

January 2022 Newsletter

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

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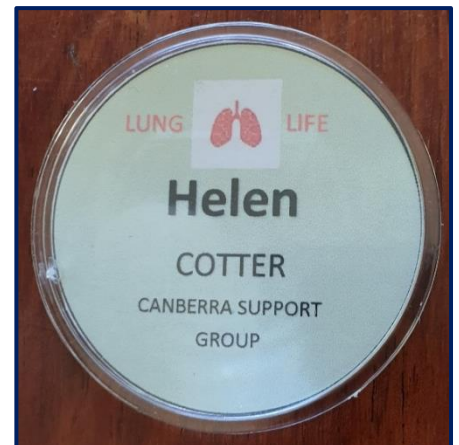
NEXT MEETING: Date to be confirmed
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

In February there will be a 'get together' (see below for details).

From the Editor

We are back from our Christmas hiatus. Happy New Year to all our readers. As you are no doubt aware COVID-19 has not made the transition to 2022 an easy one. Case numbers have now risen to a point where they are no longer accurately counted. Even getting tested is not easy with Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) difficult, if not impossible, to come by. In this environment a decision was wisely made not to hold our January meeting. We will not be holding a formal meeting in February; however, you are welcome to attend a 'get together' at the Labor Club on Thursday 10 February, from 11:00 am, followed by lunch at 12:00 noon.

Over the break our coordinator **Lyn Morley** has decided to step down from her role after five years of dedicated service. She has done a wonderful job helping to keep the organisation going, particularly through the last few difficult years. This is the final newsletter where her name will appear on the top of page 1. Lyn's retirement is of course an opportunity for someone else to take over this essential role. Could it be you?



Thanks to Jan Hunt, we have new easy to read name tags for our monthly meetings.

Val Dempsey by Chris Moyle

In November 2021 our Lung Life member, Valmai Dempsey, was named the ACT's 2022 Senior Australian of the Year for her dedicated decades of service with St John Ambulance.

Val, one of four high calibre nominees, was amazed at her win. She says, 'I thought, how does a kid from Narrabundah get rung up and told something so absolutely amazing? I guess it's not where you come from but where you choose to go to'.

So how did this kid grow into the woman receiving this award?

Val was just 10 years old when she began volunteering for St John Ambulance, inspired by a neighbour who had joined St John's 'to help people'. The young Val said to herself, 'That's what I want to do'. The neighbour, Beryl Box, a triple-certificated nursing sister, took Val under her wing, dubbing her the first St John's cadet, and teaching and looking after her.

This time spent with St John's led Val into a career in nursing, but not before marrying Lindsay, having a son and daughter and studying for her matriculation. Then she trained at 'the wonderful Woden Valley Hospital', all the while devoting time to St John's which complemented her nursing training. Her nursing career began in 1974 and Val is still a registered nurse on the COVID assistance list.

In 2020 and 2021 Val faced her biggest challenge yet as a volunteer – first with the 'Black Summer' bushfires, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the bushfires Val and her team gave up their Christmas break to work 12 hour days, helping to provide food and first aid, as well as setting up rescue houses and assisting at the evacuation centres.

When Canberra entered lockdown in August, Val tirelessly assisted ACT Health with contact tracing.

One thing Val is passionate about is for all Australians to gain first aid competence when getting their driver's licence.

Val, in her St John's uniform, has presented two entertaining and informative first aid sessions to our group. She has enjoyed many different roles and many friendships made in nursing over the years, but absolutely believes in first aid for all and is committed to community education.

Val is to be admired for contributing so much while suffering from myositis, an auto-immune disease diagnosed 21 years ago. For the past six years this has caused lung damage. Val says, 'The challenge for me is that while it has eaten into my lungs... is to continue to stay as healthy as I can and still remain active in my community'. Another commitment is to her family, and seeing her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow and develop in their lives.



A presentation to Val

As Val was not able to make it to our Christmas lunch. Retiring Coordinator, Lyn Morley, presented her with flowers after the lunch at Westfield Woden.

Canberra Lung Life Support Group congratulates Val on her award and wishes her well with endeavours on this new platform.

References: www.thesenior.com.au 2 December 2021

<https://www.act.gov.au/our-canberra/latest-news/2021/november/meet-the-act-senior-australian-of-the-year>

Lung Life Christmas Lunch

25 people from our group met together at the Star Buffet in the Burns Club for our end of year lunch in December. There was a lot of catching up as well as chatter on this occasion. Everyone was pleased to see each other after the COVID lockdown. Pam gave everyone who attended a scratchie, but the only winner was Helen Cotter who is now \$3 richer.

Editor's Note – The Burns Club is named after Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns (1759-1796). He was also known as Rabbie Burns. Although one of the sporting houses at your editor's primary school was named after him, he had no idea who Burns was until he went on a school trip to New Zealand in 1970. There he saw this bronze statue in Dunedin. This is one of four similar statues of Burns, all sculptured by 19th artist John Steell. The others are in London, Dundee, and New York.



See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Burns_\(Steell\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Burns_(Steell)) for more information on these art works.



Anne and Marilyn at our lunch



Maureen and Lyn also enjoyed the occasion.
As we have a few Lyn's - this is Lyn Brooks.

So what brain-boosting resolution should you be setting this year?

Read More - Reading really is like exercise for the brain, so start putting more focus on getting more reading in. Whether you choose to read a fiction book, a self-help book, or something totally different, you want to make reading a regular part of your life. Set a reading goal, be it one book a week, one book a month, or a few books this year. Just strive to do *more* than you've done in the past.

Laugh More - Laughing is some of the best medicine around. Not only will laughing burn a few calories (especially if it's a good, deep belly laugh), but it's also a great way to help combat stress as well. Those

who laugh more in their life tend to have happier overall lives and experience fewer negative emotions than others. They also tend to be more positive overall with their outlook.

So take some time and watch that comedy movie or read your favourite funny book. You might even sign up for a 'joke of the day' email and have yourself a good chuckle first thing in the morning. Doing all you can to bring laughter into your life will make a difference.

Socialise More - In this day and age going out and socialising may not be the easiest or best thing to do, but there are still many other ways to communicate with people.

Too many people get caught up in the day to day business of their life that they forget to connect with others. Sure, you may see your significant other daily and be connecting with them regularly, but when was the last time you spoke with your best friend? If it's been a while, set a time to catch up in a safe manner. Those who have a rich social life tend to show stronger reliance against disease and also tend to experience fewer symptoms of depression as well. Remember, it's not a matter of numbers here. Having a few close friends is often preferable over having many acquaintances that you aren't that close with.

So make the next year a year of abundance. Do all that you can to add these three things to your life and you'll be setting yourself up for brain-related success.

Reference: Dr Ryan Shelton <https://www.wholebodyhealthnd.com/>

Thanks to **Chris Moyle** for this article and **Esther Fitton** for the jokes below.

OLD FRIENDS

Two elderly ladies had been friends for many decades. Over the years, they had shared all kinds of activities and adventures. Lately, their activities had been limited to meeting a few times a week to play cards.

One day, they were playing cards when one looked at the other and said, 'Now don't get mad at me. I know we've been friends for a long time, but I just can't think of your name. I've thought and thought, but I can't remember it. Please tell me what your name is'.

Her friend glared at her. For at least three minutes she just stared and glared at her. Finally she said: 'How soon do you need to know?'

SENIOR DRIVING

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, 'Vernon, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on I-5. Please be careful!'

'Hell!' said Vernon, 'It's not just one car. There's hundreds of them!'

SUPERSEX

A little old lady who had lost her marbles was running up and down the halls in a nursing home. As she ran, she would flip up the hem of her nightgown and say 'Supersex!' She ran up to an elderly man in a wheelchair, flipping her gown at him, she said 'Supersex'. He sat silently for a moment or two and finally answered, 'I'll take the soup'.

Mountains of masks: How to dispose of those single-use face coverings

Wondering what to do with all those single-use masks you've accumulated through the COVID-19 pandemic? Since they're made of plastics like polypropylene, polyethylene, and vinyl, you can't dispose of them in the recycle bin, so they must be put into the bin with your general rubbish.

There's a huge amount of research going into finding more eco-friendly ways to dispose of these masks, a pressing concern for all of us considering that these masks take around 450 years to break down naturally and that the human race is currently using around 129 billion of these masks every month. Masks that end up in our waterways cause further pollution through heavy metal contamination and general congestion. It is always important to throw your mask in the bin after finishing – and there are a few extra things you can do to help the planet and your fellow humans as you dispose of it.

1. Snip the straps off your mask. If these masks do find their way into the environment, these straps can wreak havoc on our wildlife. Birds, fish, and other animals can get caught up in the straps and are often unable to untangle themselves. A quick snip may save the life of one of our feathered friends or water-dwellers!
2. If you've had COVID-19 or been exposed to it, seal your mask in a paper or plastic bag before disposing of it. This contains the virus and may prevent a further outbreak.
3. It may be possible to wear your mask more than once if you can. If you've only worn it briefly, and it's clean and dry, with the layers and shape intact, you can put it in a zip-lock bag with a moisture-absorbing desiccated gel or sachet, or even uncooked grains of rice. Storing your mask this way means you can use it again – for up to three days.

Thanks to **Helen Cotter** for this informative article.

Reference: COTA ACT e-newsletter November 2021

<https://www.cotaact.org.au/information/resources/enews/>



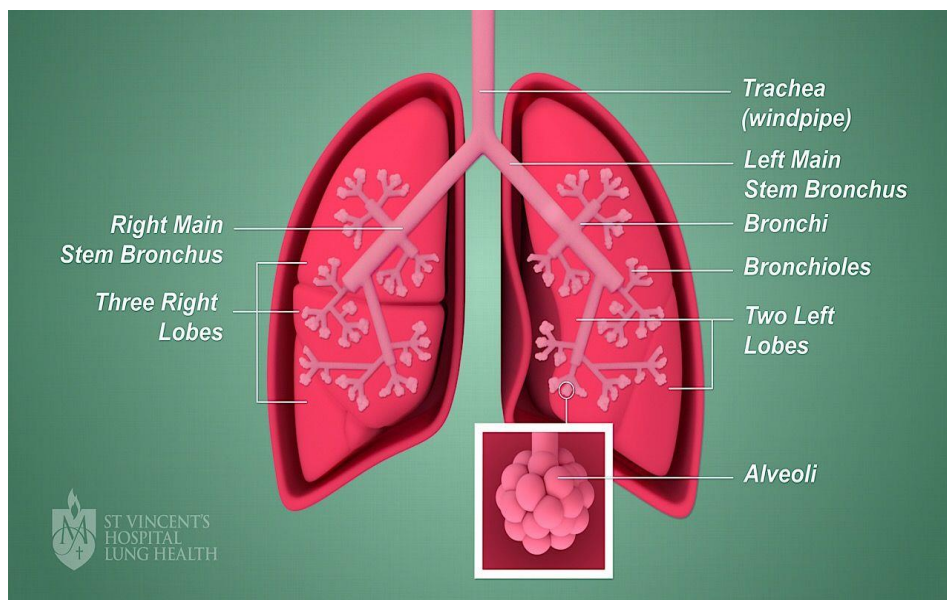
Bright summer shirts were the order of the day for Jan and Terry (above) and Chris Gray (right) at the Christmas lunch.

The Lungs

Just how much do you know about your lungs? Here is some interesting information (supplied by **Helen Cotter**) as why they may not be working as well as we may hope.

Do you have an Obstructive or a Restrictive Lung Disease?

There are two main types of lung disease (i.e. lung conditions), both of which cause shortness of breath. They are **obstructive lung disease** (difficulty exhaling air) and **restrictive lung disease** (restricting the ability to inhale).



Obstructive Lung Disease

There is an obstruction in the airways so breathing out is shallow and slow. It can occur when inflammation and swelling cause the airway to become narrowed or blocked. This leads to trapping of air and hyperinflation of the lungs, which in turn cause respiratory symptoms to worsen. The following diseases are obstructive:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Asthma
- Bronchiectasis
- Bronchiolitis
- Cystic Fibrosis

Restrictive Lung Disease

There are three main types of Restrictive Lung Diseases:

1. **Intrinsic Restrictive Disorders** (resulting from a restriction in the lungs).
2. **Extrinsic Restrictive Disorder** (originating outside the lungs).
3. **Neurological restrictive disorders** (caused by disorders in the central nervous system which interferes with the movements necessary to draw air into the lungs).

There are many issues which can result in a Restrictive Lung Condition, some of the more well-known ones are:

- Pneumonia
- Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Scoliosis
- Obesity
- Rib Fractures
- Muscular Dystrophy.

References: the information was sourced from:

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/obstructive-and-restrictive-lung-diseases-914741>

The picture was found at:

<https://www.svhlunghealth.com.au/Images/UserUploadedImages/3673/Your%20lungs%20still.jpg>

This is St Vincent's Hospital Lung Health website which has a lot of useful information as well.