

about this group

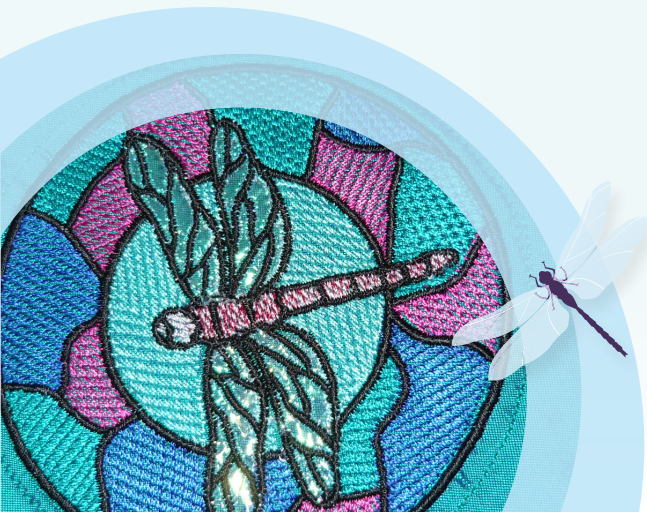
The **Advanced Breast Cancer Group** provides an opportunity for women to:

- develop new support networks and overcome the isolation women often feel
- talk with other women with secondary breast cancer about issues that are not easy to discuss with family and friends
- talk about what "living with" secondary breast cancer means for them
- share experiences of diagnosis and treatment
- increase knowledge about treatment and side effects

The group meets for an hour and a quarter each week. The group is run by two experienced health professionals.

This is a Queensland wide group, based in Brisbane, which women can attend in person or by telephone.

"This group is about living with advanced breast cancer, not dying from it."



sponsorship

This service is funded by Queensland Health.

The Advanced Breast Cancer Group Limited is a registered charity with the ACNC. ABN 19602 397 240.

All donations to the service are tax deductible.

To make a donation please go to our website

www.abcg.org.au

group facilitators



Mary O'Brien is a Social Worker and Psychotherapist. She is a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers, the Queensland Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association and the Australian Association of Group Psychotherapists.



Pia Hirsch is an Occupational Therapist and Psychotherapist. She is a member of the Australian Association of Occupational Therapists and the Australian Association of Group Psychotherapists.

For further information or to find out how to join, contact:

Mary O'Brien or Pia Hirsch

First Floor, 205 Boundary Street, West End QLD 4101

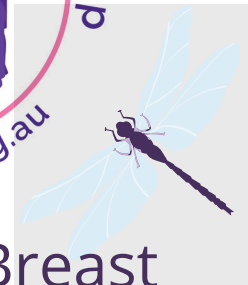
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Queensland
Government

Queensland Health



Advanced Breast Cancer Group

A Queensland support group for women with secondary breast cancer



"I don't know what I would have done without the support of this group."



what we offer?

- a weekly group for women with secondary breast cancer which they can join in person or by telephone from anywhere in Queensland
- periodic workshops and group get togethers to enable women, partners, family and friends to meet face to face
- a website www.advancedbreastcancergroup.org with information and resources for women, partners and families
- free DVD resources developed by the service
 - "You're not alone: a film about living with secondary breast cancer"
 - "Walking beside her: a partner's journey with secondary breast cancer"
 - "Ask a Radiation Oncologist: common questions about radiotherapy in the treatment of cancer"
- support for partners and families.

We are also partners in running a national online forum for people affected by breast cancer – the Aussie Breast Cancer Forum www.bcaus.org.au.

cost

There is no fee for participation in the Group, either in person or via telephone. Telephone participation is a free call from any landline telephone in Australia.

living with secondary breast cancer

Women with secondary breast cancer (also called metastatic or advanced breast cancer) have particular needs and challenges to face. Diagnosis of secondary breast cancer is often more devastating than a diagnosis of primary breast cancer, as it emphasises the life threatening nature of the illness. Most women with secondary breast cancer want support to face the future realistically and with hope.

Living with secondary breast cancer can be like a roller-coaster ride. Ongoing treatment and regular scans means that the cancer is never far from women's minds. Being in a support group can be a way of helping women cope with the ups and downs of living with the disease. However not all support groups are set up to meet the special needs of this group of women. They sometimes feel a 'failure' in support groups where other women have survived primary cancer. They worry that talking about their feelings, especially fears of death and dying, may be seen as 'not being positive' or may frighten other people.

It is for this reason, among others, that the Advanced Breast Cancer Group was established in 1999. It is a specialist group that has been specifically set up to support Queensland women living with secondary breast cancer. We also offer support to partners and families through other aspects of our service.

who would benefit?

Over the years we have found that the women who benefit most from this group are women who would like help to deal with this confronting diagnosis. Most women who join the group want to know how other women are living with secondary breast cancer and want to feel less alone.

what happens in the group

The focus of the group is on sharing of experience, so there are no topics or guest speakers. Women decide what they want to talk about. Through getting to know the other women and hearing how they cope, women develop confidence to talk about their own experience. Humour is often used to relieve otherwise painful feelings and make things feel more manageable. Women draw inspiration from each other and realise that they are not alone. Being able to exchange information about treatments, side effects and available support services helps them feel more in control of their lives and more actively involved in their treatment. Support from the other women is a major aspect of the group. Women are encouraged to have contact with each other outside the group. This has the benefit of extending the support the group can offer and often leads to the development of close friendships.

