USER RESEARCH FINDINGS

Notify me user testing

What eight donors told us about being notified when a better appointment opens up

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood®

PART ONE

Context

- Feature background
- Why not a waitlist?
- How Notify me works

THE PROBLEM

Initial problem statement and future state

Current

High-value appointment times are consumed by the donors least likely to attend. Preferred times can't always be met, and popular times book out far in advance.

Gap

We have little visibility of demand once an appointment is filled, and limited influence over rescheduled appointments.

Future

A way to refill cancelled high-value appointments that respects donors' preferences and lowers ATCCF.

From a PAG workshop held in 2021

BACKGROUND

It started as a waitlist

PAG ran research and a live trial with the NCC to test whether donors want to hear when a preferred time opens, and whether the system could fill slots in practice.

Donor problem

"I want to donate, but whenever I look at the calendar I can't see availability for the times I *can* donate for weeks."

Lifeblood problem

When donors cancel, it's hard to fill spots, especially within 24–48 hours.

1 Donors who can't find their exact date or time usually pick another convenient one, commit and move on.

2 Donors who need a routine slot (same time each day or week) would benefit from a notification when it opens.

WHY NOT A WAITLIST?

Notifying a donor beats putting them on a list

Waitlist

Wrong fit

Suits events with high desirability and scarce availability, like a concert people would prioritise over almost anything.

It implies actively waiting, holding a number on a list, and expecting to be told your place and your odds.

Notify me

Better fit

Setting a date range and times, then hearing about an opening, implies far less commitment.

Donors can set it, forget it, and decide when the notification arrives. Targeting donors who usually give at similar times raises the chance they accept.

HOW IT WORKS

The Notify me journey we tested



STEP 1

After booking a set number of weeks out (TBC), donors are offered an alert for an earlier slot.



STEP 2

They choose a date range, donation type, days of the week and times they're free.



STEP 3

If a slot opens in their chosen range, Lifeblood notifies them.



STEP 4

The donor accepts or declines the suggested appointment.

A simplified view of the journey. All tested screens are in Appendix one.

PART TWO

The how, what and who

- Testing method, objectives and hypothesis
- Donor profile for testing

APPROACH

Method, objectives and hypothesis

Method

Moderated video calls with a clickable prototype. Each donor set up a Notify me alert.

Objectives

- Is the feature desirable for donors who can't find a convenient slot?
- What could we improve, heard from the right segment?
- Where in the app should Notify me live?

Hypothesis

- Donors who book at similar times will find Notify me useful.
- Donors won't mind booking first, then being notified.

APPROACH

Questions we asked every donor

01 How far in advance would you want to know a spot is free?

02 Would this really work for you?

03 Would you go to a different centre if we suggested one?

04 Is having to book first annoying? Would just setting an alert be better?



8 donors tested

WHO WE TESTED WITH

Donor profile

Self-serve via app and portal	Aged 25–45 (incidental to screening)
Try to book within 2 weeks, as “life gets in the way”	Most book further out as a “maybe”, then decide nearer the date
Very busy, with limited windows of availability	Donate at the same time and day
Donate at the same centre	Find it hard to book

Screening drew on what PAG research and trials told us about donors who could benefit from Notify me.

PART THREE

What we saw

- Observations from testing
- Quantitative observations

OBSERVATIONS

Four things stood out in testing

Put me in control and let me self-serve

Donors reacted positively to setting their own notification parameters and responding to openings themselves.

A closer spot beats a later booking

Most would take an earlier slot if it fit their timetable, seeing it as “ticking the box” or “getting it done”.

Understanding was high

At 25–45, donors were fluent with notifications. Some compared it to gyms or hairdressers with similar systems.

It could improve cold calling

Most preferred SMS, but accepted that calls get people donating. Their pain points: small talk, and times that didn’t suit at all.

BY THE NUMBERS

What all eight donors told us

6/8

Notification method

Preferred SMS: it keeps them in control of accepting or declining, and their phone is always on them.

7/8

Notice needed

Wanted at least 24–48 hours to check their schedule and prepare, such as drinking water.

50/50

Book first?

Split on whether Notify me should appear only after booking. Some saw value in it always being on.

7/8

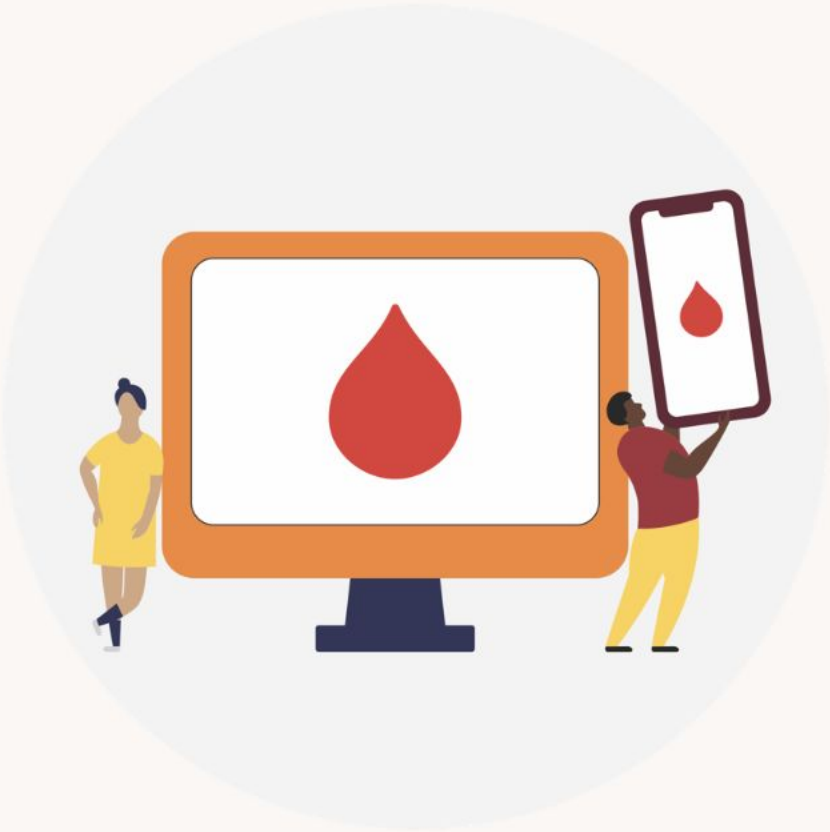
Would try it

Would like to try being notified. Two said they might accept different, slightly less convenient days.

PART FOUR

Three key learnings

- Being in control and self-serving
- The emotional impact of saying no
- Being offered a pop-up centre



LEARNING 1

Being in control and self-serving

Donors drew a clear line between a call from Lifeblood and an SMS or notification. A call felt:

- Out of the donor's control
- Intrusive, with small talk to make
- Hard to weigh against their schedule, which can lead to cancellations

They want to say yes or no without guilt, then book it themselves.

IN THEIR WORDS · BEING IN CONTROL

“Do you want this appointment? Yes.”

“

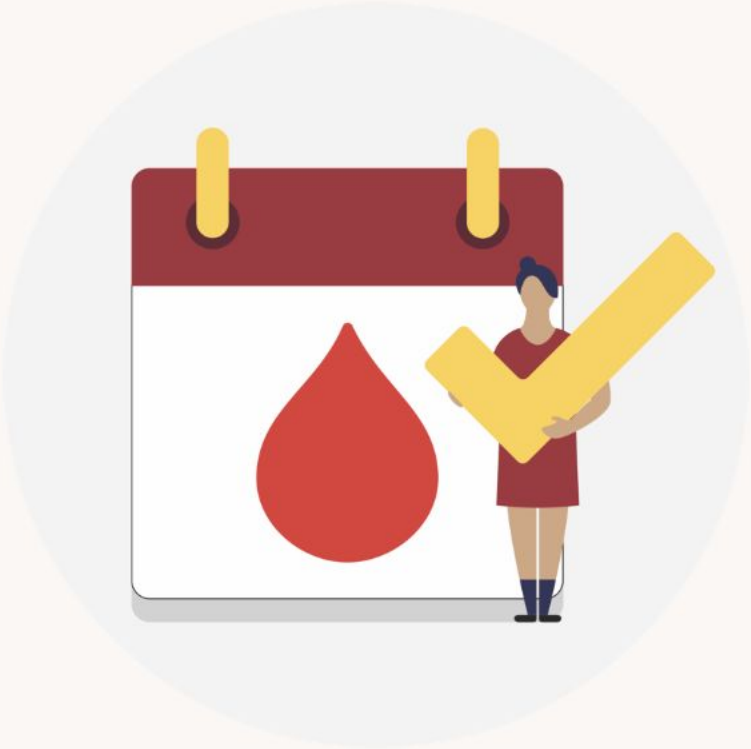
If it’s an SMS that says we have an earlier appointment on this date at this time, would you like to accept it? And I can just send back a Y or an N... I can confirm that much quicker than listening to a phone call.

“

I don’t wanna have to be dealing with another person... almost like talking to a bot online. Do you want this appointment? Yes. No. I’m like, awesome.

“

Text messages are easier to track, and if it led to booking online and moving through that process, it would be easier than talking to someone, especially with work hours being blurred.



LEARNING 2

Saying “no” carries little emotional weight

Receiving notifications

Weekly alerts were fine because they’d opted in. Phone calls had felt off because times weren’t personalised to them.

Declining a slot

No guilt: their original booking was already confirmed, and an alert felt like extra help filling a cancellation.

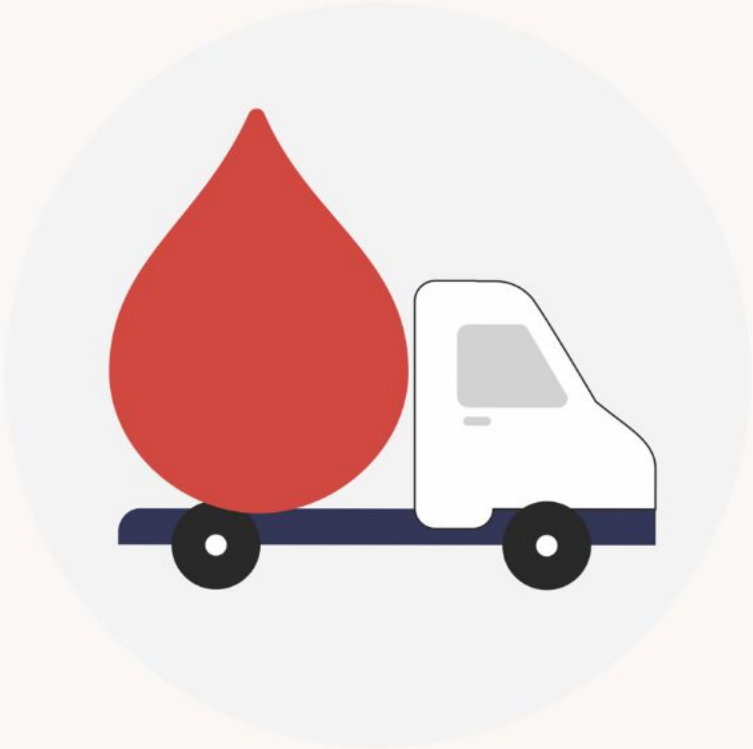
IN THEIR WORDS · SAYING NO

“I still got my confirmed appointment.”

> *As long as it’s just a text message or a push notification, I would welcome this so much. It would not annoy me if I got 15 of these in a week.*

> *If I’m opting in to be notified, I don’t know how I could get annoyed... If you find them annoying, just book and be done with it.*

> *Especially if I’m booking three or four weeks in advance, I’m not gonna have that many times I have to say no. It wouldn’t bother me because I know I still got my confirmed appointment.*



LEARNING 3

Open to a pop-up or new centre, if it's just as close

Donors are comfortable at their centre: parking, knowing the area, habit. Offered a sooner date elsewhere, the answer was a resounding "if it was close or comparable in distance".

Why not further?

The cost of petrol, a current centre that's already far, and worry about fainting or reacting while driving home.

IN THEIR WORDS · A DIFFERENT CENTRE

“It’s all based on convenience, location, timing.”

“

It’s not like a hairdresser where you finally found the one that understands your hair... For me, there wouldn’t be a connection with a centre. It’s all based on convenience, location, timing.

“

If I typed in my address and it was like “you’ve got a pop-up bank”... one in Langwarrin I had no idea about, I would probably go and try it out. But it would have to be more convenient.

“

I definitely wanna know. Yeah, especially if it’s closer and there’s a sooner availability, for sure.

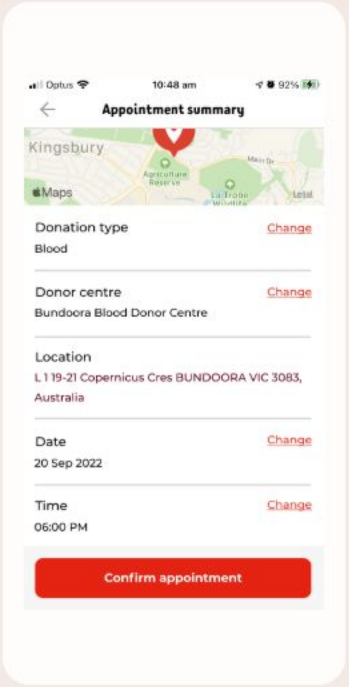
APPENDIX ONE

Screens we tested

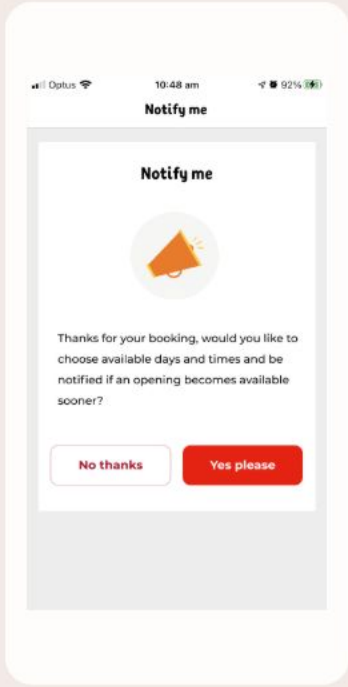
Design, content and copy are indicative and will progress with the feature.

TESTED SCREENS · SETTING AN ALERT

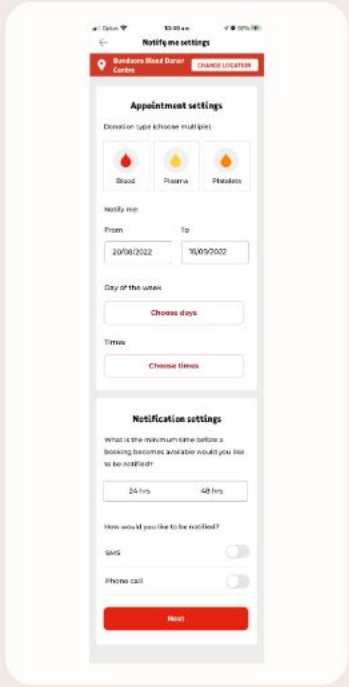
From booking to alert settings



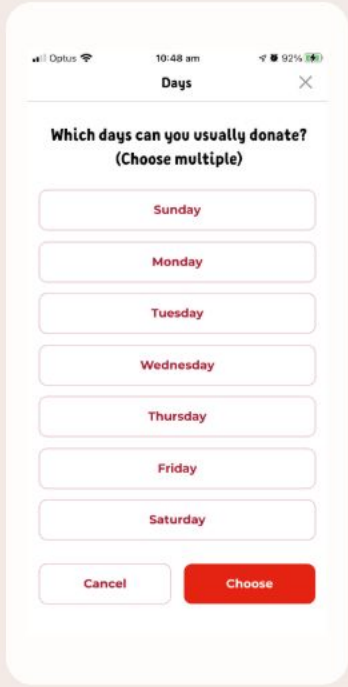
1 · Booking confirmation



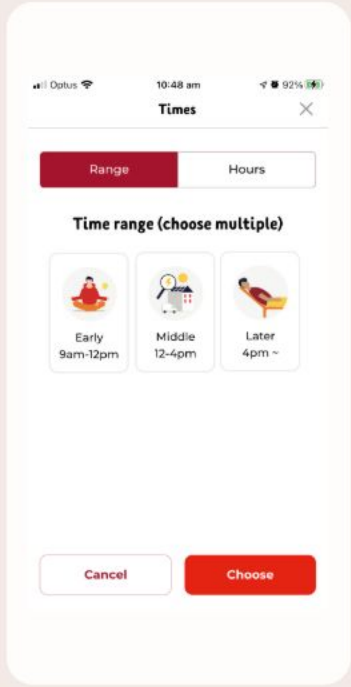
2 · Notify me intro



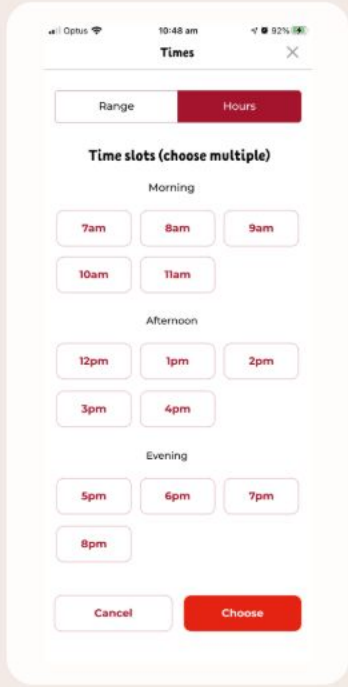
3 · Notify me settings



4 · Choose days



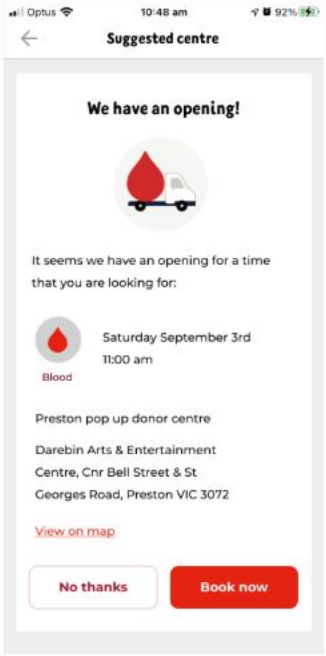
5 · Times by range



6 · Times by hour

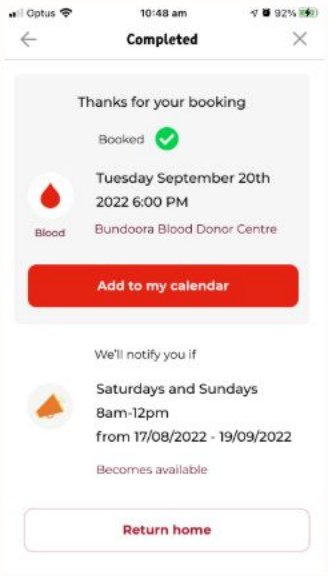
TESTED SCREENS · WHEN A SLOT OPENS

From opening to dashboard



7 · A slot is available

The donor sees the suggested time and centre, then books or declines.



8 · Completed

Confirms the booking and restates when we'll notify them.



9 · Dashboard

The active alert sits under the next appointment, with a link to manage it.

APPENDIX TWO

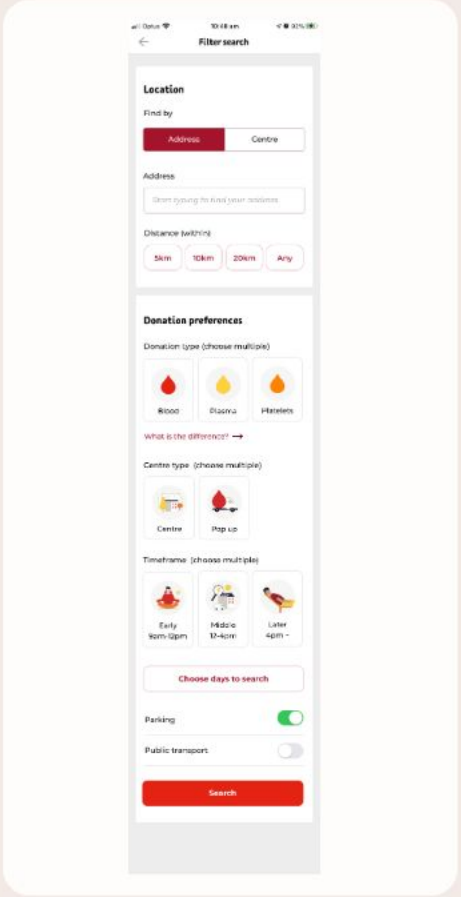
Where Notify me could go next

- Notify me with smart search
- “Always on” Notify me
- When a donor leaves without booking

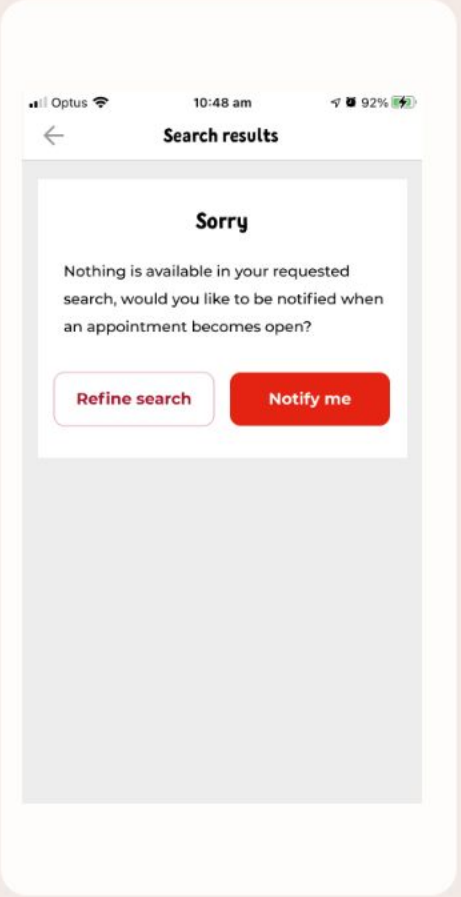
FUTURE IDEA 1

Notify me with smart search

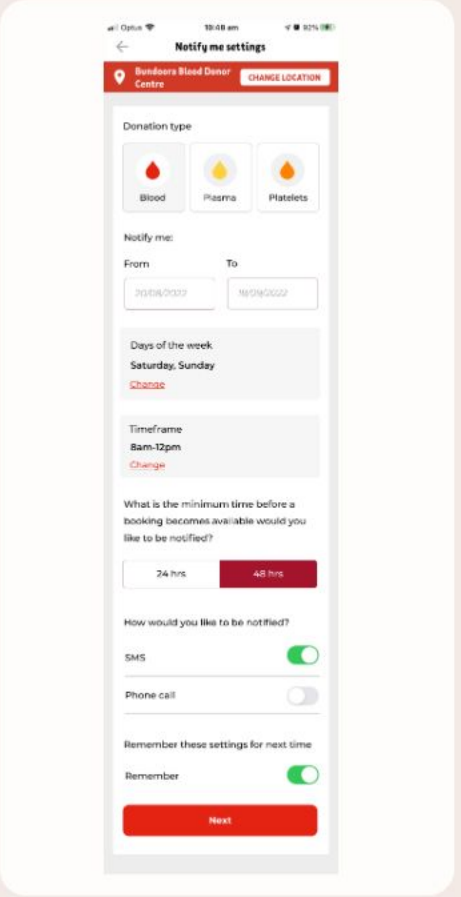
Donors filter by location, distance, donation type, centre type and timeframe. When nothing matches, they can set an alert from the results, with settings pre-filled and remembered for next time.



Filter search



No results



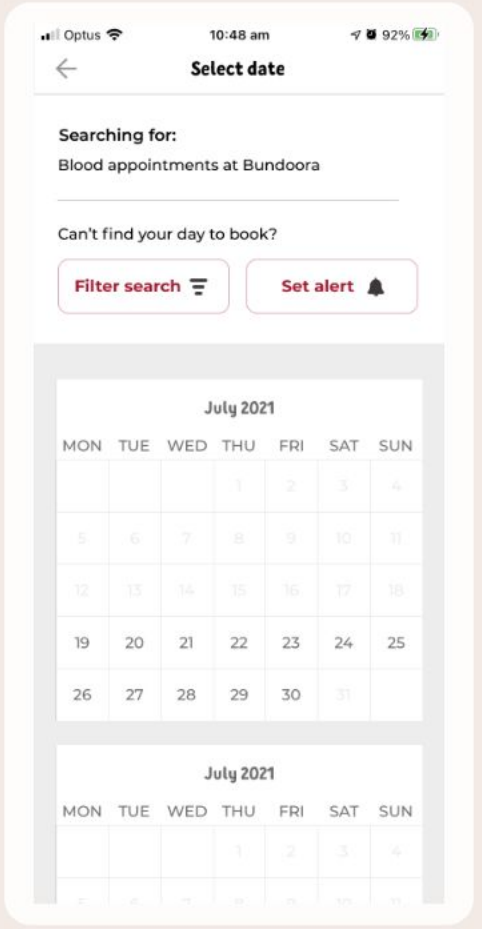
Pre-filled settings

FUTURE IDEA 2

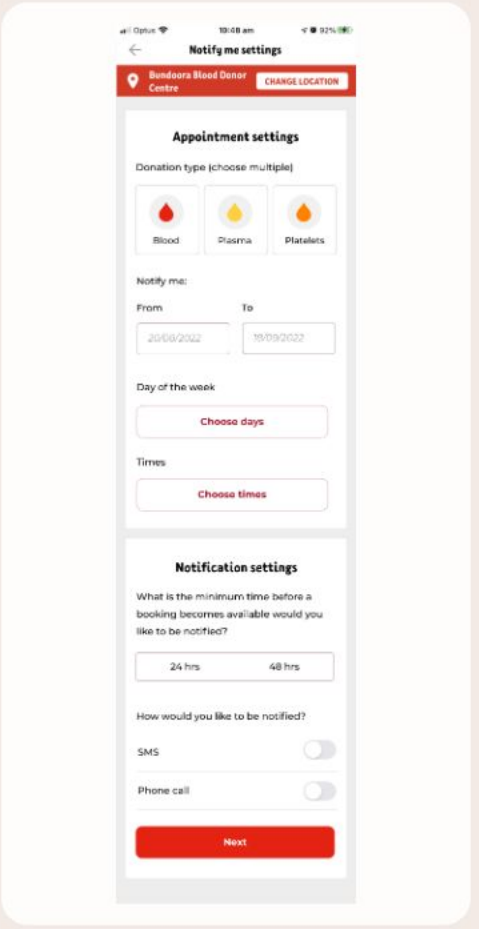
“Always on” Notify me

A “Set alert” button sits on the date picker, so donors who can’t find their day can set an alert without booking first.

Responds to the 50/50 split on whether donors should have to book first.



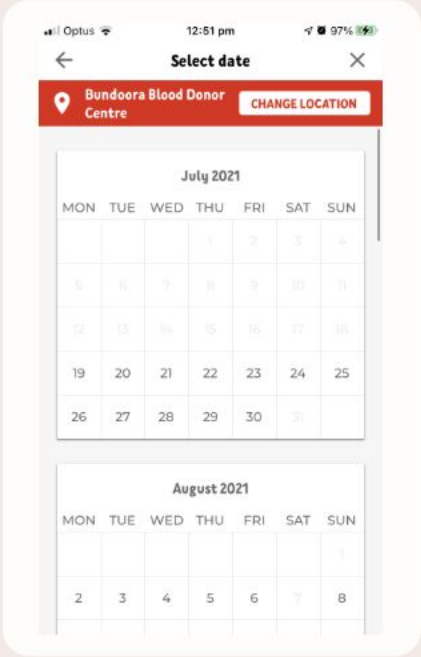
Set alert on the calendar



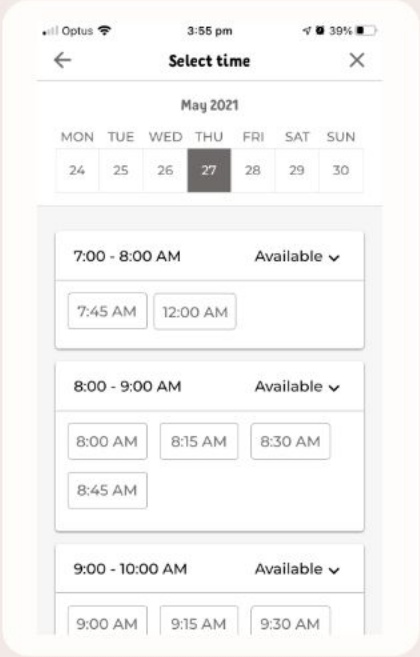
Notify me settings

FUTURE IDEA 3

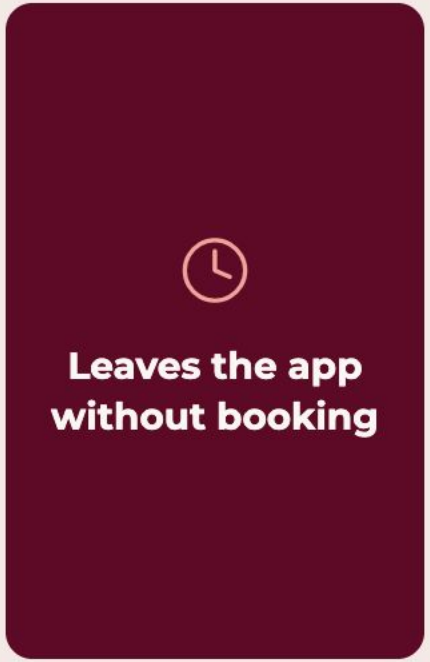
When a donor leaves without booking



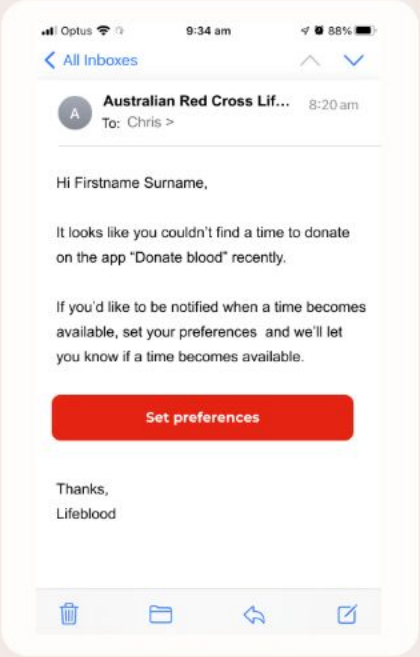
1 · Browses dates



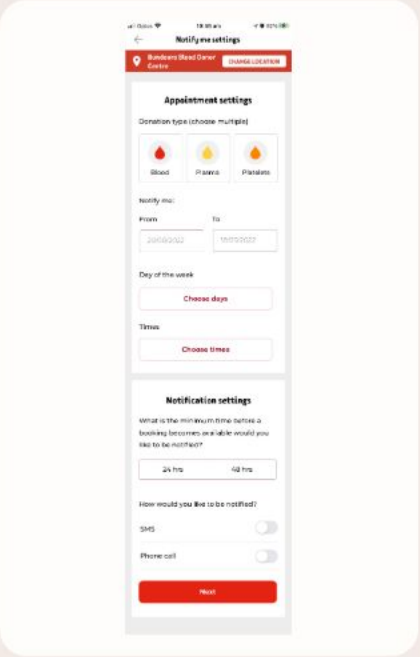
2 · Browses times



3 · Drops off



4 · Gets an email



5 · Sets preferences