

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 238**  
**Asked on 28 April 2004**

MR SHINE asked the Minister for Health (MR NUTTALL) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the wisdom of women undertaking breast screening –

What, if any, measures are being undertaken by his department in the Toowoomba, Darling Downs and South – West Queensland regions?

ANSWER:

Queensland Health, through the BreastScreen Queensland Program, has made an ongoing commitment to reduce deaths and illness from breast cancer in Queensland.

The BreastScreen Queensland Program has an established network of breast cancer screening and assessment services throughout Queensland. A key Service, which ensures access to high quality breast cancer screening and assessment services for women living in Toowoomba, Darling Downs and South-west Queensland, is the *BreastScreen Queensland Toowoomba Service*.

This Service was established in 1992. It comprises of a fixed-site breast cancer screening and assessment service, a relocatable screening service and a mobile screening service and offers free breast cancer screening to eligible women in over thirty cities, towns and shires within the catchment. This catchment extends south to the New South Wales Border, north to the shires of Taroom and Kingaroy, east to Gatton in the Lockyer Valley, and west to the South Australian and Northern Territory borders.

Queensland Health recognises the importance of ensuring convenience and access to breast cancer screening services for women living in rural and remote locations and has recently renewed its commitment to providing services in close proximity to where women live through the provision of a new mobile mammography unit which was launched in Toowoomba, by my Parliamentary Secretary, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP on Tuesday 27 April, 2004. This state-of-the art breast cancer screening facility replaces the previous unit that was over 10 years old and will travel across the Toowoomba Service catchment.

Extending our commitment to women in this region, appointments at the BreastScreen Queensland Toowoomba service are now available on the second Saturday of each month. This enables working women to access the Toowoomba Service. It is also proving to be very popular with older women who undertake child care duties for family members and therefore cannot attend the Service during the week.

The BreastScreen Queensland Toowoomba Service also uses the Electoral Roll to personally invite women aged 50-69, who are not already part of the program, to have a free BreastScreen.

The success of the BreastScreen Queensland Program has seen the number of women accessing its Toowoomba facilities grow from about 9400 in its first year of operation to a target of 14 000 women this financial year.

The BreastScreen Queensland Program aims to achieve a participation rate of 70 per cent of women in the target group 50 to 69 years every two years. Currently the participation rate for the Toowoomba BreastScreen Queensland Service is 60.5 percent. This is above the state participation rate (58.8 per cent).

Queensland Health is taking action to ensure that, high quality breast cancer screening and assessment services are provided for all eligible women regardless of where they live within the State.

Women aged 50-69 years can telephone 13 20 50 to make an appointment for a free breast screen. Women aged 40-49 years or 70 years and over are also able to have a free breast screen if they wish. A doctors referral is not required.