

## January 2023 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> February 2023  
10:15 am – 12:00 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

2022 Senior Australian of the Year Val Dempsey will be the guest speaker.

### From the Editor

Happy New Year to all our Lung Life newsletter readers. Your editor had a quiet but pleasant Christmas and New Year. Rather than seeing in the New Year by staying up late yours truly got some sleep so he could be up early for a bike ride around the lake. It was very peaceful with only a few other people around.

Since our November edition we have had two meetings as well as two social functions, so read on ...



*Are they doing some stretching exercises or is something blocking their view? Chris G, Jenny, Pam, Marilyn, Linda, and Val (background) are all interested listeners at the meeting.*

## January Meeting - Karen Anabel and Marina Siemionow

Seventeen members attended our January meeting which began with a short discussion on the Lung Life pamphlets. **Helen Cotter asked for a volunteer to take over from her to manage the printing and distribution of pamphlets.** For over a decade she has arranged for the printing of the pamphlets and provided them to Lung Life members to distribute across Canberra (Editor: *Would you be able to help out by taking this duty on?*). Attendees also highlighted the current spread of COVID across the Community suggesting the need for everyone to take care.



**The guest speaker was Daniel O'Sullivan, an Exercise Physiologist** (pictured), who is the owner of Accelr8 Rehabilitation; he was accompanied by his work colleague Sam O'Sullivan (not related). Apart from being an Exercise Physiologist Daniel is a soft tissue massage therapist. He uses this skill in the treatment of chronic conditions and chronic pain.

Daniel has taken an intense interest in Long COVID and summarised his understanding of the condition for us. He pointed out that the USA was far more advanced in its understanding and treatment of Long COVID than Australia presently is. He stated that damage to the body from COVID is likely to be cumulative and can affect all the organs in the body. He also pointed out that long term immunity from the virus was not yet possible, no matter what anyone says.

Long COVID, also known as post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, is a term used to describe the lingering health effects that some people experience after recovering from COVID-19. These effects can include fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle aches, brain fog, stomach issues and other symptoms that can last for weeks or even months after the initial infection.

Daniel highlighted how a variety of predisposing factors like genetics, personality types, mental health conditions, lifestyle factors, and food intolerances (along with a range of other issues) could be triggered by getting COVID.

He suggested that Long COVID can be diagnosed through a process of elimination. Daniel referred to the findings of Dr Clare Taylor who identified that 100% of all patients with long COVID tested so far have clots. If not PE (pulmonary embolism) or DVT (deep vein thrombosis) there are micro clots. He also advised that anyone who believes they may be suffering from long COVID should go to their GP and ensure a proper diagnosis and if not satisfied, try a different GP.

Daniel stated that recovery from Long COVID needs determination and patience. It requires the patient to apply good general health principles on an ongoing basis. This includes diet, adequate sleep, and movement, but not necessarily very much exercise to start with.

Daniel has a comprehensive blog on his **website**, [www.accelr8rehab.com.au](http://www.accelr8rehab.com.au) with videos and free downloads. He can be contacted by:

**Email** [daniel@accelr8rehab.com.au](mailto:daniel@accelr8rehab.com.au)

**Phone:** 0402 837 864.

**Address:** Accelr8 Rehab, Shop 1 Weetangera Place, Weetangera, ACT 2614

Home visits are also available.



... and from Chris Moyle: ‘The session ended with a video and a quote from Maya Angelou, an American poet and writer.’

I’ve learned that people will forget what you said,

people will forget what you did,

but people will never forget how you made them feel.

*Photo: Daniel getting his message across.  
Meeting photos taken by Val Siemionow.*

## **Christmas Celebrations at the Irish Club** – Marina Siemionow

Twenty-seven members gathered at the Irish Club on Friday the 16 December for a wonderful Christmas celebration.

The Club had decorated the tables and Marilyn and Kaye had packed six incredible hampers to be raffled off. Everybody bought tickets, the Christmas bon bons were popped, silly hats were worn, and gifts and jokes shared. Six lucky members took home amazing hampers. A good time was had by all.

**Editor:** Thank you to everyone who donated items for the hampers; approximately \$200 was raised.



*Stephen and Marilyn Allen enjoying the Christmas Lunch*

## **Lung Life Lunch at Oaks Brasserie Café** – Val and Marina Siemionow

There were 14 of us who attended lunch in Yarralumla, on 25 November 2022. The weather was beautiful, the setting idyllic, the birds were singing, the food was adequate, and the socialisation dynamic. Everyone appreciated being outdoors, enjoying the fresh air and stunning surroundings. The conversations lingered on into the afternoon.

**Editor:** Val Dempsey found time out from her Senior Australian of the Year duties to attend. Here she is with John Morley enjoying the sunshine.



## December Meeting - Marina Siemionow

Only a small contingent of 10 members attended the final meeting for the year. It was a confused start as there was a mix up with the Club, who had booked the meeting room to a different group on the understanding that we did not normally have a formal December meeting. The Club kindly accommodated us in the main bar seating area which became a bit noisy especially towards the end.

We discussed a range of topics. Points raised included:

- Christmas lunch cost was \$35.00, and the Group agreed to subsidise everyone's lunch by \$5.00 to reduce the cost to \$30.00.
- Hampers - Marilyn thanked all members for their donations and highlighted that she received plenty of items. People were very generous.

**Kaye** (pictured) briefed us on the Lung Foundation's presentation to Parliament of their report 'Transforming the Agenda for COPD'. It was decided that the group receive a briefing on the report at one of our meetings, preferably March. Kaye agreed to organise this.



**Pam** spoke about the co-design group she and Marina were taking part in for a new home based care service to be offered to people suffering from breathlessness in Canberra. The service will be piloted in Canberra from March 2023.

- Pam and Marina were provided with a book on managing breathlessness. Pam will make it available to group members after the co-design process is complete.
- It was also decided that this group should arrange to be briefed on the service at one of our meetings. Marina agreed to arrange this hopefully for our April meeting.

**Marina** led a discussion on plans for next year's meetings:

- **February** - Val Dempsey has agreed to talk to us about her amazing year as Senior Australian of the Year in 2022.
- **March** - Kaye has agreed to invite Mark from the Lung Foundation to talk about the report on 'Transforming the Agenda for COPD'.
- **April** - Marina will arrange for Ros Kirk to talk about the new *breathlessness home based service* to be offered to Canberrans.
- **May** - No speaker.

### Monthly lunches:

- It was suggested that we return to the Oaks Brasserie again while weather is warm.
- Rodney's was also suggested for a summer lunch, but we would need to sort something out for parking.

**Right: Maureen and Marina**  
*'enjoying the ambience' of the Oaks Brasserie*



## What is COPD? Part 2 – Chris Moyle (reprinted from August 2020)

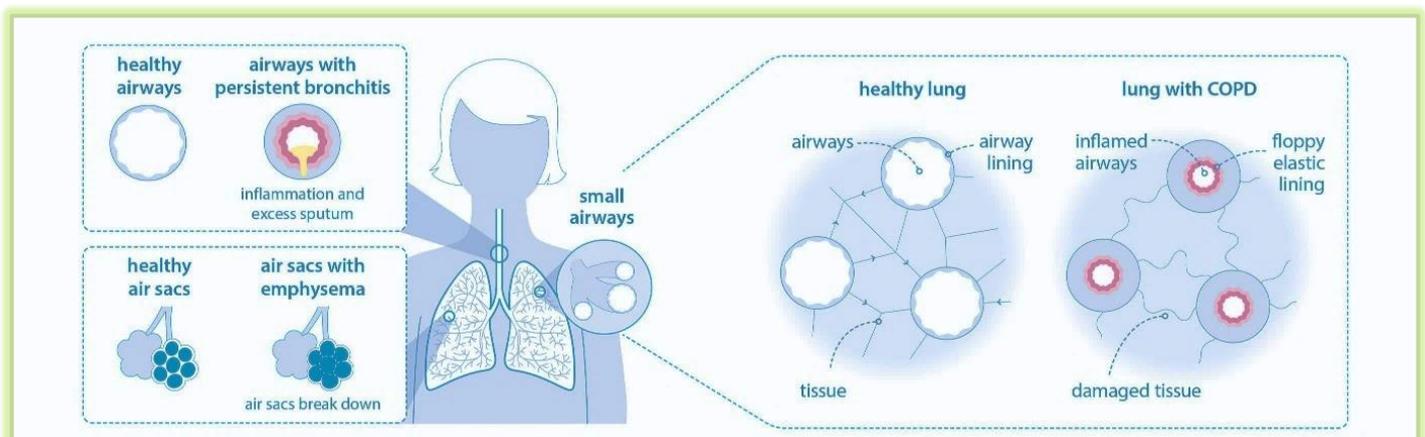
COPD is an umbrella term for a group of lung conditions including **emphysema**, **chronic bronchitis**, and **chronic asthma**.

**What is emphysema?** Emphysema is a condition in which air gets trapped inside the lungs making it harder to breathe in again. The main symptom of emphysema is breathlessness. Air becomes trapped inside the air sacs (alveoli).

**What is chronic bronchitis?** Chronic bronchitis is a constant and long-lasting irritation and swelling of the airways. The main symptoms of chronic bronchitis are coughing and increased secretions from the lungs - such as mucus.

**What is chronic asthma?** Asthma is a condition that affects the small airways. When you experience asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow, meaning there is less space for the air to flow in and out of your lungs. Usually with asthma, medicines can reverse symptoms and open the airways. In chronic asthma, however, the medicines do not fully open the airways, meaning it is irreversible. This is categorised as COPD.

There are many **causes of COPD**, which may include: **smoking** - this includes if you currently smoke, have smoked in the past, or are exposed to passive smoking; **environmental factors**, such as working or living in areas where there is dust, gas, chemical fumes, smoke or air pollution; **genetics** - a small number of people have a form of emphysema caused by a protein disorder called **alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency (AATD)** (Editor: *Your editor is one of these 'small number of people'*). This is where the body finds it difficult to produce one of the proteins (Alpha-1) which protects the lungs. The first symptoms of COPD can be subtle and may overlap with other lung and heart conditions. They may also be mistaken for signs of getting older, being overweight or unfit.



### COPD is a progressive lung condition with three stages:

**1. Mild COPD** The first symptoms of COPD tend to come on slowly and can be very mild. In the early stages, you may not have symptoms all the time and you may find there is very little or no impact on your life or independence. You may cough up mucus in the mornings or feel more short of breath than usual if you walk quickly or exert yourself.

**2. Moderate COPD** As COPD progresses, you may notice symptoms almost every day and find it harder to do your normal daily activities such as gardening, hanging out the washing, or carrying groceries without feeling short of breath. Other symptoms may include: **a repetitive cough** that doesn't get better (this is due to a build-up of mucus in the airways); **increased mucus production**, which is often thick, and white or brownish in colour; **feeling tired**, and **more chest infections** or taking a bit longer to recover from a cold or chest infection.

**3. Severe COPD** In severe COPD, you will likely experience symptoms most of the time. You may find it **hard to walk** up stairs or across the room without feeling very short of breath; **feel tired more of the time**, despite resting; **cough frequently** and cough up a lot more mucus; **feel frustrated** with the constant need to clear your mucus from your airways; get **chest infections** frequently and take several weeks to recover from a cold or chest infection.

Reference: [COPD The Basics - Lung Foundation Australia](#)

## ... and finally a joke

A young doctor moves to a country town to replace a GP who is retiring. The older man invites the young doctor to accompany him on his rounds.

At the first house a widower complains, 'I've been suffering from a rumbling stomach and the runs.'

The older doctor says, 'Well, you've probably been overdoing the fresh fruit. Why not cut back and see if that helps?'

As they leave, the younger doctor says, 'How did you come to that diagnosis?'

'Well, you noticed I dropped my stethoscope on the floor in there. When I bent down to pick it up, I noticed half a dozen banana skins and orange peels in the waste bin.'

The younger doctor said, 'Pretty clever. If you don't mind, I'll try that diagnostic approach at the next house.'

There, they spend several minutes talking with a young woman who says, 'I'm feeling terribly tired lately.'

The young doctor observes, 'You've probably been too active for the church. Perhaps you should cut back a bit and see if that helps.'

As they leave, the older doctor said, 'I attend the same church and your diagnosis is almost certainly correct, but how did you arrive at it?'

'Well,' replied the younger man, 'when I dropped my stethoscope and bent down to pick it up, I saw the vicar under the bed.'

Reference: City News - Clive Williams, 23-29 June 2022 - supplied by Chris Moyle