

## March 2024 Newsletter

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

**Editor:**

**Geoff Cox**

While our regular email is not available, please contact the Coordinator.

**Coordinator:**

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**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 11 April 2024  
10:15 am – 12:00 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

In April the guest speaker/s will be from COTA – hope you can join us.

### From the Editor

Your editor is back. Unfortunately on this occasion he was not missing because he was hiking up a mountain or exploring the outback. No. This time it was cytomegalovirus (CMV). Never heard of it? Well it is very common, and you may have had it yourself without even realising it. About 50% of Aussies have.

Thanks everyone who contributed to the production of the summer newsletters. A special thank you to Helen Cotter who stepped up and acted as the guest editor.



**Caroline, Kaye, the Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney, and Naomi (from Adelaide) at Parliament House.**

As your editor has not actually been doing his 'job' for a few months now, some photos and information have been held over. The photo above is from **COPD Day**, which you may recall was in November last year. It was taken at Parliament House where the CEO of Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) Mark Brooke and other stakeholders meet with government officials.

## Lung Foundation Australia (LFA)

Here is a summary of some of the work Lung Foundation Australia has been doing. For those readers who are viewing this online you can click the link in green if you would like to view the interesting document which was launched in 2022.

*On World COPD Day 2022, Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) launched the COPD Blueprint, [Transforming the agenda for COPD: A path towards prevention and lifelong lung health](#). This report provides the government with five urgent actions to drive significant and positive change that will improve outcomes for thousands of families impacted by COPD, and the lives of all Australians through better lung health.*

*On World COPD Day 2023, Lung Foundation Australia is calling on the federal government to take urgent action to improve COPD care that costs the Australian health system an estimated \$1 billion a year. The time to act is now. Six Australians with lived experience of COPD, shown in this video, ask the Australian Government to act on COPD diagnosis and community management.*

Lung Life member Kaye can be seen in the video which is mentioned. You will find her and other participants by clicking the link [Transforming the agenda for COPD - Lung Foundation Australia](#).

The reference for this information is the LFA website which can also be found by clicking the above link.

## March Meeting – Helen Cotter

We had an increasing number of members at this meeting, including a few new ones – so pleasing to see.

Caroline Polak Scowcroft talked about an LFA/Asthma meeting she recently attended in Brisbane. It's good to see the two respiratory support groups working closer together. Caroline would like to see LFA being more communicative with the support groups as the LFA does a lot of things we don't hear about. (Editor – see above for information about LFA news and initiatives).

Caroline also mentioned COTA ACT (Council on the Ageing) and the great things they do. At their base in Hughes, they have a wall of useful pamphlets worth checking out. We can look forward to representatives from COTA coming to speak to us next month.

Marina talked about the LFA stall (which we are staffing) at the Governor General's Open Day. She has created pin-up boards to promote the Lung Life Support Group (see page 6).

Karen, our Treasurer, has transferred the Lung Life bank account from St George to Beyond Bank, the community bank in Weston. The bank has some grant money, so Karen is investigating this. She has also contacted the Federal Minister for Bean, David Smith, to see if he has grant money available.

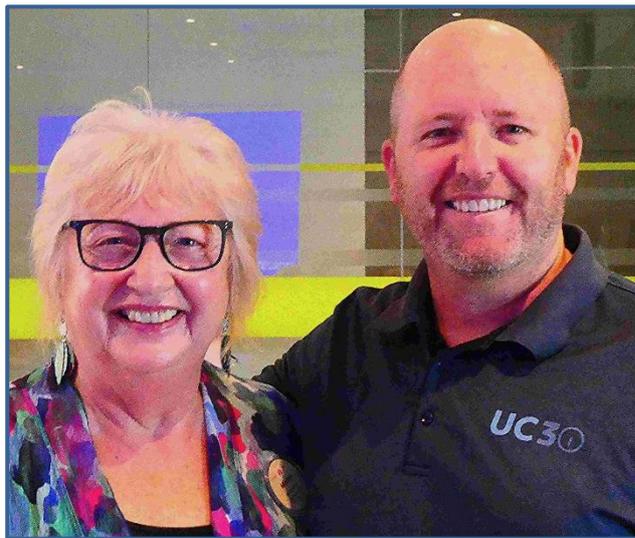
## Guest Speaker – Richie Talbot from UC

Richie worked at Canberra Hospital for many years, in the cardiorespiratory section, and now lectures at University of Canberra in the cardiorespiratory unit. As part of his role, he helps organise and manage clinical placements of physiotherapy students.

The Physiotherapy course has two degrees: a Bachelors and an entry level Masters. The course teaches three core areas: musculoskeletal, neurological, and cardiorespiratory plus a few smaller areas. This year, there are about 650 clinical placements to be found.

In the cardiorespiratory area, they teach two parts: intensive care, then cardio and pulmonary rehabilitation. **As part of their training students are required to meet with volunteers who have a lung condition. This interaction gives them some vital hands-on experience.**

Richie is asking for people with a lung condition to come to the University of Canberra Campus for **two one hour sessions. These sessions will be over two consecutive weeks. You'll be interviewed and assessed, complete a questionnaire, try 2 x 6 minute walks, and participate in an individual session of exercise.**



**Richie with Marina at the meeting**

As a volunteer, you will get the benefit of up-to-date assessment of your condition as well as of your current health and you may learn new beneficial exercises (as well as getting morning or afternoon tea). The students will have hands on experience of real people and the reality of living with their condition.

There were some questions about the ease of parking and Richie assured us that there was 'closish' parking, and that you could ask for a wheelchair from the lift to the assessment room. Talk to Marina or Richie about the venue and the parking. The details are below if you'd like to volunteer. Richie would like about 28 volunteers.

### **Volunteering to assist the Physio Students at UC**

Thursday 11 April **and** Thursday 18 April – either at 9:00 am, 11:30 am, or 2:00 pm.

OR

Friday 12 **and** Friday 19 April at 9:00 am or 11:00 am.

You are signing up for the two Thursdays OR the two Fridays.

There is also the possibility of a wheelchair from the lift.

Please contact Marina or Richie if you'd like to volunteer or want more details.

Marina: [marinasiemionow@gmail.com](mailto:marinasiemionow@gmail.com) ph: 0429 629 180

Richie: [Richie.Talbot@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Richie.Talbot@canberra.edu.au) ph: 02 6201 2161 (office)  
mobile: 0404 684 892

## A Joke from Chris Moyle

Remember we sometimes need to get our hearing checked.

An ageing woman went to her optometrist for a diagnosis of macular degeneration, and then told her husband, *'I've got immaculate regeneration'*.

Husband, *'That's nice dear.'*

## February Lunch at the Oaks Brasserie, Yarralumla – Marina and Val Siemionow

Fourteen of our members braved the storm that unexpectedly hit Canberra on Friday 23 February just as we were about to come together over lunch in the beautiful gardens of the Oaks Brasserie. Although we heard a few thunderclaps and the rain bucketed down for a while we remained dry and comfortable under the pavilion where the café had set our table.

Despite the inclement weather, and the roar of thunder, conversations continued throughout the afternoon. Our *Recruitment and Publicity working group* even took the opportunity to have their first meeting.

Towards the end of the meal the storm passed over us and the sun came out warming up the Pavilion. The staff kindly rolled up the walls and we were able to enjoy the fresh air and get a glimpse of the beautiful gardens.



**Colette Mommer and Val Dempsey.**



**Marilyn and Stephen Allen.**

## Important Dates for your Diary

**Friday 26 April** – Lunch at Raiders at Weston.

**Wednesday 25 September** – Seniors Expo

**Wednesday 20 November** – World COPD Day

Other lunches (usually held on the last Friday of a month) will be organised at monthly meetings.

## Devilbiss Suction Machine

We have received a donation of a Devilbiss suction machine that we'd like to pass on to someone who can benefit from it.



It comes with its tubing and other items.  
If it's of use to you, please **contact Helen Cotter** on [cotterhe@hotmail.com](mailto:cotterhe@hotmail.com) or phone: 02 6281 2988.

The cost? A donation to the Canberra Lung Life Support Group would be much appreciated.

Devilbiss VacuAide QSU  
Portable Suction Unit

## Taxi Subsidy Scheme – Helen Cotter

If you're having trouble getting around, you can get assistance from the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS). It provides assistance to ACT residents with a disability or significant mobility restriction which prevents them from using public or community transport.

This includes:

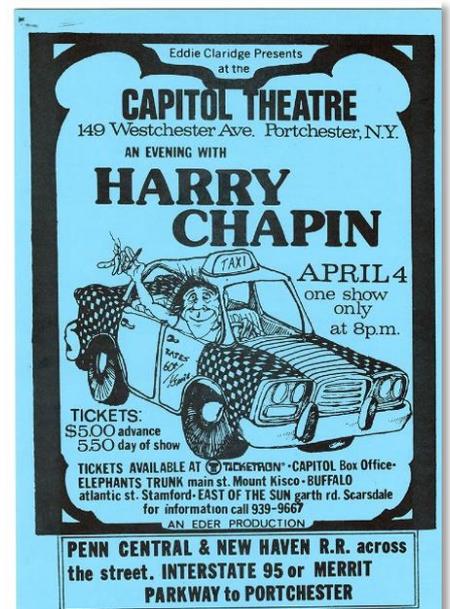
- severe mobility limitations
- legal blindness or severe vision impairment
- cognitive, intellectual, or psychiatric disability
- severe and uncontrolled epilepsy.

To be eligible you have to be a permanent resident of the ACT, or an asylum seeker with proof of status from Companion House. You also are unable to be a member of an interstate taxi subsidy scheme.

The application form is available [here](#) or by contacting the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Office (details below). The application form must be completed and signed by an authorised medical practitioner or occupational therapist – and you have to provide a passport type photo, which can be taken on your mobile phone. The application form is long because it looks at various conditions, therefore the whole form is not relevant to everyone.

The ACT Revenue Office runs it. You can contact them by phone: 02 6207 0028 - Select Option 5 or email: [concessions@act.gov.au](mailto:concessions@act.gov.au)

Or you can download the forms by typing **taxi subsidy form ACT** into the internet.



**Some taxi trivia.**  
The ballad *Taxi* was written in 1972 and the sequel in 1980.

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**Editor's Note** – Harry Chapin (see poster above) who wrote *Taxi* sadly died in a motor vehicle accident in 1981, age 38. Fortunately, his music lives on...and for the record he never actually drove a taxi.

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## Some additional News from Helen Cotter

After the latest research and figures about smoking were released, Pam Harris and Val Siemionow were interviewed by Channel Nine for their News. They enjoyed a few seconds of fame.

The City News recently interviewed Marina and Pam about the Lung Life Support Group - its history, aims, and ongoing support for people with lung conditions. We await their article.

## Governor General's Open Day

This event was held on Saturday 16 March in the garden of the Governor General's residence. It was an opportunity to bring awareness to the community that Lung Life Canberra exists and may be something they (or someone they know) may be interested in. Marina created some impressive pin boards so that passersby could read about Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) and our local organisation.

### Pin Boards

Marina brought an example of a pin board to our March meeting. Below is a selection of some of the information that was on that board.

*'No one really knows what it is like to have a chronic lung condition, not doctors or nurses or even our friends.'*

*'Speaking to others, with similar conditions helps you realise that you are not alone and can still enjoy a good life.'*



**There will be a more detailed report on the open day in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.**