

February 2022 Newsletter

Our mission is to provide a supportive and informative environment for people with lung conditions and their carers.

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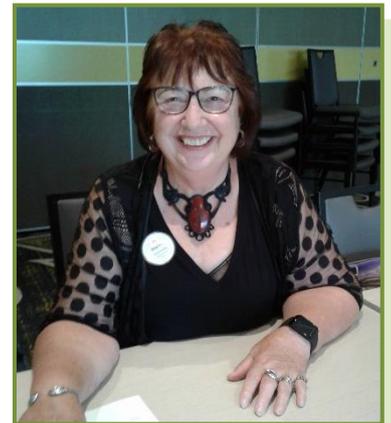
Coordinator: Marina Siemionow 042 962 9180
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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 10th March 2022
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

A social gathering will take place on Friday 25 February – see below for details.

A lot has happened in 2022, and we are only in February. Our coordinator Lyn Morley has stood down from the position after five years of dedicated service and Val Dempsey has been named the Senior Australian of the Year. You can read about both these women in this edition of the newsletter.

Around 15 members met at the Labor Club on Thursday 10 February, at which time Marina Siemionow (pictured right) was introduced as our new coordinator. We thank her for volunteering for this important role. Marina has indicated that at the next meeting in March she will discuss her role and those of her helpers.



Val Dempsey (pictured left) attended our February get together where she complimented us on being a friendly and welcoming group. We also welcomed a first time attendee Jacqui, who up to now has only received our newsletter. Jacqui kindly complimented us on the publication, saying how much she enjoyed reading it when she was unwell and confined at home.

If you would like to attend an outdoor **morning tea/lunch** at **Ricardo's Café** in **Jamison Plaza** (Bowman St Macquarie) on **Friday 25 February at 11 am** please advise Pam Harris on 0418 483 627.

Lyn Morley our Retiring Coordinator by Helen Cotter

Lyn Morley, our coordinator, is retiring from the position after five years of dedicated service. She became coordinator at the end of 2016 and since then has done a remarkable job under difficult circumstances, especially with the bushfire smoke (beginning of 2020) and COVID virus over the last few years.

Prior to the difficulties of the last few years Lyn ran our meetings on a regular basis. She kept us up to date with things that were happening and gave time for discussion of various issues. Although others arranged speakers, Lyn often was the final organiser for the speaker, needing also to present them with a small thank you gift. With all of this, she was ably assisted by her husband John who organised the PowerPoint equipment – and took the photos – amongst the myriad of other jobs.

Between 2016 and 2020, Lyn oversaw such events as Education Day at the Southern Cross Club; World COPD Day, being the link between Lung Life and Lung Foundation Australia, as well as keeping us up to date on what was happening through emails and at the meetings. In 2019, she gave a talk to the Sleep Apnea Society about our group which was very well received.

In between the bushfire smoke period and the start of the virus, we were able to hold our lovely celebration commemorating 22 years since Lung Life was formed. Lyn oversaw the organisation, liaised with the Labor Club about rooms, table layout, buffet, costs and so on, as well as overseeing the roles others had undertaken – the invitations, the table decoration, seating, the PowerPoint presentation and talk etc. It was a big undertaking that was very successful, and we were lucky to get it in before the virus stopped all meetings.

Lyn has spent the last couple of years dealing with a group unable to meet. She constantly liaised with the club about possible meetings or organised alternate events – such as the popular lunches at the Irish Club. Her emails kept us in touch with what was happening. During this time, Lyn also became the oxygen representative on the DORSS committee.

It has been a most difficult time to be the coordinator and - with increasing health problems - Lyn has felt the need to step down. She has a genetic condition called Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) which causes scarring on the lungs resulting in the lungs sticking causing difficulty breathing.

In pre-COVID times, Lyn, and husband John (pictured right), enjoyed travelling – both cruises and road trips. We hope that they may be able to resume their travel soon.

So, a really big thank you Lyn for your contribution to the smooth running of Lung Life and all the work you have put into it, including all the unseen work. We wish you well.



Val Dempsey by Chris Moyle

Marvellous news! Val Dempsey has received the honour of Senior Australian of the Year for 2022. Val's acceptance speech commenced with a chuckle and a comment to her husband, 'Oh my goodness Lindsay. *We're gonna need a bigger office.* Oh seriously, one computer in the back room is not going to be big enough for what I want to do.'

As a proud St John Ambulance volunteer Val continued, 'I believe holding out a hand to someone or taking the opportunity to be kind makes all the difference and comes back to you 1000-fold. All life is precious. This is why I believe in first aid and why I believe all Australians should learn first aid to save lives.'



'Tonight I want to inspire another generation with a project that I know will save lives. If the first person on the scene of a road crash has first aid training and supports injured people within five to seven minutes of the accident, lives are saved. Bystander first aid is proven to prevent death in those vital minutes before an ambulance arrives.'

'Our national road safety strategy for the next decade aims for a 30% decrease in death and trauma through safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds and safe driver behaviour, but there will always be human error. Imagine this...every learner driver in Australia undertaking compulsory first aid training as they currently do in 11 European countries. No other single measure has the potential to educate a generation to save lives like bystander first aid does.'

'Our family was forever changed by a car accident more than three decades ago when people came to help but didn't know what to do, and a very precious life was lost. As a nation, we can rethink our approach to those critical minutes between life and death at the scene of an accident and make members of our community part of the solution.'

'And so from this humble senior Australian, nurse, wife, mother, granny, great grandma, surviving myositis patient, and proud St John Ambulance volunteer – there is no greater gift to our nation and our humanity than saving lives. Thank you.'

Val's daughter at age 17 was involved in, but survived, an accident near Black Mountain. Bystanders stepped forward to help but said they didn't know what to do. That accident, and the life lost, has resonated with Val ever since and is the inspiration for her current campaign.

Quotes are directly from Val's acceptance speech which can be viewed at:

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/australian-of-the-year-awards-2022>, Additional Reference (including photos on pages 1 and 3): <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story. Tragic death inspired Senior Australian of the Year 2022 Val Dempsey's first aid for Learner drivers campaign | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT>

Val was able to meet with our group at the Labor Club in February, having just recovered from a bout of COVID-19, contracted at Sydney Airport on Australia Day. She has recovered well with the aid of anti-viral medication and antibiotics. We wish her all the best for the year ahead.

Letter to the Editor from Barry Blight, with response from Chris Moyle

I refer to the article in the October 2021 Newsletter by Chris Moyle in reference to 'Dancing Days'. I was very interested in this article as I too went to dancing lessons at the Fred Astaire Dancing School which was opposite the Royal Children's Hospital in North Adelaide.

My church, St. Clements Anglican Church, Enfield also held regular dance lessons at the nearby community hall. St. Clements Church, Enfield was referred to as 'The Church on the Hill' and is, I understand, still serving the community. It is heritage listed and now in its 164th year having been consecrated in the year 1858. I was never good at ballroom dancing however attended such

venues as the Wonderland Ballroom, the Redlegs Club, Norwood and Stirling in the Adelaide Hills of a Saturday night in search of companionship and social outings. I was very shy at the time and like Chris spent most of my time sitting and standing away from the dance floor to get up enough courage to ask the opposite sex for a dance. Chris brought up some of her memories and we can all reflect on ours as it comforts us and, in a way, eases our current health problems.

I was introduced to CLLSG by Doctor Hurwitz and his staff from the Respiratory and Sleep Medicine at The Canberra Hospital. I have only attended one or two meetings and now find it difficult as I am on life support system and rely on oxygen supplement. I have survived many hospital admissions and am thankful for the many medical personnel plus my family who have looked after me. I am very positive but acknowledge that any improvement to my health will be a bonus. I love social interacting and firmly believe that in talking to other people we can help one another. Father Tony Percy, The Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn once said, 'Without communication we would not function. We underestimate the importance of touch. Touch is the sense of which communicates love. That is what is missing. We need to be greeting one another with a touch.' Think positive. As Stephen Hawking, Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist, once said, 'Where there is life there is hope.'

May I also congratulate Val Dempsey being named ACT's 2022 Senior Australian of the Year and the other past, current and future Australian Day nominees and recipients. Thank you, Geoff, for a wonderful newsletter and Lyn for being coordinator for the last five years of dedication.

Response from Chris Moyle

Regarding Barry Blight's letter I learnt dancing at the Aubrey Hall dancing school in North Terrace, Adelaide, but remember the Fred Astaire School. This has reminded me of an incident related to Fred Astaire (see next page).



Barry celebrating his 80th Birthday with his Grandchildren

When you know you're old from Chris Moyle

Four years ago in Canberra Hospital's A&E I found myself hooked up to oxygen and other support equipment, some of it attached to a tall pole beside my bed. After a while I needed to take a walk and the pole had to go with me. I suddenly was reminded of Fred Astaire dancing with a hat stand in an old movie. To my mind there was some similarity between the hat stand and hospital pole, so I skipped in a circle holding the pole, not quite *a la Fred* – then noticed the looks of dismay on the nurses' faces. One of them had earlier said I was the same age as his mother and he was moving her into a home, and it was better to do that sooner rather than later.

Now one nurse stepped forward to ask what on earth I was doing. 'It's a Fred Astaire dance,' I breathlessly explained. 'You know Fred?' There were only disapproving looks. It was disappointing that I had no breath to continue, but just as disappointing that not one of the concerned nursing staff had ever heard of Fred Astaire!

Fred Astaire was an American actor, dancer, singer, choreographer, and television presenter, who is widely considered the greatest dancer in film history. He lived from 10 May 1899 to 22 June 1987 (age 88).

References: [Fred Astaire Photo bing.com](#) and [Wikipedia](#)



Coordinator's role – Information on the position by Helen Cotter

Our coordinator oversees the organisation of Lung Life to ensure its smooth and efficient running.

They have two main roles:

1. To provide support for the members of Lung Life.
2. To advocate for Lung Life and to raise awareness of chronic lung conditions in the wider community.

Providing support involves **running the meetings**. This includes dealing with business, letting members know what's happening and putting the meeting agenda together.

Outside of the meeting the coordinator **attends to emails** and **oversees duties which other members perform**. These include: the organisation of social activities, the monthly newsletter, finance, reports back from other meetings; the get well and thank you cards to send as appropriate. There are also the sessions with the physiotherapy and medical students, Seniors Expo and World COPD Day and other such formal activities. It is not an onerous job because our other dedicated members efficiently carry out the work they have volunteered for.

Advocating for Lung Life involves **spreading information** as widely as possible so that members of the community know about the group. It also involves **advocating to improve issues for people with chronic lung conditions in the ACT**. In the past, woodsmoke control and oxygen provision have been two such issues. Some members of Lung Life are involved in various committees and organisations which helps the advocacy – as do some of the support areas like the newsletter and involvement in Seniors Expo, World COPD Day and so on. The newsletter goes not only to members but also to interested people in the wider community. Speakers at meetings also help advocacy as well as providing information for the members.

Lung Life is connected to Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) our parent body; Health Care Consumers Association (HCCA); and SHOUT (a self-help organisation for small groups), all good associations for advocacy and support.

Final - So, the **coordinator oversees all of this – but not on their own**. They are supported by a fabulous lot of members, some with designated jobs, and others assisting where and when they can.

Your Liver – how much do you know?

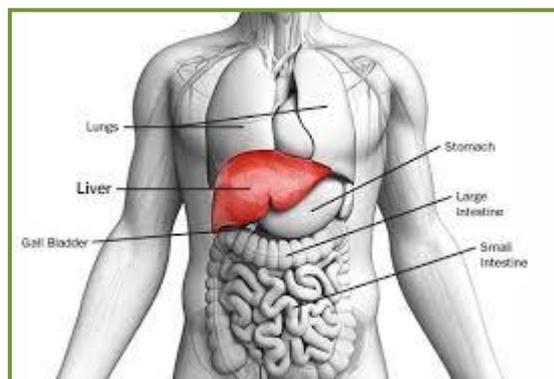
Being an organisation with a primary interest in the lungs our newsletter usually contains material about that organ; however, the lungs are part of a finely tuned system which has many important components.

The liver is large – the largest organ in the body, about the size of a rugby ball, weighing in at about 1.5kg.

Your liver is like a factory: it accepts deliveries and produces and distributes ‘goods’. It also has storage space, as well as having to dispose of waste.

Your liver’s functions include:

- **clearing your blood** of waste products, hormones, drugs, and other toxins
- **breaking down** hormones and old blood cells
- **making, storing, and releasing** sugars and fats
- **producing essential proteins**, including blood clotting factors and enzymes
- **aiding digestion** by producing bile salts to break down food
- **storing and supplying** vitamins, minerals, and iron for parts of the body where they are needed



Your liver is the **only organ that can regenerate** itself by creating new tissue. Even when mildly damaged it can still operate, albeit not as effectively.

The liver produces vitamin D, cholesterol, and anti-trypsin. Anti-trypsin **helps protect our lungs** throughout our life – yes, all interrelated.

While not all liver disease is preventable, there are **steps that can be taken to protect your liver**. These include:

- **eating well** - poor nutrition, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are amongst the most common causes of liver disease.
- **exercising regularly** – not always easy when you have a lung condition but doing a small amount of regular exercise will help your liver, your lungs and all your body and mind.
- **keep vaccinations up to date**, including Hepatitis A and B
- moderate alcohol consumption and avoid smoking

This is all very similar advice to that given to anyone with a lung condition.

References: Text - <https://www.liver.org.au/yourliver>

Diagram - <https://steemit.com/steemstem/@damzxyno/liver-anatomy-physiology-pathology-and-care>

A bit of fun to finish: An elderly Canberran was asked if he would like to contribute to the NSW floods. He said he would be happy to, but his hose only reached to the end of the driveway.