

Stay Healthy and Strong.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Stakeholder Toolkit.**

2022

This kit is designed to support community organisations and health workers to promote bowel cancer screening and keep mob healthy and strong.



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Introduction

Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the risk increases as you get older. However, over 90% of bowel cancers can be successfully treated if they are picked up early.

Testing can help to find early warning signs, even before bowel cancer is present, so even healthy people should do the test

“ Completing the free test every 2 years from the age of 50 can help to detect bowel cancer early. If found early over 90% of bowel cancers can be successfully treated.

The National Bowel Screening Program

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is free for people aged 50-74 who are registered with Medicare.

There are two ways to participate in the program:

1. Complete the self-test kit at home. If your address is up to date with Medicare you will receive your free kit in the mail every 2 years.
2. If you haven't received your kit or have concerns about doing a bowel cancer screening test, talk to your health professional.

Completing a bowel cancer screening test every 2 years can help make sure you stay healthy and strong and continue to enjoy time with family and loved ones.

The test is clean and easy to do. Talk to your health professional who can answer any questions about bowel screening.

A bowel cancer screening test is simple, private, and free.

We need your help to encourage all mob over the age of 50 to get screened for bowel cancer. The simple test can help us save lives and keep mob healthy and strong to enjoy time with family.

Help spread the yarn

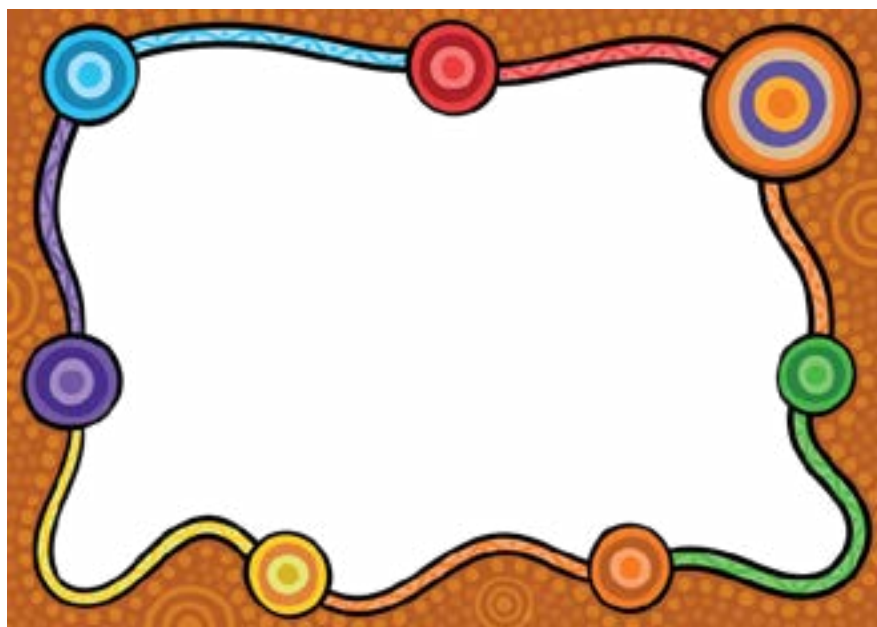
In this kit, you'll find some tools to help you share information so that people know where to go to get more information about bowel cancer testing:

- Social media tiles and videos
- Fact sheets
- Posters
- Postcards
- Community stories
- E-Newsletter

This campaign was developed in collaboration with Cancer Council and the Australian Government.

This campaign features artwork from Ngarrindjeri man, Jordan Lovegrove of Karko Creations.

The artwork represents the National Indigenous Bowel Screening Program (NIBSP) journey. The coloured meeting places are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and health services. The pathway that passes through the meeting circles represents the NIBSP tests being sent out to the community and then back to the processing centre for analysing. The processing centre is represented by the larger meeting place.



Art by Ngarrindjeri man, Jordan Lovegrove of Karko Creations.

What is bowel cancer?

Most bowel cancers (sometimes called colorectal, colon or rectal cancers) start as growths called 'polyps' that form on the inner lining or the wall of the bowel. These polyps may become cancerous if they are not removed.

Bowel cancer often develops without any symptoms. The cancer can grow in the bowel for years before spreading to other parts of the body.

Very small amounts of blood can leak from these growths and pass into your poo.

These tiny amounts of blood are not noticeable just by looking – that's why screening is important. A bowel cancer screening test can pick up early signs of cancer before any symptoms.

People aged over 50 are at higher risk of developing bowel cancer.

When you receive your free test in the mail, it's important to do it, even if you feel well. Often bowel cancer shows no symptoms, so it is important to do the test to stay healthy and strong. This simple test could save your life.

“ People aged over 50 are at higher risk of developing bowel cancer.

Receiving a bowel cancer screening test kit

Keeping up to date with screening is an important way to stay healthy and strong for our family.

You will receive a kit in the mail every 2 years from the age of 50.

If you've changed addresses recently make sure you update it with Medicare so you can get your screening test in the mail. If you haven't received your test kit, or you have lost, misplaced or thrown it away – don't worry, you can order a replacement kit. Contact the National Cancer Screening Register on **1800 627 701** or speak to your local health professional who can order one on your behalf.

Completing a regular bowel cancer screening test can help make sure you stay healthy and strong and enjoy time with family and loved ones.



Completing the test

To do the test, you need to take two small samples from two separate poos using the test kit. There are instructions in the kit about how to take the samples. The test is clean and simple, many people say it is much easier than they first thought.

Once you have collected your samples, return the kit in the pre-paid envelope included.

Your tests will be received by a laboratory, who can check the samples for blood. Your results will be mailed to you in around two weeks. If there is blood found in the sample, you should visit your health professional who may refer you to a specialist to do more tests.

If your result comes back positive, it is not a cancer diagnosis. There are lots of reasons you could have blood in your poo, and most of these are not related to cancer. Completing the screening tests can help you to look after your wellbeing and stay healthy and strong by picking up any problems before cancer is present.

It's important to see your local health professional or doctor as soon as possible so they can discuss your result and get you the right information.

Use your phone to scan this QR code to see a video guide to completing the test.



Talking about bowel cancer screening

Starting a conversation about bowel cancer screening is important. Many members of our community might feel shame or be too embarrassed to talk about it. It's important to create a safe space to talk to family and community about this simple test that can save their life and help our mob stay healthy and strong as they age.

Tips for having a yarn about bowel cancer screening

- Find a quiet, safe space that is private. It might be best to do this one-on-one or in a small group, like a Yarning Circle or Elders group.
- Ask people over 50 if they have completed a bowel cancer screening test.
- Remind people that testing every 2 years from the age of 50 means you can stay healthy and strong, enjoying time with family and loved ones.
- If people mention a family history of bowel cancer, encourage them to talk to their GP or health professional if someone in their family has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. Early testing can help save lives.

Stay healthy and strong. Complete a free bowel cancer screening test, every 2 years once you turn 50.

Here are some ways you can start a conversation about bowel cancer screening:

- Did you know there is a simple test to help detect bowel cancer early? Its free, safe and easy to do. Have you done it?
- Bowel cancer can develop without symptoms and is affecting our mob. But if found early, it can be treated successfully. Have you done the free screening test?
- Some people might feel shame to talk about bowel cancer, but did you know the bowel cancer screening test can save lives? It's not shameful or embarrassing and can help you stay healthy and strong for family.
- Ask Aunties and Uncles, have you done a bowel cancer screening test? Regular screening can help detect the early signs of bowel cancer. If found early over 90% of bowel cancers can be successfully treated.

Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences

The following products have been developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, to help people understand more about bowel cancer screening and to complete a regular screening test.

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Television and radio ads.

Featuring Dr Joel Wenitong, these can be downloaded and shared.

Factsheet.

A guide to help talk to patients and community about bowel cancer screening.



Poster.

Promoting bowel cancer screening as a priority in your community.



Postcards.

A visual reminder to provide to community about when to do their next test. They might like to put on their fridge or with their health information.



Social media tiles.

Share across your networks to help people to encourage Aunties and Uncles to do the screening test when it arrives.



Case studies.

Share stories from local champions in our community who have completed the test and encourage others to as well.

How you can help

We need your help to encourage anyone over the age of 50 to get tested for bowel cancer. The test is quick, easy and could save your life.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Put up the posters in community centres, waiting rooms, at the community sports hall, at the community store and on local noticeboards.
- Print this toolkit and have copies available for community groups and leaders to encourage people to talk about bowel cancer screening in our community.
- Email a link to the toolkit to local community leaders, organisations and service providers. This might include Elders groups, Men's sheds, or community yarnning circles.



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- Share copies of the fact sheet with community groups or family members to start a conversation about bowel cancer.
- Share a tile on social media or share resources online, encouraging members of the community to talk to Elders and family members about staying up to date with bowel cancer screening.
- Print and share the postcards with people in your network to remind them about when to do their next bowel cancer screening test.
- Encourage health professionals in your area to talk to patients over 50 about a regular bowel cancer screening test. A conversation with a trusted health professional can help community members feel safe about doing the test as part of a regular check-up.

Local stories

Local stories about bowel cancer screening and the importance of testing help community members feel safe and encourage more mob to do the test.



“ If we take those 5 minutes, to do the test, we can be around for our kids and grandkids.

- Simone, Awabakal Country

Templates are available to help you promote local stories in your region.

Posters – Know someone who has done the test and wants to encourage more people in the region? Ask them if they would be okay to share their story. Take their photo and use the poster template to add why they think it is important. Seeing local people talk about how easy the test is to do can really help others to do it too.

Social media tiles – Adapt social media posts to your local area. You can include your organisation logo, or a special message to Elders or families in your community. You can encourage people to talk to a health professional in your region to get the screening test if they have concerns. You might promote bowel cancer screening at events or information sessions.

You can download the templates at
indigenusbowelscreen.com.au



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More information and resources

For more information, including downloadable resources as part of this campaign visit indigenusbowelscreen.com.au

Other resources that can support community bowel cancer screening:

Local Cancer Council branches

For more information or local support options, talk to your local Cancer Council branch.

Find your local Cancer Council branch at:
cancercouncil.com.au/contact-us/



Cancer Australia

Information for health professionals and patients affected by cancer is available at canceraustralia.gov.au/key-initiatives/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health

Lifeline / 13 YARN

Cancer and screening can be triggering, especially for family members that have lost a loved one. 13 YARN provides 24-hour counselling services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally. Visit 13yarn.org.au

Making Tracks, SA Health

Targeted resources have been developed, including gender specific bowel screening kit instructions and flipcharts about colonoscopy. Visit sahealth.sa.gov.au

- How to do the test for Aboriginal women ([PDF 8MB](#))
- How to do the test for Aboriginal men ([PDF 9MB](#))
- What happens next? If your bowel screening result is positive for Aboriginal women ([PDF 9MB](#))
- What happens next? If your bowel screening result is positive for Aboriginal men ([PDF 9MB](#))
- Making Tracks [video](#).

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