

# Indicator 1

## Participation

### **Participation rate**

The participation rate is the percentage of women screened through the BreastScreen Australia Program in a 24-month period by 5-year age groups (40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75–79, 80–84, 85+) and for the target age group (50–69 years).

### **What is the participation rate and why is it important?**

The participation rate is a population-based indicator that measures the proportion of the eligible population attending the screening Program within the recommended screening interval. It is important for a high proportion of women in the target age group to attend for screening in order for BreastScreen Australia to realise anticipated reductions in mortality from breast cancer (DHS 1994a). The participation rate is a direct measure of this attendance. The indicator also provides information to assist in assessing the effectiveness of the Program's communication and education strategies, and can be used to assess whether the target age group is well represented in the screening population.

The focus of this report is on women who have had a mammogram in the BreastScreen Australia Program. However, other mammography for screening and diagnosis (i.e. investigating breast symptoms) is conducted outside the Program. Therefore, to some extent, the results described in this report are an underestimation of screening on a national basis.

## National Accreditation Requirements

Two of the major objectives of the Program relate specifically to the participation rate:

- to achieve a 70% participation rate in the National Program by women in the target age group (50–69 years) and to provide access to screening for women aged 40–49 and 70 years or more (see table below); and
- to rescreen all women in the Program at 2-yearly intervals.

The Minimum Standards for BreastScreen Australia require:

- participation by 60% of women aged 50 to 69 years for screening services that have been established for 5 years or more; and
- women aged 50–69 years as a percentage of the total number screened to be more than 60%.

### Crude participation rates achieved by BreastScreen Australia nationally and across the States and Territories for women in the target age group (50–69 years)

Objective <sup>(a)</sup>	Australia	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	
%	70.0	54.3	52.5	55.5	52.7	54.6	59.4	58.2	58.9	50.8

(a) Performance objective of the National BreastScreen Australia Program as set out in the National Accreditation Requirements (DHS 1994a).

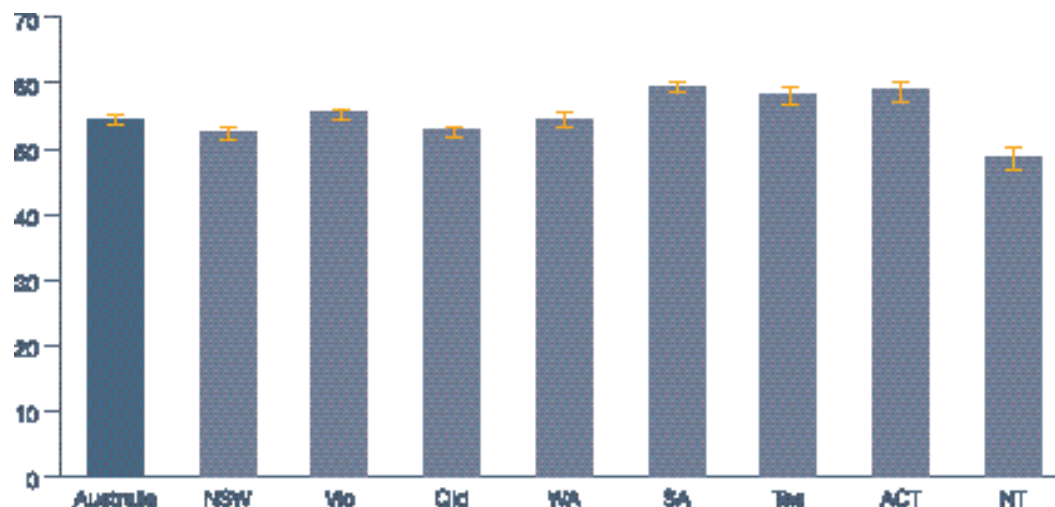
*Note:*

Rates are expressed as the percentage of the eligible female population.

Sources: DHS 1994a and BreastScreen Australia.

## Participation (age-standardised) of women aged 50–69 in BreastScreen Australia, 1997–1998

Participation per cent



Bars on graphs represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: BreastScreen Australia.

	Australia	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
%	54.3	52.6 <sup>(a)</sup>	55.4 <sup>(a)</sup>	52.7 <sup>(a)</sup>	54.6	59.5 <sup>(a)</sup>	58.2 <sup>(a)</sup>	58.9 <sup>(a)</sup>	48.6 <sup>(a)</sup>
95% CI	54.2–54.4	52.4–52.8	55.2–55.6	52.5–52.9	54.2–54.9	59.2–59.9	57.6–58.8	58.0–59.7	47.4–49.9

(a) Significantly different from the rest of Australia at the 5% level.

Notes:

1. Rates are expressed as the percentage of the eligible female population and age-standardised to the Australian population at 30 June 1991.
2. Period covers 1 January 1997 to 31 December 1998.

- All States and Territories achieved age-standardised participation rates between 48.6% and 59.5% in the target age group (50–69 years). The crude Australian rate was 54.3%, indicating that just over half of all Australian women in the target age group took part in the BreastScreen Australia Program (Table 2).
- Crude participation rates for the target age group ranged from 50.8% to 59.4% across the States and Territories (Table 2).

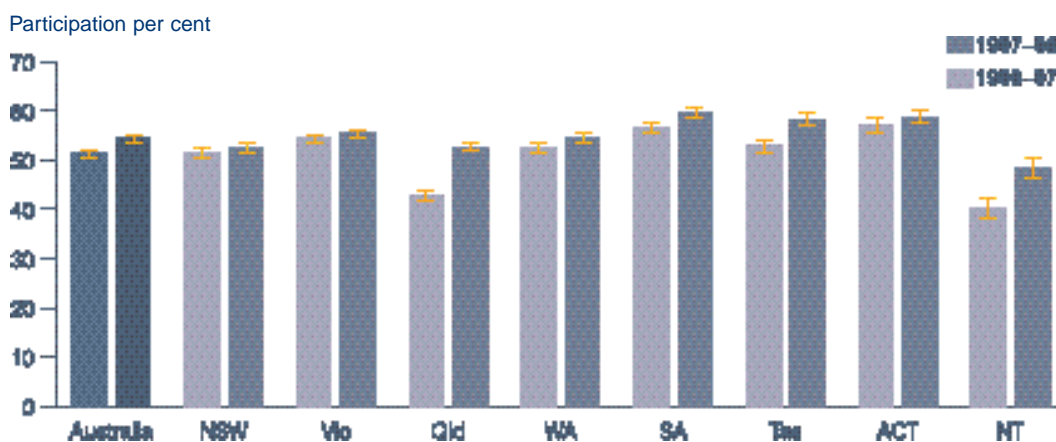
### For more information, see:

Tables 1 and 2.

McLean MJ & Condon JR 1999. A single issue program in an isolated area: mammography screening in Darwin, NT.

Aust NZ J Public Health 23:357–361.

## Participation of women aged 50–69 in BreastScreen Australia, 1996–1997 and 1997–1998



Bars on graphs represent 95% confidence intervals.

Source: BreastScreen Australia.

	Australia	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
<b>1996–97</b>	51.4	51.6	54.4	42.9	52.6	56.4	53.1	57.1	40.4
<b>95% CI</b>	51.3–51.5	51.5–51.8	54.3–54.6	42.7–43.1	52.3–52.9	56.1–56.8	52.5–53.7	56.3–57.9	39.2–41.6
<b>1997–98</b>	54.3	52.6	55.4	52.7	54.6	59.5	58.2	58.9	48.6
<b>95% CI</b>	54.2–54.4	52.4–52.8	55.2–55.6	52.5–52.9	54.2–54.9	59.2–59.9	57.6–58.8	58.0–59.7	47.4–49.9

Notes:

1. Rates are expressed as the percentage of the eligible female population and age-standardised to the Australian population at 30 June 1991.
2. All differences between 1996–1997 and 1997–1998 were statistically significant at the 5% level.
3. The 1996–1997 NSW participation rate has been revised since its publication in the previous screening report (AIHW 1998b). The revised estimate is now lower than previously reported. This change has also affected the 1996–1997 participation rate for Australia, making it lower than previously reported.

- Increases in participation rates may be due to increasing screening capacity for the Program in the States and Territories. For example, Queensland’s participation rate in 1997 reflected the fact that only 5 out of 11 fixed BreastScreen Queensland services had been operating for 5 years or more at this time (AIHW 1998b).
- Participation rates have increased for all States and Territories from 1996–1997 to 1997–1998. Queensland and Northern Territory rates showed the greatest increase, 22.8% for Queensland and 20.3% for the Northern Territory. The age-standardised participation rate for all Australia increased from 51.4% in 1996–1997 to 54.3% in 1997–1998, which constitutes a relative increase of 5.6%.

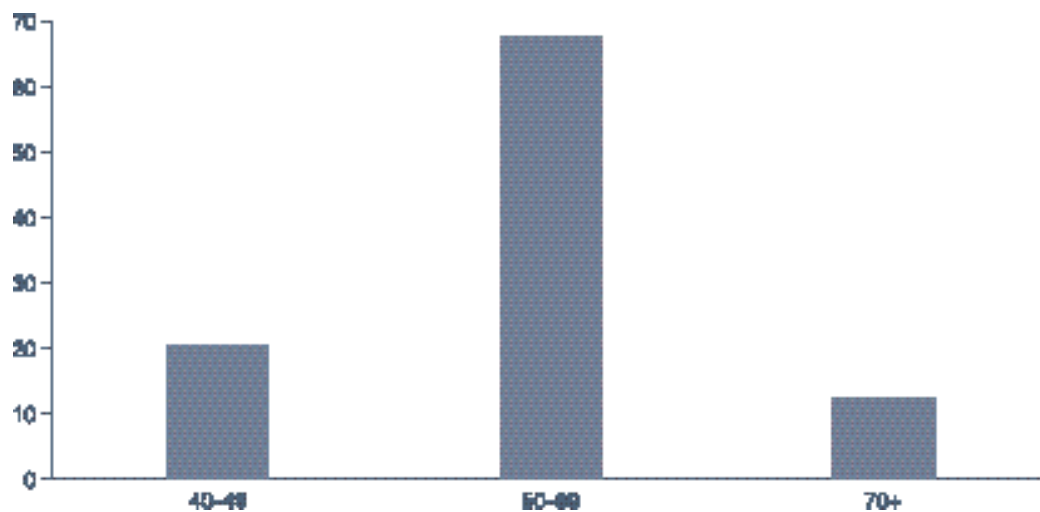
### For more information, see:

Tables 1 and 2.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 1998b. Breast and cervical cancer screening in Australia 1996–1997. AIHW Cat. No. CAN 3. Canberra: AIHW (Cancer Series No. 8).

## Age distribution of women screened, BreastScreen Australia, 1997–1998

Participation per cent of all screened



Source: BreastScreen Australia.

Age	40–49	50–69	70+
%	20.4	67.4	12.2

- The above figure shows the age-distribution of women screened in the BreastScreen Australia Program at the national level. It shows that the majority of those screened were women in the BreastScreen Australia target age group, women aged 50–69 years.
- The National Accreditation Requirements for BreastScreen Australia (DHS 1994a) require that the number of women screened in the target age group be more than 60% of the total number screened. During the 1997–1998 period all States and Territories achieved this target. In Victoria and South Australia this proportion was the highest, at 75% and 77% respectively for the 24-month period.
- Of all women screened, 20.4% were aged 40–49 years while 12.2% were women over 70 years.

### For more information, see:

Table 1.

Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health 1994a. National Program for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer—National Accreditation Requirements. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health.

