



## May 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 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
10:15 am - 12 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Guest Speaker from ACT Police - How to recognise and deal with scams

### Vale Esther Fitton and Sharon Ross

We're sad to hear of the deaths of both Esther and Sharon.

**Esther** (pictured right) died on Thursday 12 May after a long illness. She was a stalwart of Lung Life, continuing after her husband Ray died of COPD many years ago.

Esther, along with Ray, was one of the founding members of Lung Life in 1998 and remained fully committed until she was no longer able to attend. She developed an auto immune illness which couldn't be controlled so she spent many months in and out of hospital. It was sad to see such a positive vital person having to put up with so much. We will all miss her.



As Esther was so significant to Lung Life, we will have a fuller piece about her in the next newsletter.

Three representatives from Lung Life – Pam, Margaret, and Helen C - attended **Sharon's** funeral, which unfortunately was the same day and time as the Lung Life meeting. Sharon died in late April, after dealing with pulmonary fibrosis for many years and then developing lung cancer. She was an amazing person with a very varied life.

Sharon was born in Junee and lived in quite a few NSW towns. She worked at many different jobs including switch board operator, country mail distributor and short order cook. Sharon married twice but, in between, brought up her kids as a single mum. She finally moved to Canberra to be near her children. There they became aware of her many interests – gardening, photography, and crafts such as knitting and crocheting for charity and hospitals. One of her big interests was crafting and selling soaps at the markets.

Sharon was a member of Lung Life for a short while before she became too ill to attend. She was a lovely person and will be sorely missed by all.

*By Helen Cotter*

## **May Meeting**

Thanks to Janette Morgan who took notes at the monthly meeting and wrote the informative summary about our guest speaker, Craig Allen. Also thanks to Chris Moyle for a little additional information about the meeting and our recently retired Coordinator, Lyn Morley.

- Lyn Morley has been admitted to hospital with a lung infection. We wish her a speedy recovery.
- Marina distributed a comprehensive draft program of meetings and events throughout the year, and discussion followed about upcoming events - which included the Seniors Expo on 26 May.

## **Our Guest Speaker, Craig Allen by Janette Morgan**

Craig Allen presented a detailed talk about his experiences with mental health issues such as bipolar and depression for 45 years. Craig described how his life became a cycle of self-medication, addiction, and alcohol abuse. From a good public service job as team leader of an ACT Parking Operations team, he became unemployed.

After attempts to get clean Craig adopted a holistic approach and self-help to treat his mental health issues. He undertook a drug and alcohol counselling course overcoming dyslexia to graduate. He commenced an exercise and a supplementary medicine regime. Finally, he undertook hypnosis and now runs a successful business of psychotherapy and hypnosis.

Craig explained that our thoughts create our emotions. He suggests to control what we can control and ignore what we cannot control. We must note how we view circumstances, and notes that happy thoughts lead to happier thoughts. We should avoid ‘globalised thinking’ where we say, ‘all men can’t be trusted’. Focus on things outside oneself to move to a positive mindset. Importantly choose your thoughts, dismissing negative ones as destructive to one’s wellbeing.

Craig gave a demonstration of his hypnosis technique which he conducts in his room. Sessions last 20 to 25 minutes, and his phone number is 0404 027 341.

The meeting warmly congratulated Craig for his presentation to the group and for his personal success.



*Sharon at our 2018 mid-winter dinner*

## From the Editor

Just in case you were wondering the guest speaker was not the well-known ABC newsreader, Craig Allen. They just happen to share the same name.

The *News from the Editor* opposite definitely wasn't written by your editor. He isn't nearly that clever or funny. It was sent in by Chris Moyle. As good a writer as Chris is your editor doesn't think she wrote it either - but have a read and a good laugh.

You may remember the **silos art** photographed by **John Morley** in Colbinabbin, Victoria, on the front page of the April edition. Well here is another photo from the same location.

Painted by artist Tim Bowtell, the work was undertaken after a community survey as to what themes should be part of the work. There are five themes in all. The parts you can see in this photo are *Community Gatherings* – The Farmer's Picnic, and *Agriculture/ Rural Aspects* – the train and station.

Thanks John. Your editor feels a drive to see it for himself would be worthwhile.

<https://www.colbinabbinsiloarttrail.com.au>

### News from the Editor:

These lockdowns are getting annoying and quite frankly, I've had enough. I've discussed the matter over a cup of tea with the kitchen sink, and we both agree that the experience is draining.

I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts the wrong spin on everything.

Same with the fridge. He only gives cold shoulder. I asked the lamp, but she couldn't shed any new light on the situation.

The vacuum cleaner was rather rude and told me to suck it up Princess. The threshold was no better, it suggested I get over it. The carpet advised me to sweep my feelings under the rug. But the fan was more upbeat and thought that the crisis would soon blow over.

The toilet looked a bit flushed and didn't offer an opinion.

The wall didn't say a word either, just gave me a blank stare.

The doorknob was more forthcoming - told me to get a firm grip on the situation and move on.

The front door declared I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to.... you guessed it right - pull myself together.

Then the chair told me to table it, and the table remarked, I didn't have a leg to stand on. When I told the table to break a leg, the mirror said that my comments reflected poorly on my thinking.

I then asked the fireplace but she was too burnt out to respond. However, in the end, the iron set things straight. She said everything will be fine.

No situation is too pressing for long anyways.



## Thanking volunteers

**May 16-22 was National Volunteer Week** – a time to thank all those who volunteer to support people and the community in many different ways.

Lung Life members are among those who volunteer. They range from the Coordinator with all the overview work that they have to do through to those who organise our events and do behind the scenes work. These include ‘doing’ the finances and newsletter, organising social activities, arranging speakers, sending cards, upgrading name tags and a myriad of other beneficial actions.

So, thank you to all of you lovely volunteers.

## Good News and Some Bad by Helen Cotter

We celebrate **National Reconciliation Week** this year between 27 May and 3 June, marking three significant dates:

- the 1967 Referendum which was an overwhelming ‘yes’ to allow Indigenous people to be recognised as part of Australia through inclusion in the census
- the unity and identity of Torres Strait Islanders with their own flag in 1992 (pictured right)
- the 1992 Mabo decision that effectively recognised that Indigenous people were the original inhabitants of Australia and allowed them to claim their home territories if possible



These were great steps forward in our Australian identity – yet there are still further steps to take.

Currently, Indigenous Australians lag behind non-Indigenous Australians on health issues. When you look at chronic lung conditions, they are a major cause of poor health and death in Indigenous Australians. About one third of Indigenous Australians have some type of serious respiratory condition – this is nearly twice the rate of non-Indigenous Australians.

Generally, Indigenous Australians are more likely to have to go to hospital because of the severity of their condition than non-Indigenous Australians – and are more likely to die.

A lot more needs to be done within the Indigenous community to improve First Nations People’s health, but what a great day it would be if both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have the same range of outcomes for their chronic lung conditions.



References: [Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - Respiratory Health - Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet \(ecu.edu.au\)](#)  
[1.04 Respiratory disease - AIHW Indigenous HPF](#)

2022 Aboriginal calendar of significant events - Creative Spirits, retrieved from <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-calendar#may>

**Lung Foundation Australia (LFA)** is your national body for research and support for people living with a lung condition:

- ✓ working to improve your lung health
- ✓ advocating for research and policy change
- ✓ raising awareness about the symptoms and prevalence of your lung disease
- ✓ supporting equal access for you to treatment and care

LFA provides services and information on many types of lung diseases, including lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis, pulmonary fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension, respiratory infections, and rare lung disease in children.

It has a **helpline** where you can get free, confidential information and support – including from a respiratory care nurse, a lung cancer support nurse and a lung cancer social worker. Some of our members have already used this help line and have found it very worthwhile. They also provide information on peer support programs, exercise programs and other resource information.

Their number is: **1800 654 301 - Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm**. Call them and you will be connected to the relevant service. You'll find a lot of information on their comprehensive **web page** - [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au) - and many fact sheets on all sorts of topics that you can download. It explains how your lungs work and how to look after them. They also offer peer support and webinars.

One of their services is providing **support to support groups** all around Australia. Lung Life of course is one of the support groups. LFA supports us in many ways (although recently prevented by COVID-19) such as:

- ✓ assisting with events like World COPD Day in November
- ✓ providing many of our handouts
- ✓ running national committees with representatives (currently Kaye and Caroline)

The national committees receive information and feedback from support groups to help improve overall understanding and services.

It really is a good idea to have a look at their website and just see the range of things they offer - you'd be surprised.

If you are not online or need assistance with technology, you may like to get a family member or friend to assist you to view some of LFA's great information.

***From LFA:***

*One in three Australians are impacted by lung disease.*

*It's the second leading cause of death.*

*45 loved ones lost every day*

***Q. If one in three are impacted by a lung disease, how many are there in the ACT ?***

The LFA has an informative e-newsletter that you can subscribe to, just go to [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au) to sign up. You may have seen the most recent edition which Marina emailed to our group.

**Winter Wellness Tips From LFA** – for online readers note words in *green* are links to LFA website

Take steps to protect yourself against respiratory infections like [influenza](#), [pneumonia](#) and [COVID-19](#). This year it's more important than ever with **experts predicting that infection rates will soar**.

**Preparation is key** to staying as well as possible during the winter months. Now is the time to make an appointment with your GP to ensure your medications and vaccinations are up to date, and that you have an action plan in place.

The importance of a **balanced diet and regular exercise** is no secret. You can find a range of helpful resources including at-home exercise videos and goal-setting tools on the website - link [here](#). [Healthy eating](#) doesn't have to be complicated – choosing nutritious and easy to prepare snacks and meals that only need a few ingredients can help to keep preparation time short and you nourished.

Dedicating time to looking after your **mental health and emotional wellbeing** is just as important as your physical health – in fact the two can impact one another. LFA have a suite of online resources to help you navigate the unique challenges of living with a lung disease. Visit LFA's Mind Matters hub, [here](#).

### Tips for visiting the doctor

Start a **symptom diary** and make entries each day, taking note of any flare-ups and factors that could have caused this, like cleaning a dusty room. Use your symptom diary to jot down any questions or concerns to jog your memory during your appointment.

**Be sure to ask questions during your appointments.** Request for the doctor to write information in your symptom diary notebook, so you can easily refer to it when needed. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask your healthcare team more questions or tell them if you don't understand something.

**Ask for the support of your family and friends.** An extra pair of ears can be helpful to digest the recommendations of your healthcare team or provide a little extra reassurance.

Having a robust **healthcare team** to provide specialist care and expertise is crucial to effectively managing and living well with COPD. Alongside your doctor, your healthcare team may also include a respiratory nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, or dietician. It's really important that you feel heard and supported by your healthcare team. Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion if you feel like you're not getting the care you deserve.

Reference: Lung Foundation Australia e-newsletter April 2022