

# Peace of mind in 10 minutes

**B**reastScreen Victoria is reminding women in the Wimmera that a 10-minute appointment for a mammogram can provide peace of mind. It is common for women's own wellbeing to take a back seat when they are so often the glue keeping a busy work and family life together in rural communities, while juggling multiple priorities.

In 2015, when warmer weather resulted in early harvests in the region, screening rates dropped, and with recent flooding the number of women booking in for a mammogram at BreastScreen Victoria's Horsham clinic have again fallen.

Kristy Paine, a radiographer at the BreastScreen clinic on Baillie Street, said many women felt anxious about getting a breast screen, which is recommended every two years for women after they reach the age of 50.

Having moved to Horsham in 2002 and starting with BreastScreen Victoria in the same year, Kristy has experienced the full spectrum of the ups and downs rural life can bring.

"It's great seeing the same faces come in every other year; the women remember you and they're happy to have a chat," she said.

"Admittedly, we recognise first-time screeners can be a bit anxious, there can be a fear of the unknown.



Kristy Paine

"It's important to remember though that the vast majority of women don't have anything to worry about.

"All women bring their stories, their life experiences and their fears with them when they attend a breast screen.

"We don't ask women to leave their breasts at reception and come back when the appointment is over."

Statistics show one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime and 75 percent of those will be over the age of 50.

With age being the biggest risk factor

**'Women definitely find it a bit easier having a mammogram as a shared experience – there's a camaraderie'**

– Kristy Paine

of breast cancer, BreastScreen Victoria's program is targeted at women aged 50 to 74.

Women aged 40 to 49 and over the age of 75 are eligible to attend, however, they are encouraged to discuss breast screening with their GP in the context of their health needs.

With many women who screen at the Horsham clinic travelling from outside of the city for their appointment, Kristy also suggests booking with a group of friends could alleviate some of the anxiety.

"We have plenty of women who come into Horsham as a group and make a day of it," she said. "I encourage women in the Wimmera community to continue to be vigilant with their regular two-yearly breast screen, as evidence shows early detection is invaluable, giving women the best chance of successful treatment and recovery."

Women can make an appointment at Horsham's BreastScreen Victoria clinic or any other location that is convenient to them online at [breastscreen.org.au](http://breastscreen.org.au) or by calling 13 20 50.

People who undergo the anxiety of testing, waiting and treatment for breast cancer have access to support through Horsham Friends Abreast Support Group.

Co-ordinator Barbara Eltze said the group was dedicated to supporting women and families instead of raising money for the fight against the disease.

"We are a group of ladies who have experienced breast cancer and provide friendly, caring, support and understanding, share feelings or just have a good laugh in a relaxed atmosphere," she said.

"Our meetings are informative as we chat over lunch. Guest speakers also provide support and information. We are a source of face-to-face contact."

Mrs Eltze said Horsham Friends Abreast met at 11.30am for lunch on the first Friday of the month at Horsham RSL.

"We not only provide support for people in Horsham, but also the broader region," she said.

People seeking further information can call Mrs Eltze on 0408 557 603 or Marcia Carrick 0438 874 285.

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