First remote breast screening service hits the road in the NT

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A new service to help women tackle cancer rates in remote areas has begun in the Northern Territory.

The Minister for Health Robyn Lambley has today launched the BreastScreenNT Bus that will give remote women the opportunity to have screen tests closer to home.

“Extending and improving health services for Territorians in remote areas have been top priorities of the Country Liberals Government,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The BreastScreen Bus will make a big difference to the lives of women living in the bush.

“Remote women have always had to travel hundreds or sometimes a 1000 kilometres to have a breast screen, and some did not access the service at all.

“Thanks to the BreastScreen Bus they will no longer have to put up with the tyranny of distance, and it will encourage more women to access the test.

“The service today visited the community of Barunga, and it will visit 20 remote communities on a two yearly cycle, with women from neighboring communities encouraged to attend.

“In addition the Bus will provide screening services in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy, to complement services in Darwin, Alice Springs and Palmerston.

“In 2013 BreastScreenNT screened 6635 women, and nearly 1200 of the women screened were Indigenous.

“In the next 6 months we hope that the BreastScreen Bus will have the capacity to screen 800 women in remote communities.

“In 2015, the service will aim to have capacity for 1350 women to be screened in remote communities.

“The bus has been fitted with specialist mammography equipment, and it also looks fantastic featuring the artwork of young Wadeye artist Magdalena Mullumbuck”.

Robyn Lambley
Minister for Health
The Commonwealth Government has provided $1.2 million for the bus, and the Territory Government has committed $415,000 in operational funding for the remote service.

Breast screening mammograms are strongly recommended for women aged over 50 years, as early detection offers women the best chance of recovery. It is a free service and takes less than 30 minutes.

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