



# Case study of advocate involvement: Sally Crossing



When members of the Breast Cancer Action Group NSW (BCAGNSW) recognised the difficulty women were having in assessing their referral options for breast cancer treatment, they set about to take action. Members of the Group's management committee had discovered similar frustrations in their own personal experiences and wanted to find out if other women were being affected as well. A survey of members confirmed that the concern was important. 'We had a large number of other women who told us the same story and there was very significant support for us to do something about it,' said Sally Crossing AM, Chair of the BCAG NSW.

The BCAGNSW assessed that there was a lack of information in the community in general and it was not uncommon for GPs to refer to those they knew best or who were the most local, even if that person did not necessarily specialise in breast cancer treatment. Ms Crossing explained: 'My own GP, when I was first diagnosed with breast cancer, referred me to a general surgeon who in fact made some mistakes. And my GP was a perfectly good GP. She just didn't know who worked in multi-disciplinary teams and who specialised in breast cancer surgery. In those days, it wasn't as well known and there was very little communication. But now, due to consumer influence, it's been opened up so this information is accessible to anyone who wants to find it.'

Working in close partnership with the Breast Cancer Institute NSW, the Breast Cancer Action Group NSW developed a very detailed directory of breast cancer specialists. First published as a hard copy resource in 2002, *The Directory of Breast Cancer Treatment and Services* was the first known of its kind to provide women with comprehensive information on breast cancer specialists and other services specific to the disease. The Directory was eventually transitioned to a website and was regarded as a go-to resource for patients and practitioners alike.

'The Directory created a lot of attention and was extremely well-used,' said Ms Crossing. 'It answered a real need of consumers and brought attention to the whole cancer world that this information needed to be provided.'

—Sally Crossing, consumer, Deputy Chair, Cancer Voices NSW

