



BreastScreen Australia
National Quality Improvement Plan
November 2016

Approved by the National Quality Management Committee on 25 November 2016

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Glossary

BSA	BreastScreen Australia
NAS	National Accreditation Standards Measures of the BreastScreen Australia accreditation system
NPBP	National Performance Benchmarking Program
NQMC	National Quality Management Committee
NQIP	National Quality Improvement Plan
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
SDP	Strategic Data Plan
SQC	State Quality Committee
SQIP	State Quality Improvement Plan

1 Purpose

The purpose of the National Quality Improvement Plan (NQIP) is to support quality improvement within the BreastScreen Australia (BSA) program at a national level.

It provides a formalised process for achieving the following core objectives:

- Identify National Quality Improvement Priorities that are critical to achieving BSA Program objectives;
- Provide realistic and achievable strategies and actions for resolving National Quality Improvement Priorities;
- Enable the NQMC to provide strategic leadership in the quality improvement of BSA services in a collaborative manner.

2 Introduction

Since its conception, the BreastScreen Australia (BSA) National Quality Management Committee (NQMC) has primarily operated as a compliance body, responsible for assessing the performance of BSA Services against the National Accreditation Standards (NAS). Under the revised accreditation system, implemented from 1 January 2016, the NQMC's role has been broadened to include strategic leadership in national quality improvement.

This National Quality Improvement Plan (NQIP) has been developed by the NQMC to fulfil its new responsibility. It provides a framework for capturing, developing and implementing quality improvement initiatives at a national level.

2.1 Scope

The NQIP seeks to support national quality improvement through two key avenues:

- identifying areas of underperformance or high performance at a national level; and
- “horizon-gazing” for emergent technologies and practices that will support quality within the BSA program.

The scope of the NQIP is to articulate as National Priorities those quality improvement issues and opportunities that warrant coordinated national action and which the BSA program is equipped to adequately address within realistic timeframes.

The types of National Priorities in the NQIP can include:

Type	Description
Procedural	This will include overarching actions to establish or sustain the NQIP.
Structural	This will include strategic, quality- related structural improvements to the BreastScreen Australia Program.
Performance	This will include strategies to improve specific national NAS Measure performance.

2.2 Governance

NQMC is the decision-making body for the content and implementation of the NQIP.

The NQIP will be communicated to jurisdictions following each August NQMC meeting. State Quality Committees (SQC) will be responsible for ensuring that their State Quality Improvement Plans (SQIPs) align with the NQIP.

2.3 NQIP Development and Review

The development process for the NQIP is outlined in Figure 1 and aligns with the National Quality Improvement Framework. It involves the development and annual update of the NQIP through a process of:

1. identifying key quality improvement issues for the BSA Program through the consideration of a range of information sources; and
2. applying selection criteria to determine which issues warrant inclusion in the NQIP as a National Priority.

The SQCs' input, along with their SQIPs will form a key reference in the annual update of the NQIP.

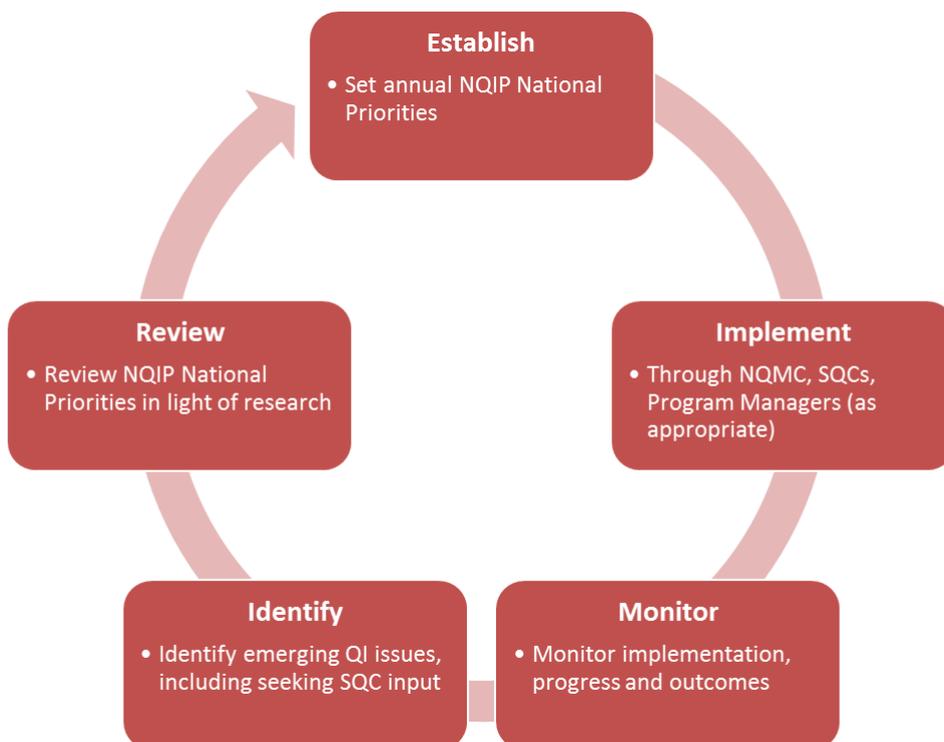
Figure 1: NQIP Development



The NQIP will be updated as illustrated in Figure 2, in an annual cycle. The review cycle will typically commence in April with a request for SQC input, with the updated NQIP being approved by the NQMC at its August meeting.

For those quality improvement issues not captured as National Priorities, the NQMC will take direct action where appropriate within the broader national quality improvement framework.

Figure 2: NQIP Development and Review Cycle



NQIP 2016-17: Initial Development

The development of this initial NQIP has varied from the process described in this section.

The BSA program is currently in transition to the revised accreditation system. A number of jurisdictions have yet to finalise their SQC and most jurisdictions are yet to finalise their SQIPs under the revised system. Accordingly, it was not practicable to seek the input of SQCs in the initial drafting of the NQIP.

Instead, the NQMC invited comment from jurisdictional Program Managers/SQCs on a draft of the NQIP prior to finalising it.

2.4 Identifying National Priorities

A range of nationally relevant quality issues and opportunities will be considered for selection as National Priorities each year. These may include recurring or notable areas of underperformance or high performance at a national level. They may also include additional projects, strategies and structures which work to support quality improvement within the BSA program.

Potential National Priorities will be identified through a comprehensive review of accreditation data, relevant research, the national performance database, SQIPs and direct consultation with SQCs.

The National Priority selection process utilises the following criteria to identify the most pressing quality issues with the greatest potential for improvement through coordinated national action:

1. The issue is relevant to the whole country or large portion of the country.
2. If the issue is relevant only to one jurisdiction, it has significant ramifications for the outcomes for women.
3. The issue involves consideration of the harm/benefit balance and is likely to improve the outcome for women.
4. The issue is considered nationally significant in terms of achieving the objectives of the BSA Program Objectives, which are to:
 - a) Reduce the mortality and morbidity attributable to breast cancer.
 - b) Maximise early detection of breast cancer in the target population.
 - c) Maximise the proportion of women in the target population who are screened every two years.
 - d) Provide high quality services that are equitable, acceptable and appropriate to the needs of the population and equally accessible to all women in the target age group.
 - e) Provide screening and assessment services in accredited Screening and Assessment Services as part of the BreastScreen Australia program.
 - f) Provide high standards of program management, service delivery, monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

3 The National Quality Improvement Plan 2016-17

The National Priorities for the NQIP 2016-17 were identified and selected using the process and criteria outlined in Section 2. These initial National Priorities are:

1. Establishing a Strategic Data Plan (SDP) project to facilitate a strategic approach to the use of data available to the NQMC in developing quality improvement initiatives
2. Establishing a National Performance Benchmarking Program (NPBP)
3. Evaluating the appropriate use of remote radiology as a service delivery model within the BreastScreen Australia Program

In selecting these National Priorities, the NQMC sought to ensure that the NQIP was relevant and achievable in an environment where jurisdictions and the NQMC are still implementing the revised accreditation system.

As part of the selection process, other issues considered for inclusion were:

- Emergent technologies (for example: tomosynthesis)
- Use of Clip Markers
- National participation performance (Level 2 NAS 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2)
- National recall rates performance (Level 2 NAS 2.6.3, Level 1 NAS 4.2.1)

While noting these issues, it was agreed that an improved understanding of the context and interrelationships of the NAS Measures is an important first step. In this respect, the SDP and the NPBP will establish essential quality improvement resources and systems to enable future NQIPs to effectively target specific performance, outcomes or risk issues.

The rationale for these Priorities is outlined below and is followed by an Action Plan (Section 3.4) for addressing them.

3.1 Establishing a Strategic Data Plan Project

The BSA program has a wide variety of data available to inform quality improvement. This project covers the development of a data plan which will improve the integration and utilisation of these data, including accreditation data, data held by Services/SCUs, data held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and other relevant data sources.

The SDP will drive better use of the available data by facilitating its strategic application in accurately identifying and responding to quality issues, as well as providing a refined understanding of where further research may be required.

Specifically, in the initial instance, the SDP will support the implementation of the NPBP (see Section 3.2). It will also support the development of a reporting tool to analyse Service/SCU level accreditation data to assist in identifying National Priorities for inclusion in the NQIP.

More broadly, the SDP will be closely tied with the planned revision of the accreditation and reporting process, which seeks to streamline the data flow in the accreditation system.

3.2 Establishing a National Performance Benchmarking Program

The establishment of the NPBP will allow the NQMC to meet its governance responsibility to:

Document and report on the national performance of BreastScreen Australia Services and SCUs against the NAS Measures to facilitate benchmarking across jurisdictions and drive quality improvement (BSA Accreditation Handbook 2015, p. 23).

The NPBP will be established as one of the key components of the SDP (see Section 3.1) and form one of the overarching structures for supporting national quality improvement.

The NPBP will provide each Service/multi-service SCU with a benchmarking report which demonstrates their performance against key NAS relative to both national and peer Service performance. The design of the NPBP will need to consider benchmarking alike Services, e.g. rural, metropolitan etc. The NPBP will allow for the identification of areas for improvement and also highlight areas of excellent performance, facilitating program-wide learning from effective practice.

The NPBP will provide benchmarking reports to Services and multi-service SCUs following the August NQMC meeting each year. These reports will be de-identified so that only the relevant Service's/multi-service SCU's performance is labelled. Subject to confidentiality terms, the Program Managers Group will receive a national summary of identified data, in order to workshop quality improvement opportunities.

3.3 Remote Radiology Evaluation

BreastScreen Services in a number of jurisdictions face significant difficulties in providing assessment services to isolated and dispersed populations. Remote Radiology offers potential for improving the quality of BSA service delivery nationally.

The NQMC considers it is essential that new procedures, such as remote radiology, be subject to rigorous, evidence based guidelines to establish national best practice.

The NQMC has identified that there is a need to provide clear guidance to BreastScreen services on how remote radiology can be implemented with minimal risk to patient safety and service quality.

Accordingly, the NQMC, in conjunction with a number of jurisdictions, is establishing a research project to evaluate the use of remote radiology.

This project will provide the basis for the development of quality and consistency guidelines for remote radiology practice.

3.4 Action Plan

The following table outlines the NQIP priorities and the process and timelines proposed for their initial progression.

National Priorities	Type	Source	Actions	Timeline	Accountabilities	Success Measures
Establish National Performance Benchmarking Program	Procedural	New NQMC responsibility (see 2015 Handbook)	Establish a project to develop a NBP, including engaging appropriate contractor.	November 2016	NQMC Secretariat	National Performance Benchmarking Program established
			Implement NBP.	August 2017	NQMC Secretariat	
Remote Radiology Evaluation	Structural	Accreditation information	Engage appropriate researcher to conduct evaluation.	December 2016	NQMC Secretariat	Evaluation produces outcomes that can be used to guide remote radiology best practice within the BSA program
			Conduct evaluation.	2017-2018	Evaluation Steering Committee	
Establish Strategic Data Plan Project	Structural	NQMC analysis	Establish project governance and funding arrangements. Engage contractors to commence SDP development.	October 2016 – January 2017	Project Steering Committee/NQMC Secretariat	SDP established and supporting quality improvement and improved data flow within the BSA program.