



Prostate Cancer
Foundation
of Australia

PROSTATE SUPPORTER

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

www.prostate.org.au

APRIL - MAY 2010

Volume 3: Number 4

Stars align to broadcast test message

A new star-studded media campaign has been devised to help drive better prostate cancer awareness throughout Australia.

SEVERAL of Australia's biggest television, music, media and sports stars have come together to front a major prostate cancer awareness campaign that offers men clarity about prostate cancer and testing.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia will launch this new campaign in Sydney on Tuesday May 25.

The campaign was initiated and produced by Les Hill, star of the hit television crime series *Underbelly*, to provide men with clear advice on prostate cancer risks by encouraging them to discuss their individual risk and testing options with their doctor.

Well-respected Australian identities that span several age demographics – including television host Bert Newton, former Australian Test cricket captain Steve Waugh, film and television actor Gyton Grantley, INXS guitarist and saxophone player Kirk Pengilly, radio

announcer Adam Spencer, and actors Simon Westaway and Marcus Graham – have dedicated their time to appear in television commercials, radio commercials and online videos with the aim of reducing confusion some men feel about prostate cancer and prostate cancer testing.

The striking television commercials attracted some of the nation's brightest production talent, being directed by award-winning director Paul Middleditch, shot entirely at The Wiggles Studios in Sydney and edited by Peter Whitmore, of The Editors.

The campaign has been launched in the wake of fresh research that shows the majority of men recognise prostate cancer as the most important men's health issue (cited by 83 per cent of men polled), but are still reluctant or slow when seeking further information about the benefits of testing for prostate cancer risks and treatment options.

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



ADDING MUSCLE TO THE MESSAGE: Television star Les Hill is the driving force behind a new prostate cancer media campaign that features a star-studded cast.

in brief...

- **THE next meeting for the Royal Adelaide Hospital's Health in Men series will be on Friday May 28, from 1pm to 1.30pm, in the RAH's Robson Theatre, with John Potter presenting a talk titled: "Dealing with Stress". These talks are sponsored by Pfizer. Could interested attendees please make sure you email your RSVP to rah.healthpromotion@health.sa.gov.au or phone RAH Health Promotion on 8222 5193 before May 22 for catering purposes.**

- **CONTRIBUTIONS from all Support Group members to the monthly Prostate Supporter newsletters are most welcome; please 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

MAY 11 MEETING:
The Action Group will conduct its next meeting in the upstairs meeting room of the Cancer Council SA building, 202 Greenhill Rd, Eastwood at 5.30pm on **Tuesday MAY 11.** At present, entry is through the rear stairway of the building.

All interested people are welcome to attend the Action Group meetings, and new members for the action group – from any of the Central Australia Chapter support groups – are greatly welcomed.

JUNE MEETING:
The Action Group will meet in the same venue, at the same time, on **Tuesday June 8.**

• 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>

Asking questions about what requires action

Action Group convenor Dean Wall reflects on what urgent action is now needed for prostate cancer sufferers.

AFTER a very active previous 12 months – during which the Action Group conducted awareness events in both the metropolitan area and in several country centres, as well as attending both the Yorke Peninsula and Lucindale Farm Field days – the group appears to have struck something of a hitch.

We are currently planning an awareness event to be held in Mt Gambier, but have not yet been able to secure a urologist to act as our keynote speaker. As a result, a confirmed date for this event remains uncertain.

Because of this, I'm keen to seek opinion from readers on a subject which has received significant media coverage over recent months – the matter of PSA and DRE screening.

Any opinions forwarded to the Action Group can then be collated and, through the Central Australia Chapter Council, be forwarded to the Support and Advocacy Committee (SAC) to prepare any relevant submission both to Government, and also to the relevant professional bodies, such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and others.

Recently, the Urological Society of Australia issued a recommendation that, in order to establish baseline PSA levels, the age at which men with no previous family

history of Prostate Cancer should begin PSA screening be reduced from age 50 to 40.

As an immediate response, articles from various professional bodies, such as the RACGP, appeared in the press, on radio and television that strongly disagreed with this recommendation.

These articles quoted statistics to support their argument, indicating that among supposedly low risk 60-year-old men, there would be 3.5 deaths per 1000 men who were screened annually, compared with 4.4 deaths among an unscreened cohort.

For low-risk 40 year-olds, there would be 0.037 deaths per 1000 screened men, compared with 0.041 deaths among unscreened men. I question that if there is no screening, how is the level of risk to be determined?

The Cancer Council of SA, in its publicity vision at the front desk, advises that one in eight Australian men will have a lifetime experience of prostate cancer, which equates to about 1.25 million men, and this isn't insignificant.

While men in this argument were regarded as statistics only, we believe that living, breathing men have a right and a wish to live and enjoy life.

Figures quoted in the media suggest that in low risk men

at the age of 60, screening achieves a 25 per cent improvement in outcome, with the death rate per 1000 people reduced from four to three. Try telling that extra person who lives that screening wasn't worth the extra work or benefit!

They also made a couple of significant omissions in their argument: they are only quoting figures for low risk men and they ignored the "watchful waiting" option as a meaningful form of treatment, particularly in this low-risk group.

A further matter, and one which is close to my own heart because of the situation of my brother, is the matter of the limitation of PBS prescriptions for Taxotere for men with very advanced prostate cancer.

Such men are limited to a maximum of 10 courses, while women with breast cancer have unlimited prescription access through PBS. The argument is that limited evidence exists for long-term benefits, though if access is limited, how can such evidence be achieved?

What do you think? Are these matters worth pursuing? If you agree, please let someone in the Action Group know your opinion, or contact the Central Australia Chapter Council, to ensure these important matters can be pursued further.

Prostate Cancer Support and Awareness: ADELAIDE GROUP

COMING EVENTS**MAY 17 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 support group's May meeting will feature Dr Joe Abadia from the Men's Health Clinic at Seaton, speaking on men's health issues.

JUNE 21 MEETING:

The presentation will be from COTA (the Australian Council on the Ageing), talking on Beyond Maturity Blues.

JULY 19 MEETING:

Guest speaker will be Diabetes Educator Michelle Hogan from Diabetes SA, speaking on the subject of diabetes.

• For more information, 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

Encouraging health maintenance for life

The State Government's Do It For Life health program is helping more people prevent chronic disease, as Ian Fisk reports.

FOR the Adelaide Support Group's April meeting, guest speaker Geoff Coombe – a Lifestyle Adviser with the SA Government Department of Health, Southern Primary Health area – gave a very interesting presentation on his department's "Do it For Life" program.

In addition to the presentation, each of the audience members were given a folder full of information, bearing the slogan "Making lifestyle changes for better health".

The organisation's website explains the Do it for Life program as "a State Government initiative that aims to reduce risk factors for adults (18+ years) with a high risk of developing preventable chronic diseases".

The program employs lifestyle advisors and support officers who assess, monitor, support and provide feedback to patients over a period of three to 12 months. The officers facilitate goal setting with the patient and help develop an action plan.

The plan sometimes includes referrals to other health professionals and the process includes providing regular feedback and follow up with both the patient and the referring health professional.

Patients can be referred to the program by a GP or other health professionals, or refer themselves to the program.



Lifestyle advisor Geoff Coombe.

Picture: IAN FISK

However, the advisor or support officer will then facilitate a consultation between the patient and their GP to ensure that the patient is safe to participate in the program and has no diagnosed chronic diseases.

Participants must be identified as being at high risk by the Australian Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK), have one or more SNAPS risk factors of smoking, nutrition, alcohol misuse, physical inactivity and stress, and meet the other eligibility criteria on the referral form.

The initial risk assessment is undertaken by a GP or health professional, in consultation with the potential patient using a standardised risk tool provided.

The Do It For Life program offers a sustained patient focus, includes all SNAPS risk

factors and consultations with an advisor or support officer is free for the patient.

Geoff gave a PowerPoint presentation on the program elaborating on all the issues involved, including:

- Why do it? Because with better health, you enjoy a better life, and you're worth it. The best investment you can make for your future is through engaging in good health.
- Research shows that modifying identified risk factors can prevent and delay the onset of chronic disease.
- The risk factors of smoking, nutrition, alcohol misuse, physical inactivity and stress were discussed in detail.

The Adelaide group has listened to many speakers on these subjects, but it was good to hear it again from such an interesting speaker as Geoff.

**COMING
EVENTS****MAY MEETING:**

The City of Onkaparinga Support Group met at 6.30pm on May 5 in the boardroom at Noarlunga Community Hospital.

JUNE BARBECUE:

Our mid-year BBQ at the Willunga Lions Sale Yard will be at 11am on Sunday June 6. If you are going to attend, phone Phyllis Shields on 8382 6671 by June 3, to help us order enough meat.

JULY MEETING:

The next meeting is at 6.30pm on July 7 in the boardroom at Noarlunga Community Hospital, Alexander Kelly Drive, Noarlunga.

• For more information about coming events, visit the City of Onkaparinga Support Group's dedicated website at www.pcsog.org

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

Free program rebuilds health after cancer

A valuable education program offers to help rebuild men's health after suffering prostate cancer, as John Shields reports.

MEMBERS of the City of Onkaparinga Prostate Cancer Support Group welcomed Cancer Council SA project officer Kathriye Strassnick and Stephen White to their April meeting and it was good to hear about the cancer support activities that Kathriye is involved in (also reported by the Adelaide Group on page 3 of the March-April edition of Prostate Supporter).

Kathriye says the CCSA was the first such organisation to be established in Australia and had also bought equipment for the Royal Adelaide Hospital. It does not receive government funding and, like the PCFA, relies on donations to fund the excellent work that they do in relation to all forms of cancer.

Kathriye also spoke in detail about behavioural research, education, healthy eating, exercise, extensive support services, CCSA accommodation, counselling service, Cancer Connect and the very important work provided by carers.

Stephen gave a comprehensive account of his own experience with the Staying Healthy After Cancer Program, which was very well received.

Kathriye discussed the coming Staying Healthy After Cancer Education group program – a free six-week program that will help cancer patients to manage changes to their body; reduce

feelings of anxiety, depression and fear; work more effectively with health care professionals and reconnecting with life to get more out of living.

The education program covers: nutrition, exercise, relaxation techniques, fatigue, medications, difficult emotions, communication, problem solving and goal setting. the program is delivered by trained peer leaders.

If you would like to know more about the program's future courses being held at Angle Park, Fullarton, Salisbury, Aldgate, Modbury and Eastwood, or become a leader for the program, or take part in the six-week online course for Healthier Living With Ongoing Health Problems – Including Cancer, please phone Kathriye on 8291 4158. There was particularly good interest from our support group in attending the upcoming course at Noarlunga Health Village, Alexander Kelly Drive, from Thursday May 13 to Thursday June 24, 2010. If you would like to attend, please give Kathriye a call.

DESERVED RECOGNITION

DR CAROLE PINNOCK has received an award for 20 years' service at Repatriation General Hospital and, as we know from personal experience, has been a great support to our groups as a guest speaker.

Dr Pinnock's contribution to the production of books about localised and advanced

prostate cancer, being the Chair of the Education Steering Committee of the Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration Repatriation General Hospital Daw Park, is widely respected and appreciated by prostate cancer support groups.

Also at the Repatriation General Hospital, Dr Sam Chopra has been awarded a \$30,000 grant to further his understanding of prostate cancer tissue growth and how it is controlled, by studying the male hormone receptor in benign and cancerous tissue. The grant was a bequest by the late William (Cyril) Wallis for research into the causes and treatment of prostate cancer.

A GEM OF A NEW SERVICE

A SPECIALISED unit for older people has been opened in Ward One of the Repatriation General Hospital, called GEM (Geriatric Evaluation Management). This unit is an integral part of a comprehensive plan to anticipate and accommodate the health care needs of the ageing population in Southern Metropolitan Adelaide.

Research supports that older patients treated in GEM units improve in function, have shorter lengths of stay in the hospital, leave taking less medication and generally have better outcomes following their hospital stay. The full report is in the April 2010 edition of Repat News, and also check the Southern Adelaide Health Service at www.rgh.sa.gov.au

Mitcham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Pathology helps pave the path to cancer detection

The role of pathologists in prostate cancer treatment is often unheralded but still very significant, as Mitcham support group deputy chairman Roland Harris reports.

WHILE urologists treat the effects of prostate cancer, pathologists deal with the biopsy samples of living tissue and the cells that compose it. This was explained clearly to the Mitcham support group at its April meeting.

The group's third meeting for 2010, which attracted an audience of 24 interested members, featured retired pathologist David Evans as guest speaker.

David had commenced pathology in 1961 with the Commonwealth Department of Health, which took him to many Australian cities, and then stayed in Hobart from 1969 to 1997. He did

voluntary work in Nepal and East Timor before retiring to Adelaide in 2002.

David has a passion for barber shop quartet singing, and four singers came with him to add a performance element to his presentation.

As a fun way to start the meeting, David led us through a few hair-raising renditions of old favourite songs. This put us all in a relaxed mode before the slide show and his talk commenced.

In examining the historical work and breakthroughs of Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), acknowledged as the father of modern pathology, the audience was shown that

diseases are best explained in terms of changes that take place within the cells of body tissue.

David described how a pathologist finds out what is going on while the patient is still alive and therefore can provide cell information that can perhaps cure problematic diseases.

The slides in David's presentation looked a bit like floral dress patterns to us, so we were most thankful for David's skilled interpretation of the cell patterns. After question time, David and Eleanor Evans were presented with a gift in appreciation for an enjoyable evening.

COMING EVENTS

MAY 27 MEETING

The next Mitcham Support Group event will be held on Thursday, May 27, in the Colonel Light Gardens RSL club rooms at 4 Prince George Parade, Colonel Light Gardens, from 7pm. Guest speakers will be Belinda Plush and Kathy Naulty from the Aged Care & Housing Group speaking on Respite Services West/Wyatt Holidays Program.

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

Adelaide Prostate Cancer Support Group

Generous donations

RECENTLY the Toorak and Burnside Bowling Club held a fundraiser for breast cancer. Its success prompted Carl Hopkins, an active member of that club and also the Adelaide Prostate Cancer Support Group, to suggest that they also have a bowling fun day to raise funds for Prostate Cancer.

For this event, bowling club members were encouraged to wear blue, and Carl cut a fine figure in his blue PCFA shirt and hat.

At the Adelaide support group's April meeting, Carl presented a cheque for \$340

from the proceeds of this event. This money will go into the Trevor Hunt Memorial fund to help pay for the training of a South Australian Prostate Nurse. A special thank you to Carl and his bowling club for their support.

WHILE VISITING doctors in late April, Ian Fisk met with Eric and Elfriede Reuschle, who because of poor health have not been able to attend support group meetings for while. Eric generously donated \$50 to our group, for which we return great thanks to Eric and Elfriede.



Carl Hopkins

Barossa Prostate Cancer Support Group

Fairground attraction

Taking an information stall to the Kapunda Farm Fair proved most beneficial to the community, as Barossa support group convenor Don Piro reports.

THE Barossa support group were pleased to represent the PCFA at the recent Kapunda Farm Fair for two days, speaking to more than 150 people and giving out pamphlets, brochures and information about prostate awareness and men's health.

The Barossa Group has only small numbers and we were supported by other country and city group members who came up when a SOS for help was sent out to staff the display over the two days of the fair.

I would like to thank the Barossa Group, Barry Searle and Stan Armstrong who came over both days to help man the stand, set up and pack up, as well as John Krahlung, Alan Hall, Peter Kent – and especially Allan and Joan Manfield from Port Pirie, Ian Fisk, Bob and Liz Wood from Adelaide groups, and Trevor Muirhead and Ron Lehmann from Murray Bridge (they mentioned they will be having



Pictured, from left: Barossa support group members Peter Kent and Alan Hall hard at work issuing prostate cancer information at the recent Kapunda Farm Fair.

COMING EVENT

MAY 18 MEETING

- The Barossa Support Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month at Don Piro's home, 28 Kindler Ave, Nuriootpa. Please contact Don for further information on 8562 3359 or 0419 863 124.

a similar fair next year at Karoonda and may call out for extra helpers as we did).

By having a chat, a laugh and working together, it certainly

does help build networks and friendships. Organising a stall and getting the relevant flyers, resources and pamphlets is not a difficult task, but it takes

a bit of chasing around and organising, setting up rosters and without other members' assistance, it simply wouldn't happen.

I am sure this is not only a Barossa problem but faces many other groups as well – so thank you to those who travelled to the Kapunda Farm Fair, as it really is worthwhile for all the men and the families we reached out to.

Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group

Diverse events for Port Pirie members

A SOCIAL gathering of Port Pirie Prostate Support Group members was held during March at the beautiful home setting of a member couple at Baroota. The group enjoyed home-cooked pizzas in the outside wood oven and a smorgasboard of barbecued meats, salads and desserts, set among orchards and vineyards on the property. It was a fabulous event that underlines the benefits of being involved in a support group.

For the official April support group meeting, Port Pirie naturopath Karen Coleman spoke to the group about what is naturopathy.

As an additional bonus, registered nurses Jeff Boundy and Wendy Oppermann presented their research findings about erectile function to a special group meeting in April. This was promoted to the community and there was an attendance of 24 people.

Dr Richard Wells has now been confirmed as guest speaker for the support group's next meeting, to be held on TUESDAY JUNE 1, and he will be discussing innovations in robotic surgery.

Meetings for the Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group are always held on the first Tuesday of the month, at the BHAS bowling club in Port Pirie, with the most recent event held there on May 4.

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

Murray Bridge Prostate Cancer Support Group

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Murray Bridge Prostate Cancer Support Group conducts its monthly meetings at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month, at Our Wellbeing Place, 108 Swanport Rd, Murray Bridge.

The next meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY, MAY 19** and it is hoped that the guest will be a local solicitor, speaking on wills, powers of attorney and other legal items relevant to our group. Please bring along your questions.

• For further details, phone Ron Lehmann on (08) 8532 3277 or email bronron@aapt.net.au

Members get inspired to add sparkle to meetings

Even the absence of a guest speaker couldn't stop this support group from achieving good fellowship, as Ron Lehmann reports.

THE Murray Bridge support group's April meeting attracted strong attendance, including several new people and an increase in the number of partners joining group members – a sign which is very encouraging.

Unfortunately the intended guest speaker was not able to attend due to unforeseen difficulties. However, the group was enlightened by Trevor Muirhead who issued a report on the Prostate Cancer Ambassadors training week that he attended in Melbourne earlier this year.

It was noted that the two Murray Bridge Prostate Cancer Ambassadors – support group convenor Ron Lehmann and

Trevor Muirhead – performed a valuable service during the month by providing help for the Barossa support group's information stall at the recent Kapunda Farm Fair (for a full report of this event, see the Barossa group item from Don Piro on Page 6 of this newsletter). This proved to be an especially memorable day of promotional activity and fellowship.

The April group meeting also discussed general health matters, from further developments on prostate cancer treatments to promoting better awareness of health professionals, and the wish list of possible future speakers to enlighten and inform the group.

VALUABLE INPUT

THE April meeting also benefitted from the input of retired doctor Sanjee Martin, who is also a support group member and explained to the group the significant difficulty in diagnosing and treating prostate cancer. His explanation proved very interesting and helpful to many members, who discussed several points at length over cuppas and biscuits after the meeting concluded.

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED

THE June meeting of the Murray Bridge support group will feature Graham Lyons as guest speaker, delivering a talk on natural alternatives to health problems.

Research findings and news items from around the world

Green laser treatment delivers impressive results in Perth

PERTH doctors are using a revolutionary green light laser to treat one of the most common and annoying medical problems in older men – an enlarged prostate.

The condition affects half of all men by the age of 60, often making them have to go to the toilet frequently. A quarter of men with enlarged prostates need treatment such as surgery or drug therapy.

Hollywood Private Hospital is the first hospital in Western Australia to offer green light laser therapy, which uses 100-12 watt laser energy from the green light band to vaporise the prostate tissue that obstructs the outlet to the bladder.

In recent months, surgeons Syd Weinstein and Stan Wisniewski have treated more than 35 Western Australian men with the new laser, which is tipped to become

the new gold standard for treatment of enlarged prostates.

Traditional surgery often means that men face a three-day stay in hospital, but green laser surgery patients usually stay in hospital for only one day.

• Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 2010, written by Medical reporter Cathy O'Leary.

THE LIGHTER SIDE...

A married man went into a confessional and said to his priest, "I almost had an affair with another woman." The priest said, "What do you mean, almost?" "Well, we got undressed

and rubbed together, but then I stopped." The priest said, "Rubbing together is the same as putting it in. For your penance, say five Hail Mary's and put \$50 in the poor box." The man left the confessional, said his prayers,

then paused beside the poor box and started to leave. The priest, who was watching, yelled: "You didn't put any money in." The man replied, "I rubbed \$50 on the box, and according to you, that's the same as putting it in!"

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

Payneham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Why reach out for support?

The question of why support groups are so valuable to prostate cancer sufferers has myriad answers, as Payneham Support Group coordinator Phil Davis reports.

BEING diagnosed with prostate cancer can often be overwhelming – especially if you are alone, or if your doctor is the only person that you feel comfortable talking to about your situation.

Because of this sense of isolation, many men have found it is very helpful to attend a prostate cancer support group, where they are able to discuss their concerns, options and outcomes with others who are or have experienced the same disease.

Adjusting to life and the challenges posed by prostate cancer can be eased by listening to health professional, who speak at meetings and answer questions asked by members.

This simple exchange of information enables members to learn more about the disease in a friendly and accepting environment.

Communication with other support group members and how they are managing their individual prostate cancer situations not only improves knowledge, but I also believe it improves the confidence and self esteem of men at a very difficult time, and the realization that one is not alone.

It is important to realise that it is okay to worry; this may be the first time we have faced our own mortality, so it is important to be gentle on

yourself. You may experience unexpected emotions and concerns, but fortunately there is help and experience at hand within the membership of the support group.

To aid and increase the communication among members, the Payneham support group's April meeting included a barbecue meal (and a grateful thank you to all those who provided food and assisted in preparing and serving the meal).

The meeting also included our first survivor forum. This enabled each member the opportunity to speak about their own personal prostate cancer journey, including how and when they were diagnosed, the impact of the diagnosis, treatment received, side effects and any other concerns or improvements that have happened.

The broad gambit of treatment options were spoken about, with most members saying they are quite happy and comfortable with their individual choice of treatment.

While the meeting was in progress the thought entered my mind that generally men are uneasy about visiting a doctor – and considerably more ill at ease when discussing issues concerning the prostate. However, as the meeting progressed the unease slowly subsided and we all became more comfortable.

Within the community, it is very apparent that male traits inhibit knowledge of the disease: while men with reckless indifference will run into a burning building to save a pet, they're very reluctant to discuss any situation below their belt.

Thankfully there are now more men prepared to discuss prostate cancer in public and demystify the problem. This should encourage men to take a greater interest in their own health, with more understanding and knowledge of the disease – and hopefully a preparedness to be tested.

The survivor forum was very interesting and worthwhile, with various questions being asked during the discussion, which I hope alleviated some fears. We all have our fears and disappointments but the majority of us have been fortunate enough to be accurately diagnosed and are receiving or have received treatment.

Support is important when you are experiencing a life threatening illness. It is necessary to accept support from family and friends, and support groups can help make the journey less stressful.

Remember that others may share information or experiences that do not necessarily apply to you. Never replace your doctor's advice with tips from another survivor's story.

COMING EVENTS

MAY 18 MEETING:
The Payneham Support Group will meet in the Payneham RSL Clubrooms, 360 Payneham Rd, Payneham at 7pm on Tuesday May 18. The May meeting will feature Grantley Day, Lifestyle Advisor and Living Works Facilitator, delivering a talk on cancer and depression issues.

JUNE MEETING:
The support group meeting on June 15 at the Payneham RSL Clubrooms will feature Dr Stephen Hardy, Research Scientist in Biochemistry and Immunology, speaking about the Mechanics of Cancer.

• For more information about the Payneham Support Group – or for a helpful chat about your prostate cancer issues – please phone Phil Davis (8251 0939 classic100@lifestylesa.net.au), Peter Woodrow (8263 5556) or Arthur Seager (8289 4180), or visit the Payneham Support Group's dedicated website at www.psapayneham.org

McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group

Taking group meetings to engage with new audiences

In a bid to show more people how prostate cancer support groups operate, the McLaren Vale group met in a new venue, as Bryan Hearn reports.

FOR the April meeting of the McLaren and Districts Support Group, we enjoyed a smart change of venue. Arrangements were made to use the local bowls club in McLaren Vale and our guest speaker was Malcolm Ellis, Central Australia Chapter Chairman but wearing his prostate cancer ambassador's hat on this occasion.

My thinking behind the change of venue was that many bowls club members could be potential prostate cancer support group members – and having an ambassadors presentation would convert the regular meeting into an “awareness” evening that could reach beyond the normal meeting of members.

Unfortunately only one bowls club member attended with 17 other regular support group members and one new member – though the bowls club member requested that a lot of the prostate cancer information materials and brochures be left at the club.

These materials were taken by bowls club members over the following weekend, so hopefully there may be some



Good numbers of support group members attended the Ambassadors presentation by Malcolm Ellis at McLaren Vale Bowls Club in April.

follow-up enquiries.

To start the meeting, an overview of the PCFA Central Australia Chapter was detailed. As respective secretary and chairman of the Central Australia Chapter, Malcolm and I were able to provide a comprehensive overview of Central Australia Chapter activities, along with a detailed description of the PCFA national administrative structure.

Malcolm then delivered an interesting 30-minute Ambassador presentation which stretched significantly longer due to unexpected computer problems.

I filled in during the down time by playing the song *Prostate*

COMING EVENT

THURSDAY MAY 27

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, May 27. The guest speaker will be retired rural GP Clive Auricht, who will speak on exercise and lifestyle options for the over 60s

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

Blues by Adelaide musician Peter Tilbrook (formerly of The Masters Apprentices) from his recently released CD *Let's Go to the Movies*.

Listening to the words of this song raised quite a few laughs from support group members.

Members should be reminded that sales of this CD will help benefit Prostate Cancer research, with \$5 from every sales being donated by Peter to prostate cancer projects. For CD sales details, visit Peter Tilbrook's band website www.thepartycats.com.au

And now for something completely different ... a touch of humour

• REAL PROBLEMS LOGGED BY COMPUTER HELP CENTRES:

Tech Support: In the bottom left hand side of the computer screen, can you

see that the OK button is now being displayed?

Customer: Wow. How can you see my screen from there?

Caller: “I deleted a file from my PC last week and I have just realised that I need it. If I turn my system clock back two weeks will I have my file back again?”

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

Seasonal holiday visitors are welcome to join Darwin group

The Prosper Darwin group is planning events that can include travellers enjoying the dry season, as Graeme Tierney reports.

WHILE Keith Williams usually compiles this report, he is taking a bit of well deserved rest and recreation with his wife Pat, and we wish them safe travels.

While Keith has been away, the Darwin group has held its usual monthly meeting, made some minor decisions and given our advice freely and confidently to those in need.

It is officially the dry season in Darwin and, as usual, the rain has all but stopped, the barramundi are biting and

tourists of all shape, size and age are arriving. The next few months are certainly the time to visit the Top End. Roads from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia are all in great condition and you are all welcome to visit.

The support group is planning a dinner at The Wharf in Darwin on Monday July 12, and anyone visiting the city is welcome to attend.

Albert Goodrich, a member of our support group for a long time, is now a local TV star.

COMING EVENT

The Prosper Darwin support group will next meet on **MONDAY, JUNE 14**. The 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.

Albert was recently the first patient to use the CT Scanner at the new Oncology Unit in Darwin, and had a television interview with the *Stateline* program on ABC TV. Albert performed admirably and has helped spread a valuable message about prostate cancer and its treatment to a wider public audience.

Albert, we know you are enduring a difficult time at the

moment but be assured you are in our thoughts and we wish you well.

Let's all make the most of life and, as Keith says, travel safe.

- For more information about the Prosper Darwin support group, in the absence of group president Keith Williams, please contact group secretary Graeme Tierney of Leanyer, by phone at home on 8927 0594 or mobile 0427 270 594.

Research findings and news items from around the world

Bald men less likely to get prostate cancer problems

MEN who start to go bald before the age of 30 are up to 45 per cent less likely to have prostate cancer later in life, scientists in the US announced in March.

Researchers from the University of Washington studied 2000 men aged between 40 and 47, half of whom had suffered prostate cancer.

The researchers compared the rate of tumours in those who had remembered losing their hair at a young age, compared to those who had had not suffered hair loss.

The study found that men who had started to thin out on

top earlier were almost half as likely to develop prostate cancer, which contradicts previous research.

Baldness is caused when hair follicles shrink after being exposed to too much dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a chemical produced by the male hormone testosterone.

Experts believe that men with increased levels of testosterone are more likely to become bald at a younger age, particularly if baldness runs in the family.

By the age of 30, approximately 25 to 30 per cent of men will have some baldness, researchers believe.

By the age of 50, half of all men suffer significant hair loss.

"At first, the findings were surprising," said Professor Jonathon Wright, an expert in prostate cancer at the University of Washington in Seattle. "But we found that early onset baldness was associated with a 29 per cent to 45 per cent reduction in the relative risk of prostate cancer."

Once diagnosed, prostate cancer sufferers are often given drugs to reduce testosterone levels, because this hormone can accelerate the growth of tumours once they develop.

However, the research also suggests that high levels of testosterone at an early age may help prevent the disease.

The findings were published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology*.

According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, each year close to 3300 men die of prostate cancer, with about 20,000 new prostate cancer cases diagnosed in Australia every year.

Alarming, by the age of 85, statistics show that a man has a one in five risk of developing prostate cancer.

Alice Springs Prostate Cancer Support Group

What it means to be supported

Some of the reasons why both men and women become involved with prostate cancer support groups have been summarised by Murray Neck, convener of the Alice Springs group.

THERE are many reasons why both men and women become involved with prostate cancer support groups, and it is valuable to reflect on these to make sure that new members can be appropriately welcomed to existing support groups, and that more potential members can be approached and encouraged to join groups.

1 The desire to help others by starting a local support group: Bill was diagnosed with prostate cancer some years ago but had little idea what the next appropriate step for him would be.

He had little information concerning his prostate problem, had nobody to talk to, and both Bill and his wife were confused and alarmed.

He survived surgery and chemotherapy, met two other locals who had endured similar circumstances and found they all had a strong wish to help other men in their community who had to face this conffliction.

Enquiries put them in touch with the nearest prostate cancer support group, and with their guidance they started their own group.

2 As a survivor or as an observer, you can learn more about the disease through professional guest speakers and through recommended reading.

3 You can meet with others to either share experiences or learn from the survivors.

4 To spread the word through the community by encouraging younger men, particularly those in the under 55-year bracket, to commence having regular PSA tests and to take charge of their body's health.

5 To provide support for men and their families who have recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer, or who are in recovery mode from an operation.

6 To develop friendships and to share fellowship, and through doing this, to realise there is a good life to be enjoyed after prostate cancer.

7 To receive the monthly support group newsletter and information mail outs. Often these people do not attend meetings, but they would always be welcomed, as would a short note from them to the group advising of their circumstances, requirements or suggestions.

8 You are part of a large, valuable organization. It has been stated many times that a man who joins a support group lives longer. The longer I live, the more I realise that this is a fact.

A VISIT TO ROTARY

SUPPORT GROUP Chairman Tony O'Brien was welcomed as guest speaker at an April meeting of the Rotary Club of Alice Springs. Speaking from experience and supported by his wealth of gathered

knowledge, Tony was able to enlighten Rotarians with the many facets of prostate cancer.

Judging by the number of questions fielded and the extension of question time, his talk was well received and Rotarians were much more knowledgeable, and with some requesting further reading material.

The club generously donated \$500 towards the expenses of an additional delegate to attend the August Conference of the Prostate Cancer foundation of Australia in the Gold Coast.

TED WHITTEN GOLF CLASSIC

THE E.J. WHITTEN 2010 Alice Springs Golf Classic – one of the region's great charity events – is being held on May 13 and 14 this year.

Inaugurated in 2007, this annual Alice Springs event has been incredibly successful. The town's serious golfers and many other triers come together in teams of four to compete for a trophy, followed by a gala dinner.

In the process, they raise money for the E.J. Whitten Foundation which helps fund research into prostate cancer.

Nationally, this golf tournament held across many different cities has raised in excess of \$3.5 million and Alice Springs golfers are proud to have contributed \$25,000 towards the foundation.

COMING EVENTS

MAY MEETING:
The Alice Springs Prostate Cancer Support Group will meet on Thursday May 13 from 6.30pm to 8.00pm in the conference room of General Practice Network NT, Skinner St, Alice Springs. Guest speaker for the May meeting is well-known local aboriginal health worker Kenny Lechleitner, whose topic is: "Being sensitive but sensible". Ken will explain the hereditary complications of encouraging aboriginal men to talk more openly about health matters.

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Support group member and lifestyle fitness coach Noel Harris invites all support group members and interested persons to participate in his long-term, free exercise session "Stretch and Stride Sessions", held every Wednesday from 5pm at Rhonda Diano Oval, Head St, Alice Springs.
The current program starts on May 1 and ends on August 30, 2010.

Early detection leads to swift prostate treatment

A chance blood test for a happy and seemingly healthy 51-year-old revealed the insidious arrival of prostate cancer, but also triggered decisive action, as David Sly reports.

AWARENESS of prostate cancer being a potential threat to older men is leading to more blokes taking the initiative to get checked early for the disease – resulting in immediate action to help beat prostate cancer, as 51-year old Tony Lewis can testify.

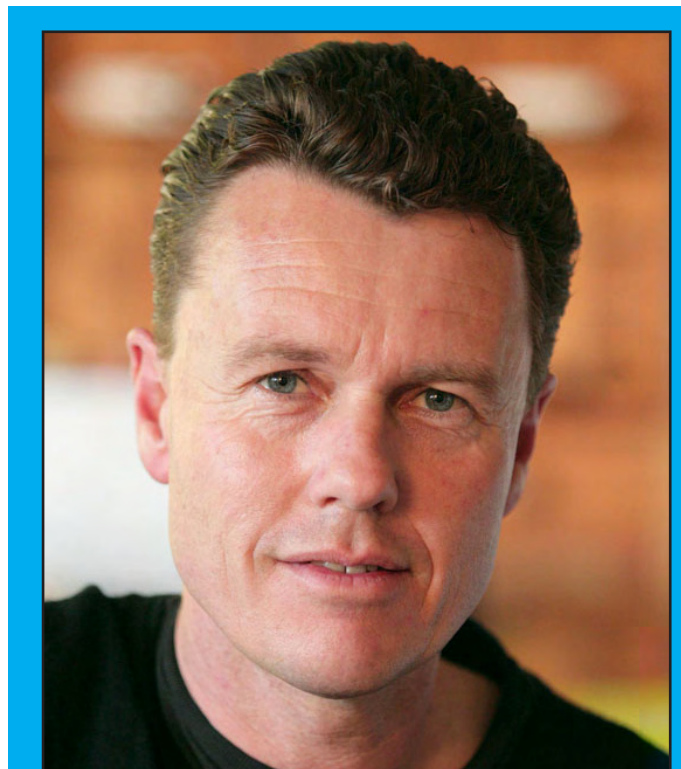
The successful Adelaide freelance media photographer went to his doctor late last year for a general health check and felt it would be in his best interest if the doctor also performed a digital examination.

“It’s a message that is starting to seep into the general consciousness of blokes in Australia, that after you turn 50 you should have a check for prostate cancer, regardless of how well you feel at the time,” says Tony.

The digital examination revealed no signs of trouble, but a companion blood test taken to make sure of matters came back with a PSA result of 6.0 and set alarm bells ringing.

“I went back for another blood test and immediately started doing as much research as I could about the disease and possible treatments,” says Tony. “While I was aware of prostate cancer, I really didn’t know anything specific about it, and obtaining material started to quickly put me in the picture.”

By the time two weeks had passed, and Tony had been introduced to specialist Alan



Tony Lewis

Stapleton and had a biopsy taken for detailed examination, Tony had mentally prepared himself for bad news. “My wife Anne got very cut up by the diagnosis and my children Tibby and Oscar were worried for me, but the more information I found and advice I sought, the better I felt about getting a positive outcome. My doctors now say that going in for surgery with the right mental attitude certainly helped with my recovery.”

Tony asked several doctors and specialists “What would you do in my position?” and drew confidence from their

answers that surgical removal of his prostate was a smart and practical solution.

“Something had to be done – that was obvious – so I chose whatever would give me the greatest long-term benefits. I had no fear of the surgery because it had been explained very clearly to me. I actually felt lucky in the circumstances; of all the possible types of cancer, this had very good prospects of long-term recovery.”

As more people became aware of Tony’s condition, which he believed was an unexpected and isolated incident, he learned

that it was not the first time prostate cancer had affected his extended relatives.

“It wasn’t until I started asking more questions that I realised a history of prostate cancer existed through my family. It just wasn’t talked about in the past, so it shocked me to learn the truth.”

Since surgery in December and a month’s leave from work to fully rest, Tony has had two blood tests that have both shown PSA undetectable. “That has my doctors and me feeling very optimistic.”

Interestingly, Tony’s journey with the disease, decisive action and successful, swift recovery has sent a poignant signal about prostate cancer to many of Tony’s peers and friends.

“They were so shocked at what had happened to me – without any signs of me being ill or being anything other than routinely healthy – that they realised it could happen to them just as easily,” says Tony.

“Many of my friends have now said they should go and have checks done as well – and better still, I know that several have gone beyond talking and taken action.

“Being checked for prostate cancer is more than just giving peace of mind to guys of my age – it can make sure they take early and decisive action against this disease, just like I have.”