

2023 Breast Cancer Policy Scorecard



Ahead of the 2023 General Election, Breast Cancer Foundation NZ surveyed the key political parties to find out where they stand on the most pressing issues affecting breast cancer.

Here are all of the parties' responses.

KEY

Supports

Partially supports

Doesn't support






Grading criteria:

Supports - a 'Yes' response that meets the requirements of the question exactly, or details a compelling alternative proposition.






Partially supports - a 'Yes' response that lacks detail (e.g. no funding or timeframe), is too vague to clearly see how it supports our policy ask, or commits to some aspects of the question but does not sufficiently achieve the ask; OR a 'No' response that outlines an alternative policy that may go some way towards addressing the issue











Doesn't support - a 'No' response with no alternative policy; OR neither 'Yes' nor 'No' selected; OR a 'Yes' response where the details supplied completely fail in our opinion to commit to our policy ask.











1. Will your party commit to extending the BreastScreen Aotearoa programme to women aged 70-74, as in other countries, starting in Q1 of 2024?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National	New Zealand First
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Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
We support this policy in principle, subject to cost-benefit analysis.	We would commit to extending the BreastScreen Aotearoa programme to women aged 74. We would ensure that the extension to the programme starting in Q1 of 2024 remained a high priority above administrative changes such as an IT system upgrade.	Our election manifesto has not been confirmed, but in principle this is something we would like to do, as funding and workforce allows. Getting more people screened for breast cancer is our current priority as around 271,000 people 45 to 69 in the eligibility group who can access screening are not getting a regular check. Some additional enablers would also need to be in place for changes to the age range, including that breast screening service providers require substantial capacity in terms of workforce, equipment and facilities.	Expanded free breast cancer screening is already a National Party Policy in my [Shane Reti's] name in the ballot box. We walk the talk.	New Zealand First believes that getting scanned for breast cancer should not be a decision motivated by cost. Our seniors should not be left choosing between paying for a breast cancer screening or for household bills.
2. Will your party commit to funding of recruitment and retention initiatives, along with additional workforce, to raise participation in the BreastScreen Aotearoa programme to reach 70% of women aged 45-69 in all regions, prioritising at-risk groups (Māori & Pacific)?				






ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Workforce shortages are rife across the health sector and we will be releasing policy in the coming weeks designed to recruit and retain more staff to the health workforce.	We recognise that there are system changes needed to reach 70%, particularly among marginalised/at-risk groups. As per our Health policy we would: "Reconfigure our health system towards recognising and acting on oppressive and intersecting biases (e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, fatphobia, ageism, queerphobia, transphobia) and the knowledge and skills required to work with affected communities, such as Deaf and disabled people."	In principle, this is something we would like to support, as workforce and funding allow. Getting more people scanned for breast cancer is our current priority as around 271,000 people 45 to 69 in the eligibility group who can access screening are not getting a regular check. The initiative in this question requires workforce development, as well as better supporting infrastructure like the information system. We are committed to improving all facets of this.	National will announce policies to increase and retain the vital health workforce.	New Zealand First acknowledges that our health services are in crisis and staffing shortages are an epidemic. It is wrong that so many of our workers are looking overseas for better pay and conditions in Australia while we are left trying to recruit people from overseas when New Zealanders should be able to train here and earn a living wage.





3. Will your party commit to ensuring that Māori and Pacific women's breast screening begins at age 40, using the risk-based approach of the current bowel screening programme, starting in Q1 2025?





ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
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Party's Yes/No response to the question: No	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
We wish to reduce harm, however we would need to see cost-benefit analysis before committing to this policy.	As per our Health policy we support "free and early healthcare intervention and treatment, and that healthcare is received in a manner that promotes equity for women, Māori and Pasifika". We would commit to ensuring that Māori and Pacific women's breast screening begins at age 40, using the risk-based approach of the current bowel screening programme, starting in Q1 2025.	Our 2023 election manifesto commitments have not yet been finalised. We are unable to offer a commitment on this topic. We recognise the inequity faced by Māori and Pacific women, who die from breast cancer at a higher rate than non-Māori and non-Pacific women, and face barriers to screening. Again, additional enablers would need to be in place for any changes to the age range, including that breast screening service providers require substantial capacity in terms	National will look at all of the information currently available to the government and not to the opposition to make further decisions on targeted cancer screening.	New Zealand First believes in ensuring that investment reflects areas of upmost need as that will give the best return on that investment and will save more lives.






		of workforce, equipment and facilities.		
4. Will your party commit to innovative, technology-enabled strategies for breast screening, to provide more accessible screening and timely diagnoses?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ACT's Health spokesperson Brooke van Velden has a Member's bill which creates a medicines strategy to forecast new technologies.	Our Health policy prioritises "investing in and ensuring timely, equitable access to the most up-to-date research, procedures, medicines, diagnostics, vaccines, and health technologies". In line with our policy, we would commit to innovative, technology-enabled strategies for breast screening, to provide more accessible screening and timely diagnoses.	The Government has significantly increased cancer screening funding, worked to reduce barriers and make screening services more accessible, particularly for Māori and Pacific women, and invested in screening solutions driven by technology.	National supports evidence based technology that supports the science alongside a clinical case and a business case.	New Zealand First firmly believes that the sooner breast cancer is detected the sooner it can be treated. Early screening, early detection and early treatment saves lives.
5. Will your party ensure that Māori and Pacific women reporting a breast lump to a GP receive a diagnostic centre appointment within two weeks, given their higher likelihood of cancer?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: No	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Yes
We wish to see all women who report a breast lump receive timely care and this should not be based on race.	Our party is committed to "free and early access to healthcare intervention and treatment while promoting equity for women, Māori, and Pasifika". Our Health policy recognises the disproportionately higher likelihood of cancer among Māori and Pacific women and emphasises equitable healthcare access for these communities. To uphold this policy, we would commit to ensuring that Māori and Pacific women reporting a breast lump to a GP receive a diagnostic centre appointment within two weeks.	In principle, this is something we would like to support. We recognise that Māori and Pacific women are more likely to develop breast cancer than other ethnicities, and we are determined to address these inequities through our significant investment in breast screening services, the digital infrastructure around it, as well as additional resource to enable catch up on breast screenings missed due to Covid-19. However, the timelines for screening appointments depend on a variety of factors, including workforce, capacity and facilities, but we have invested significantly in all of these areas during our time in government.	In contrast to Labour who have stated that they will "not have targets at the forefront of their health policy", National believes in health targets and will hold itself accountable to cancer targets.	New Zealand First believes that any women who reports a breast lump to their GP should receive a diagnostic centre appointment. Where there is a disproportionate need we will respond accordingly.

6. Will your party commit to ensuring all patients receive a diagnosis within 28 days of specialist referral, as recommended in the proposed national Breast Cancer Quality Performance Indicators (Te Aho o Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency)?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: No	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
We agree with the sentiment that all patients should receive their diagnosis as soon as possible, however we believe the biggest barrier to getting timely care is the lack of workforce and we are focused on policy that will see more people recruited and retained.	Our Health policy is centred around providing timely and accessible healthcare to everyone. We strongly believe that early intervention and treatment can make a significant difference in the health outcomes of all patients, as demonstrated clearly in the evidence you have provided. Our party supports free healthcare intervention and treatment to ensure that patients receive necessary medical attention at the earliest possible stage. We will commit to ensuring all patients receive a diagnosis within 28 days of specialist referral, as we understand that timely diagnosis is critical in managing breast cancer and various health conditions effectively.	The Breast Cancer Quality Performance Indicators, as well as our election manifesto, have not yet been finalised, and as such we are unable to make a commitment around this indicator. The government launched the independent Te Aho O Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency in 2019 to drive better cancer care and control nationwide, which enabled them to create indicators such as these. We believe that these indicators will help drive the health system towards better cancer care and control, including in breast cancer care.	National will announce in due course what cancer target(s) it will be accountable for and what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that the sooner cancer is detected and treated the more lives will be saved.
7. Will your party take action to ensure high-risk patients receive radiation therapy (RT) within eight weeks of surgery or chemo and within 12 weeks for lower-risk patients, in line with safe practice?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Yes
ACT will take action to address the workforce constraints that are holding back our healthcare system and forcing women to wait longer than should be necessary. We will be releasing policy in the coming weeks designed to recruit and retain more staff to the health workforce.	We will commit to ensuring that high-risk patients will receive radiation therapy (RT) within 8 weeks of surgery or 6 weeks of chemotherapy, and within 12 weeks for lower-risk patients, in line with safe practice. We would ensure this happens as soon as possible while maintaining positive health outcomes for patients. Our health policy also emphasises the need to guarantee that "all health	Since we have come into government, we have acted to improve access and timeliness to radiation therapy for cancer patients and we will continue to strive for improvements. In 2019, we announced investment into 12 new linear accelerators for radiation treatment, including plans to put machines in many regions for the first time. The implementation on	National will announce in due course what cancer target(s) it will be accountable for and what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that the sooner cancer is detected and treated the more lives will be saved.

	workers, and other carers that engage with specific population groups and communities, receive generous pay, support, respite, supervision and supported access to training". We believe that prioritising the working conditions and wellbeing of health workers will effectively alleviate the pressures that contribute to staff shortages in radiation therapy (RT) and throughout the health system.	these projects is currently ongoing, but two new linear accelerators are now in operation in Palmerston North. Increasing the timeliness and capacity of radiation therapy services will also require sustained investment into our health workforce and health facilities.		
8. Will your party commit to workforce and hospital resources to enable a 45-day window from diagnosis to breast cancer treatment (surgery or chemo), as recommended in the proposed national Breast Cancer Quality Performance Indicators (Te Aho o Te Kahu Cancer Control Agency)?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
We commit to creating policy to address the workforce constraints that are holding back our healthcare system and to making the most efficient use of healthcare resources.	We are committed to ensuring that the necessary workforce and hospital resources are allocated to enable a timely 45-day window from breast cancer diagnosis to treatment, whether it be surgery or chemotherapy. We understand the critical importance of prompt intervention in breast cancer cases and the impact it can have on patient outcomes.	The Breast Cancer Quality Performance Indicators, as well as our election manifesto, have not yet been finalised, and as such we are unable to make a commitment around this indicator. Improvements to planned care that reduce waitlists for treatment, like surgery or chemo, is a top priority for this government. Obviously waiting for an operation or treatment can be an anxious time. We're starting to address this by implementing effective waitlist management, initiating a suite of workforce initiatives, investing in health infrastructure, and reducing inequitable waiting times for Māori. We established a high level waiting-list taskforce and our responsibility now is to hold the system to account to deliver the taskforce recommendations, to see the expected outcomes and will bring together the sector to help solve these long-term challenges.	National will announce in due course what cancer target(s) it will be accountable for and what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that the sooner cancer is detected and treated the more lives will be saved.

9. Will your party commit to public funding of genomic tests that predict cancer treatment response and outcome, given the potential to optimise treatment for patients while avoiding over-treatment, with concomitant cost savings and resource optimisation?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
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Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
ACT proposes a medicines strategy to look into the future of medicines and their use. However, the funding of individual medicines is a decision that must be made by Pharmac,	<p>We will commit to the public funding of genomic tests that can predict cancer treatment response and outcomes. We recognise these tests have the potential to greatly optimise treatment plans for patients, minimising over-treatment while maximising efficacy. We support cutting-edge technologies with the aim of avoiding unnecessary treatments, and optimising resource use in the health system.</p> <p>We recognise the value of genomic testing in tailoring cancer treatment plans to individual patients, ensuring that they receive the most effective and personalised care. Our commitment to public funding for genomic tests underscores our dedication to evidence-based policies that prioritise patient wellbeing outcomes.</p>	<p>Our manifesto has not yet been completed, so we are unable to offer a commitment on this topic.</p> <p>However, in principle the Government is committed to improving the health outcomes of New Zealanders through greater access to safe and effective medicines and medical devices.</p> <p>Decisions around what medicines and medical devices are funded are made by Pharmac. Labour respects the independence and impartiality of Pharmac. We do not think it is for politicians to second-guess the experts there. That is why, rather than undermining the PHARMAC model and funding specific drugs, Labour has committed to increasing the Combined Pharmaceutical Budget.</p>	National supports evidence based technology that supports the science alongside a clinical case and a business case.	New Zealand First believes that through genomic testing we can ensure that people who are at risk of breast cancer can be made more aware of the symptoms of cancer so when they are detected they can receive early tests and treatment.
10. Will your party ensure access to publicly funded Keytruda for all triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) patients by Q1 2024, and Trudelvy for those with advanced TNBC?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: No	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
ACT proposes a medicines strategy to look into the future of medicines and their use. However, the funding of individual medicines is a decision that must be made by Pharmac. ACT believes Pharmac's decision-making process should be more transparent.	Our commitment is to provide universal, free, and accessible diagnosis, treatment, and management for all illnesses and injuries. We would invest in and ensure timely and equitable access to the latest research, procedures, medicines, diagnostics, vaccines, and health technologies. We would therefore commit to ensuring access to publicly funded	<p>Our manifesto has not yet been completed, so we are unable to offer a commitment on this topic.</p> <p>However, in principle the Government is committed to improving the health outcomes of New Zealanders through greater access to safe and effective medicines and medical devices by lifting Pharmac's budget. In the past</p>	National will announce in due course what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that all should have publicly funded access to cancer treatment medicines. It should not be a cost motivated decision.

	Keytruda for all TNBC patients and Trodelvy for those with advanced TNBC by Q1 2024 - taking into account the formation of the government.	year, this has allowed Keytruda and Tecentriq to be funded for certain types of lung cancer.		
11. Will your party commit to public funding of the game-changing drug T-Dxd (Enhertu) for advanced breast cancer by Q1 2024?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: No	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes
ACT proposes a medicines strategy to look into the future of medicines and their use. However, the funding of individual medicines is a decision that must be made by Pharmac. ACT believes Pharmac's decision-making process should be more transparent.	Our commitment is to provide "universal, free, and accessible diagnosis, treatment, and management for all illnesses and injuries. We would invest in and ensure timely and equitable access to the latest research, procedures, medicines, diagnostics, vaccines, and health technologies." We would therefore commit to public funding of T-Dxd by Q1 2024 and to actively roll-out the funding and distribution as soon as possible.	Our manifesto has not yet been completed, so we are unable to offer a commitment on this topic. (Answer as above)	National will announce in due course what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that all should have publicly funded access to cancer treatment medicines for their cancer. It should not be a cost motivated decision. We believe that this drug should be funded based on robust medical research and recommendations.
12. Will your party commit to bringing together stakeholders including existing government entities, pharmaceutical companies, international experts and NGOs to develop a new approach to achieving improved affordability of cancer medicines, along with wider and faster access?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
ACT believes there is benefit to bringing together stakeholders to hear their perspectives on how wider and faster access to medicines could be possible.	As our Health Spokesperson, Dr Elizabeth Kerekere has already begun this process including meeting with pharmaceutical companies that specialise in cancer treatments. We recognise the importance of engaging all relevant parties and harnessing their collective expertise to drive meaningful and enduring change. By fostering a collaborative environment, we would aim to identify and implement strategies that address the challenges in the current system and improve affordability and accessibility of	Our manifesto has not yet been completed, so we are unable to offer a commitment on this topic. However, we made an election promise to conduct an independent review to look at how well Pharmac performs against its objectives, and whether those objectives need changing. We released the full report and its recommendations last year. The Government agrees with the Pharmac Review Panel's recommendations that cancer pharmaceuticals should, by and large, be considered in the same	National will announce in due course what treatment modalities it will prioritise above the current baseline.	New Zealand First believes that the role of Pharmac in the provision of such drugs will be a part of the analysis.

	cancer medicines for everyone. The Green Party has a proven track record of bringing together community and sector stakeholders, and government agencies to develop a new approach to issues that successive governments have struggled to address. The development of Te Aorerekura: National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence under the direction of our Co-leader Marama Davidson is an example of our commitment to a collaborative approach with community and sector stakeholders.	ways as are other pharmaceuticals and that equitable access should be promoted. The Government notes that there will be important unique characteristics to be considered both for some cancer and some other pharmaceuticals, and that suitability and equitable outcomes are important. Pharmac is currently reviewing suitability of the child cancer treatments pathway, for example.		
13. Will your party ensure that initiatives related to breast cancer are included in the development of Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) and the new Women's Health Strategy, given that breast cancer is the leading cause of death for women under 65, and 3500 per year are diagnosed?				
ACT Party	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First
				
Party's Yes/No response to the question: Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
It would be surprising for a Women's Health Strategy to not reference the leading cause of death for women under 65.	We are committed to prioritising breast cancer initiatives in the development of Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) and the new Women's Health Strategy. Our goal is to improve breast cancer outcomes through comprehensive strategies that promote early detection, timely treatment, and holistic support for affected individuals and their families. By prioritising breast cancer within these overarching health strategies, we aim to make meaningful progress in addressing this critical health issue and improving outcomes for everyone affected by breast cancer.	A significant priority for Labour is to create a health system in which women receive the best possible care, and this includes quality breast cancer care. As part of the Government's health reforms, we required a women's health strategy to be developed to help guide our system to pae ora, healthy futures. This strategy will set the direction and priorities for women's health and wellbeing, will be wide ranging and is required to take on board the feedback of the community.	National had already committed to legislative change to breast cancer screening with a private members bill in the ballot box in my [Shane Reti's] name. Breast cancer will continue to be a high priority for us.	New Zealand First believes that all should be able to access breast cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment without having to worry about the cost and where additional need is required it will be delivered.

* BCFNZ acknowledges that some parties are still finalising their election manifesto commitments and are currently unable to answer the questions meaningfully. We will be seeking updated responses closer to the election and will update this scorecard accordingly.

We also sent our survey to Te Paāti Māori and The Opportunities Party. Te Pāti Māori told us they weren't able to respond to our survey by the deadline, and The Opportunities Party said their health policy was still in development so wasn't able to answer our questions.

This scorecard was produced to provide accessible and up-to-date information about how political parties intend to tackle breast cancer. Breast Cancer Foundation NZ does not support or oppose any particular political party or advise people on how to vote.