



Kelvin Thomson MP

Federal Labor Member for Wills

BOWEL CANCER – DON'T WAIT TILL IT'S TOO LATE.

The Member for Wills, Kelvin Thomson, today announced that from the start of July, about 2.5 million Australians will be offered free kits to enable them to take an easy but vital test for bowel cancer, in the privacy of their own homes.

All eligible people – those who turn 50, 55 or 65 years of age between 2008 and 2010 – are strongly urged to take up this offer. A letter inviting them to take part in the voluntary screening program will be sent direct to their homes.

Bowel cancer is one of Australia's most common cancers with around 80 Australians losing their life each week. It can develop with few, if any, early warning signs.

The good news is that bowel cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable cancers, provided it is detected early. A simple test, performed by a pathology lab using samples provided via the kit, will be able to catch abnormalities early enough to save lives.

For too long, bowel cancer was a disease which was surrounded by silence. Although the risk of developing bowel cancer rises sharply and progressively from the age of 50, all Australians should be aware of its potential impact on their families.

Mr Thomson said, "The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program is a major step forward for Australia in reducing the toll of this disease.

"It is being implemented by the Federal Government in partnership with state and territory governments at a cost of \$87.4 million over the next three years.

"The Government will also provide funding to the states and territories, through the next Australian Health Care Agreements, for follow-up services for people whose screening tests return a positive result".

These screening tests for bowel cancer have been shown to be highly effective both in overseas clinical trials and in the pilot screening program in Australia.

Some people will receive their screening invitations around the time of their birthday, while others will receive theirs to coincide with other people living in their area.

All information is private and will be kept on the Program Register, which is protected by law and will not be unlawfully disclosed.

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For further information please contact Anthony Cianflone from Kelvin Thomson's office 9350 5777 or 0419 386 950