

July 2022 Newsletter

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

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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 11 August 2022
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Guest Speaker - YMCA: Physical exercise and your well being

Vale Barry Blight

1942 – 2022

Another member of Lung Life has sadly passed away.

Barry Blight was a relative newcomer to our group; owing to his own health issues, COVID restrictions, and bush fire smoke he was only able to attend meetings on a few occasions. He did, however, enjoy reading the newsletter each month. Earlier this year he wrote to your editor and his lovely letter was published in the February edition.



Barry originally hails from South Australia. He leaves behind his wife, Devi, three children and five grandchildren (pictured). Lung Life sends our condolences to his family at this time. R.I.P. Barry.

July Meeting - Marina Siemionow

Numbers were down a bit for this meeting, and we especially missed a number of our regular attendees. Val Siemionow did a check of who was here and who was not, and we heard how some of the absent members were. We especially reach out to Kaye Powell who is recovering from a hospital stay.

Marina reminded everyone of the up and coming events, especially Esther's Gift which is the lunch that Esther is shouting all members to. This will be held at the Burn's Club (Esther's favourite) on Friday 29 July. We also briefly raised the COTA Seniors and Veterans Expo scheduled for Wednesday the 14 September, calling out for volunteers to man our stall on the day along with our stall on the 16 November for World COPD Day in Cooleman Court.

Also, we briefly discussed the state of our Group's member data base which is a bit haphazard and does not reflect consistent or the most current information on our members. It was agreed that Marina would send out a questionnaire to all members electronically in the coming month and provide a paper based version for those not digitally enabled at the next meeting. All members will be asked to complete and return the form so that our member data base can be standardised and updated.

Karen Anable, one of our newer members, had just read our latest six newsletters and congratulated the team, especially the editor, responsible for putting together such an interesting and engaging newsletter; she really enjoyed the style and approach used.

We were privileged to have Lina Weber, the Seniors Liaison Officer from the Community Safety Unit, ACT Policing as our guest speaker. Lina gave a very informative and fascinating talk on Scams, focussing on those most prevalent in Canberra. She shared a range of amazing stories to illustrate her key points.

She pointed out that every person is subjected to scamming, but those of us who use digital devices are especially vulnerable. Lina advised how we all need to be on the lookout for scammers as they can appear in all avenues of our lives. Even door knockers, be they collectors for charity or people offering to undertake work in our homes and gardens, need to be checked as they too can often be scammers.

The most prevalent scams are about money. In the ACT the most common relate to dating apps which are used by scammers to gain money and gifts from unsuspecting targets. Lina described many instances of the most effective scams, all of which target relationships and peoples' emotions before seeking monetary support.

Phone scams which always attempt to take advantage of vulnerable people are also one of the more difficult types of scams to prevent. Prevention relies entirely on the individual to recognise these for themselves and hang up on the caller and to never engage with the caller.

Lina also raised Elder Abuse as one of the more prevalent issues facing the elderly and more vulnerable people in our community. She pointed out how this is usually carried out by family, often a male, but can also be a daughter or carer. Abuse is frequently financial but also emotional and at times involves physical abuse. To prevent this she advised that we should be very thoughtful when we prepare our Enduring Power of Attorney and be careful.

Get together at Southern Cross Club Jamison

An intimate group of only nine members attended lunch at the Southern Cross Club in Jamison on what turned out to be a very cold and blustery day. Nevertheless conversation was abundant, and a good time was had by all, over good food and in the warmth of the club rooms.

COPD: The Basics – Your Healthcare Team - Chris Moyle

As well as your doctor, there are other health professionals who can help you manage your COPD - this is your healthcare team. A respiratory nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, or dietician may be part of your healthcare team. You may choose to ask one or more of your family or friends to also be part of your healthcare team. They can assist by attending appointments with you or helping you monitor your symptoms.

Regular visits with your healthcare team are important

Having regular contact with your healthcare team will help you to stay in control of your COPD symptoms. You should go to your appointments even if you are feeling well.

You can talk to your healthcare team about:

- Changes in your symptoms, or flare-ups
- Your medicines, including any side effects
- Other conditions you may have and their impact on your health and wellbeing
- Strategies to self-manage your COPD
- Environmental risk factors you may have recently been exposed to such as smoking, dust or fumes.

Tips for appointments with your healthcare team

It is important that you understand the information your healthcare team gives you during appointments. It is also equally important that they understand your personal needs and what is important to you. The following tips can help you get the most out of your appointments with your doctor and other members of your healthcare team:

- **Keep a symptom diary** to help you monitor your symptoms over time. Discuss any change in symptoms at your next appointment.
- **Use a notebook** to keep track of the information you discuss with your healthcare team. Take it with you to all appointments.
- Before your appointment **make a list of questions** and concerns in your notebook. List them in order of priority. If you have a number of questions you may need to make a longer appointment or schedule a second visit.
- **Show your list to your healthcare professional** at the beginning of your appointment and decide together what you will discuss during this visit.
- **Take a friend or family member** to your appointments for support.
- **Ask your health professional to write information** in your notebook for you to refer to again.
- **If you don't understand something**, ask your healthcare professional to repeat the information or to explain it in a different way. Do not avoid asking questions because you are afraid or embarrassed. Your healthcare team is there to help you.
- Ask about the **best way to contact your healthcare team** in case you have medical questions, or if you suspect a flare-up.
- Let your healthcare team know **if you are worried about the cost** of your health treatments. They can help you find the best solution.

Reference: <https://lungfoundation.com.au/resources/copd-the-basics-booklet/>

Hospital Story - Chris Moyle

On one occasion in hospital I found myself sharing a 2-bed ward with an elderly man. I was close to the door, and he was beyond the curtain next to the window. After lights out one night there was a disturbance which woke me at about 2am. A woman had walked in and went straight to my neighbour Jack's bedside. I heard them talking and he asked, 'What's your name?'

'Margaret,' she replied, and a hushed conversation followed. A nurse arrived and escorted the woman out. I was fully awake after that with my neighbour up and wanting to chat.

'I know that woman,' he told me. 'I've met her before. She's upstairs and I'll visit her tomorrow.'

Next morning after breakfast Jack disappeared and nurses kept asking me if I knew where he'd gone. I remembered the previous night's incident and reported that he was visiting the woman who was here last night. I was pleased to show, in my rather incapacitated state, that I was on the ball and could be helpful.

'Really?' said the nurse.

Lunchtime came and went and then dinner arrived, but no sign of Jack. Word was that he couldn't be found and had probably left the hospital. Quite a mystery. I pictured him meeting with Margaret upstairs. Perhaps they'd left together.

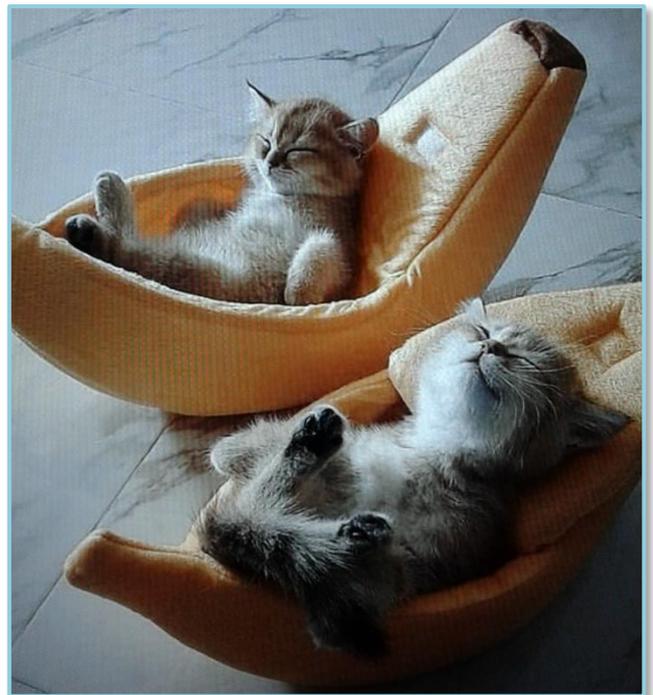
The next step was to contact Jack's next of kin and the following morning Jack was escorted back to his bed with his son in tow. He was completely at ease and unfazed by the questions.

'Where did you go?'

'Home,' he said. And the big question – the reason for going home?

'I had to feed the cat.' Of course. Why wouldn't you go home when your best friend is no doubt starving and needs sustenance.

From that time onwards unfortunate staff members took it in turns sitting by his bed for a 24 hour vigil. Presumably the cat received good meals at home, and after that I was less inclined to believe room-mates' stories.



Take Control: Live Well Program - Helen Cotter

This is a three week program about living well with a chronic condition run by Canberra Health Services. Some members of Lung Life have already done this program and recommend it for the knowledge and confidence it brought.

You'll look at such areas as:

- getting the most out of your health appointments
- exercising and eating to help your health
- looking after your mental health
- finding correct and reliable health information
- setting goals and achieving them
- finding the local supports available to you.

You'll end up with a personal plan to improve your wellbeing, a handbook with useful resources, the option to receive regular SMS/text message support to help you reach your goals for up to 6 months, and a reunion session after 6 months.

You can take this program either in person (once a week for 2.5 hours at various locations across Canberra) or online (once a week for 1.5 hours).

To register, you just need to call [Central Health Intake](tel:0251249977) on [02 5124 9977](tel:0251249977).

If you'd like more information about the program, please feel free to email: SelfManagement@act.gov.au

See below for a full list of upcoming program locations, dates and times. Please note, places in each group are limited so book as soon as possible.

- Tuggeranong Community Health Centre on Wednesday from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm, starting 10 August 2022.
- Northside Community Service (Dickson) on Tuesday from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm, starting 6 September 2022.

Where they're located

- [Belconnen Community Health Centre](#)
- [Phillip Community Health Centre](#)
- [Gungahlin Community Health Centre](#)
- [Village Creek \(Kambah\) Community Health Centre](#)

Finding comfort after a loss – researched by Chris Moyle

Grief, simply put, is adjusting to a loss. It can be the loss of a loved one, a dream, a job, or a faith. It can be big or small, last for hours or years, feel as sharp as the cut of a knife or dull as a deep bruise.

No matter the specific circumstances, grief is always normal. 'Grief isn't an illness. It's not a sign something went wrong. It's actually a sign something is going right,' says licensed social worker and psychotherapist Abigail Nathanson, a professor of grief and trauma. 'Grief is simply a part of having relationships. We're hardwired to seek out relationships, and we're hardwired to mourn when they end.' Knowing that grieving is both expected and understandable is the first step to coping with the pain. 'The goal of grief is not 'How do I stop being sad?' but 'How do I carry this and still live my life in a meaningful way?'

There is no one 'right' way to grieve, nor is there a prescription for getting through it. However, there are some things that many people find helpful during the process, she says. One of the most beneficial things for people mourning any loss is to find a community of others who understand and can sympathise. One way to do that is through reading mourning quotes from people who have loved and lost and lived to talk about it.

Longreach and Tambo - George's Outback Adventure Continues...



George is nearing the end of his 2022 outback adventure and was recently in the Queensland town of Longreach. It was near Longreach that he spotted this paddle steamer.

'Hi from Longreach where I found the Pride of the Murray berthed on the Thomson River being made ready to take passengers on a cruise. The paddle steamer came from Echuca. As it is 9m wide the whole road was taken up by the float'.

As George has informed us the paddle steamer came up by road. The Thomson River is too far north to be part of the Murray Darling System; rather it is part of the Lake Eyre Basin. The Thomson flows south west to a confluence with the Barcoo where together they form Cooper Creek. According to Wikipedia this is the only place in the world where two rivers join to form a creek.

Located right on the Tropic of Capricorn, Longreach has a population of over 3000 people, and it is a well-known tourist destination – your editor has been there for one. Highlights of the town include the Qantas Heritage Museum and Stockman's Hall of Fame.

Tambo with a population of around 400 is quite a bit smaller than Longreach. It is also a little further south, for that is the direction that George is now heading.

'Hi from Tambo where the wind is quite cold. Due to the rain I am unable to complete my holiday to Mossman and Port Douglas, so I am on my way home; not happy but the weather has beaten me this year. I can't get off the bitumen road as the sides are damp and you can sink and become bogged. See you maybe for the August meeting'.

Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomson_River_\(Queensland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomson_River_(Queensland))