



Participant Follow Up Function (PFUF) National Bowel Cancer Screening Program



The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (the Program) is a federal government initiative, which invites Australians aged 50–74 years to screen for bowel cancer using a free, simple test at home. The Cancer Institute NSW promotes the program in NSW and provides the Participant Follow Up Function.

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world. Around one in 13 Australians will develop bowel cancer during their lifetime. The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (the Program) aims to reduce deaths from bowel cancer through early detection of the disease.

The Cancer Institute NSW, a pillar of NSW Health, has responsibility for the promotion of the Program in NSW. The Institute is also responsible for delivering the Participant Follow Up Function (PFUF), which provides follow up care for participants with positive screening results.

PFUF Officers follow up over 20,000 NSW Program participants per year.

What does the PFUF service do?

- PFUF Officers routinely contact local health districts, health care providers (including GPs and practice nurses), and participants to ensure they are progressing along the screening pathway.
- PFUF Officers may need to clarify information related to colonoscopy procedures. For example, confirming a colonoscopy or consult was completed as scheduled.
- PFUF Officers may liaise with healthcare teams regarding referrals, Recommendation for Admission (RFA) forms and waitlist status/categorisation to enable participants to progress to colonoscopy.
- PFUF Officers may follow up participants at multiple time points following a positive FOBT.

What is the Participant Follow Up Function (PFUF)?

The PFUF complements the Program reminder letters and usual care provided for participants. The aim of the service is to encourage Program participants along the screening pathway following a positive faecal occult blood test (FOBT) result. This includes follow-up with their GP and, if required, further diagnostic investigations (usually colonoscopy). PFUF Officers update progress on the screening pathway in the Program Register.

As a result, the PFUF assists to minimise undue delays in bowel cancer diagnoses, minimise participant uncertainty and ultimately contributes to better cancer outcomes.

For further information about the Program, visit cancerscreening.gov.au/bowel or call the Infoline 1800 118 868.

For information regarding the NSW PFUF service, email the PFUF Manager at bowelscreening@cancerinstitute.org.au

Participant consent

Participants give written and signed consent to the sharing of information related to FOBT follow up and colonoscopy when submitting an FOBT sample and participant details form.

Information requested by PFUF Officers

Information may include (but is not limited to):

- date of completed/scheduled colonoscopy, name of facility and proceduralist
- waitlist status/category
- receipt of 'Recommendation for Admission'.

National Bowel Cancer Screening Register

Colonoscopy status is entered into the Program Register, administered by the Department of Human Services. This information is analysed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the program and inform future screening program delivery.