



Raising Breast Cancer awareness are KDHS cancer screening project officer Dale-Maree Florence (left) and KDHS Planned Activity Group assistant Sandi Donaldson.

Screening drops

By Patrick Phillips

With breast cancer screening rates falling across the country, local women aged 50 to 74 are being encouraged to get screened.

New national figures have shown that screening rates for women aged between 50 and 69 in 2013-14 was 53.7 per cent, down from 54.4 per cent in 2012-13 and the national high of 57.6 per cent in 2001-02.

Kyabram District Health Service's cancer screening project officer Dale-Maree Florence said it was a worrying sign and urged more women to have the vital mammograms that aid early detection.

"A lot of people create their own barriers with their excuses to not get screened," she said.

"But in this day and age with the accuracy of the screening programs, we are so fortunate to have this technology available and we would be crazy not to use it.

"If breast cancer is found early enough, and it is one of the most insidious of the cancers, then there is a good chance it can be beaten.

"You hear stories all the time of people who catch it early, get treated and live on.

"That is why screening is so important."

In order to encourage greater breast cancer screening within Kyabram and district, Ms Florence said KDHS has made buses available to communities to help transport women to Shepparton, Bendigo or Echuca hospitals.

KDHS Planned Activity Group assistant Sandy Donaldson said it was a great service that made having the screening easier for country women.

"I am lucky that I can drive myself to appointments but there are a number of women in the community who can't," she said.

"That's why the bus is such a great idea.

"Between 50 and 74 it is recommended to have the screening every two years.

"It's an easy reminder in the mail that you are due and then you can either organise a screening by yourself or get involved in one of these buses.

"The screening is non-invasive and provides you with some piece of mind because you are doing as much as you can to take care of yourself."

Women interested in getting a breast screen are encouraged to make an appointment either online or over the phone.

For mammogram bookings, contact 132 050.

Women interested in the bus service are encouraged to contact KDHS on 5857 0200 for more information.

■ For more information on breast screening, visit www.australia.gov.au/breastscreen