

BreastScreen Aotearoa Action Plan

Implementing the recommendations
from the Quality Improvement
Review of Clinical Quality and Safety
for BreastScreen Aotearoa

April 2025

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



BreastScreen
Aotearoa



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Background

- In May 2023, the Quality Improvement Review of Clinical Quality and Safety for BreastScreen Aotearoa New Zealand (the Review) was publicly released by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ). The Quality Review identified areas that needed improvement to achieve equitable access and outcomes from the national breast screening programme.
- In June 2024, the first BreastScreen Aotearoa (BSA) Review Action Plan was released, outlining work Health NZ was progressing to achieve the objectives and recommendations of the Review.
- This 2025 BSA Review Action Plan provides an update on progress made during 2024 towards the recommendations of the Review and what will be achieved in 2025.
- There are 27 Initiatives underway (or planned) that fit within eight workstreams which contribute to the 26 recommendations of the Review.



Review recommendations

“Ma te kotahitanga e whai kaha ai tātau” (Māori)
 “Takanga ‘enau fohe” (Tongan)

These two proverbs, in Te Reo Māori as well as in Lea Faka-Tonga speak to strength in unity.

This Māori proverb speaks to “te reo kotahitanga” and the importance of having a voice of unity. This proverb translates to “In unity, we have strength”.

This Tongan proverb relates to the rowing of the Kalia (waka) and encourages the rowers to row at the same time, so that it drives the Kalia in the direction they are aiming for. When the speed and timing of their rowing are in sync, this will make the Kalia sail faster and the Kalia will stand out in performance.

– *BreastScreen Aotearoa Campaigns Insights Report*

In response to the 26 Review recommendations set out on page 6 and 7, BreastScreen Aotearoa (BSA) are progressing a range of initiatives across eight broad workstreams:

1. Touchpoints
2. Improved access
3. Smarter working
4. Discover and design
5. Quality and safety, monitoring
6. Workforce and training
7. Mammograms
8. Project

“Being a breast cancer survivor, we need to encourage our rangatahi on the importance of screening. Rangatahi listen to our kuia, they value our kuia, they show them respect. There’s power and influence with our kuia to educate and inform on screening.”

– *Quote from BSA hui-fono in Kirikiriroa from Pare Ruha, Māori Women’s Welfare League/ Secretary, Tainui Regional Council*

Some of this work is planned to begin in future years. For example, funding for additional Mammograms (workstream 7) is scheduled to begin from mid-2026.

The ‘Project’ workstream (8) includes internal staffing, coordination, and governance of the BSA Review work and is not detailed in this Action Plan.

Rec #	Review recommendation (shortened)	Workstreams that contribute to this recommendation
1	Develop a comprehensive, coordinated population-based approach to all cancer screening services in Aotearoa New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter working
2	Monitoring and performance framework for Tiriti responsive co-governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
3	Monitor and support the BSA ICT replacement to ensure fit-for-purpose screening system is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Smarter working
4	Appoint Pae Whakitere to oversee implementation of the Review recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project
5	Expert working group to support Pae Whakitere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project • Discovery and design
6	Wānanga for a Māori lead community of practice to develop skills and experience to engage with BSA governance at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
7	Co-design strategy - Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Smarter working • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring • Improved Access • Workforce and training
8	Rapidly increase Māori and Pacific participation to 70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Smarter working • Improved Access • Mammograms • Discovery and design
9	Co-design with Māori and Pacific approaches to achieve equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Smarter working • Project resource • Improved Access • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring • Discovery and design
10	COVID-19 response and recovery plans - Māori and Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Access • Smarter Working • Touchpoints
11	Māori data sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Access • Project

Rec #	Review recommendation (shortened)	Workstreams that contribute to this recommendation
12	Ethnicity data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
13	Develop a monitoring and reporting framework with Māori, Pacific, consumers and service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Access • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
14	Monitor and continuously update evidence-base for development of the BSA programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
15	Develop a plan for research to improve screening pathways for Māori, Pacific, people with lived experience of disability and other groups with higher mortality risk or under-served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
16	Cultural safety and anti-racism training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce and Training • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
17	Co-design recruitment and retention strategy including opportunities for Māori, Pacific, people with lived experience of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce and Training
18	Co-design a kaupapa Māori accreditation programme for providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce and Training • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
19	Consumer and whānau panel to oversee re-design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoints • Discover and design
20	Consumer engagement plan (partner with HQSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring • Discover and design
21	Clinical co-governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality, Safety, and Monitoring
22	Co-design programme policies	
23	Re-design external audit programme	
24	Best practice learning system and continuous improvement	
25	Adverse Event Management System (AEMS) and Complaint Management policy	
26	Training National Cancer Screening Programmes and Lead Provider kaimahi (AEMS)	

Action plan

Progress during 2024



Workstream	During 2024 BSA partnered and worked with a range of organisations to progress the following:
<p>Touchpoints</p> <p><i>Leveraging touchpoints with women to enable access to screening</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori Women’s Welfare League (MWWL) began rolling out a programme to increase breast screening rates for wāhine Māori through its peka branches. This programme carries the name Tātāu Tātāu and aims to screen 3,000 wāhine Māori, including 70% of the MWWL membership. As part of this work, a mobile screening unit was present at the 2024 MWWL National Conference, 20 health promotion events have been completed, and 26 wāhine Māori have been screened. • The design and implementation of a phase one pilot with Hauraki PHO of the Hospital Touchpoints initiative. The pilot is in progress in the Hauraki-Thames-Coromandel region and involves connecting with women and whānau through the hospital and community setting, inviting them to undertake a comprehensive health needs assessment, and referring and supporting these women to screen. This work has resulted in 8 new BSA enrolments, 24 screens, and 66 referrals to screening support services. • Wawata Creative and Bright Sunday engaged with 200+ Māori and Pacific women, 70 other women, along with providers and stakeholders to inform development of national campaigns and localised messaging to support the BSA Age Extension roll-out in the Nelson-Marlborough region in late 2024 and the 2025 roll-out of the new National Breast Screening System called Te Puna. This work was also informed by The Research Agency’s market survey of over 400 Māori and Pacific women, benchmarking awareness and understanding, and providing insights into barriers and motivations.
<p>Workforce and Training</p> <p><i>Building a robust and culturally aware workforce</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants have engaged with Screening Support Service providers and BSA Lead Providers to begin building a picture of the BSA workforce, including challenges and opportunities with recruiting and retaining Māori and Pacific staff. This will inform work in 2025 to improve recruitment and retention of the BSA workforce. • A survey is being developed to collect data about the BSA workforce. This will help build an understanding of the experience of kaimahi working for BSA and how cultural safety, recruitment and retention can be improved. • Kaimahi Training and Development funding was distributed to 42 hauora Māori partners and other providers delivering Cancer Care Coordination and Screening Support Services. Providers are using this funding to build the capability and capacity of their local workforce, including to address racism, systemic biases, and culturally unsafe practices across the entire breast screening pathway. So far, more than 650 kaimahi have completed training programmes.
<p>Smarter Working</p> <p><i>Developing smarter and more holistic ways of delivering screening services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSA partnered with four hauora Māori organisations to run whānau engagement and surveys to identify enablers and barriers to accessing the three cancer screening programmes (breast, bowel, and cervical). Insights will be used by Health NZ to develop and test new solutions to overcome these barriers. • From October to November 2024, Telehealth service Whakarongorau Aotearoa made follow up calls to wāhine Māori and Pacific women in Auckland central who had not replied to invitations to book a mammogram. Through this 2-month trial, an additional 156 women were screened, and future appointments have been booked. • BSA Lead Providers received additional funding to trial new ways of engaging Māori and Pacific women to improve uptake of screening services. This funding was used for ICT equipment, additional call center staff, and staff development.

Each initiative took time to plan and commission, and for several key initiatives, implementation began in the latter part of 2024. The impact and benefit of these initiatives will continue until mid-2025.

Workstream	During 2024 BSA partnered and worked with a range of organisations to progress the following:
<p>Improved Access</p> <p><i>Making breast screening accessible to all</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSA Lead Providers received funding to offer screening outside of usual hours and in different locations to make screening more accessible to Māori and Pacific women. As a result of this additional funding, more than 1,500 women were screened (up to 4 December 2024), including more than 1,000 priority women. Additional funding was allocated to Screening Support Service providers to provide more support to enable Māori and Pacific women to access screening services. Through a number of initiatives like more promotion, purchasing of cars, laptops, and other resources, and the hiring of more kaimahi, more than 850 additional women were supported into screening. Consultants have engaged with Screening Support Service providers and leaders, in the data sharing and intelligence space, across Health NZ to scope a project looking at how technology and data sharing can support equity in the BSA system. This scoping work is the first phase of a multi-year initiative which will include looking at how the Māori data sovereignty governance framework may apply to BSA for data sharing.
<p>Discover and Design</p> <p><i>Supporting community-led solutions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In late December, the final report for the Co-Design project in Kirikiriroa Hamilton was received by Health NZ. This report outlines key findings and recommendations for improving access to breast and cervical screening for wāhine Māori, which are now being considered by the cancer screening teams. In May 2024, a hui-fono was held in Kirikiriroa Hamilton that brought together organisations from across the region involved in supporting wāhine Māori and Pacific women to participate in breast screening. This hui-fono provided an opportunity to build and strengthen connections, share insights, and provide feedback on how equity in the BSA Programme could be improved.
<p>Quality, Safety, and Monitoring</p> <p><i>Ensuring the system is set up to deliver high-quality screening</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024, an auditing agency was contracted to review the programme standards component of the BSA National Policy and Quality Standards (NPQS). These standards are being re-written to be consumer focused, better reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and enable more effective evaluation of service delivery. Other components of the NPQS – such as monitoring requirements and clinical practice guidelines – will be considered in 2025. Scoping work within this workstream was also completed in 2024. This scoping will inform initiatives in 2025 such as the establishment of a Community of Practice, a BSA Research Programme, and exploration around Cultural Competency and Equity Accreditation.

Summary of key impacts

The below statistics are collated from progress reports supplied by breast screening providers and delivery organisations – received by BreastScreen Aotearoa up until 4 December 2024.



2,683
total additional women screened



More than
932
Wāhine Māori screened



69
Wāhine Māori newly enrolled in BSA



**Priority women include Māori, Pacific, under-screened, and un-screened women.*



More than
280
Pacific women screened



16
Pacific women newly enrolled in BSA



23
additional kaimahi supporting women to screen



665
support kaimahi completed additional training



103
additional transport provided to help women screen

Change in BreastScreen Aotearoa screening coverage

Screening coverage	Dec 2023	Dec 2024	Change	Screens to reach 70% (as at Dec 2024)
Wāhine Māori	61.0%	63.3%	+2.3%	7,086
Pacific women	64.6%	67.3%	+2.7%	1,135
All women	67.8%	69.6%	+1.8%	3,570

The above breast screening data was retrieved via the R-shiny app on 16 March 2025.

Case studies



Case study:

Hospital touchpoints

Trailing a new way of engaging with women about breast screening and their wider health needs

In late 2024, a trial was launched to connect with un-screened and under-screened women through the Thames Hospital to support them to screen.

This project is being led by a new team within Hauraki PHO who contact eligible women through the Thames Hospital and outpatient clinics. The team offer information and support to help them breast screen and invite them to take part in a Whānau Hauora Assessment process to understand the wider health needs of the women and their whānau.

The team are also connecting with women and whānau through hauora days, which are community-based events to promote local health and community services within the Hauraki rohe.

The kaiāwhina, with clinical support, can book women in for screening appointments at Pito Hauora (located in Thames), and can also refer women and their whānau on to a range of other health and social support services.

While this project is in its early stages, several women have been enrolled (or re-enrolled) in the BSA Programme and screened for breast cancer because of this trial. The Whānau Hauora Assessment process is also helping to improve the wider health of women and their whānau.

This trial in Thames will run till the end of June 2025 and will inform potential future work to strengthen connections between primary and secondary healthcare.



The Hospital Touchpoints team (Left to right: Elizabeth Gardener-Jones - Team Lead, Hauora Wāhine; Paulette Winiata - Kaiāwhina; and Awhimaaia Tupuhi - Kaiāwhina)

Case study:

Tātau Tātau initiative

Partnership with Māori Women's Welfare League

BSA and Māori Women's Welfare League (MWWL) have formed a partnership to increase breast screening rates for wāhine Māori.

The programme carries the name Tātau Tātau and aims to screen 3,000 wāhine Māori, which includes 70% of the MWWL membership.

In an effort to increase awareness of the breast screening kaupapa across the League's extensive network, each of the MWWL regions have appointed their own representative who will champion the kaupapa, and among other things, develop resources for an education and training package for their members.

BSA and the MWWL also worked together to enable a mobile screening unit to attend and screen wāhine during the MWWL National Conference which took place at the Mystery Creek Event Centre in Kirikiriroa Hamilton on 11 and 12 October.

Over the two days, close to thirty wāhine took up the opportunity to screen, including one member who was 14 years overdue for her mammogram. Seeing these wāhine reconnect with the screening pathway was a great outcome, and BSA is excited for mobile screening teams to attend more MWWL events in the future.



MWWL National Executive members and our Midland Mobile Screening team at the MWWL conference in October

Case study:

Hui-Fono in Kirikiriroa

Strengthening connections across the BreastScreen Midland region

In May 2024, the BSA team and Pae Whakatere hosted a hui-fono in Kirikiriroa Hamilton that brought together organisations from across the BreastScreen Midland region (Waikato, Lakes and Bay of Plenty) who were involved in supporting Māori and Pacific women to participate in breast screening or other health or social programmes.

Twelve organisations (including the local BSA Lead Provider) joined the hui-fono, along with representatives from Pae Whakatere and Health New Zealand.

The hui-fono was an opportunity for organisations to build and strengthen connections, share insights, and provide feedback to Health New Zealand on how equity in the BSA Programme could be improved.

The ideas discussed during the hui-fono are already feeding into the work of the BSA Programme and wider screening and prevention mahi.

An Insights Report has also been prepared to summarise the ideas and potential actions discussed during the hui-fono. If you would like a copy of this report, please email breastscreen.aotearoa@tewhaturora.govt.nz.



BSA kaimahi and attendees at the hui-fono in Kirikiriroa

Action plan for 2025

The year ahead



Several of the initiatives from 2024 continue until 30 June 2025. This work is not included in the below 2025 Action Plan.

Workstream	Next steps – what will be achieved in 2025
Touchpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2025, BSA will leverage different ‘touchpoints’ (where women engage on their healthcare journey) to better enable access to breast screening. This will include working with Pacific health services within hospitals, building off a Pacific-focused project led by the National Bowel Screening Programme. BSA plan to partner with Pacific and Māori organisations with national reach to encourage, educate and screen wāhine Māori and Pacific women for breast cancer. BSA will also roll out a range of communications and engagement at both the national and regional level to support the launch of the new National Breast Screening System.
Workforce and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In early 2025, consultants provided advice and recommendations for how recruitment and retention of Māori and Pacific BSA staff could be improved, building on their scoping work from 2024. The BSA Programme will consider the consultant’s recommendations alongside results from the BSA Workforce Survey before confirming next steps for building a robust and culturally aware workforce for 2025.
Smarter Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2025, Health NZ will develop smarter and more holistic ways of delivering screening services, including by progressing insights and ideas collected through our four hauora Māori partners who undertook research in 2024 to understand the barriers to accessing the three cancer screening programmes. Health NZ also plan to run an open and contestable process to seek and fund ideas from Māori and Pacific community organisations for projects that would improve uptake of screening invitations and ensure women have what they need to attend screening appointments.
Improved Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will continue in 2025 to make breast screening accessible to all, in particular wāhine Māori and Pacific women. Further funding will be allocated so BSA Lead Providers can offer additional breast screening services out of regular business hours and in new locations. BSA plans to pilot a new model for Screening Support Services that strengthens relationships across the BSA system and ensures appropriate regional coverage of support services. BSA will also consider recommendations from the consultants about opportunities to support equity in the BSA system through improved technology and data sharing.
Discover and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further regional-focused hui-fono will be run in 2025 to bring together organisations involved in BSA and the wider the community to share insights and develop new ideas.
Quality, Safety, and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the system is set up to deliver high-quality screening, a review of the monitoring requirements component of the BSA National Policy and Quality Standards will be commissioned (as the second stage of the broader NPQS review). BSA will also commission development of a Research Strategy which will include a specific research question, to determine the breast screening coverage rates required to achieve equitable breast cancer mortality rates among Māori, Pacific and non-Māori, non-Pacific women. BSA are looking to establish Communities of Practice (CoP) to build networks and share best practice across the breast screening system. This will incorporate learnings from already established Māori and Pacific CoPs focused on bowel and cervical screening. Advice from Te Amokura Consulting on what a Cultural Competency and Equity Accreditation process could look like for BSA will also be considered, including potential models that could be built into the BSA National Policy and Quality Standards in the future.

