

## October 2015 Newsletter

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

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**Next Meeting:** Thursday 8 October 2015  
10:15 am - 12 noon  
**The Burns Club**  
8 Kett Street Kambah ACT 2902

**Guest Speaker:** Open forum - bring along any ideas, worries or concerns you would like to discuss.

### Dates for your diary

Wednesday 28 October 2015	Tour of the Botanic Gardens followed by lunch
Wednesday 18 November 2015	World COPD Day
Thursday 8 November 2015	Lung Life Meeting, The Burns Club, 10:15 am - 12 noon
Thursday 17 March 2016	Seniors Week Expo 2016 at Thoroughbred Park

### September Meeting Chris Moyle

Renovations at the Burns Club made for a noisier than normal meeting, but the Club promises our new meeting room will be available very soon. It was pleasing to welcome four first-timers among the twenty-four people in attendance.

### Topics discussed:

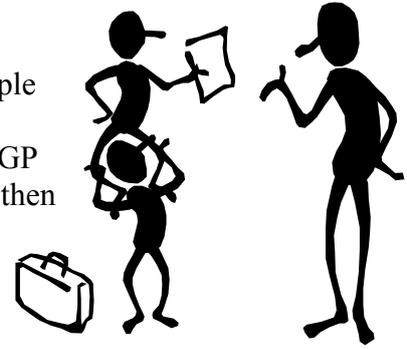
- The venue for our Christmas lunch was discussed but a decision has yet to be made.
- Carolyn suggested we consider visiting schools to talk to young people about our lung diseases. This will involve education about prevention (namely not smoking) and promoting a greater understanding in the community. Carolyn will follow up with schools and advise us of the outcome.

Another rather fabulous Burns Club smorgasbord was enjoyed by all before a group of us departed in a mini-bus for our yearly visit with the medical students from the Australian National University.

## Medical Students Visit

Chris Moyle

Each year the ANU School of Medicine arranges for a group of people with respiratory diseases to interact with first year medical students. The “patients” and the students simulate an appointment between a GP and his/her patient. One student took a detailed medical history and then it was question time. By the end of the session the students had learnt about:



- our history
- our symptoms
- our first diagnosis
- the diseases and their progression
- the long term effects - physical, social, mental as they relate to a real, live person.

It's a good feeling to help our future doctors and it's very generous of the ANU to pay for our taxis and thank each of us with a \$30 Coles voucher.

Thanks to Pam Harris for organising the visit and thanks to all our volunteers.

### Travellers' Tales

***In a Vienna hotel:*** In case of fire, do your utmost to alarm the hotel porter.

***A sign posted in Germany's Black Forest:*** It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.

***In a Zurich hotel:*** Because of the impropriety of entering guests of the opposite sex in the bedroom, it is suggested that the lobby be used for this purpose.

***In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist:*** Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists.

***A translated sentence from a Russian chess book:*** A lot of water has been passed under the bridge since this variation has been played.

### An Update on the Health Infrastructure Program, ACT Health

Health Care Consumers' Association ACT INC

*On the 11 August 2015 Paul Carmody, the Deputy Director General of the Health Infrastructure Program - ACT Health, came to Health Care Consumers' Association to provide an update on the Health Infrastructure Program. The overall program of works encompassing the Health Infrastructure Program has been ongoing for around 5 years, with over \$900 million dollars committed so far.*

#### Current projects of ACT Health under construction:

- **Secure Mental Health Unit:** Operating October 2016.
- **Multistorey Carpark, Calvary Public Hospital:** Opening January 2016.
- **Building 15, Canberra Hospital:** Details of the services moving into this building are yet to be publicly announced. Expected completion October 2015.
- **Emergency Department Expansion:** Expected completion end 2016.
- **Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm:** Expected to be operating late 2016.

- **University of Canberra Public Hospital:** This is a fully government funded facility and is expected to open in 2018.
- **Buildings 3 and 2, Clinical Services Building, Canberra Hospital:** At this stage the ACT Government has not made a decision about the form or delivery method for the redevelopment of Buildings 3 and 2 at the Canberra Hospital. A review process will include the examination of a

range of solutions to meet current and forecast health service needs of the ACT community and surrounding areas.

- **Capital Upgrade Program.** The Capital Upgrade Program is an ongoing program of works with a focus on upgrading, improving, and replacing health facilities.

### **How To Maintain A Healthy Level Of Insanity in RETIREMENT**

- At lunchtime, sit in your parked car with sunglasses on, point a hair dryer at passing cars, and watch them slow down!
- On all your cheque stubs write, 'For Marijuana'!
- Skip down the street rather than walk and see how many looks you get.
- With a serious face order a Diet Water whenever you go out to eat.
- Sing along at the opera.

## **The A-Z of Preventative Medicine**

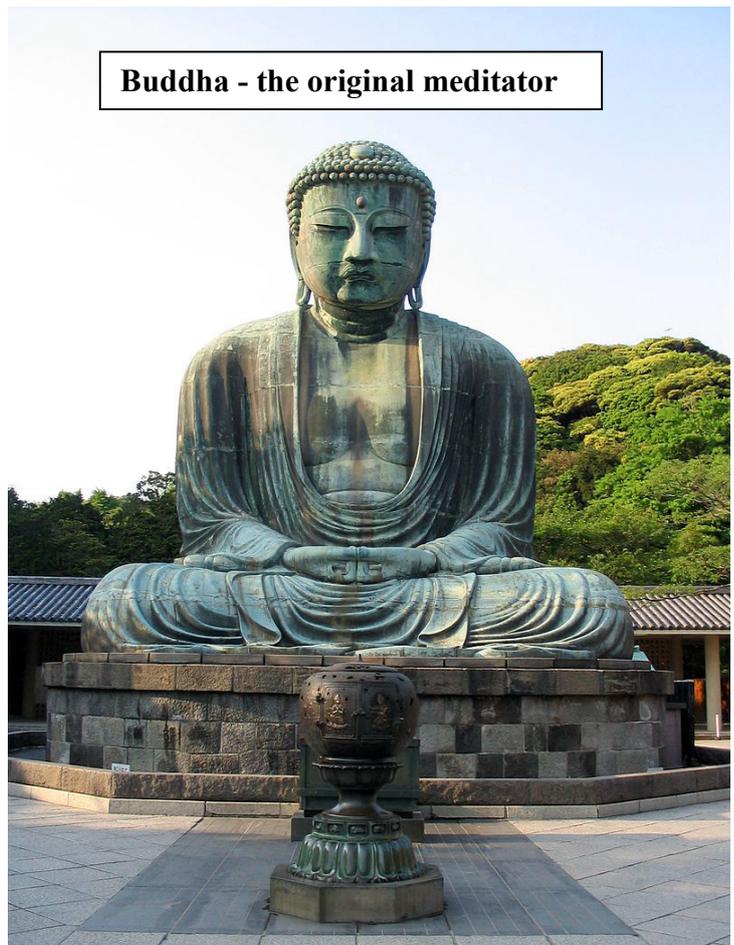
**Chris Moyle**

### **Meditation and Mindfulness**

**Kelly McGonigal “Your Brain on Meditation”**

Thousands of years ago the sage Patanjali, who compiled the Yoga Sutra, and the Buddha both promised that meditation could eliminate the suffering caused by an untamed mind. They believed that it was possible to change one’s mental powers and emotional patterns by regularly experiencing meditative states.

Today, Western scientists are testing the wisdom of the masters, using new technology that allows researchers to study how meditation influences the brain. Using a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, Eileen Luders, a researcher in the Dept. of Neurology at the University of Los Angeles School of Medicine, looks for evidence that meditation changes the physical structure of the brain. Luders says, “Today we know that everything we do, and every experience we have, actually changes the brain”. Indeed, Luders finds several differences between the brains of meditators and non-meditators. Regular meditators had more grey matter in regions of the brain that are important for attention, emotion regulation and mental flexibility. Increased grey matter typically makes an area of the brain more efficient or powerful at processing information. More and more neuroscientists, like Luders, have started to think that learning to meditate is no different from learning mental skills such as music or maths. Like anything else that requires practice, meditation is a training program for the brain.



**Buddha - the original meditator**

## Reduce Your Stress

Research also shows that meditation can help people with anxiety disorders. Philippe Goldin, director of the Clinically Applied Affective Neuroscience project in the Department of Psychology at Stanford University, uses mindfulness meditation in his studies. The general practice is to become aware of the present moment - by paying attention to sounds, your breath, sensations in your body, or thoughts or feelings - and to observe without judgment and without trying to change what you notice. Like most of us, the participants in Goldin's studies suffer from all sorts of disturbances of the mind - worries, self-doubt, stress, and even panic. But people with anxiety disorders feel unable to escape from such thoughts and emotions, and find their lives overtaken by them.

Participants in Goldin's studies take an eight week mindfulness-based course in stress reduction which includes regular meditation. Brain scans showed that after the mindfulness intervention there is a decreased activity in the amygdala - a region associated with stress and anxiety. Most important, the participants suffered less. "They reported less anxiety and worrying," Goldin says. "They put themselves down less, and their self-esteem improved."

Goldin's interpretation of the findings is that mindfulness meditation teaches people with anxiety how to handle distressing thoughts and emotions without being overpowered by them. Most people either push away unpleasant thoughts or obsess over them - both of which give anxiety more power. "The goal of meditation is not to get rid of thoughts and emotions. The goal is to become aware of your thoughts and emotions and learn how to move through them without getting stuck." The brain scans suggest that the anxiety sufferers were learning to witness negative thoughts without going into a full-blown anxiety response.

Such studies provide exciting evidence that small doses of mental training, such as an eight-week mindfulness course, can create important changes in one's mental well-being. The "use it or lose it" principle also applies. It would appear to be important to continue meditating on a daily basis to train your brain to continue helping you in the best way possible.

*Source* [www.mindful.org/your-brain-on-meditation](http://www.mindful.org/your-brain-on-meditation)

## Flexible Bus Service

**Helen Cotter**

This service provides free service to seniors and people with a disability who have limited access to other transport options. Each mini-bus is equipped with low steps and a wheelchair lift. The driver will assist.

- The shuttles run in 3 zones: Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden/Weston/Narrabundah.
- They start at 9:30 am and work in 2 hour blocks. The last pick up is at 1:45pm.
- They pick up from homes.
- They travel through the suburbs to the shops. They will travel via the closest hospital on request.
- If you wish to travel to other areas in your zone, you need to speak to the driver as the service is flexible.
- It's a free service but bookings need to be made 2 days before travel.

The **Community Services** also help with door-to-door community transport to appointments as well as to social commitments such as our Lung Life meetings. Contact your local community service for more information.

For more information, contact [www.transport.act.gov.au](http://www.transport.act.gov.au)

For bookings: 02 6205 3555

## World COPD Day 2014

*From the Report by Lung Foundation Australia*

World COPD Day 2014 was a resounding success with almost 240 events registered with Lung Life Australia geared towards raising awareness of the prevalence and impact of COPD. Patient support groups joined in by:

- hosting displays
- sausage sizzles
- walks
- bus trips
- media articles in their local papers and newsletters.

The green t-shirts, balloons, streamers and wigs helped event holders to get noticed. Baked goods and sausage sizzles were a popular way of drawing in interest from passers-by. Some groups came up with other creative ways to get people thinking about COPD. For example:

- a jelly-bean guessing competition
- COPD quizzes
- a paddle-wheeler cruise along the Nepean river
- green apples and cupcakes on GP counters with lung health checklists.



In 2014 the Canberra Lung Life Support Group set up an information booth in the Canberra Centre. Helen Cotter and Beth Forbes were just two of the many who manned the booth.

Armed with bottles of cold water and protected by broad-brimmed hats and refreshed by cooling fruit platters or spurred on by thoughts of a tasty snag, over 400 patients and their supporters strolled along scenic river bends, paraded through parks, paced on treadmills and exercise machines and perambulated around local athletic tracks and gyms around the country, covering over 1120 km in 20 separate events. **Well done, everyone - that's over 300km further than last year!**

Health professionals supported World COPD Day by aiming their activities not only at existing patients to remind them of key messages but also at the wider community to raise symptom and risk factor awareness. Their activities included:

- holding events such as guest speaker sessions
- speaking with media
- conducting risk assessment and screening activities using Lung Health Checklist
- providing educational activities in pharmacies, general practice clinics, Hospitals and Health Services
- supporting targeted COPD case-finding in the community using handheld COPD screening devices such as the PiKo-6, spirometry and pulse oximetry
- demonstrations of inhaler device technique
- smokelyser tests and
- smoking cessation education.

## MEDICARE LOCALS

Helen Cotter

Medicare Locals played an important role in World COPD Day 2014 by supporting general practices and pharmacies and facilitating health professional education. Some Medicare Locals held education evenings for health professionals or provided support personnel for community events being held by pharmacists and general practice.

World COPD Day 2015 is on Wednesday 18 November 2015 and it's time to start thinking about and planning activities. In 2014 the Canberra Lung Life Support Group held a stand in the Canberra Centre with information and screening activities. Two gyms also held treadmill events and a Queanbeyan Medical Centre promoted the Day. **What will 2015 bring to the ACT and surrounding areas? Watch this space for further information as it comes to hand.**

### Floral the Explorer Adventure

**When: Wednesday 28 October 2015**

**Where: National Botanic Garden**

**Time: 10:45 am**

**Assembly Point: Near the cafe**

Lunch will follow the tour but if you don't want to do the touristy bit join us for the social bit – lunch outside on the deck. Names and numbers for Flora and lunch will be taken at the next meeting.

## Australian Government Hearing Services Program

Helen Cotter

The Australian Government provides a Hearing Services Program providing for pensioners and other eligible people, giving access to a range of fully or partially subsidised hearing services. It includes:

- a comprehensive hearing assessment performed by a qualified hearing practitioner
- help with your hearing loss and communication needs, including support and rehabilitation services
- access to a wide range of high quality hearing devices, if required, made by leading manufacturers and
- optional maintenance support. You can receive repairs and batteries to support your hearing device for a small fee.

You will need to get your doctor to fill out a medical form for you to then see a hearing service provider. If you want to find out more, contact **Office of Hearing Services** at:

[www.hearingservices.gov.au](http://www.hearingservices.gov.au) or phone 1800 500 726 or email [hearing@health.gov.au](mailto:hearing@health.gov.au).

### Its called 'therapy'!

- When the money comes out of the ATM, scream 'I Won! I Won!'
- When leaving the Zoo, start running towards the car park, yelling, 'Run For Your Lives! They're Loose!'
- Tell your children over dinner, 'Due to the economy, we are going to have to let one of you go...?'
- Pick up a box of condoms at the pharmacy, go to the counter and ask where the fitting room is.