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Kellys champion cancer campaign

►WAGGA

BOWEL cancer wasn't a topic widely discussed among friends by former Sydney Swans footballer Paul Kelly and his wife Lyndelle.

But since the pair have completed take home screening tests as part of the Stop Bowel Cancer Program, Ms Kelly said more of their friends had followed their lead and familiarised themselves with the symptoms of and treatment for the illness.

The Stop Bowel Cancer Program, launched by the Gut Foundation and Murrumbidgee Medicare Local, is the first initiative of its kind to encourage people as young as 40 to be tested for the disease, which can be successfully treated if detected early.

With Gut Foundation statistics showing bowel cancer kills as many women each year as breast cancer, Ms Kelly has urged women especially to ensure they are tested for bowel cancer.

Results already collected from bowel screening tests across the Riverina have shown more than 31 per cent of the positive

results have been from patients aged between 40 and 49 years.

With a further 2000 bowel cancer screening kits delivered to Douglas Hanly Moir pathology centre this week for testing, Mr Kelly has joined with founder of the Gut Foundation Professor Terry Bolin to urge those residents who collected a kit, to make sure they complete the test.

"It is important they follow it through," Mr Kelly said.

"As the program is finding many positive tests which require colonoscopy, it is crucial that everybody returns their kits as this will provide the best opportunity to find and prevent cancer by removing polyps," Professor Bolin added.

While Mr Kelly said he did not know much about the symptoms or treatment of bowel cancer before becoming involved with the campaign, he was surprised to learn how successful its treatment could be if it was detected early.

For more information about bowel cancer screening or to order a test visit www.gutfoundation.com/bowel-cancer-screening-kit or www.stopbowelcancer.com.au.



RAISING AWARENESS: Lyndelle and Paul Kelly are encouraging Wagga residents over 40 to complete a bowel cancer screening test as part of the Stop Bowel Cancer program. Picture: Oscar Colman