

MEDIA RELEASE

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Eligible seniors encouraged to take part in free bowel cancer screening program

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service's health promotion officer Claire Condon is reminding all eligible residents this Seniors Week (13 – 21 August) to take advantage of a free bowel cancer screening program.

As the health promotion officer for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program, Ms Condon said the program was expanding its eligibility with more people able to participate this year.

"Eligible people are sent a free faecal occult blood testing kit which can be completed at home," Ms Condon said.

"Eligibility is based on age, and men and women who are turning 50, 55, 60, 64, 65, 70, 72 and 74 years in 2016 are sent a free kit in the mail.

"The program is expanding each year, with ages 72 and 64, being add to the eligibility list this year. In 2017, people turning 54, 58 and 68 years of age will be invited to participate.

"By 2020, around four million Australians will receive testing kits, which could save up to 500 lives annually."

In 2015, 38 per cent of eligible residents in the Toowoomba catchment area took part in the Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

And even though that statistic is higher than both the national and state participation rate, Ms Condon hopes to see more residents take part in the potentially life-saving program.

"Bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting both men and women," she said.

"However, it is also one of the most treatable cancers if caught early."

During Seniors Week, Ms Condon will attend a number of events to encourage more eligible people to participate in the bowel cancer screening program. She will attend the U3A Seniors Week Expo at Toowoomba's Humeridge Church of Christ tomorrow, Wednesday 17 August, from 8.30am to 2.30pm, and the 10th Annual Southern Downs Leisure and Lifestyle Expo in Warwick at the Senior Citizens Association on Thursday 18 August from 10am to 1pm.

For more information about the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program visit <https://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program>

Ends

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