

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Multilingual cancer screening health education program aims to improve cancer screening uptake in migrant and refugee communities.**

The [Screening Saves Lives](#) program, led by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a national campaign to improve migrant and refugee communities' participation in breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening through the delivery of health education sessions and community engagement activities. This campaign will be delivered in 20 languages.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, the campaign represents an important initiative in improving health equity for migrant and refugee communities, and ensuring more people have the information they need to access life-saving cancer screening.

Cancer screening [data shows](#) that people from migrant and refugee communities face significant barriers to accessing reliable health information and education about cancer screening programs in their first language and from evidence-based health sources that they trust. A lack of health information and services in languages other than English can mean that people from migrant and refugee backgrounds often experience poorer cancer journeys and outcomes, due to delays in diagnoses and treatments.

The Screening Saves Lives program has already experienced high demand from migrant and refugee communities, with one session held by True Relationships and Reproductive Health Queensland being attended by over 60 Arabic-speaking participants. Participants have expressed eagerness to book cancer screenings after health education sessions, with some booking screening directly after sessions.

*“Learning about cancer screening in your first language can be life changing. Our Screening Saves Lives Program allows community members to develop trust, participate and engage with health information via a professional and skilled multilingual health educator, receive evidence-based health information, and build the confidence to access life-saving screening services,”* explains MCWH Director of Programs, Dr Regina Torres-Quiazon.

The risk of dying from bowel cancer is 40% lower for those diagnosed through the [National Bowel Screening Program](#), while breast cancer deaths have reduced by approximately 28% since the introduction of BreastScreen Australia, and those diagnosed through cervical screening had an [87% lower risk of dying from cervical cancer](#).

The Screening Saves Lives program is currently underway nationally, led by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, and with partners in every state and territory, including Red Cross South Australia, Red Cross Tasmania, Red Cross Northern Territory, True Relationships and Reproductive Health QLD, Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre WA, STARTTS NSW and Women's Health Matters ACT.

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