

BreaCan

Strategic Plan 2009 - 2012

Introduction

BreaCan is a state-wide information and support service for people affected by breast and gynaecological cancers. It is a women-centred, holistic service which recognises that every person's experience of cancer is different.

BreaCan operates from a resource centre located in central Melbourne. The resource centre is staffed by trained volunteers who either have personal experience of breast or gynaecological cancer or who have cared for someone who has. A small team of staff work alongside the volunteers to provide support to women, their families and friends. The service is also involved in policy and project development, data analysis and community liaison.

BreaCan is a service of Women's Health Victoria (WHV), a state-wide health promotion organisation run by women, for women. Women's Health Victoria provides a range of support to the service as well as the overall context for our work. The BreaCan Advisory Group, which includes consumers and representatives from the cancer services sector, provides additional advice, guidance and support.

This is the first BreaCan strategic plan. The timeframe has been chosen to coincide with the three-year cycle of recurrent funding which we now receive from the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS). The plan has been developed collaboratively with input from members of the BreaCan Advisory Group and staff and it has been endorsed by the WHV Council. It is also informed by the service deliverables which are outlined in our funding agreement with DHS.

This plan outlines BreaCan's vision, the principles by which we operate and the key strategic goals which we have set ourselves for the period 2009-2012. In addition to this, a series of operational plans, including a communications plan, will be developed to assist us in meeting the objectives described here.

Throughout the life of the plan, we will be engaged in 'environmental scanning' in order to identify opportunities and risks which may emerge for the service. While pursuing the strategic direction outlined in this plan, we intend to retain a degree of flexibility in order to manage any risks which emerge or to take action on agreed opportunities for the service as they arise.

More information about Women's Health Victoria, including its strategic plan, can be found at www.whv.org.au.

More information about BreaCan can be found at www.breacan.org.au.

“ BreaCan gave me the help that no one else was able to give me and in doing so allowed me to take control of my life.

Mary-Anne, aged 55

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Our Vision

By 2012 we will:

- Support more women with breast and gynaecological cancers to actively participate in their care and to live well
- Empower our volunteers to bring the principles of the service to life and to support other women with breast and gynaecological cancers
- Improve the effectiveness, profile and reach of the service
- Innovate in response to the diverse needs of people affected by breast and gynaecological cancers
- Share what we've learned so far and continue our learning
- Collaborate with our colleagues in other organisations to improve care and support for women with breast and gynaecological cancers.

Our Principles

The following principles underpin all of our work:

Acknowledge difference

We recognise that every woman's experience of cancer is different and must be seen in the broader context of their lives.

Share experience

We will share experiences, we will not give advice.

Provide a welcoming environment

We will provide a welcoming, accessible and safe environment.

Encourage participation

We will actively encourage people to participate in the development and operation of BreaCan.

Empower people

We are committed to enhancing people's skills and capacity to make informed choices, as they wish.

Respect privacy

We respect the privacy of people.

Be non-judgemental

We will provide information and support in a non-judgemental way.

Maintain high standards

We are committed to delivering a high quality service. We regularly review the relevance of the service to its users and we seek to make improvements wherever possible.



Our Goals for 2009-2012

1. Increase the number of people using our service

In pursuing this goal, we aim to continue the successful strategies we have already developed as well as exploring new ways of engaging with our target audiences. We were delighted to welcome women with gynaecological cancers into the service in 2007. Encouraging more of these women to use the service will be a priority for us over the next three years. We will also be paying particular attention to groups of women which have been identified for their lower rates of participation in our service, such as women in rural and regional areas, indigenous women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Our resource centre will remain the focal point of our service, although we will explore the use of technology to extend our reach even further. As always, the needs and experiences of women will underpin everything we do.

2. Expand our capacity

If our service is to continue to grow and succeed, we need a sustainable volunteer workforce. We must ensure that our volunteers are appropriately recruited, trained, coordinated and supported to provide a high quality service. Equally, we must ensure that our staff feel valued and motivated to play their part in the development of the service. We will maintain our connections across the cancer services sector, ensuring the constant flow of information into and out of the service. While the service now enjoys recurrent funding from the Victorian Department of Human Services, we will also be exploring the possibility of additional funding through projects and partnerships with other organisations in the cancer services sector and beyond.

3. Extend our influence

We believe we have a lot of valuable experience to share with our colleagues in the cancer services sector. In developing collaborative relationships with key individuals and organisations, we seek to improve the care and support of women with breast and gynaecological cancers. We also intend to learn from these partnerships in order to improve the effectiveness of our own service.

BreaCan has always been an innovative service. Over the next three years, we seek to continue this innovation in responding to the diverse needs of people affected by breast and gynaecological cancer. In doing so, we will maintain the approach that has served us so well in the past: 'start small and do it well'.

“You never know what a place will be like when you first walk in the door. But BreaCan...it just felt so welcoming and comfortable.

Toni, aged 44

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Goal 1

Increasing the number of people using our service

Our objectives

To demonstrate an increase in the number of women with breast cancer and gynaecological cancer using the service

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Identify and make accessible (via the resource collection, centre library and website) high quality information resources that respond to women's needs
- Continue successful strategies and develop new strategies to inform women about our service and to encourage them to use it
- Undertake research (independently or in partnership with relevant organisations) to investigate the needs of two 'underserved' groups with a view to improving their access to information and support. These may include women in rural and regional areas, indigenous women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Redevelop our existing website to create a 'stand alone' site which can be used for a range of purposes including promotion and service delivery
- Explore the feasibility of developing web-based technology options to reach women who may be isolated or prefer to access our services via this medium.

To demonstrate an increased number of referrals to the service from relevant hospitals and cancer support services

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Develop a diversified range of communication strategies to promote the service to health professionals who are best placed to refer women to the service.
- Refine our data collection processes to better understand the referral pathways from the public and private sectors.

To ensure that the experience of women and others using our service is positive and to use the feedback we obtain to further improve the service we offer

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Collect information pertaining to women's experience of our service (emotional and practical support, peer support, perceived quality of information received, etc)
- Tailor service delivery and programs to meet the needs identified by women
- Respond to any positive or negative feedback received in a timely manner and in accordance with organisational policies.



Goal 2

Expanding our capacity

Our objectives

To ensure that between 25 and 35 trained peer-support volunteers actively work with BreaCan staff to provide information and support to women and to contribute to service development

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Conduct recruitment as required to ensure that a sufficient number of trained volunteers are actively participating at all times
- Provide volunteers with regular training and support in response to their own needs and those of the service
- Trial and evaluate a process for diversification of the peer support volunteer role in partnership with relevant cancer services or cancer treatment centres.

To ensure that all staff are appropriately skilled and supported to undertake their work and that they contribute to a culture of teamwork, trust and respect

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Recruit staff with suitable qualifications and experience and who can actively contribute to the culture of the service
- Implement formal and informal mechanisms for management, professional development, training and support for staff.

To extend our connections across the cancer services and broader health sector

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Provide opportunities, both formal and informal, for representatives from relevant organisations or professional groups to contribute their advice and expertise to the service
- Ensure BreaCan is represented on relevant committees or at relevant forums within the sector

To establish a more diversified resource base for the service which includes recurrent funding, project funding and donations

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Identify additional funding sources both independently and in partnership with other relevant organisations
- Respond to and seek out possible donors
- Evaluate the internal partnership with Women's Health Victoria in order to ensure we are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible
- Develop, document and monitor effective risk management, budget and planning processes.

“As a volunteer, I found that sharing experience is of great value to the people I speak with. You can see/hear their relief when they fully realise that this person knows the physical and emotional turmoil they are in for from their first-hand experience.

Sandra, BreaCan Peer Support Volunteer



Goal 3

Extending our influence

Our objectives

To promote the effectiveness of 'the BreaCan model' in contributing to quality care within the cancer services sector

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Identify opportunities to actively disseminate our knowledge to target audiences
- Submit articles for publication in relevant journals or as conference presentations which share what we've learned and demonstrate the value of the model (and encourage our supporters outside the service to do likewise)
- Prepare submissions in response to relevant government reforms or requests for information/participation in forums which articulate the needs and experiences of women.

To develop at least two new collaborative partnerships with individuals or organisations within the cancer services sector, particularly those with which we have not worked previously or which can assist us in achieving our strategic objectives (for example, organisations working with women from CALD communities)

Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Complete evaluation of previous partnerships in order to determine an approach which is most likely to succeed
- Target key individuals and organisations with proposals for projects likely to be of benefit to both organisations
- Improve our connections with the metropolitan and regional Integrated Cancer Services (ICS).

To demonstrate an increase in the number of requests received from organisations conducting research, for advice and assistance (including assistance in identifying suitable study participants)

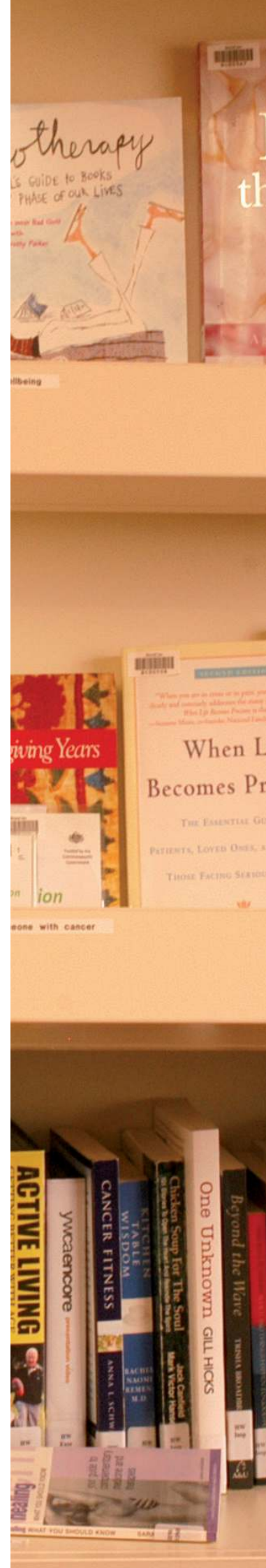
Activities which will be conducted to meet this objective may include:

- Identify and respond to opportunities to work with researchers that are committed to genuine consumer participation and improving health outcomes for women
- Promote the service and our availability to provide advice and assistance to relevant researchers and research organisations
- Demonstrate our ability to add value to research projects and to ensure participants are kept appropriately informed throughout the process.

Evaluation

The goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan are closely inter-related. We anticipate that activities undertaken to achieve one may also assist in achieving others.

Regular evaluation of our activities will be undertaken on a project and/or regular basis. We will report our progress against each goal and objective on an annual basis to the BreaCan Advisory Group, the Women's Health Victoria Council and the Victorian Department of Human Services. Comprehensive evaluation of this strategic plan will be conducted in the final year in the life of the plan, 2012. The outcomes of this evaluation will be used to inform the future strategic direction of the service.





More information

More information about this strategic plan or about any other aspect of Breacan can be obtained by contacting the Breacan Resource Centre on 1300 781 500 or email breacan@breacan.org.au.

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