



# BreastScreen Victoria and COVID: Six lockdowns, a ring of steel and a global pandemic

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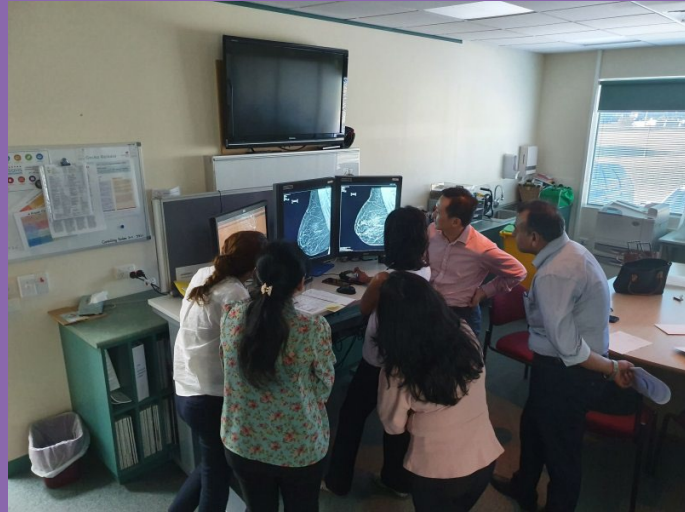




I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today and all the lands across this continent on which we provide BreastScreen services.

I pay respects to Elders past and present, and all First Nations people that are here today.

# What were you doing in March 2020?



# We didn't have 'global pandemic' on our risk register

## Australia's roaring population growth

Appointment Cancellations – Clinic 415 – Thursday 08/02 [Unplanned RAD Leave] – 26 appts



## Minding the Gap: Strategies to Address the Growing Radiology Shortage



Appointment Cancellations – Clinic 707- EQUIPMENT ISSUE due to Power – 28 appts.

## Clinical Comparison of Full-Field Digital Mammography and Screen-Film Mammography for Detection of Breast Cancer

# COVID-19 in Victoria



Source: <https://lockdownstats.melbourne/>





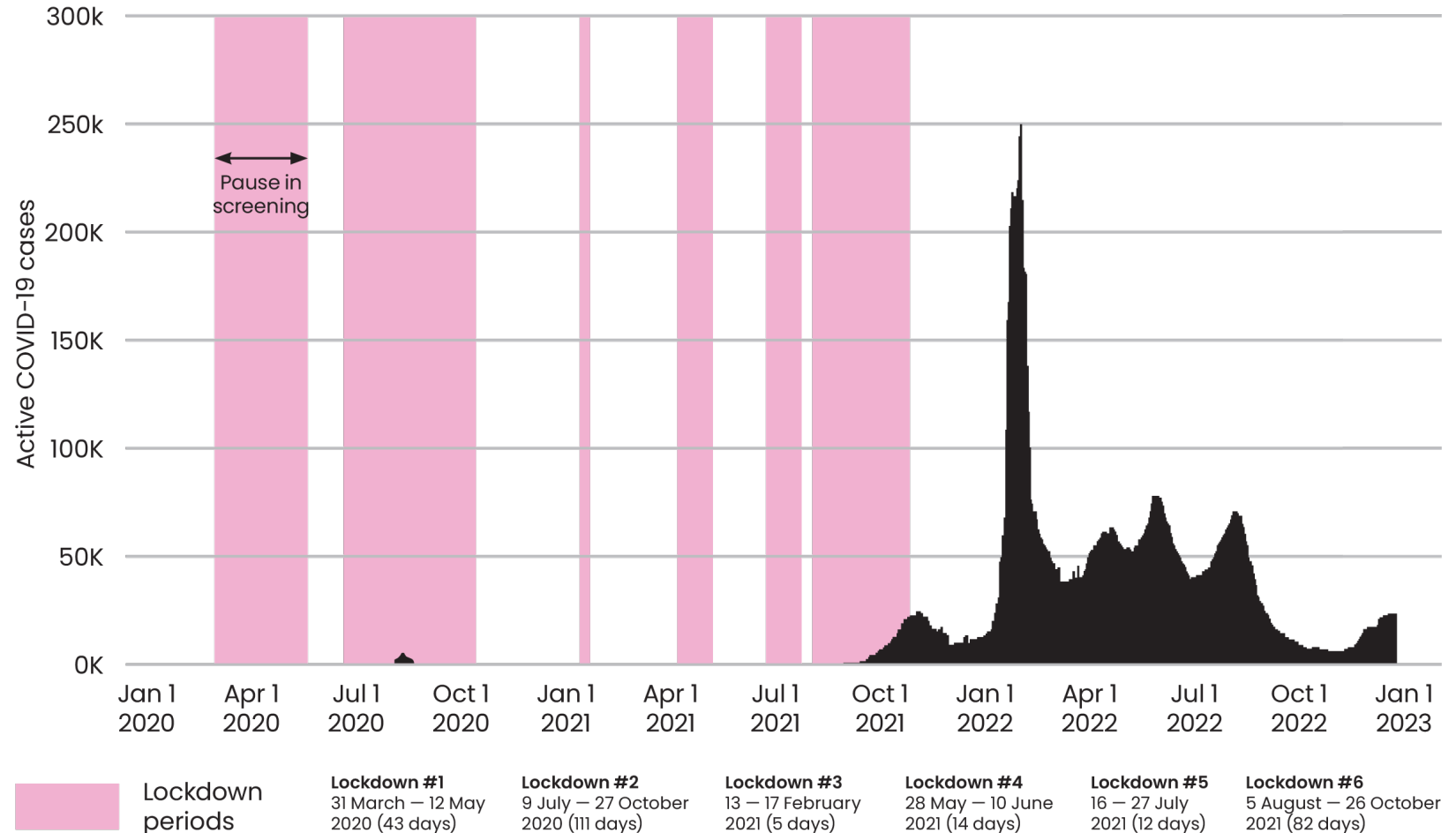
# Lockdowns and screening in Victoria 2020 and 2021

After the first lockdown, Victoria went through five more lockdowns over the next 18 months.

267 days in total.

But we never paused screening or assessment statewide again.

Active cases of COVID-19 in Victoria during lockdowns



Source: <https://www.covid19data.com.au/states-and-territories>





## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) IN VICTORIA

# LATEST NUMBERS

Latest data at 27 October 2020



new cases  
(last 24 hrs)



lives lost

**14 day  
rolling average**  
(13 Oct - 26 Oct)

**Cases with  
unknown source**  
(11 Oct - 24 Oct)

Metro  
Melbourne

2.8

6

Regional  
Victoria

0.2

0

Note: Data ranges differ to allow time for case interview data to be analysed.

[www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)



# Our challenges

**Screening  
pause**

**Throughput  
constraints**

**Lockdowns  
and border  
closures**

**Infection  
control  
Vaccinations**

**First virtual  
accreditation**

**Funding**

**Remote  
working**

**Workforce  
constraints**

**Unplanned  
leave**

**Late  
cancellations  
by clients**

**Clients with  
chronic health  
issues**

**Psycho-social  
impacts**

# Strategies

**Prioritise relationships with workforce and service providers**

**Agile client communications**

**Funding changes / support**

**Tele-health for some assessment results and work from home for office staff**

**Changing IT demands  
laptops / remote support**

**Prioritise target age cohort**

**Targeted in-language communications**

**Innovative delivery  
Click and Collect**

# Focus on under-screened groups

We saw an increase in throughput from under-screened groups between 2018 and 2023:

- Overall, we had a 3% increase in total attendance over 5 years.



BUT

- 50% increase in attendance from Aboriginal clients.
- 40% increase in attendance from targeted CALD groups: Arabic, Mandarin and Punjabi.



# 'Click and Collect' breast screening at The Rose Clinic

- The Rose Clinic BreastScreen sits within David Jones' flagship CBD store.
- We had to pause breast screening due to retail closures.
- To recommence screening, we set up a 'click and collect' model where we escorted clients through David Jones and up to the clinic through the 'click and collect' service door.
- We screened up to 30 women per day.



# Client responses

"I knew the coronavirus would have a bearing on how soon I could have the mammogram. I was put on the waiting list and didn't have long to wait. It was all very efficient."

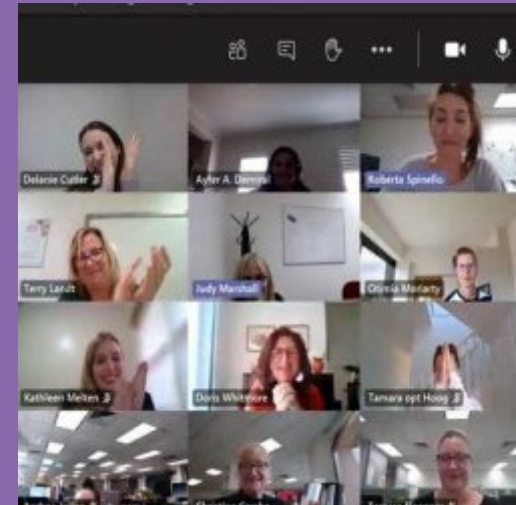
"Having been told last year to re-apply later in the year, I then was put on a waiting list. A fortnight ago, I received a text to say I could have an appointment. My phone call was answered promptly, and I was given an appointment in 4 days."

"It was very organised and safe during the current lockdown . I was in and out very quickly."

"There was about a 3-month wait for an appointment. I have never had to wait so long before. Otherwise, it was an easy process."

"With COVID all precautions were taken and I felt very safe entering the building with QR coding, hand sanitizer, etc. Staff very friendly and made me feel at ease. Well done."

"Extremely happy with the lady that did the screening. She was caring, gently very friendly and explained everything that she was doing."











# Recovery - Growth strategies

Open new clinics

Renovate and/or  
relocate existing  
clinics

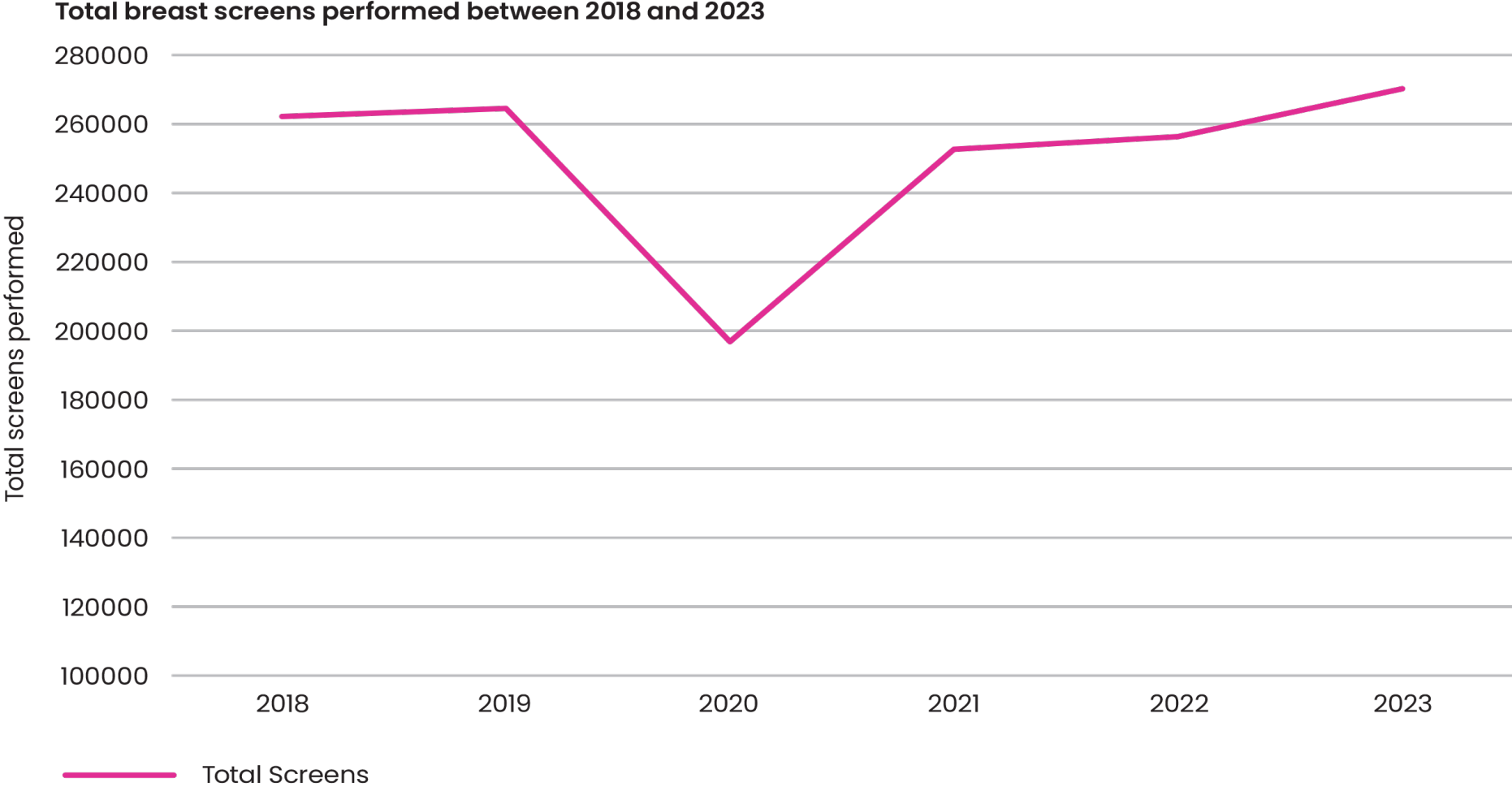
Extend clinic hours

Replace mobile van  
visits with  
permanent fixed  
clinics

Outbound calls to fill  
cancelled  
appointments

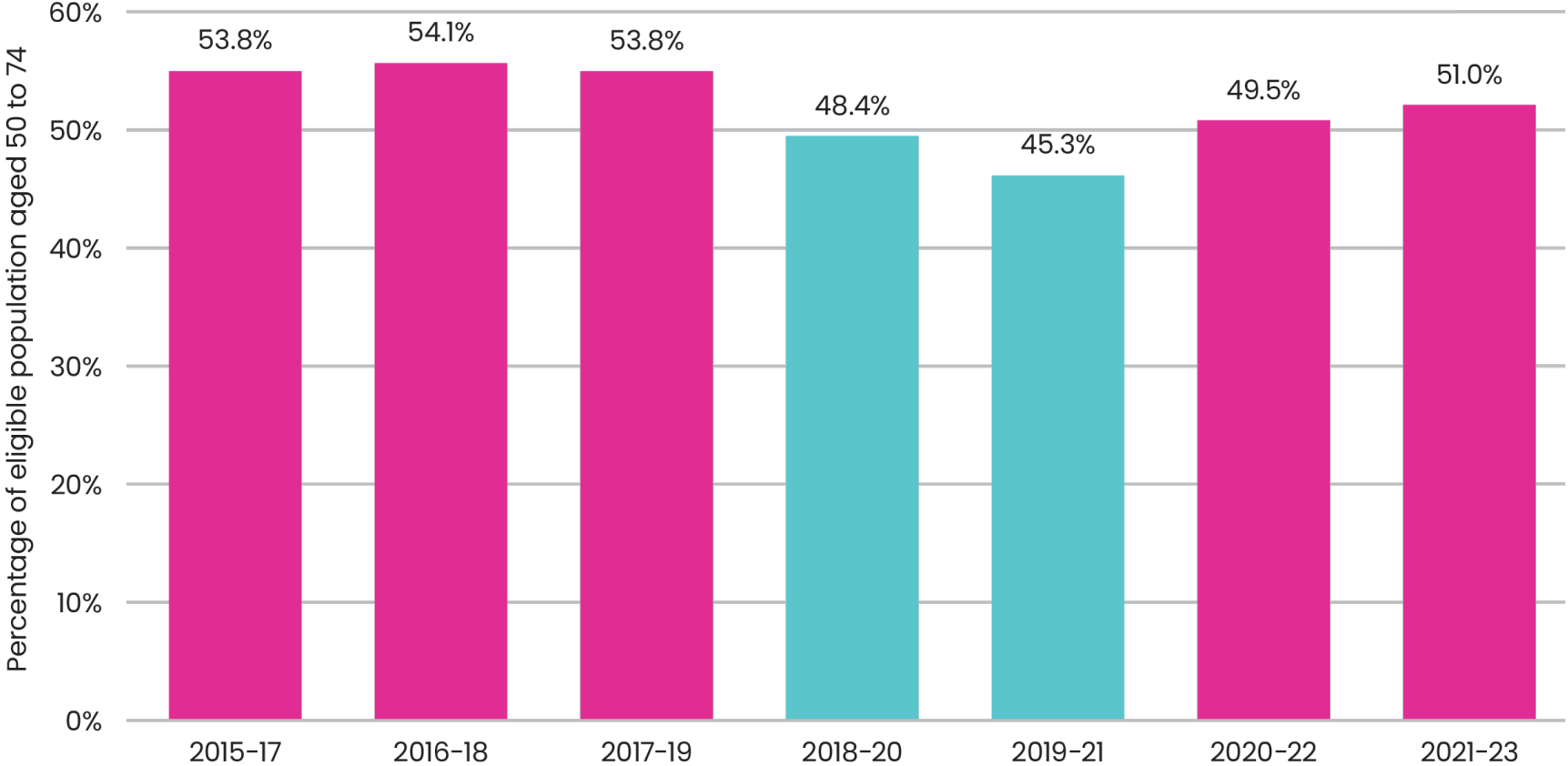
Additional Funding  
from Dept Health

# Screening throughput recovery



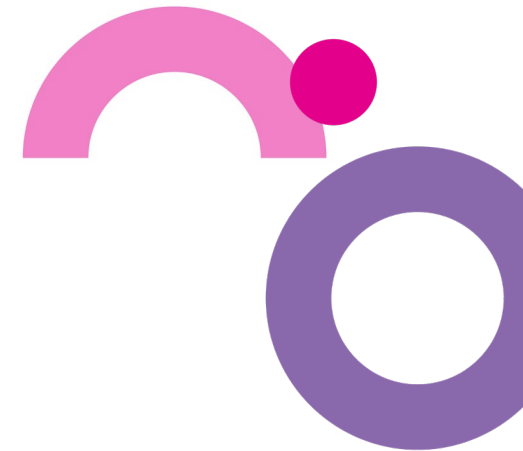
# Screening participation recovery

Percentage of the total eligible population screened



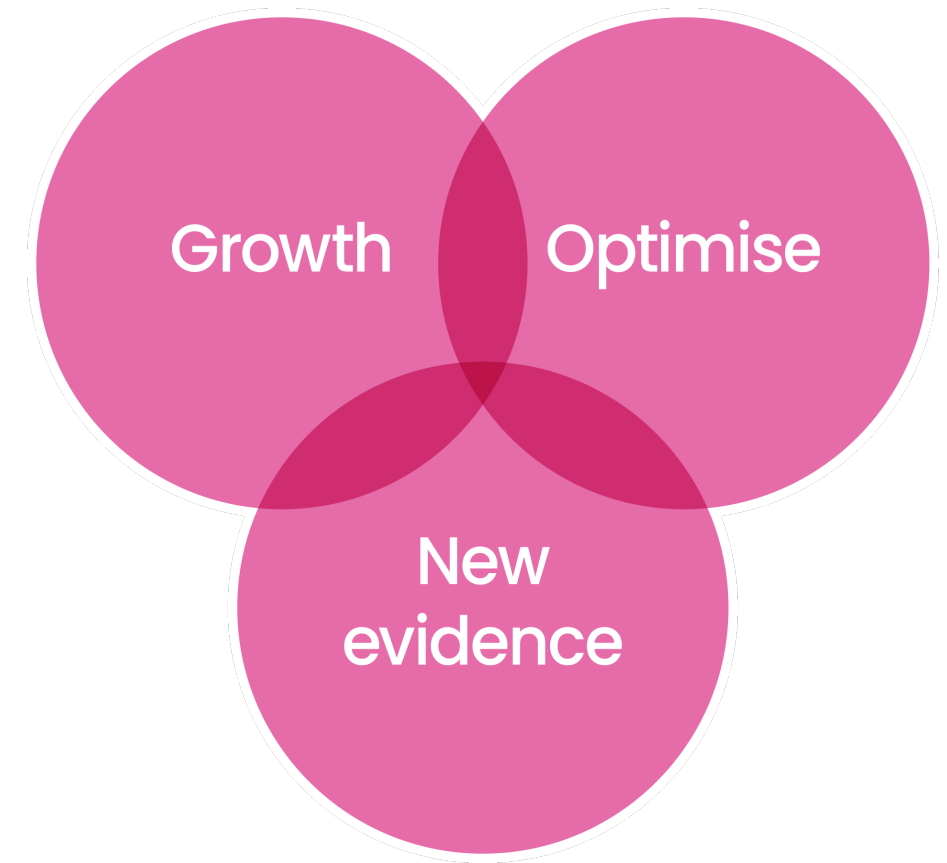
# What we learned from COVID-19

- People in BSV are resilient and dedicated
- Systems and relationships are robust
- Strong clinical governance maintained high-quality services
- Existing IT infrastructure supported a pivot to a virtual work environment
- Our team can adapt their work processes to new environments
- Strong demand for our program from clients



## Innovation Strategy

By 2026–27, we will deliver 310,000 screens and achieve a participation rate of 55% including equitable participation in Aboriginal and CALD communities.



**And we now have 'global pandemic' on our risk register!**

