, Austria in February 2024, and
- The BreastScreen Australia Conference in Canberra in March 2024.

Darren Lockie and Michelle Giles have also published their research in the following articles:

- Screening participant and health service impact of population-based breast density notification in Australia: Co-designed randomised controlled trial in BreastScreen Queensland – Nickel B, Ormiston-Smith N, Hammerton L, Cvejic E, Mcinally Z, Vardon P, Legerton P, Baker K, Isautier J, Larsen E, Giles M, Brennan M, McCaffery K, Houssami N. Medical Journal of Australia 2023.
- Effectiveness of hybrid digital breast tomosynthesis/digital mammography compared to digital mammography in women presenting for routine screening at Maroondah BreastScreen: Study protocol for a co-designed, non-randomised prospective trial – Nehmat Houssami, Darren Lockie, Michelle Giles, Sally Doncovio, Georgina Marr, David Taylor, Tong Li, Brooke Nicke, M Luke Marinovich. The Breast, Feb 2024.



Maroondah BreastScreen staff at the BreastScreen Australia Conference in March



Hybrid tomosynthesis screening trial

In early March 2024, a new research trial began at Maroondah Screening Clinic which aims to recruit 20,000 clients over two years. It is a partnership between BreastScreen Victoria, Eastern Health and the University of Sydney.

Research in Australia and overseas has shown that 3D mammography is more precise and captures areas of the breast that may not be visible in a 2D mammogram. A hybrid tomosynthesis screening mammogram involves taking two breast images using standard 2D mammography from the top and two breast images using 3D mammography from the side.

The trial aims to find out if this new method of screening is better than 2D mammography for detecting cancer, and whether it can reduce the number of women who have unnecessary further tests after a breast screen. The trial is funded by the National Breast Cancer Foundation Endowed Chair Grant and the National Health and Medical Research Council Investigator (Leader) Grant, awarded to Professor Nehmat Houssami – lead researcher on the project.

“We plan to use a hybrid approach that combines technologies to improve our ability to identify any abnormalities in breast tissue at the earliest stages,” Prof Houssami said. “This will give our patients the best chance of successful treatment outcomes.”

Maroondah RAS turns 30!

Maroondah RAS recently marked its 30th anniversary with a celebration attended by clients, past and current staff members and colleagues from Medical Imaging Eastern Health, and Cancer Services Eastern Health. From its humble beginnings, the Maroondah service has grown into a leader in breast cancer detection and treatment. Its first screening took place on January 10, 1994, in a cosy weatherboard house on Grey Street but today, it operates out of the state-of-the-art Breast and Cancer Centre at Maroondah Hospital.

A Beautiful Shawl artwork, designed by The Women's Healing Group from the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, was unveiled on the day. Created for a recent mobile van visit to the local Mullum Mullum Indigenous Community, this stunning artwork symbolizes the service's strong connection with the Community and its commitment to inclusivity and cultural safety.

Congratulations and thank you to the whole team, past and present.

Geelong region

30 years saving lives

This year Geelong Reading and Assessment Service (RAS) celebrated 30 years of delivering life-saving breast screening services to women in the region. Dr Linda West, Clinical Director, is the driving force behind Geelong RAS. Lynda Shea, Geelong's steadfast Data Manager, has also been with the service since it began.

The dedicated and highly qualified nursing team are at the heart of the service, constantly striving to improve clients' experience. The service is particularly proud of its involvement in the '1000 Hearts Project'. Staff members handmade small fabric hearts and give them to clients diagnosed with breast cancer with a handwritten note of support. This project symbolises the team's empathy and support for clients during their challenging journey.

Congratulations and thank you to the members of the Geelong RAS family, past and present, for making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of so many people in the region.



Melissa Crone, Designated Nurse Counsellor, Linda West, Program Director and Chief Radiologist and staff receive the Quality Award

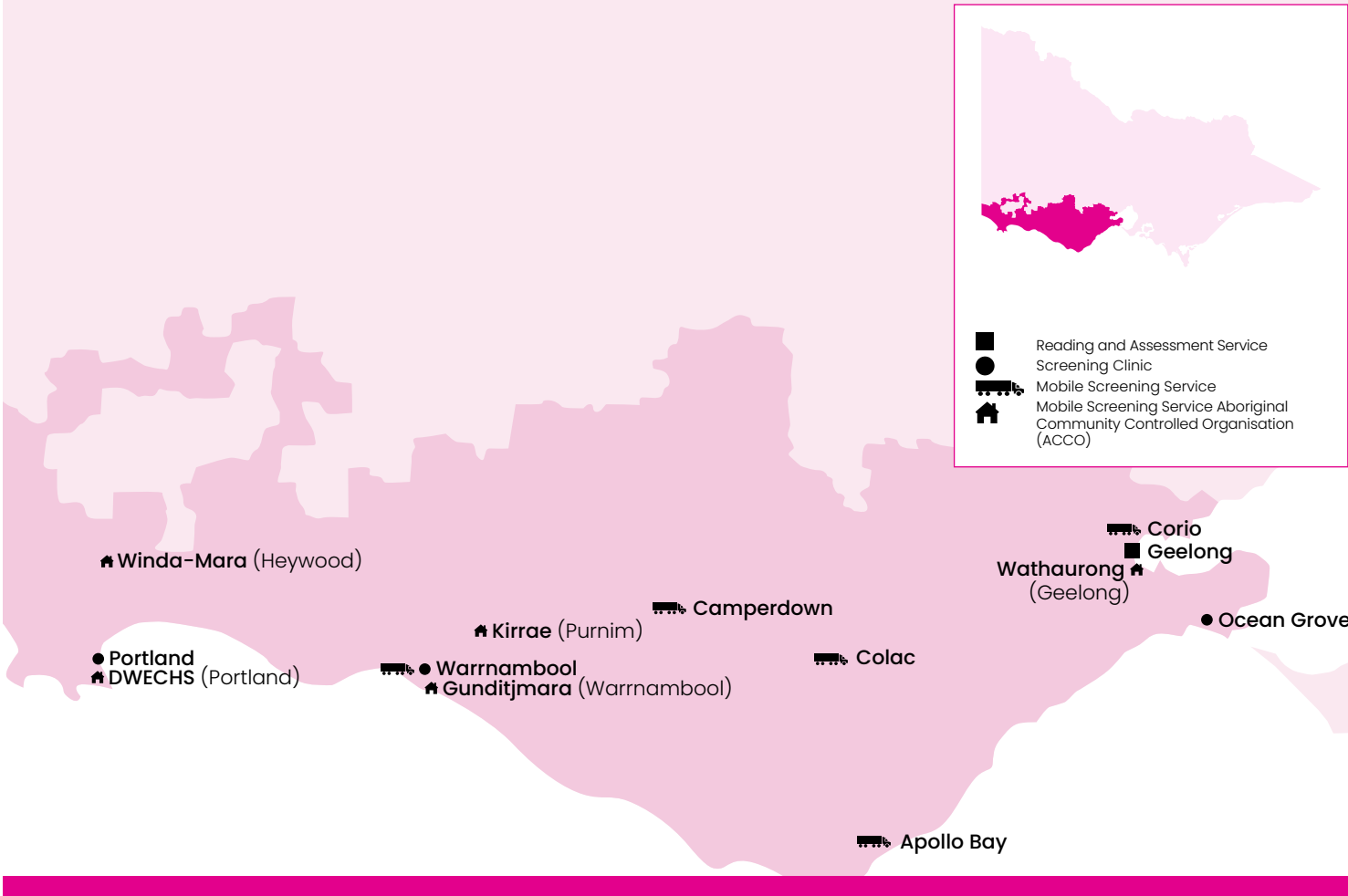
Nursing team wins the inaugural BreastScreen Victoria Quality Award

This year Geelong Reading and Assessment Service Congratulations to the Geelong RAS nursing team on winning the inaugural Quality Award for their project on improving post-biopsy hematoma care. This project was led by Melissa Crone, Designated Nurse Counsellor for the Geelong and South West Service. The nursing team dedicated time and effort to creating a systematic approach to minimise clients' discomfort and the incidence of complications after a biopsy.



In-language group bookings

In June 2023, Geelong BreastScreen moved locations Geelong RAS provided several group bookings with an interpreter onsite to welcome and support multicultural clients. These were well attended with up to 10 clients having a screen at each session. The interpreters helped BreastScreen staff provide an explanation about breast screening and what to expect in the mammography room. The clients felt comfortable talking about screening with each other and shared common obstacles that they had faced in taking part in breast screening before the group sessions were offered. This also assisted BreastScreen staff to better understand multicultural clients' needs.



New clinic on the Bellarine Peninsula

In April 2024, the newest screening clinic on the Bellarine Peninsula opened at Ocean Grove. Located just over 20km from Geelong, the clinic will provide breast screening services to an estimated 1,000 additional clients in the region each year.

The Bellarine region has experienced significant growth in recent years and the population is projected to continue rising. The new clinic is busy and has received excellent feedback from clients who appreciate having a local screening clinic available for appointments all year round.

Two consumers, Carmel and Vicki, helped plan the new Ocean Grove Screening Clinic. They visited the site to provide recommendations on signage and layout and remained involved throughout the planning process to ensure a client-centered approach to its development.



Rita Butera, CEO (centre), Linda West, Program Director and Chief Radiologist, Luke Neill, COIO, Milva Francis, Program Director and the Geelong team celebrate the opening of the Ocean Grove BreastScreen Victoria clinic



Our governance

Our governance structure ensures we meet quality standards and provide an evidence-based, high-quality service for our clients.

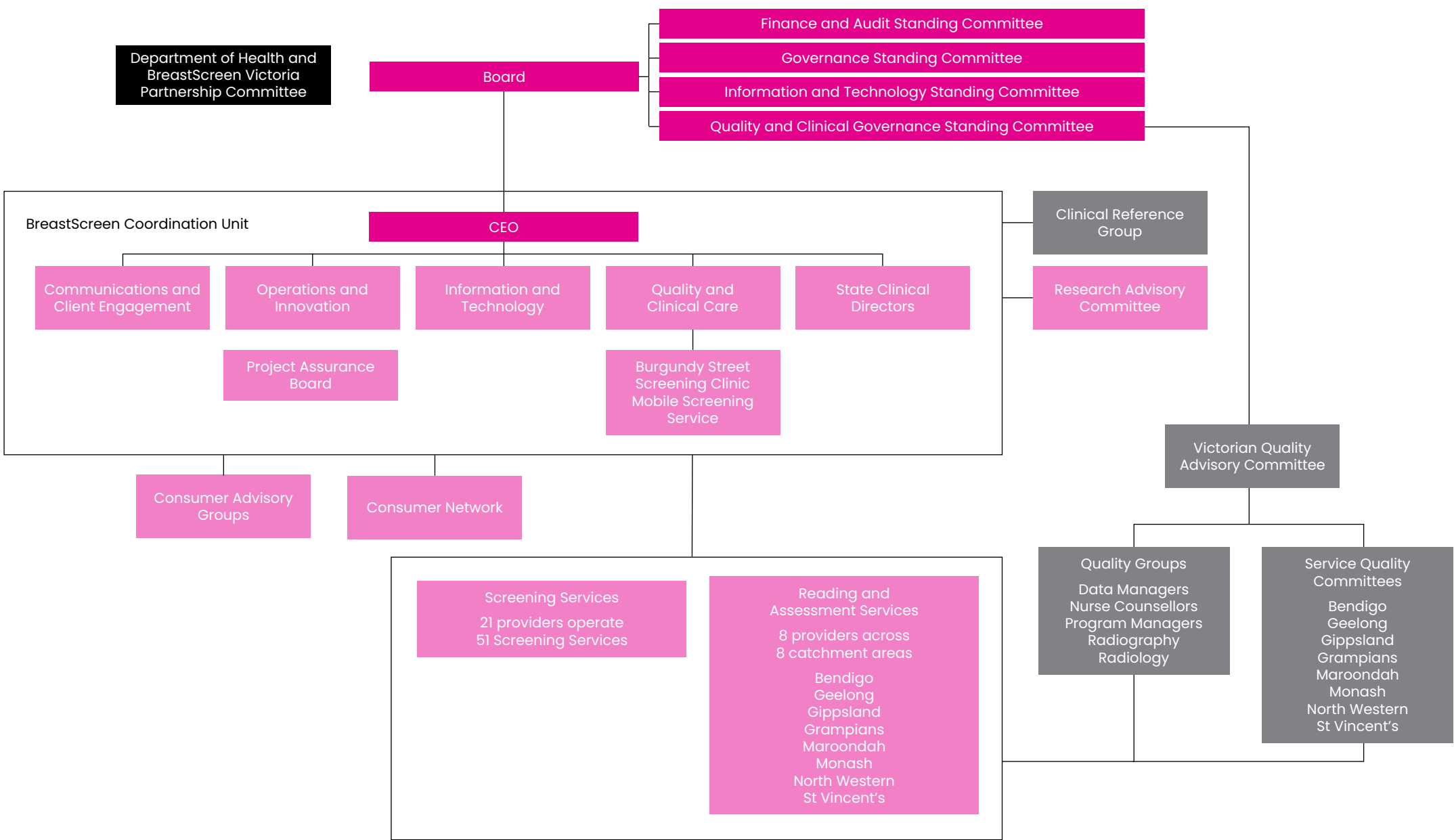


Our governance

BreastScreen Victoria has developed an organisational structure to ensure we can deliver safe and effective breast screening services to as many clients as possible.

BreastScreen services in Australia are quality assured and accredited under the BreastScreen Australia National Accreditation program and the National Quality Management Committee oversees performance against the National Accreditation Standards. We are committed to ongoing quality assurance through our Quality and Clinical Governance Framework.

BreastScreen Victoria governance structure



BreastScreen Victoria Board

BreastScreen Victoria is governed by an independent Board whose members are appointed by the Victorian Minister for Health.

Dr Elisabet Wreme (Chair)
MSc, Prof Doctor in Bus Admin, FAICD

Jorden Lam (Deputy Chair)
LLM, BCom, LLB, GradDipLP, GAICD

Sue Madden (Treasurer)
BBus, FCPA, GAICD

Rita Butera (CEO)
AssDWelf, GradDip(Org Dev), GAICD

Debra Cerasa
MEdMgt&Ldr, BHScNsg, GradDipAdEd&Trg, GradDipBusMgt, RN, RM, CertICU, GAICD

Dr Vanda Fortunato
PhD, MA, BA, GAICD

Liz Kelly
BBus, GradDip(OrgPsych), Cert IV Workplace Training & Assessment, Accredited mediator, MAICD

Dr Wayne Lemish
(retired November 2023)
BSc(Hons), MBBS, FRANZCR, MAIP, GAID

Dr Jocelyn Lippey
(commenced November 2023)
BMed, FRACS

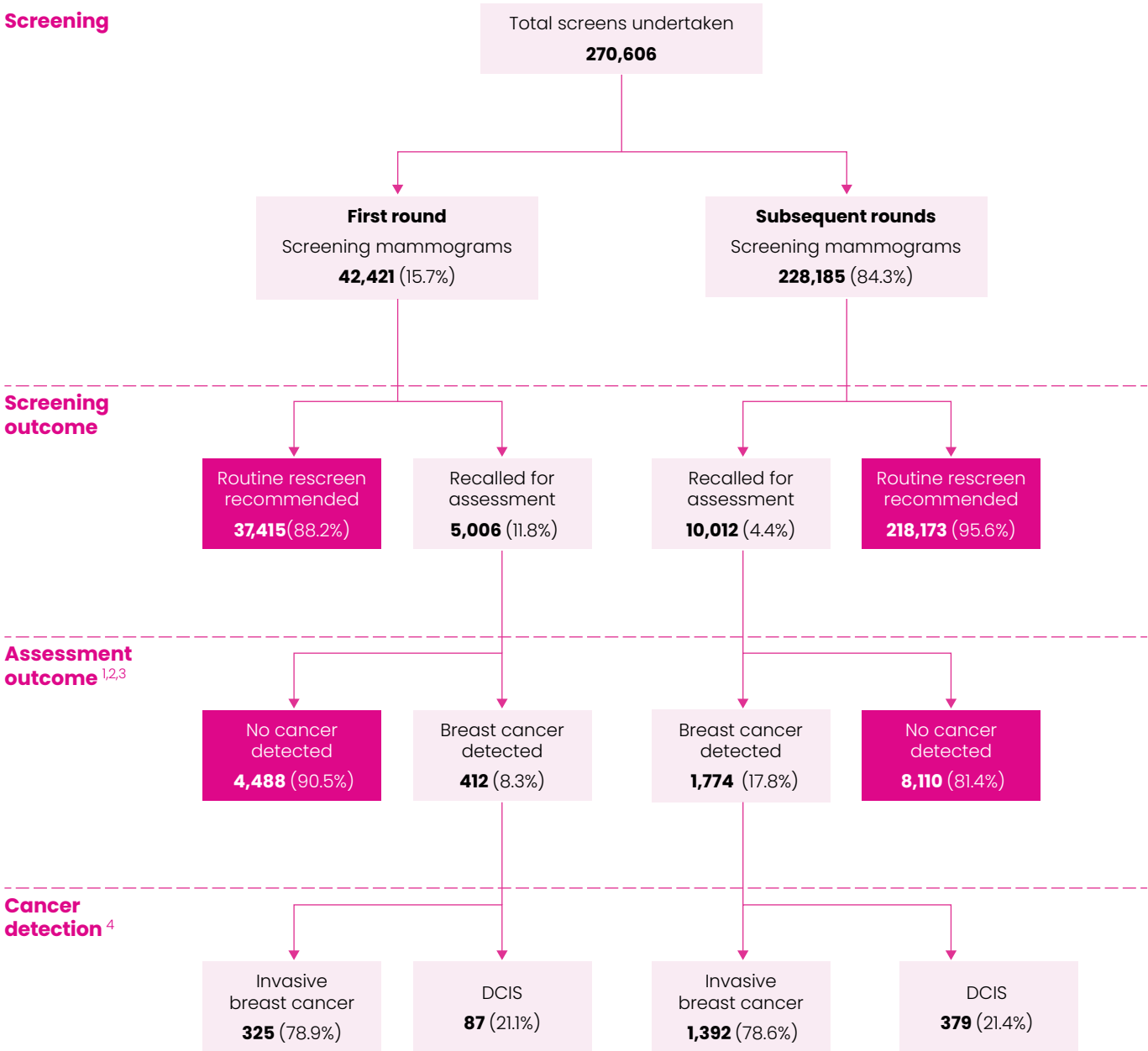
Alistair Lloyd
(commenced November 2023)
BComp, MBA, GAICD

Tim Staker
(retired November 2023)
DipEng(Biomed), MBA, GradDip(TechMgt), GAICD

Screening and assessment pathway 2023

Calendar Year

Screening



Assessment outcome^{1,2,3}

Cancer detection⁴

1 Excludes women who did not attend assessment.
2 Percentages do not add to 100% due to the exclusion of women who did not complete assessment and women with incomplete assessment/histology data.
3 At the time this report was finalized, 0.9% of women assessed in 2023 were yet to complete their assessment experience.
4 Excludes breast cancers diagnosed at early review more than six months after the screening mammogram and cancers diagnosed at early rescreen for women who presented with a breast lump and/or clear or blood stained nipple discharge in the same breast in which the breast cancer was diagnosed.
Data for women screened in 2023 is as it stood on 26 August 2024.
Future requests for data and publications may not exactly correspond to the figures in this report as they will reflect subsequent additions to the dataset.

Screening and assessment summary

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Screening					
First round women	36,995 14.0%	19,929 10.1%	26,028 10.3%	33,662 13.1%	42,421 15.7%
Subsequent round women	228,044 86.0%	177,133 89.9%	226,863 89.7%	222,919 86.9%	228,185 84.3%
Total	265,039 100%	197,062 100%	252,891 100%	256,581 100%	270,606 100%
Screening outcome					
First round women					
Routine rescreen recommended	32,993 89.2%	17,745 89.0%	23,139 88.9%	29,748 88.4%	37,415 88.2%
Recalled for assessment	4,002 10.8%	2,184 11.0%	2,889 11.1%	3,914 11.6%	5,006 11.8%
Subsequent round women					
Routine rescreen recommended	218,806 95.9%	169,551 95.7%	217,396 95.8%	213,603 95.8%	218,173 95.6%
Recalled for assessment	9,238 4.1%	7,582 4.3%	9,467 4.2%	9,316 4.2%	10,012 4.4%
Assessment outcome ^{1,2,3}					
First round women					
No cancer detected	3,616 90.8%	1,973 90.9%	2,607 90.4%	3,510 90.2%	4,488 90.5%
Breast cancer detected	326 8.2%	169 7.8%	243 8.4%	341 8.8%	412 8.3%
Subsequent round women					
No cancer detected	7,551 81.9%	6,254 82.7%	7,749 82.0%	7,657 82.5%	8,110 81.4%
Breast cancer detected	1,601 17.4%	1,254 16.6%	1,630 17.3%	1,548 16.7%	1,774 17.8%
Cancer detection ⁴					
First round women					
Invasive breast cancer	249 76.4%	118 69.8%	194 79.8%	249 73.0%	325 78.9%
DCIS	77 23.6%	51 30.2%	49 20.2%	92 27.0%	87 21.1%
Subsequent round women					
Invasive breast cancer	1,288 81.1%	1,014 80.9%	1,303 80.1%	1,243 80.6%	1,392 78.6%
DCIS	301 18.9%	239 19.1%	323 19.9%	300 19.4%	379 21.4%

1 Excludes women who did not attend assessment.
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3 At the time this report was finalized, 0.9% of women assessed in 2023 were yet to complete their assessment experience.
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Copies of this report are available at:

 www.breastscreen.org.au



Financial Report

The BreastScreen Victoria Inc. Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2023 has been produced as a separate document. Copies are available at: www.breastscreen.org.au or phone 13 20 50.

In the spirit of unity and respect, BreastScreen Victoria acknowledges the First Peoples of these lands and waterways. We recognise their deep connection to the earth and the importance of holistic wellbeing as we embark on our shared journey of breast health.

There are many terms to describe Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria. This includes First Nations People, Sovereign Nations, Indigenous Australians, Traditional Owners etc. In this report, to be inclusive and respectful, we have chosen to use the term Aboriginal.

BreastScreen Victoria is committed to ensuring we offer a welcoming, safe and accessible service for all eligible Victorians.

BreastScreen Victoria gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health.