

October 2014 Newsletter

**Providing a supportive and informative environment for people
with a variety of lung conditions and their carers.**

Editor: Helen Reynolds 02 6259 7737
helenrey@creationcorporation.com.au
Contact: Helen Cotter 02 6281 2988
lung.life1@hotmail.com

Next Meeting: Thursday 9 October 2014
10.15 am - 12 noon
The Burns Club, 8 Kett Street, Kambah ACT 2902

Guest Speaker: Michael Keen, Director – Client Support Services, Rehabilitation Aged and
Community Care Service.
Michael will be speaking about his area of work and about oxygen provision in the
ACT.

Dates for your diary

Thursday 11 November 2014 Canberra Lung Life Support Group Meeting
Wednesday 19 November 2014 World COPD Day

September Meeting Helen Cotter

Carmel efficiently took us through the business of the meeting that included the following:

- Pam reported on the SHOUT Expo at the Hellenic Club. It was well set up and run with many self help and related groups showing their wares. It was good to see the variety of groups that assist the different needs of the community. Many thanks to Pam, Robyn and Barry who set up our table; and to Maureen, Esther and Marilyn who followed on.
- Pam and others reported on the day with the medical students at TCH. Ten to twelve people attended and found the event worthwhile. Students were meant to draw out the information from the 'patient' so they had to be careful not to be too knowledgeable about their conditions. One participant had a problem identified that she didn't know existed so is really pleased about that and is following it up.
- EMEP (Emergency Medical Equipment Payment) from the Federal Government has come through for this year and should be in your bank account.
- Many people talked about various health issues that they encountered - this gives us all greater knowledge and awareness about these issues. Pam G talked about the valves for the lungs; Nasri talked about how his treatment got rid of his burning lungs; we discussed the IMT device that Bernie talked about last month - members who are now using it are very pleased with the results.

We thanked Carmel for the great job she has done under our new plan of members running the meetings for three months. They have been three well-organised, well run and enjoyable meetings. We now pass the baton on to Pam Gaston for the next three months.

Guest Speaker Virginia Rasheed

Virginia has been the coordinator of the “Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions” course for the past six years. Courses (free of charge) are held at selected locations in Canberra throughout the year and can also be presented at venues nominated by the participants. Attendance is for 2hrs 30 mins per week over a period of 6 weeks. Course leaders include a health professional and a person with a long-term condition.

Topics covered during the course include:

Action Plan

A big strength is making an action plan, which helps many people feel more confident about managing their illness. The action plan, which is made every week throughout the course, can be about anything that is going to improve a person’s outlook on life.

Support

The support of the group is really important and people get involved with talking and brainstorming.

Symptom management

Managing the symptoms is important with depression, pain, anxiety and shortness of breath. Strategies are given to help manage symptoms. Many people suffer a mild depression when they have a chronic illness and it is important for them to do something that lifts their spirits.

Emotions

Sometimes it is the first time people have talked about the effect difficult emotions have on their lives. Feelings of frustration and anger are normal, but these feelings can make you tense up, resulting in even more frustration, pain etc. Learning to relax and doing diaphragmatic breathing helps manage this stress.

Making informed decisions another important topic

It is sometimes necessary to make a long appointment with your GP and to have a prepared set of questions ready to put to your GP. It’s also prudent to request copies of test results. The GP can do a management plan relating to allied health professionals. Use reliable websites such as “Health Insight”. Also have a comprehensive list of your medicines, including dosages, plus over-the-counter and complementary medicines.

Contact

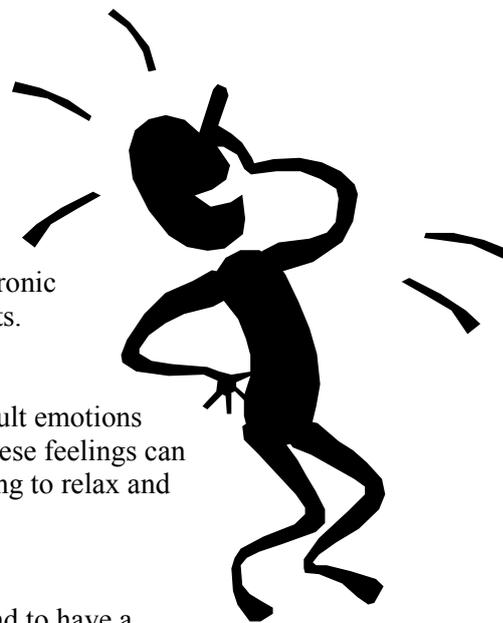
Ring Community Health Intake on 02 6207 9977 to enquire about upcoming courses at Gungahlin and Phillip Community Health Centres and other venues. Community Health Intake also refers people to many other free services, including physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology, continence clinic and falls injury prevention. Some services, however, have eligibility criteria.

2014 World COPD Day

Helen Reynolds

On World COPD Day, 2013 the Canberra Lung Life Support Group decided to bring to the attention of the Canberra community the importance of lung health. To this end, a very successful stand was set up in the Canberra Centre. Members of The Canberra Hospital’s Chronic Care Program performed spirometry and carbon monoxide readings for interested passers-by.

This year on World COPD Day Wednesday 19 November 2014 we will be offering the same service. We encourage our members to assist in promoting World COPD Day by taking to the passers-by while the Chronic Care nurses perform the tests.



Visit to Medical Students

Chris Moyle

On 4 September 2014 eight LungLife members attended the ANU Medical School at The Canberra Hospital. Everything ran very smoothly. We were each contacted in the morning to check on our availability, and in the early afternoon taxis arrived to transport us to the ANU Medical School at TCH. Staff met our taxis (all paid for by the School) and escorted us upstairs for tea, coffee and biscuits. We also each received a \$30 shopping voucher.

The supervising doctors then took us into separate rooms where our group of students greeted us. One student was nominated to take a medical history and there was a keen interest in how we coped with our illnesses. Afterwards we were escorted to waiting taxis for the return journey home. As in other years, the visit proved to be a very worthwhile coming together of sufferers of a chronic lung disease and the medicos of the future.



Reasons for coming to Canberra

Helen Reynolds

Helen Reynolds and her then husband, Don Neal, were teaching in the Leichhardt district of Sydney and living in the inner west. The continual traffic congestion and the behaviour of their fellow road-users frustrated them, Helen in particular. She wanted to get out of the city and return to the country, either Canberra or Bathurst. Canberra won, even though friends, like most Sydney-siders, asked, “Why? There’s nothing to do in Canberra.”

During the school holidays that year they visited the ACT searching for a house on the south side, which was closer to Queanbeyan, where Helen, being trained in NSW, wanted to teach. In 1989 they moved with their dog, Cheeky, into a home at Gilmore. They found people at the nearby Chisholm shops were surprisingly friendly and driving in Canberra was like driving on country roads, with hardly any traffic.



Helen and Cheeky at Woods Reserve

Helen was on Long Service Leave from the NSW Department of Education and Don, also on Long Service Leave, was trying to break into the world of Information Technology in Canberra. A new home in a new city but things did not work out as planned. When Helen’s

Long Service Leave was over plus twelve months leave without pay she took steps to return to her chosen profession. A Principal’s position just north of the border was offered and accepted. Don continued with his dream, living in Canberra with weekend trips down south.

Helen and Don were later divorced and their Gilmore home sold. After a few more years she retired and moved back to Canberra, to Lyneham North. Don was still living in Canberra and the friendship, which had been the backbone of their marriage despite its failure, was rekindled. As Helen says, “She and Don were good friends who should have remained friends and never married.”

On her return to Canberra and with time on her hands Helen enrolled at the University of Canberra. “Three of the best years of my life, and I came away with a Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Communication, another piece of paper and new friends.” She bought a new house with a friend from Uni but that didn’t work out so Don was offered the share and now Helen shares a house, again, with Don, her ex-husband. And now they are planning to move back to the “Southside” and that will complete the circle of Helen’s time in the ACT - Southside to Inner City to Northside and back to the Southside.

Helen says Canberra’s easy driving on uncluttered roads has been a well-kept secret although lately some roads are becoming like Sydney’s - absolutely jammed with traffic. Have you driven on the Parkway and Ginninderra Drive Extension during the peak hour? Perhaps others have discovered Canberra’s charm and we shouldn’t deny them the chance to live in our capital city, which gives its inhabitants the best of both worlds, the country and the city.

Australian Senate Inquiry into toxic dusts, sprays and airborne pollutants along with nanoparticles

Helen Cotter

Information from Richard White, who has a dust disease from his work and who was a significant initiator of the Senate Inquiry. He worked hard for many years to get the Inquiry set up, supported by Gary Humphries, among many others.

In 2005 the Senate set up an inquiry into workplace harm related to toxic dusts/sprays and emerging technologies (including nanoparticles). They delivered the report in 2006. The Inquiry was set up as a result of the establishment of a real need for one. Over 1000 names were gathered from people responding to advertisements in certain places of heavy work such as Whyalla and Mt Tom Price. Specialist doctors and researchers provided information to demonstrate the need.

The Inquiry made 14 recommendations that included:

- improving the collection of data on dust related diseases
- raising awareness throughout Australia of the hazards of toxic dusts
- improving and enforcing hazardous substance regulations
- developing nationally consistent identification, assessment and compensation systems
- finalising a nanotechnology* strategy, establishing greater knowledge and understanding of the risks of exposure and setting up appropriate regulation.

Since then, a number of these have been adopted and have had direct effects upon all Australian workers. Included is more specialised monitoring at work sites, along with 'on the spot' inspections. As well, the time limit for taking action has been increased.

One example of improvements after the Inquiry is seen in the Fire Services around Australia. Firemen/women who have ingested toxic fumes or contaminants by swallowing, absorbing or breathing, previously needed to fight through the courts to establish that the cancer they had contracted was from their workplace. Now they are automatically accepted for compensation.

The NDIS has also meant that eventually all workers who have been let slip through the compensation system will be able to access health and services previously denied to them.

***Nanotechnology** is the use of atoms and molecules to create nano-products - ie miniscule – tinier than miniscule – products. Scientists are learning to combine atoms and molecules with other, different types of atoms or molecules to create a wide variety of applications. These can be used, for example, in improving technology, commercial products, medical diagnosis and treatment. There is, however, the concern that there may be dangers to the environment and to human health. (from Wikipedia)

The A-Z of Preventative Medicine

Chris Moyle

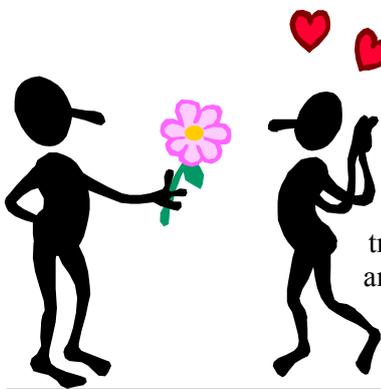
Herbs (Advice from Vaughan Bullivant, founder of Blackmores vitamin company)

Herbal products (available from health food stores) are not likely to have toxic after-effects, especially if taken with advice from a herbalist or naturopath, so why not take advantage of centuries of herbal medicine and tradition? It's also wise to check with your pharmacist to confirm that these remedies won't interfere with any medications you are taking.

Echinacea, cultivated in Britain and the US, is extremely useful for stimulating the body's immune system and building resistance to infection, colds and other disease.

Fenugreek, one of the oldest medicinal plants dating back to the ancient Egyptians and Hippocrates, is a cleansing and soothing herb. It softens and dissolves body mucous, leaving a healing, protective coating over inflamed areas. It helps eliminate excess mucous, relieving catarrh, sinusitis, hayfever and bronchitis.

Feverfew is one of the most commonly used medicinal herbs for the treatment of conditions such as migraine, headaches and arthritis.



“I’ve eaten an Italian meal with plenty of garlic. Have I brushed my teeth enough?”

Garlic dates back over 4,000 years to the earliest recorded history and was used by the Vikings, the Greeks, Egyptians and Babylonians (300 BC). Garlic contains substances that help prevent cancer. It is valuable as a mild natural antibiotic and for building general body resistance to ill health. It lowers cholesterol and triglyceride levels of the blood, helps normalise blood pressure and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease. It encourages the growth of healthful bacteria in the intestinal tract and is most beneficial for the treatment of all bacterial, viral and fungal infections. Odourless garlic capsules are available, or eat parsley or drink full cream milk to lessen the odour.

Ginseng (the most potent species are found in Siberia and Korea) is reputed to prevent tiredness and the debilitating effects of old age. It is apparently taken by Russian astronauts for resistance to disease and stress and in strengthening the immune system.

Golden Seal, first discovered by the American Indian, principally the Cherokees, is one of the best all-round medicinal herbs. It contains mild antibiotic properties, inhibits the growth of bacteria and assists the treatment

of all problems with inflammation or infection, acts as a tonic on the mucous membranes and can also be used for all catarrhal conditions.

Horseradish is one of the most effective herbs for eliminating excess mucous in the system. It is beneficial for the treatment of sinusitis, hayfever, colds, bronchial troubles and congestion of the lungs.

Kelp, derived from seaweed, contains approximately 50 nutritional elements, many difficult to obtain from today’s foods. It is particularly rich in natural iodine, which is essential for the thyroid gland to make the hormone thyroxine. Japanese folklore recommends this plant in the treatment of high blood pressure, and it can be used for heartburn, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, arthritis and nervous disorders.

Slippery Elm is a valuable soothing herb for assisting the healing of injured or inflamed tissues, especially in the stomach and intestinal tract, but also in the throat, lungs, kidneys, bladder and bowels.

Valerian, used long before the Romans, has a remarkable calming effect upon the nerves and is now used extensively to promote a strong, healthy nervous system. It is useful as a herbal sedative to induce calm, restful sleep.

Broccoli each day keeps asthma away

From Australasian Science, September 2014, p13

Consumption of one or two cups of lightly steamed broccoli each day can help asthmatics breathe normally and prevent their condition from worsening, according to research from the University of Melbourne. The study found that eating vegetables from the cruciferous family - which also includes kale, cabbage, brussel sprouts, cauliflower and bok choy - reduces and even reverses lung damage. Consumption of broccoli changes the formation of the airways and may make breathing easier for those who suffer from asthma and allergies.

The findings are part of the trend in healthcare research that looks to incorporate dietary treatments with prescription medicine. The research is still in its experimental stage.

New Flexible Bus Service for older Canberrans up and running in the ACT!

COTA ACT News September 2014

The ACT Government has just launched a flexible bus service for seniors who can’t drive or take public transport – augmenting the existing Community Bus services. The service operates in the inner Belconnen, inner south, Woden and Weston areas. The service can take you to Belconnen, Woden or Cooleman Court shopping precincts and return you home, inside school hours. The north side services also connect with Calvary Hospital and the south side ones with Canberra Hospital.

To find out more about the service or to book call 02 6205 3555.

Thanks to Caroline Polak Scowcroft for this article found in a newsletter from the British Lung Foundation. She thought it could be used to show how people in different places in the world have the same issues and benefits from activities with groups such as the British Lung Foundation and the Lung Foundation Australia.

Making a difference with “Breathe Easy Camden”

By Joan McCarthy August 2014

Improving local health services has given my retirement a purpose. About 10 years ago I was diagnosed with COPD. The words ‘chronic’ and ‘disease’ terrified me, so I stopped doing stuff in case I made it worse. Big mistake! I was referred to pulmonary rehabilitation and my whole outlook changed. I realised that exercise could improve my condition and I learnt how to manage it instead of letting it manage me. Suddenly the future looked much brighter and I’ve never looked back.

My introduction to the British Lung Foundation (BLF) was at the very first meeting of their Breathe Easy Support Group in Camden in 2008. I was privileged to become chair of the group just 4 months later. Since then



I’ve met politicians at Westminster, spoken at training courses for health care professionals and at the BLF staff conference. I’m also a member of the London Respiratory Team and IMPRESS, a project that aims to improve respiratory care.

It all started when I was invited to join a local team to decide which health projects and innovative ideas should be funded and how they should be measured. It all sounded really important so I was very nervous about saying yes, but I agreed to get involved. I wanted to learn how the National Health Service worked - and if I could improve it. After our first meeting, I was so

proud of myself. I was also pleasantly surprised at how many people I’d met who could come and speak at our Breathe Easy group meetings.

Recently, somebody asked me why I get involved with all of these things. The answer is simple - I want to make a difference. Both for myself and others, but mainly I want to make sure my children and my grandchildren can get the very best care, if they need it. If there is anyone reading this who is thinking of doing any of these things then my advice is do it. It’s made my life so much more interesting and I’ve met loads of people from all walks of life.

I thought my retirement might be boring but the BLF has certainly ensured this has been the most interesting time of my life and it continues to give me enormous pleasure. Despite all the work I do with the local health services, running Breathe Easy Camden is the most satisfying thing I’ve done. I can actually see how much it helps my members in many different ways on a regular basis. They actually tell me what it means to them, which makes me really proud.

All of this is down to the BLF, which has given my retirement purpose and a great deal of pleasure and I thank you so much.

Hands off the Pension!!

COTA ACT News September 2014

In this year’s Federal Budget the Government proposed to index the Age Pension only by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from 1 September 2017, freeze eligibility thresholds for the Pension and pension related payments for 3 years from 2017 (i.e. don’t index them as usual), reset deeming thresholds for Pension income testing from September 2017 - thresholds for singles will be reduced from \$46,600 to \$30,000 and for couples from \$77,400 to \$50,000, and increase the age pension qualifying age to gradually reach 70 years by 2035.

Although these measures don’t start until 2017 they have already been passed by the House of Representatives and are in the Senate for its consideration.

So what might these measures mean for pensioners and older Australians? According to COTA Australia, they will:

- dramatically reduce the standard of living of Pensioners, due to the cut in indexation. If the CPI had been used since 2009 the Pension would already be \$30 per week or \$1560 per year less
- affect Full Pensioners worst, people with the least assets and other income will be hardest hit
- reduce the income of all part pensioners, rather than tackling community concerns about people with high assets receiving a part pension
- mean that older people unemployed due to age discrimination and lack of jobs will stay on Newstart for years longer rather than moving to the Age Pension
- reduce the living standards of pensioners while leaving intact huge tax concessions to well off superannuants. Many tens of thousands of superannuants get tax concessions bigger than the value of the single pension.

For more detail on all the above you can access COTA's submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee for a full discussion of the proposed changes and the need for a Retirement Incomes Review.

http://www.cota.org.au/lib/pdf/COTA_Australia/publications/submissions/cota_submission_social_security_amendments.pdf

If you don't agree with these measures to significantly reduce the Pension you can:

1. **Sign up to the Hands Off The Pension campaign** on the COTA website at <http://www.cota.org.au/australia/hotp/default.aspx> and we will keep you up to date on developments and actions to take.
2. Write to the Prime Minister telling him so. View a sample letter online at: <http://www.cota.org.au/australia/hotp/hands-off-the-pension-letter-to-pm.aspx>
3. or download a copy of the letter in Microsoft Word format: http://www.cota.org.au/lib/pdf/COTA_Australia/publications/cota-australia-hands-off-the-pension.docx
4. You can mail a copy of this letter or visit the PM's website and submit it online: <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
5. Send a letter to your Senators: <http://www.cota.org.au/australia/hotp/send-a-hands-off-the-pension-letter-to-your-senators.aspx>

The National Botanic Gardens Twelve Months On Helen Reynolds

Are you just a little curious as to what has been happening at the National Botanic Gardens during the past year? What is happening in the Red Centre Garden? Remember, we were there when it was officially opened to the public last year? And perhaps most importantly, has the Bistro changed its Menu?

Now, if you answered “YES!” to any one of these questions, then make sure you book your seat on Flora, the Explorer and discover the changes **Mother Nature** and **Mein Host** have brought to bear on The Gardens.

WHEN: Wednesday 22 October 2014
COST: \$6.00
PICK UP POINT: Outside Café Floresco
TIME: TBA
LUNCHEON: At the cafe



RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER: Please be aware that if you receive this Newsletter by post and you have an email address and would like to receive it instead by email you may send your request to Helen Cotter at lung.life1@hotmail.com.