

# Get Behind Bowel Screening



## Background information to campaign

Get Behind Bowel Screening is a Cancer Council advocacy campaign launched 6 June 2009 to build support for the full roll-out of the Australian Government's National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP).

Bowel cancer kills 80 Australians every week, yet nearly all cases can be cured if found early. The Government's NBCSP provides enormous potential to save lives from bowel cancer, but it currently offers only one-off screening to people turning 50, 55 or 65 before December 2010. That means around five million Australians aged over 50 are missing out on a test that could possibly save their lives. Although the Government has spoken encouragingly about future support for the program, there is no long-term funding commitment or implementation plan. The potential of the program will not be fully realised without increased funding and a clear plan for program expansion.

Cancer Council's campaign aims to encourage the Australian Government to commit to full implementation of the NBCSP, with biennial screening that targets everyone over 50 years of age by 2012. Regular bowel cancer screening reduces bowel cancer deaths by 33%.

## How the campaign works

The campaign - *Get Behind Bowel Cancer Screening – Make a Noise*, asks the general public to use their voice to help prevent more than a third of bowel cancer deaths. Cancer Council encourages all Australians to go to the campaign website: [www.getbehindbowelscreening.com.au](http://www.getbehindbowelscreening.com.au) and send an email telling their local Member of Parliament to pressure the Government to get behind bowel screening. This means expanding the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program to include two-yearly screening for everyone over 50 by 2012.

Cancer Council will send a campaign email to tens of thousands of supporters, encouraging them to go to the website and 'get behind bowel cancer'. Supporters will be encouraged to forward the email to 11 friends – signifying the number of people who lose their lives to bowel cancer each day in Australia.

The campaign will be launched nationally on 6 June, ahead of Bowel Cancer Awareness Week (8-15 June). It will run until the end of October, when the number of emails will be counted and included in Cancer Council Australia's 2010 Budget submission.

## Bowel Cancer Statistics

Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related death in Australia, yet it just doesn't get the attention it deserves. 80 Australians die each week from bowel cancer.

More than 13,000 Australians get bowel cancer each year. This means there is a one in 12 risk of an Australian getting bowel cancer in their lifetime (to age 85). Over 3800 Australians die from bowel cancer each year.

## See FAQs for more information