



Submission to review of Phase Four of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program

In 2022, the Australian Government conducted public consultations into the review of Phase Four of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP). Cancer Council developed a submission into this review, with the expertise of the National Cancer Screening and Immunisation Committee.

Cancer Council has been formally involved in the NBCSP's development since its implementation including publishing the current clinical practice guidelines for the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of colorectal cancer which underpins the NBCSP as well as delivering federally funded national communication campaigns to encourage participation in the NBCSP.

Cancer Council's submission supported the modification and adaptation of the NBCSP to reflect the latest evidence which supports the lowered eligible age among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from an efficacy and cost-effectiveness standpoint. We outlined the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, doctors and Aboriginal Health Workers in actively promoting the NBCSP as well as highlighting the importance of informing these stakeholders of the rationale underpinning the change in eligibility.

In addition to this, we recommended that any lowering of the screening initiation age occur in conjunction with a scale-up of the Alternative Pathway Pilot to further support increases in participation rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for the Alternative Pathway to be considered for use among other target groups.

We detailed our support for targeted education on the benefits of screening including media and social marketing campaigns and personal testimonials. We believe increased stakeholder interaction across the Program Delivery Advisory Group and Clinical Advisory Group as well as involvement of external researchers is necessary to inform evidence-based improvements to the Program and its research priorities. Cancer Council supports enhancements to the National Cancer Screening Register to ensure active transfer of data to clinicians.

Cancer Council strongly advocates for the continuation of the national bowel screening communications strategy in partnership with the Australian Government, for at least three years, to ensure screening participation targets are achieved and sustained. Our submission highlights our support for the suggestions proposed by constituents to modify the existing screening kit to increase program participation.

Cancer Council's submission will be made publicly available, along with further information on the review of Phase Four of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program here:

<https://consultations.health.gov.au/hearing-and-program-support-division/review-the-national-bowel-cancer-screening-program/>