

Bringing breast screening services to the remote Northern Territory

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In July 2014, BreastScreen NT launched a state of the art 4 wheel drive truck, with the ability to take specialised breast-screening equipment out into communities that had previously not been able to access this service.

In this poster presentation, we will share our experiences, the lessons and the successes of this year, and how we have worked with different teams across the Northern Territory to provide this potential lifesaving service.

Hub communities across the Northern Territory were identified, with considerations of location, facilities, eligible population and convenience for other communities to access. A tentative schedule was then proposed, using the above data to calculate how long the truck needed to be in each place.

At each site we visited, we encountered many challenges, with many learning opportunities. Our staff all developed skills very rapidly; it was a steep learning curve, but overall exceptionally rewarding. We aim to include some personal reflection on our experiences as well.

Included in the lessons that we have learned are some statistical data that shows what a successful venture this has been so far. In our first 6 months we have developed new methods in how we approach communities, the information that we require ensuring we can provide a safe and effective service, how we staff the truck and ways to improve the logistical challenges associated with this vehicle. This learning is fluid and constant, the team has to be adaptable and open to changes that can occur sometimes on a daily basis.

This poster presentation will be shared from our radiographer staff who have worked on the truck over the last few months. We will also be including some reference to the radiography work that is performed on the vehicle while working remotely. Our radiography staff have developed new skills, including becoming truck drivers of this vehicle. For us to share our experiences and stories and to reflect on our learnings we hope to inspire others. The radiographers have had to adapt their technique and work flows when working with remote clients, who for the most part have never experienced a mammogram.

Providing this remote breast-screening service has been ground breaking in so many ways, we are proud to bring this service to the many women who live remotely in the Northern Territory, and are excited for the opportunity to share with other like-minded people.