



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **New breast cancer prevention study reaches milestone – could prevent 300,000 future breast cancers per year, worldwide.**

IBIS-II, a major international breast cancer prevention study, has reached an important milestone with 500 women from Australia and New Zealand volunteering to take part in the Prevention arm of the study. However, many more volunteers are needed to help reach the international goal of 6,000 women.

IBIS-II is being conducted in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZ BCTG) and is coordinated internationally by Cancer Research UK. It is the second prevention study undertaken by the ANZ BCTG and follows the landmark IBIS-I which showed that the drug tamoxifen could prevent breast cancer in some women at increased risk.

The new, unique and vitally important IBIS-II study, which is supported in Australia and New Zealand by the National Health and Medical Research Council, is the only clinical trial worldwide to investigate whether the drug anastrozole can prevent breast cancer in postmenopausal women who are at increased risk of the disease.

Previous research using anastrozole as a treatment for early breast cancer suggests that it could prevent up to 70 percent of new tumours occurring, or 300,000 breast cancers per year worldwide. To confirm its role in preventing the disease in women at increased risk, a large comparative outcomes study must be conducted. More women are encouraged to participate so that the results are obtained as soon as possible.

Lynne Becton from Gunbower, Victoria was the 500<sup>th</sup> woman from Australia and New Zealand to join the prevention arm of the IBIS-II study. She said that joining the study gave her a chance to help the fight against breast cancer.

“I joined the IBIS-II study because I am at higher risk of breast cancer due to a number of my family members having suffered from the disease” said Lynne.

“Everyone involved in this study has treated me with great respect and I have been kept well informed. I would encourage other women at high risk to participate; it’s not hard to be involved and it gives you a feeling of satisfaction.”

Professor John Forbes, ANZ BCTG Director of Research and International IBIS-II Study Co-Chairman said “It is very gratifying that so many women have come forward to take part in the IBIS-II study, as the findings from this research could provide a valuable approach to prevent breast cancer, not only for women today but also for their daughters and granddaughters in the future.”

“This represents a remarkable collaboration by the researchers of the ANZ BCTG with their international colleagues and it highlights the important contribution being made by women in Australia and New Zealand that may ultimately provide benefit globally for millions of women.”

IBIS-II was launched in Australia and New Zealand in 2005 and now involves 34 institutions and more than 630 women contributing an important 12% of the global recruitment total so far.

More than 2,500 women in New Zealand and 12,000 women in Australia are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. Mortality has fallen due to improvements in the treatment of breast cancer, and more cancers are being diagnosed early through national screening programmes when the chance of cure is highest. However, there are many important research questions yet to be answered, and learning more about how breast cancer can be prevented is one of these.

Australian women can find out more about whether they are eligible to take part in the study by calling **1800 640 709**. New Zealand women can call **0800 888 656**. More information is also available on the ANZ BCTG website: [www.anzbctg.org](http://www.anzbctg.org).

- Ends -

**To interview an IBIS-II spokesperson in your area or a woman taking part in the study, please contact:**

**Katie Smith - Recruitment and Promotions Officer, ANZ BCTG.**

**Ph: +61 2 4985 0134 / 0412 675 382**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**About IBIS-II (International Breast cancer Intervention Study II)**

IBIS-II is being coordinated in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and globally by Cancer Research UK. The trial is taking place in 21 countries including Australia, New Zealand, India, Chile, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

- The IBIS-II Prevention part of the study aims to recruit 6,000 postmenopausal women who are at increased risk of developing breast cancer. A number of factors for increased risk can make a woman eligible to enter the study and these are set according to the different age groups. Women can take part in the trial if they are aged between 40 and 70 years and are not on HRT.
- IBIS-II DCIS aims to recruit 4,000 postmenopausal women who have been diagnosed with, and had surgery to remove, Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS). This part of the trial is designed to determine which of the two drugs, anastrozole or tamoxifen, can best prevent new cancers, both in the breast affected by DCIS and in the opposite breast. Women who have had a mastectomy to remove their DCIS cannot join this arm of the trial but they can be part of IBIS-II Prevention.
- Further information on IBIS-II is available at [www.anzbctg.org](http://www.anzbctg.org).
- In Australia women can obtain more information on IBIS-II by telephoning 1800 640 709. New Zealand women can call 0800 888 656.

**About the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group**

The Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZ BCTG) is Australia's only collaborative, independent breast cancer clinical trials research group. It is dedicated to the cure and prevention of breast cancer through the conduct of multi-institution and international clinical trials. Working in collaboration with 500 researchers in more than 80 of the leading medical institutions in Australia and New Zealand, and with similar research groups internationally, ensures Australia and New Zealand are at the forefront of breast cancer research progress and this delivers benefits to women immediately. Additional information can be found at [www.anzbctg.org](http://www.anzbctg.org).