

## **National Indigenous Breast Cancer Roundtable to improve cancer outcomes**

Tuesday, 26 August 2014

Some of the country's leading authorities on cancer and cancer survivors themselves will descend on the Lowitja Institute in Melbourne tomorrow (Wednesday, 27 August) for a Breast Cancer Research Roundtable.

Hosted by the National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) and the Menzies School of Health Research, the roundtable will bring together over 40 researchers, service providers, health professionals, cancer survivors and consumers. The roundtable will be opened by the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO.

Menzies Senior Research Fellow, Associate Professor Gail Garvey said the event hopes to maximise the impact of current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander breast cancer research through identifying research priorities and collaborative research effort.

"The focus of the roundtable is on working collaboratively across research and cancer service providers with patients and consumers in order to improve cancer services and patient outcomes based on person centred care, equitable access, better coordinated cancer services and best available evidence," A/Prof Garvey said.

"It will also identify national research priorities that can contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who develop breast cancer, their families and communities and support collaborative and competitive research funding proposals."

Breast cancer is the most common cancer experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The Indigenous breast cancer incidence rate is lower than among non-Indigenous population (82 compared to 104 per 100,000). However, despite this Indigenous women are more likely to die from breast cancer than non-Indigenous women (28 per cent compared to 21 per cent).

A/Prof Garvey said this pattern had been consistent over a number of years and may be due to lower participation in screening programs, late diagnosis, lack of access to appropriate services and reduced likelihood of receiving and completing appropriate treatment.

In 2009-2010, 36 per cent of Indigenous women aged 50-69 years participated in the BreastScreen program, compared with 54 per cent of non-Indigenous women, however this demonstrates an increase from 1999-2000 when only 32 per cent of Indigenous women participated.

Several small studies have sought to address these disparities to increase screening participation through community involvement in planning and delivery of programs, employment of Indigenous health workers, the provision of culturally appropriate, holistic health services by GP's, assistance with transport and flexibility in appointments.

The 2014 roundtable will build upon successful National Indigenous Cancer Research Roundtables held in 2010 and 2013 which identified the need for a nationally integrated approach, research principles and priority research areas.

The Breast Cancer Research Roundtable has been coordinated with support from the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) through the Think Tank Grant funding program.

The media release in full can be viewed at: [http://www.menzies.edu.au/icms\\_forthcoming](http://www.menzies.edu.au/icms_forthcoming)

NICaN is a national network and online resource that encourages and supports collaboration around Indigenous cancer research and delivery of services to Indigenous people with cancer including their carers and families. NICaN is a partnership between the Menzies School of Health Research, the DISCOVER-TT Centre of Research Excellence, the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, the Lowitja Institute and Cancer Council Australia.

**Media note:**

Associate Professor Gail Garvey is available for pre and post-roundtable interviews. A high resolution photo of Associate Prof Gail Garvey is available on request. View her researcher profile here: [http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our\\_People/Researchers/Gail\\_Garvey/](http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our_People/Researchers/Gail_Garvey/)

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