

Increasing participation in breast screening – the Queensland experience

Annette Birt, Michelle Tornabene and Nick Ormiston-Smith

Cancer Screening Unit, Preventive Health Branch, Department of Health, Queensland Government

Where are we now?

High participation by women in the target age group (50-74 years) in breast screen programs across the country is critical to reducing morbidity and mortality due to breast cancer. In Queensland:

- the participation rate in 2015-16 was 56.3% and in recent years shows a decreasing trend (Figure 1)
- participation varies by age, with women aged 50-54 years having the lowest participation rate (51.2%) and women aged 65-69 years having the highest participation rate (61.2%) (Figure 2)
- participation varies amongst priority populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (48.6%), women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, (53.2%) and women living in outer regional (60.7%), remote (51.2%) and very remote areas (53.5%)
- the number of women returning (within 27 months) for their first rescreen is significantly less than those returning for their second and subsequent rescreening episodes (61.9% compared to 84.4%).

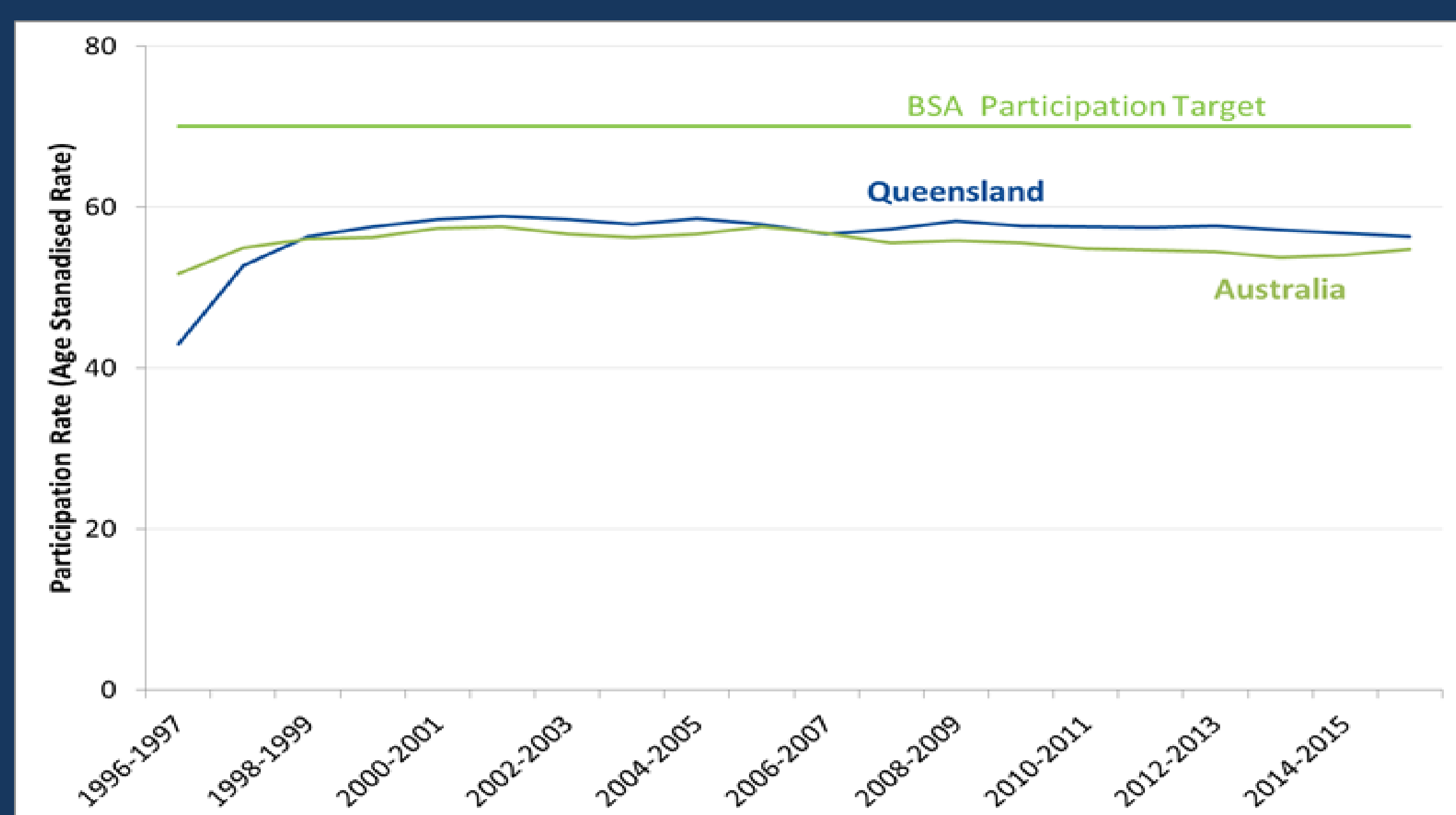


Figure 1: Queensland and Australian participation (Age standardised rate, women aged 50-69 years, 1996-91 to 2015-16)

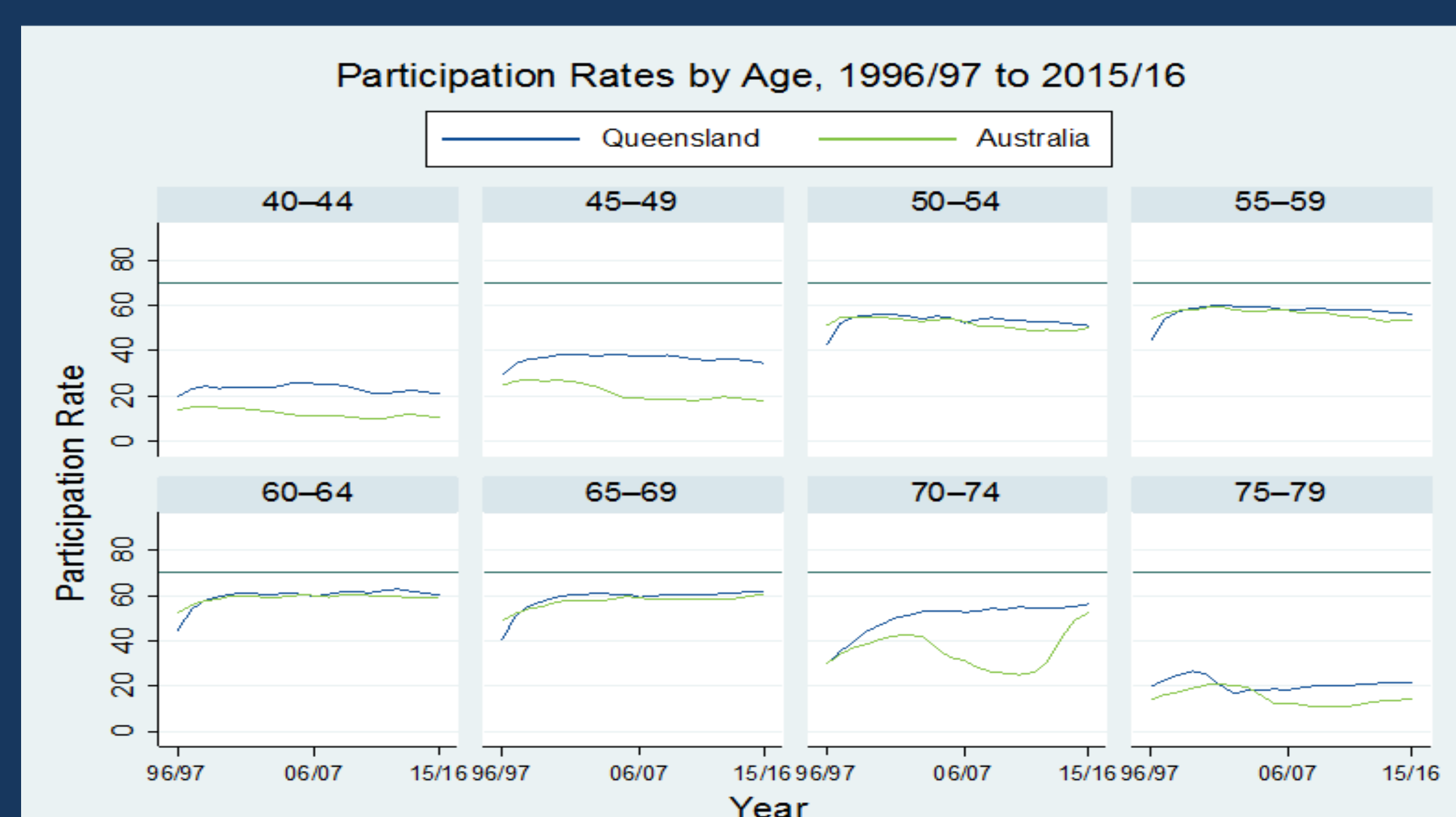
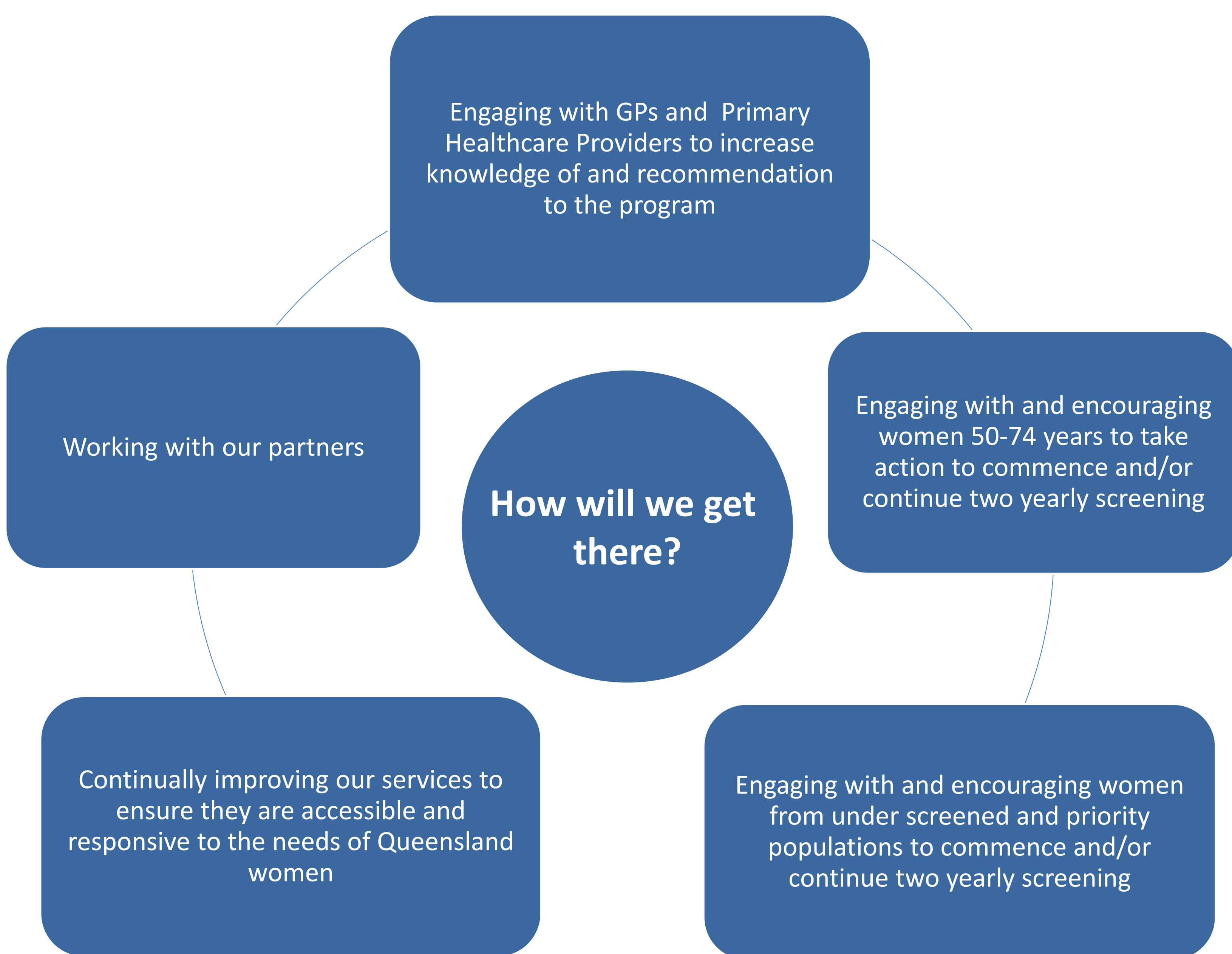


Figure 2: Queensland and Australian participation trends by age group (1996-97 to 2015-16)

Where do we want to be by 2020?

BreastScreen Queensland is implementing targeted strategies to address declining participation in the program and is working towards the aspirational goal of screening an additional 68,100 women across Queensland (60% participation rate) by 2020-21, potentially detecting approximately 420 additional cancers¹.

This will contribute to BreastScreen Queensland's progression towards our overarching goal of meeting the National Accreditation Standard of 70% or greater participation and ensuring equitable access to the program.



It is estimated that based on the 2016 cancer detection rate approximately 420 additional cancers may be detected. This is based on the assumption that the age distribution and other socio-demographic characteristics of clients remain the same over time.