



Prostate Cancer
Foundation
of Australia

PROSTATE SUPPORTER

Newsletter of the Prostate Cancer Support Groups
of South Australia and Northern Territory

www.prostate.org.au

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2009

Volume 2: Number 9

Agenda set for chapter conference

The first annual conference of the PCFA's Central Australia Chapter will introduce delegates to a wealth of new knowledge.

ON Friday October 16 and Saturday October 17, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia will present the first Central Australia Chapter Conference, to be held on at Mercure Grand Mount Lofty House, 74 Mount Lofty Summit Rd, Crafers.

Accommodation is provided for delegates on the nights of October 15 and 16, with conference business starting at 9am on Friday 16th and ending at 3pm on Saturday 17th.

The conference program starts with dinner for registered delegates on Thursday October 15, before two full days of planning meetings, discussions and presentations from authoritative speakers.

Presenters on the Friday will include Dr Carole Pinnock AM, and Dr Grant Buchanan, with other segments through the conference including a pathology presentation, outlining Medicare changes

that will affect prostate cancer patients, sessions with Beyond Blue's depression counsellors and a group dynamics session.

Strategic planning sessions for delegates from support groups in the Northern Territory and South Australia will focus on securing the future of existing and new support groups, including effective succession plans for leadership and key office bearers.

A series of new policy documents for support groups within the chapter – tabled for discussion at the most recent Central Australia Chapter Council meeting in Darwin, reported on Page 2 of this newsletter – will also be presented during the conference.

If you are interested in participating in the conference, please contact Paul Redman at the national PCFA office immediately.

Newsletters can also be read online at www.pcagsa.org.au/pages/supporter.html



The Central Australia Conference will feature an address from Dr Grant Buchanan (right), pictured at the PCFA Awareness Month launch in the State Library of SA (for more event details, see report on Page 12). Progress of Dr Buchanan's prostate cancer research, which is supported by the PCFA, is detailed on Page 7 of this newsletter.

Conference registration forms can be obtained from the PCFA and must be sent back as soon as possible to Paul Redman, support group services manager of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, PO Box 1332, Lane Cove NSW 1595, or faxed to 02 9438 7099, or email to predman@prostate.org.au

Please note that attending support group members need to discuss whether they are the official delegates from their group, so they can complete the registration form correctly.

in brief...

CONTRIBUTIONS of stories and images from all Support Group members to the Prostate Supporter newsletters are welcome. If you have something of interest to share, please contact Foster Hill PR and Marketing by phoning (08) 8231 3555 or email items and images to prostate-news@fosterhill.com.au

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99 or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

Prostate Cancer Action Group

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 13 MEETING:

The Action Group met in the upstairs meeting room of the Cancer Council SA building, 202 Greenhill Rd, Eastwood at 5.30pm on Tuesday October 13. At present, entry is through the front door on Greenhill Road.

• For more information about the Action Group and its activities, visit the South Australian Prostate Cancer Action Group's dedicated website, with detailed archives containing its newsletters, at <http://www.pcagsa.org.au>

Free Blackwood awareness night

AN AWARENESS evening will be held at Blackwood Football Club, Trevor Tce, Blackwood, on Wednesday October 21, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

This evening has been arranged by the Action Group in conjunction with the Rotary Club and the Blackwood Hospital. Guest speakers will be Dr Peter Sutherland, Head of Urology

at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, presenting an overview of prostate cancer, and clinical biochemist Dr Alfred Poulos talking about Nutrition in Cancer. Prostate cancer survivors will also speak about their own experiences.

To register your interest in attending, please phone the Blackwood Hospital on 8278 0400.

Central Australia Chapter Council Meeting

Progress made on policy documents

The Central Australia Chapter Council met in Darwin on September 17 at the Mirambeena Travelodge – the only absentee being Murray Neck from Alice Springs due to ill health. Also attending was Paul Redman, representing the PCFA, and local Darwin support group members Peter and Beth Harvey, Annette Weir and Alan Wyatt.

Within the meeting agenda, two applications for affiliation to the PCFA were received from recently formed support groups at Murray Bridge in South Australian and Katherine in the Northern Territory. Both were accepted

and unanimously recommended for affiliation. In other business at the meeting, Draft policy documents were discussed, including a proposed Chapter Business Plan, a paper defining councillors roles and responsibilities, a contingency plan for setting up new support groups and a leadership training proposal. Further development of each paper will see additional input from councillors.

It is hoped that at least two of these papers will be tabled at a proposed Council meeting before the Chapter Annual Conference in October.

While in Darwin, the councillors also met with local support group members for a social meal at Stokes Wharf adjacent to Darwin harbour – with one local indulging in a double double ice cream cone for dessert, boasting four scoops of different flavoured ice cream heaped in a double cone. Photographic evidence of this phenomenon exists should anybody doubt these facts.

The next council meeting will be held in Port Pirie on November 19.

Don't forget to visit the chapter website at www.PCFACentralaustraliachapter.org with links to all support group members.

Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group

Carmen Valente, sonographer of Perretts Medical Imaging, spoke to the Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group about medical imaging and the prostate at group's September meeting. She described some of the imaging techniques that are available locally, for the benefit of Port Pirie residents, and those available outside of the local area. There was great interest in this presentation and many questions.

PROSTATE CANCER PROMOTION

THE Port Pirie group's participation in the

Fathers Day awareness campaign was a huge success. Stalls were held on August 6, 14 and 22 outside of a local shopping centre and bank.

With 39 local sponsors supporting the group and the raffle conducted at the stall, the whole exercise only cost the support group \$20; better still, it was able to send a cheque to PCFA for \$1450 with money raised from their efforts. Volunteers at the stand said many men stopped and told of their own stories involving prostate cancer.



At the stall: Tony Amato, Fred Pisani and Vic Pisani.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99 or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

Prostate Cancer Support and Awareness: ADELAIDE GROUP

COMING EVENTS**OCTOBER 19 MEETING:**

The Adelaide Prostate Cancer Support Group meets on the third Monday of each month in the Park View Room of the Fullarton Park Centre, 411 Fullarton Rd, Fullarton. The meeting on October 19 will feature Dr Vanessa Thompson from the Hansen Institute as guest speaker, talking about the centre's prostate cancer research projects and latest developments.

NOVEMBER MEETING:

The support group's meeting on Monday November 16 will feature Dr Carole Pinnock talking about the new publication *Consumer Guide: Advanced Prostate Cancer*.

A special dinner with the Mitcham Support Group will be held at Colonel Light Gardens RSL on Friday, November 27. See Page 5 of this newsletter for more details.

• For more information about coming activities, visit the Adelaide Support Group's dedicated website at www.psaadelaide.org or contact Ian Fisk by phoning 8296 3350, or send email to info@psaadelaide.org

A new voice offers a refreshing insight

A new support group member shared his solution to painful reactions after radiation treatment, as Ian Fisk reports.

THE Adelaide Support Group meeting on September 21 featured some interesting discussion contributed by a new member, Peter. During September, Peter had been actively pursuing the local media about a lack of press coverage for September being International Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Peter also spoke of his journey with the disease and how a relatively little known treatment has overcome serious cancer side effects he suffered.

Peter underwent Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy which cured the painful rectal and bladder bleeding he was experiencing after radiation treatment.

The treatment involved 40 two-hour sessions in an oxygen rich chamber at three atmospheres pressure.

Hopefully Peter will supply more details of his treatment to Prostate Supporter.

This meeting had been advertised in the community announcements on Coast FM radio, though this did not result in any additional attendance. We will try again with our October meeting and perhaps some Messenger Press advertising too.

MAKING THE NEWS

RECENTLY there has been a lot of press coverage about PSA testing, and Ian Fisk was



Carl Hopkins, Paul Ferrett and Pam Fisk at the barbecue. Picture by Karyn Foster.

Generous donors make Bunnings barbecue a hit

International Prostate Cancer Awareness Month has been a busy time for many in the Adelaide support group. On Friday September 4, several volunteers from the group assisted Merlene Burdon with a barbecue at Bunnings Mile End store. Thanks to the efforts of Pam Fisk, Paul Ferrett, Carl Hopkins plus Pam and Ross Daniel, \$925 was raised for our group (I flew to Melbourne that morning for the PCFA Support and Advocacy Committee meeting). Thanks also go to Bunnings and especially Merlene, who noted that only the standard weekly amount of 30kg of sausages were sold, which meant that a large number of generous donations were included in the total.

invited by the Cancer Council SA to be interviewed with others by Channel Nine.

The resulting segment appeared on the Channel 9 news on September 23.

MAYES MILESTONE

GREAT news to learn that Ami Mayes, the widow of our late past secretary/treasurer Reg Mayes, has just become a great great-grandmother!

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 7 MEETING:

The City of Onkaparinga Support Group met at 6.30pm on October 7 in the boardroom at Noarlunga Community Hospital, Alexander Kelly Drive, Noarlunga. The guest speaker for the evening was urologist Dr David Elder.

NOVEMBER MEETING:

The Support Group meeting on November 4 will feature guest speaker Arne Breuer, who is a lifestyle coordinator.

• For more information about coming events and archives listing previous events and local group newsletters, visit the City of Onkaparinga Support Group's dedicated website at www.pcsog.org

• Special thanks are extended to the City of Onkaparinga Support Group sponsors: **Southern Primary Health Woodcroft, Port Noarlunga-Christies Beach RSL Sub Branch, toneraction Christies Beach, The Original Open Market** and to the **City of Onkaparinga Council**.

Training to ensure leadership succession

Work has commenced on important new leadership training manuals for local support groups, as John Shields reports.

ARE you interested in taking on support group leadership training? If so, please have a chat with John Shields or Malcolm Ellis, as it is important that we ensure continuity of all roles in the City of Onkaparinga support group.

A support group leaders' manual is being prepared through the Central Australia Chapter Council, containing a support group procedures kit.

John Shields is designing this valuable resource with input from support group members, so that the Chapter Council can keep track of support group leadership through reports regarding any training progress at each Chapter Council meeting.

It is hoped that potential leaders will have training from their local support group leader, according to training guidelines in the support group leaders manual. They would then attend a Chapter Council meeting to satisfy council members of their ability to lead a group – and be awarded a competency certificate from the council to verify their leadership.

It is hoped that soon every support group leader and librarian will have this new manual.

NEW MEMBERS

OUR GROUP welcomed several new members: Denis

BARBECUE BOOSTS AWARENESS

IT'S pleasing to report a successful Blue September outing at Bunnings Noarlunga has raised \$622 for the local prostate cancer support group.

The weather was good and the smell of hot sausages and onions was a bit hard for people passing by to resist – especially as the aroma drifted deep into the Bunnings



ABOVE: Peter Kiley, John Shields and Brad at the Bunnings barbecue.

store. Thanks go to Peter and Chris Kiley who helped in the morning, John and Dawn Hammerl for the afternoon shift, Bunnings and the staff members who assisted during the day, especially Jane who was head chef and Brad who coloured his hair blue for the occasion. Peter suggested that we should have another barbecue at Bunnings, and this idea has since got the green light from Bunnings for planning to begin. We will have to run this barbecue ourselves, and be prepared to be quite busy as the weather will be warmer and we could also sell cold drinks. With the the PCFA Banner and an information table as well, this will be another excellent opportunity to help the PCFA help us.

Pennington, and David and Gloria Hill, who are learning more about treatment options before making up their minds about what is best for them, and Les and Joy Belton, who are members of the Adelaide Group that recently moved to live in Seaford.

LIONS DONATION

MANY THANKS to the Willunga Lions Club for their generous \$1000 donation, which will enable us to place advertisements in the local paper promoting medically qualified guest speakers that attend our meetings.

Mitcham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Going down a different track

Support group members enjoy the input of guest speakers such as former SA Deputy Premier Don Hopgood who pulled the focus far away from men's health issues, as Mitcham Support Group president Terry Harbour reports.

DR Don Hopgood AO, former Deputy Premier of South Australia, is passionate about the history of South Australia's railways and gave an extremely interesting presentation at the Mitcham support group's September meeting on the issues that faced SA Railways in the 1920s.

Providing a welcome change to health issues, Don focused on when American railway administrator/manager, William Alfred Webb took over as the commissioner of SA Railways in 1923. He was controversial from the start, having negotiated his salary of £5000 pounds per annum – about five times the salary of the Premier.

However, Webb transformed an outdated and uneconomic rail system. He introduced high capacity bogie freight cars and larger, more powerful locomotives. Where three locomotives were used to haul freight, only one new powerful loco introduced by Webb was required – though these heavy locos demanded stronger and wider tracks and stronger bridges.

Webb said the existing Adelaide railway station was “out of the 19th century” and commissioned a grand new building to replace it, which still stands on North Tce as the Skycity Casino.

Webb also inherited the Islington workshops, which

THE FATHER'S DAY AWARENESS EFFORT

The Mitcham group's awareness initiative at Bunnings Marion store on Friday September 4 was a success, with a significant number of brochures and other pamphlets being distributed to Bunnings customers.

Many women accepted pamphlets and indicated that they would make sure their husbands read them. Several donations were made by people, but it was felt that the important issue was “getting the message across” and raising awareness of prostate cancer issues. Thanks go to Graeme Bradley (pictured above, resplendent in his new PCFA polo shirt and hat), Peter and Betty Grove-Jones, Wendy Foster and Bob Robinson for their assistance on the day.



in 1922 had no electricity, with steam-driven machinery and lighting from acetylene lamps. He introduced immediate improvements at the workshops.

Webb instructed a new chief engineer to design and build three new locomotives and freight goods trains, putting South Australia at the forefront of railways systems in Australia.

All these changes made by Webb were extremely expensive for the State – soon after World War I and a series of droughts that had reduced freight income, just as Australia was heading into

a depression. His expenditure became an election issue and after harsh criticism, Webb resigned and returned to the US in 1930. However, he provided a sound system, evident when country lines were taken over by Australian National Railways.

Don illustrated his talk with many pictures of old steam trains and carriages from Webb's period, which was greatly appreciated by the support group members.

ANYONE FOR DINNER?

IN LIEU of the Mitcham support group's usual November meeting, it will

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 22 MEETING

The next Mitcham Support Group meeting will be held on Thursday October 22, in the Colonel Light Gardens RSL club rooms at 4 Prince George Parade, Colonel Light Gardens, from 7pm. The meeting will comprise a general discussion evening among the group members, plus the viewing of a health related DVD.

• For more information on events and group activities, visit the Mitcham Group's dedicated website at www.psamitcham.org

instead be having a social dinner at the Colonel Light Gardens RSL on Friday November 27 at 7pm.

We extend an open invitation to other support group members to join us.

Please advise Terry Harbour by phoning 8271 0513 or email harbour@adam.com.au BEFORE October 22 if you would like to join us.

Barossa and Gawler Prostate Cancer Support Group

Survey highlights what is now required for cancer survivors

This report on the Barossa cancer questionnaire results has been compiled by Don Piro, who chaired the recent successful Cancer Forum held in Tanunda

THE Barossa and Gawler Prostate Cancer Support Group, in partnership with Barossa Health, Barossa Division of General Practice and Barossa Area Fundraisers for Cancer, organised a Cancer Community Needs Survey alongside the successful Cancer Forum event, which was promoted as "An Evening with Graeme Goodings". The key objective of the survey was to determine what the community wants in the way of services for cancer survivors.

A questionnaire was developed and distributed through the local paper, mail-outs, hospitals, health services and the website of the Division of General Practice.

Respondents could be cancer survivors, carers, family, professionals or just interested people in the community, and they were asked to consider needs including transport, home assistance, counselling, peer support, visiting specialists, resources, sources of information and advocacy.

A profile analysis of respondents showed that about half were over 55 years of age with a further quarter in the 44-55 age range. More women than men completed the survey and the cancer types most had identified were breast, prostate and bowel cancers. These survey results generally confirmed the expectations of the committee.



Don Piro at the Cancer Forum in Tanunda.

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 20

- The next meeting of the Barossa Prostate Cancer Support Group will be held in the Meeting Room at the Vine Inn Hotel, Nuriootpa, at 2pm on Tuesday, October 20. The meeting will include a catch-up on health reports, a discussion about planning, topics and other issues for 2010, and arrangements for the support group's end-of-year social get-together.

The availability of transport and home assistance programs were seen as extremely important issues to be addressed, as were enhanced medical and hospital services, especially those of visiting specialists. Professional and peer counselling was a high priority, as was the availability of a support group. There was interest in education and accessing information, perhaps through a resource centre.

Reflecting on the survey results, the committee considered that cancer services in the Barossa Valley are being

developed in line with the community's needs.

We do have Transport and Home Assist programs, and information and educational resources do exist, although it was felt that they would be more accessible if housed in a central location. Medical centres and local hospitals are seeking funding to expand their service delivery capabilities.

The Prostate Cancer Support Group is the only surviving support group in the Barossa, though there is obviously interest from the community

in accessing support for other forms of cancer.

There are three main areas that will now be pursued:

- **DEVELOP** and provide funds to set up a programme to provide practical assistance to cancer survivors with materials such as prostheses and wigs, and facilitate the provision of therapies like aqua-aerobics and massage.

- **EXPAND** the boundaries of the Prostate Cancer Support Group to include people with other types of cancer, with the premise that there are many areas of support, knowledge and education that are common to all cancers.

- **APPROACH** the Barossa Council to assist with establishing a Central Cancer Resource Centre.

The past few months have seen a partnership formed between groups with a common interest and similar goals. We believe this will now lead to a stronger and more effective support program for cancer survivors in the Barossa Valley.

Murray Bridge Prostate Cancer Support Group

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Murray Bridge Prostate Cancer Support Group conducts its monthly meetings at 7.30pm on the first Thursday of each month, at Our Wellbeing Place, 108 Swanport Rd, Murray Bridge. The next meeting is on THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5. For further details about the group and its meetings, phone support group chairman Ron Lehmann on (08) 8532 3277.

McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group

Weighing financial gains by planning your funeral

Laying plans and paying for your funeral now can ease a greater financial burden on your loved ones after you have departed, as Bryan Hearn reports.

JOHN Treacy, of Alfred James Funeral Homes, presented the group with several informative brochures – *A Little Forethought, a great deal of benefit; The Guide to Pre Paid Funerals; It's alright to cry; Sharing Memories; What do I do when someone dies?* and *The Memory Tree*, which details how the company can, after a funeral, make additional arrangements to plant a tree at Monarto Zoo in memory of the deceased.



John also explained details from a comprehensive booklet that contains information required by people preparing for a funeral, with space for people to record personal details that will be required at the time of their funeral.

Differences between pre-arranged funerals and pre-paid funeral were explained. A pre-paid cremation costing about

\$3650 in 1999 currently costs about \$6500; another funeral that cost about \$3900 in 1999 is now priced at \$6800. Benefits can also be accrued in relation to pension entitlements.

Funerals or cremations that are pre-paid will not incur extra costs, regardless of the time difference when the funeral occurs – unless additional services are added.

John explained that pre-

planning a funeral removes guesswork for those left behind. It also allows the deceased to express in advance their own thoughts and wishes.

John provided support group members with information about the processes involved where a death occurs under various different types of circumstances – at home, in a hospital, at work, in a disaster or by accident.

COMING EVENT

THURSDAY OCTOBER 22

The McLaren Districts group will next meet in the administration building at the rear of the McLaren Vale & Districts War Memorial Hospital, Aldersey St, McLaren Vale, at 7pm on Thursday, October 22. Guest speaker will be local urologist Dr David Elder.

- Contact group president Bryan Hearn on 8323 7924 or 0410 539 274 to confirm your attendance.

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

BRYAN Hearn would like to extend thanks to his wife Kay and McLaren Districts prostate cancer support group members Barrie Edwards and Phil Spry for their help at the recent Bunnings barbecue and prostate cancer awareness event held at Bunnings Woodville, which managed to raise about \$700 towards prostate cancer research.

South Australian Prostate Cancer Research Update

DR GRANT Buchanan from the University of Adelaide is using powerful new techniques to help understand why prostate cancer returns after treatment in up to 30 per cent of men, and why certain therapies used to block testosterone from stimulating cancer cell growth cease to work after a period of time.

The research project, funded by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and announced in the June edition of *Prostate Supporter*,

is looking to modulate the natural function of a that may be responsible for prostate cancer evolving.

Dr Buchanan and his team have found that the protein called SGTA, which acts as a natural testosterone “braking system”, fails as cancer progresses.

“We now know that SGTA has the potential to stop prostate cancer evolving into a life threatening disease by limiting the action of testosterone, and that this protein often fails as

the cancer progresses. What we ultimately want to do is to study these proteins, refine our understanding of how they work and screen new compounds with the potential to fight prostate cancer from a new angle,” says Dr Buchanan.

“Current treatments to block androgen receptors fail after a short period of time. We don’t know why, so it is of great importance to us to keep trialling new options so we can improve prostate cancer survival.”

Payneham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Relief for incontinence sufferers

A trio of speakers shed light onto the often embarrassing and rarely discussed subject of incontinence for the Payneham Support Group, as Phil Davis reports.

FOR those who have been diagnosed with prostate and received some form of treatment, some urinary and/or bowel side effects usually occur. Side effects can be quite minor but can also severely affect individuals who remain home near a toilet and perhaps feel too embarrassed to venture out. This issue can be a very private, sensitive and difficult topic to speak about, even with family.

However, the Payneham group's August and September meetings had three health professionals speaking about this distressing issue.

Urologist Samantha Pillay, spoke at the August meeting about how urinary problems affect quality of life, daily activities, self esteem and productivity. However, after a reasonable post treatment recovery time, there are solutions to continence difficulties: pelvic floor muscle exercise, or male slings for chronic continence and urinary control via an artificial sphincter.

At the September meeting, colorectal surgeon Associate Professor Nick Rieger spoke about the bowel, highlighting problems when patients have some form of radiotherapy to their prostate. This may, in some cases, result in damage to the bowel because of its close proximity to the prostate.

He explained the three main problems which can affect those treated;

THANKS TO OUR BARBECUERS

A very big thank you to Peter Woodrow (pictured left, with Arthur Seager), who liaised with and arranged with the help of Tasma of the Parafield Gardens Bunnings Store a fundraising barbecue



and awareness event at the store on Friday September 4. Bunnings Staff members helped Peter, his wife Jenny, and Kathie and Arthur Seager to raise \$1000.

Arthur and Kathie were again busy on Friday September 25, raising more funds for the PCFA by assisting staff of the Tea Tree Gully Council at another fundraising barbecue.

1. Bleeding from the bowel, which is caused by rectal telangiectasia (new blood vessel formation). As a result of the radiation, vessels burst and result in bleeding.

2. Incontinence, which can result in poor rectal compliance, urgency, flatus, smearing and faecal incontinence.

3. Bowel cancer risk after radiotherapy, though this risk is quite minute.

Professor Rieger also discussed treatment options which may provide some improvement, along with medications, diet, regularity, exercise and other lifestyle adjustments which may also assist.

The second speaker at the support group's September

meeting was Rosalie Donhardt, a registered nurse and a continence nurse advisor attached to the Continence Resource Centre, located within the Independent Living Centre at 11 Blacks Rd, Gilles Plains.

Rosalie said the Continence Resource Centre is a state-wide information advisory service, providing advice on bladder and bowel problems to affected patients, carers, families and health professionals.

Rosalie also displayed and demonstrated how to use some of the extensive range of products available which assist in making life more comfortable for those experiencing bowel or bladder incontinence.

The SA Continence Resource

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 20 MEETING:

The Payneham Support Group will meet in the Payneham RSL Clubrooms, 360 Payneham Rd, Payneham at 7pm on Tuesday October 20. Guest speaker will be urologist Dr John Bolt, who will speak about erectile dysfunction, treatment options that are available and men's sexual health.

NOVEMBER 17:

Annual general meeting including the election of office bearers for 2010. The evening will also include a social gathering and barbecue.

• For more information, phone Phil Davis (8263 2217 classic100@bigpond.com), Peter Woodrow (8263 5556) or Arthur Seager (8289 4180), or visit the Payneham Support Group's dedicated website at www.psapayneham.org

Centre website is www.continencesa.org.au and queries can be sent by email to info@continencesa.org.au or phone (08) 82665260. SA and NT callers can also phone 1300 885886. The Continence Resource Centre services are all free of charge.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99 or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

Prosper Darwin Prostate Cancer Support Group

Activities and northern visitors mark a memorable September

Visiting councillors from the Central Australia Chapter made good connections with the Darwin Prosper group, as convenor Keith Williams reports.

WE usually rely on a good Dry season to help us through the challenge of the build-up for the Wet season. However, this year the Dry deserted us well ahead of schedule – which could have been a problem for the September Central Australia Council's meeting up north.

The Councillors are a hardy lot, though, and a judicious mix of indoor and outdoor activities saw them get through a full agenda in good style, and to sample some of the delights that our tropical location offers.

Several of the Darwin support group members attended the Council meeting and lunch, and the dinner hosted by Paul Redman on the Thursday evening.

It was pleasing to note the local input provided valuable additions to the Council's activities, as their comments were positive and well informed.

BUNNINGS SUCCESSES

DURING the Blue September month of prostate cancer awareness activities, the Darwin support group successfully presented two stalls at local Bunnings stores and both proved to be valuable public relations opportunities.

At the main store, about \$1000 was raised by Bunnings staff. It would now seem



Walking tall among survivors

Keith Williams is pictured above at the Cancer Council's Relay for Life in Darwin with his daughter Meghan, a breast cancer survivor (who was diagnosed at 47, by sheer luck). Keith's dad died from prostate cancer, as did his elder brother. Keith's youngest son's wife also died of breast cancer four years ago, at the age of 38. He wonders what chance his grandson has of avoiding cancer's reach?

appropriate that we made presentations from the Prostate Cancer Group to the Bunnings staff in the near future to thank them for their efforts and enthusiasm.

In the wake of this successful effort, we can hope that next year's collaboration will be bigger and better.

RELAY FOR LIFE

UNDER considerable pressure from my daughter (a breast cancer survivor), I lined up for the Cancer Council's Relay For

Life on September 25. While our prostate cancer support group had been lukewarm about getting involved in past years, I was most pleased to see two more of our members there.

I was especially amazed by the reception we got from the hundreds of relay entrants as we did the survivor's lap of honour.

Jo Fairbairn, the Ambassador trainer who had come up to Darwin in time for the event,

COMING EVENTS

Next support group meeting:

**MONDAY
OCTOBER 12.**

The Prosper Darwin Group meets on the second Monday of each month, at the Harbour Room, Christ Church Cathedral, corner of Smith St and the Esplanade, Darwin, at 7.30pm.

managed to get behind the PA system and gave the PCFA a big plug – and also got the PCFA's World's Biggest Undies displayed at the very popular Mindil markets on the following Sunday afternoon.

A MOST UNFORTUNATE RESIGNATION

SADLY, Peter Harvey has resigned as secretary and from the group, having been a loyal and invaluable member of the group for several years.

Unfortunately Peter and his wife Beth are both going through testing periods of poor health and had to make this tough decision. We wish them all the best in the future – though this creates the challenge of finding another secretary for the Darwin group. Any takers?

Personal profile of a Prostate Cancer journey

Rex's cancer wakeup call

Journalist Rex Jory, like most men, thought he was invincible. But a simple test proved otherwise; he had prostate cancer. Now he wonders why blokes don't take their health more seriously.

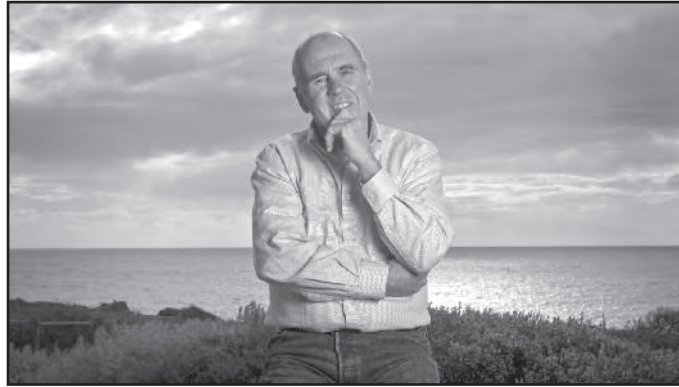
THESE were meant to be the Camelot years. A serene lifestyle, free of stress and pressure. I had recently retired from full-time work at The Advertiser. Superannuation had provided enough for Liz and me to live in modest comfort, there were no mortgages and my health and fitness were good.

Early this year we took a leisurely driving holiday to Victoria before a planned trip to Europe. I was driving and Liz took the call. "We'd better stop. It's your specialist."

I'd had a few precautionary tests on my prostate, as any man in the 50-plus age group should do, but there had been no cause for concern. But the urologist quietly uttered the words no man wants to hear. "I'm afraid the biopsy results were positive. You have prostate cancer."

It took a moment for the news to register. My first reaction was disbelief. People like me don't get cancer. Other people get cancer. I was fit and active. I felt great. But prostate cancer, like so many other potentially lethal illnesses, has no respect for time, social standing, wealth, race, family background or personal fitness.

Like so many men I had been casual, almost irresponsible, about my health. I rarely went to the doctor, rarely had any form of medical check-up. It was nothing more than a cop-out. I used to say I didn't have the time. I was too busy. Apart from tablets to control high



"People like me don't get cancer. Other people get cancer. I was fit and active ... perhaps I thought I was invincible."

cholesterol I didn't require medication. I was in good shape. Perhaps I thought I was invincible.

Sadly, I was all too typical of too many men. Women are broadly conscientious, proactive and open about health issues. Men are secretive and reactive. Is it pride? Is it ego?

Are men frightened to look soft by confiding in their doctors or submitting to potentially embarrassing physical examinations? Blokes aren't helped by a health system that seems to be biased towards women. Perhaps it's because they are less defensive about health issues.

I was scared. Back in Adelaide my specialist sympathetically, patiently and methodically laid out the options – intense radiotherapy, a relatively new form of nuclear medicine, surgery or wait, watch and see what happens. Some choice. I eventually elected to have surgery. I reasoned that the

cancer was not meant to be there. Get it out.

Liz and I went overseas and had a fabulous time but a third traveller – the unspoken risks associated with cancer surgery – was with us in every hotel room, every aircraft seat and at every restaurant table.

The operation in June worked so well that I was discharged from hospital the following morning, fully dressed and plugged in to a discreet catheter. Recovery was rapid and predictable.

Then fate dealt a second deadly hand. I contracted a virulent, aggressive infection which had near-fatal results and left me weak and exhausted. But by then my attitude had changed from disbelief and confusion to survival, whatever challenge was thrown at me.

It's funny. Men don't talk much about health. But the number of mates who supported me in those dark

days was amazing. And I'd wager that every one of them has since had a discreet medical check-up.

Now 10 weeks later, I'm still under a surgeon's professional gaze but results are encouraging. I seem to be free of a cancer which could have killed me within five years. I count myself among the lucky.

In 2009, death from prostate cancer is avoidable and unnecessary. Not enough men are lucky enough to have a specialist who acted on professional intuition and, like mine, pestered me to have a prostate biopsy.

Then again, it shouldn't be up to the doctors to prod us into action. There's no doubt it makes sense for there to be a national men's health strategy, as announced by the Federal Government last year. There has been a women's strategy for some time, after all. One of the programs is being designed by the Royal College of General Practitioners, and aimed at convincing men to have regular health check-ups.

The catchline is supposed to be: Would you pass a roadworthy? But ultimately the message has to be that a man's health is his own responsibility – the question is how to get blokes to believe that. And with this in mind, prostate cancer has become the flagship, a cause celebre for men's health.

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Alice Springs Prostate Cancer Support Group

A widow's reflection

After four years, Carol Hession chose the Alice Springs Support Group's September meeting to talk about her late husband's prostate cancer, as Murray Neck reports.

JOHN and Carol Hession grew up in Echuca, a river town in northern Victoria, and were close friends as teenagers, both playing sport and enjoying a healthy lifestyle. Then John was conscripted into the army and was sent to Vietnam, where his unit was involved in heavy fighting.

On returning to Australia, the couple married and John joined the Northern Territory Police Force in Darwin, trained and served in a number of towns and bush outposts, and was finally posted to Alice Springs as a sergeant.

They had many interests. Both were cheerful and outgoing people and made many friends as they maintained their fitness levels, John being an instructor in tai kwon do.

John resigned from the police force when he turned 50 and then with Carol and their son Nathan settled back in Echuca, where life was good.

After two years John started to lose weight and annoyingly found that his energy levels had declined. He was diagnosed with acute diabetes and was immediately prescribed insulin.

Shortly after this, a blood test showed a PSA reading of 6.8 but his GP told him not to worry.

Feeling that something was out of order, John sought another opinion, got a referral to a urologist and was given an

immediate diagnosis. He was told that cancer had already started to spread outside the prostate.

Having been given three years to live, many people at this point would have become depressed, confused and wonder why this was happening. John and Carol talked at length about their new situation.

Having always had a positive outlook, they decided to face their future in this manner.

Treatment over the next few years included radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormonal and strontium.

Carol nursed John most of the time, as there was no carer assistance available in Echuca. A palliative care nurse from Bendigo who visited once a week was described by Carol as "brilliant".

John's sudden and bewildering chain of health issues became a case study that was investigated by Monash University. This involved recording the psychological effect of cancer on families, the genetic link and the family history of prostate cancer (there was none), together with responses to new treatments.

Over the course of John's treatment, his urologist was convinced that action in Vietnam was a contributing factor to his sudden health decline. This was emphasised by the fact that men from his battalion, the 7th RAR, were

suffering cancer in various forms at far greater than normal percentages.

As John's health deteriorated so did his pain level and consequently morphine dosage increased. Nevertheless, he was determined to hide his agony by maintaining a jovial attitude when visiting the local RSL Club to have a coffee with his mates, some of whom were also Vietnam Vets.

When John told a close Alice Springs friend who phoned him regularly that he was having hormone treatment, the friend asked him had he taken up knitting. John replied "Not yet but once a month I'm not real flash".

The end was near when cancer entered the brain. John was unable to sleep and began hallucinating, but still he did not complain. When John was hospitalised during his last few days, staff were absolutely amazed at his mental strength.

After John's death, Carol stayed in Echuca for a year, until she realised that her true home was in the Northern Territory. After initially going to Darwin, Carol and her son Nathan have eventually settled back in Alice Springs.

This courageous lady left our support group with this poignant message: "It is of prime importance to share one's feelings with your partner and not be over protective – especially where children are involved."

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER MEETING:
The Alice Springs Action Group's monthly meeting was held on Thursday October 8, from 6.30pm to 8pm in the conference room of General Practice Network NT, Skinner St, Alice Springs.

MOVEMBER
The Alice Springs Movember Group of young men are preparing for this fundraising. Join in and grow a moustache. More information available at www.movember.com or phone Rob Gane on 0419 809 481.

RELAY FOR LIFE WALK
The annual Cancer Council Fundraiser, at ANZAC Oval, Alice Springs, starts at 6pm on Friday October 9 and finishes at 10am on Saturday October 10. Teams of 10 to 15 people can register, with a fee of \$16.50 per person, and participants are encouraged to find individual sponsorship. Help this great cause and enjoy the experience with friends. For further information, phone Hannah McAll on 8951 5881.

RAISING PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Adelaide bathed in blue



To commemorate Prostate Cancer Awareness month, several major Adelaide buildings were bathed in blue light on September 1, including (from left) the State Library of SA, the Rundle Mall Lantern and Bonython Hall in the University of Adelaide.

Premier Rann launches Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, as John Shields reports.

A FUNCTION at the State Library of SA on September 7 launched International Prostate Cancer Month, with South Australian Premier Mike Rann praising the work of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia for raising awareness and supporting research.

The Premier's praise is well directed. More people are now aware of prostate cancer and its insidious nature than ever before. Men are also doing something about it, even though they often need a lot of "encouragement" from their wife or partner.

There were many familiar faces at the gala launch: Representing the PCFA were CEO Andrew Giles, Chairman Graeme Johnson and Board member David Sandoe; Men's health Ambassadors Malcolm Ellis,



ABOVE: Premier Mike Rann gets ready for September Prostate Awareness barbecuing with Karyn Foster.



A large and supportive crowd gathered for the Prostate Awareness month launch in the State Library of SA.



Ian Fisk, Dean Wall and Dr Bob Such; medical professionals Dr Carole Pinnock, Professor Villis Marshal and Dr Peter Sutherland, and many other invited guests and support

group members. Many thanks to Karyn Foster from Foster Hill for organising an excellent evening.

Andrew Giles spoke about the awareness month being

effective thanks to the support of the Commonwealth Bank, Bunnings, and local support groups for issuing information and PCFA pamphlets about prostate cancer.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99 or visit the website www.prostate.org.au