



## May/June 2023 Newsletter

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

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**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 13 July 2023  
10:15 am – 12:00 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

*The Guest Speaker will be from Southside Physio talking about their program.*

### May Meeting - Marina Siemionow

It seems that the regular attendance at our meetings is around 14, these days. With the arrival of COVID, members have become more cautious about attending when they are coughing. Every time we meet, I'm receiving apologies from two to four members who are choosing to stay away as they are fearful that their coughing might impact others. With winter setting in, we also have a couple of our core group travelling on their regular journey north, chasing the sun.

For this meeting we had **Mark Brooke** (pictured) the **CEO of the Lung Foundation Australia (LFA)** come to talk to us about the wonderful work LFA is doing in promoting lung health; focusing on its advocacy and the success it is having in influencing government policy and funding measures.



Mark enthusiastically described the four years of hard work he and his team had put into advocating for the ban of non-prescription vaping products and the relief he felt when the Government recently announced the strengthening of regulations and quality standards for vapes. He also described a further success with the Government announcing the \$267 million to fund a National Targeted Lung Cancer Screening Program over

the coming years. Mark also mentioned that Long COVID has been added to the range of Lung Diseases that Lung Foundation Australia supports and the urgent need for more research in this area.

Mark passionately described the amazing team he has working with him and how the team has expanded its role and grown over the five years that he has had the privilege to lead the organisation. The team has even won a couple of Human Resource Awards.

Throughout his discussion with us Mark highlighted how interested he was in our Group, complimented us on our newsletter, which he reads every month, and complimented us on the critical support we were providing.



*The group who attended our meeting in May, along with Lung Life Australia CEO Mark Brooke*

## From the Editor

One of our members, Kaye Powell, has been involved with some valuable behind the scenes work advocating for lung health.

This photo was taken at Parliament House where Kaye (in green) is with Mark Brooke presenting ***Blueprint Transforming the agenda for COPD a path towards prevention and lifelong lung health*** to the Government. You can find this work on the Lung Foundation Australia website [Blueprint](#).

## May Lunch – Val and Marina Siemionow

On Friday 26 May eleven of us had lunch at the Irish Club. When we first arrived, we ended up standing around the bar as there was no table available for us. Eventually we discovered that we had been booked in for the previous day. Once the club identified their mistake staff quickly organised a table and settled us down.

Conversation quickly followed with Pam's son, Dean, (who has known the group for the twenty or so years that Pam has been a member) reminiscing about the early years. After the slow start, unfortunately, the slow service continued, and no-one was enthralled with their meals especially when the iconic dish of liver and onions was no longer available on the menu. It seems that the club's dining room is under new management. Despite some disappointments with the food, there was laughter and a number of conversations continued into the afternoon. A good time was had by all.



**Editor:** Maybe you need to go to Dublin, Cork, Galway, or some other interesting Irish place to get a good liver and onions. Although a bit of Googling on Wiki has the UK, US, Canada and Germany as the main countries where it is eaten.



*Stephen, Val, Helen Reynolds, Margaret, Pam (and a smiling face on the big screen) at the Irish Club in May*

## June Meeting – Val and Marina Siemionow

Twelve members attended the June meeting: we had apologies from Maureen, Val, George, Caroline, Margaret, Helen Cotter, Helen Reynolds and Marilyn. We also welcomed back a number of members after long absences - these included Barry and Shirley and Richard. It was great to see them.

### Topics discussed were:

- June lunch options. It was decided to hold our June lunch on Friday 23 June at the Southern Cross Club in Jamison.
- Christmas or *Xmas in July* is coming up. This will be held on **Friday 28 July at the Raiders Club** in Weston. We decided to go with the standard menu for this lunch and members would order for themselves as usual. Raffles will be organised for the day. **RSVP Marina by Friday 21 July**. You can find Marina's email address at the top of page 1.
- Marina mentioned a new service currently being trialled in Canberra by Southside Physio (both Pam and Marina have been involved with this as consumer representatives). Marina has arranged for Southside Physio, to come to our July meeting to talk to members about the service. After this members can determine whether they would fit with the criteria, and if so, can request a referral from their GP (see information on p5).
- Pam sought interest amongst the group to participate as guinea pigs for Q&A sessions with students from University of Canberra. We agreed to recommence this support for the students and Pam will let the University know of our interest in being involved.

### Guest speakers:

There were two guest speakers at today's meeting, Janine Lourensz and Dianne Percy from Asthma Australia. Janine was on first and started by advising us that one in nine (i.e. 11.1%) of Australians suffer from asthma and that the ACT leads the country with 12.1%. The presentation was very interactive, and

Janine was able to draw Lung Life members into an open discussion on a broad range of asthma-related topics. The presentation focused on the following topics:

- What is asthma?
- What are its signs and symptoms?
- What is involved in looking after asthma in terms of its triggers, its management, and its prevention?
- The overlap between asthma and COPD and the role of steroidal inhalers in their treatment.
- A round table discussion of asthma triggers ensued focusing on its contributing factors such as pollen, dust, chemicals (cleaning products), perfumes, thunderstorms, etc.
- It was noted that asthma also often goes together with hay fever and allergic rhinitis.
- Janine then introduced 'Flo', which is a product for cleaning sinuses and flushing out allergens. It is seen as an excellent way of managing hay fever.
- The discussion then focused on asthma medications – the use of *Relievers* taken as needed; the use of *Preventers* taken every day; and the use and efficacy of *Spacers* when using relieving puffers. It was stressed that users had to be aware of the potential interaction of some of their medications and to note the warnings on their products.
- A *Haler Aid* was passed around for members to examine.

Dianne's presentation was much briefer and focussed on the role and purpose of exercise in Asthma health maintenance. The group then participated in a hand and foot co-ordination exercise which was a precursor to a further discussion on exercise options, assessments, and programs. Both of the presentations were of interest and also very relevant to the group. The meeting finished at 12:00 pm and as usual the group broke for lunch in the bistro.

## April Lunch - Val and Marina Siemionow

In April a small group of nine gathered for lunch at Snapper, at the Southern Cross, Yacht Club. We ate in the much improved outdoor area, now formally known as the 'Courtyard' where we enjoyed beautiful vistas of the lake, Black Mountain, and Canberra along with large flocks of seagulls that stayed away from the tables. Members shared personal life experiences and as usual conversation continued throughout the afternoon on far ranging topics.



*Helen Reynolds and Margaret at Snapper*



These topics included the usually 'tabooed' politics and religion. Everyone was thrilled that the promised afternoon showers stayed away, and we were able to enjoy one final Canberra autumn afternoon outdoors.

## **Riotact Interview - Val and Marina Siemionow**

James Day (pictured below) a charming young cadet journalist with the Riotact contacted us through Lung Foundation Australia wanting to write an article on our group with a focus on why people joined our organisation and what benefits they got from the group. A mix of long term and newer members met James at short notice and shared their stories.

**Editor** – If you are unfamiliar with Riotact, you can view its content on <https://the-riotact.com/>.



*Karen, Chris Grey, Marina, and Helen Cotter with Riotact journalist James Day*

### **Are You Breathless?**

For a short time only.

Free Breathlessness Intervention Service.

This service is designed to make you feel in control, confident and increase your independence in daily activities.

Run by exercise professionals trained in Breathlessness Management Southside Physiotherapy [www.southsidephysio.com.au](http://www.southsidephysio.com.au).

Flexible and tailored to your individual needs.

Initial home visit with 3-4 follow up visits.

Your GP can refer you today if this program suits your needs.

## Air conditioner Available

One of our members, Jenny Pannell, has a highly efficient **nearly new mobile air conditioner** to give away.

She no longer needs it as her landlord has now installed reverse cycle air-conditioning into her home.

If you think you may be able to make use of this item, please contact Jenny directly at [jennympannell@gmail.com](mailto:jennympannell@gmail.com).



## COPD Part 3 (Reprinted from October 2020 – Chris Moyle)

Your **weight** can have an impact on your energy levels, mobility, and symptoms such as breathlessness. If you are **underweight**, your body has less nutrient stores. You may get tired more easily and your muscles, including your breathing muscles, can become weak. Being underweight can also increase your risk of getting infections. If you are **overweight**, this can increase your breathlessness, making it hard for you to do daily activities like walking up stairs or carrying groceries. It also increases your risk of developing other health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes.

The **Australian Dietary Guidelines** say that you should enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day:

- **Vegetables:** including different types and colours, and legumes/beans.
- **Fruit grain (cereal) foods:** mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa, and barley.
- **Lean meats and poultry:** fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans.
- **Dairy:** including milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat.

You should also drink plenty of water and limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.

It is important to get advice that is specific to you and your condition. **An Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD)** can help you understand what your healthy weight range is. They can also help you set goals and develop healthy eating plans to ensure you are getting the right nutrition.

**If you get breathless** during your normal daily activities you may start to avoid **exercise**, however, this can cause your muscles to get weak and you will lose fitness over time. COPD research has shown that regular exercise can help maintain your fitness, improve your wellbeing, and reduce symptoms, such as breathlessness.

You should aim to **exercise** for at least 30 minutes, five times a week. It's important to note that you do not have to do all 30 minutes at once. For some people this will be achievable whilst others will need to break the 30 minutes into smaller sessions. The activity you do should make you a little out of breath. It's important to talk with a health professional, such as a physiotherapist, about what type of exercise would suit you.

For more information see <https://lunghealth.lungfoundation.com.au/>.