

January 2025 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 13th February 2025
10:15 am – 12:00 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

The February lunch will be on Friday 28th February - see the meeting minutes

Back to 2024 – November lunch at the Raiders Club - Val Siemionow

It was a very pleasant and convivial event. Everyone appeared to enjoy the gathering. Service was good and the meals were tasty.

January meeting – Helen Cotter

For the first meeting of the year we had a small but lively group. Marina outlined what we'll do every meeting, giving us an overview of what we're currently doing and what we plan to do.

For today, we looked at the first draft of the action plan for the **breathing project** that Marina has been involved with, and then we filled out a **survey** on how satisfied we are with Lung Life.



The breathing project is **Breathlessness Action Plan for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and their support persons**. Its purpose is to create an improved action plan for those who experience episodes of breathlessness. Today, Marina handed out the draft action plan. It has two aspects: **a two-sided page** outlining strategies to help manage breathlessness when it worsens; and **a 49 page supporting booklet** going into details about understanding breathlessness episodes, developing strategies for dealing with them and recording your episodes to help you understand when they occur. The emphasis is on understanding the strategies for you to use when an episode occurs.

We had a lively discussion on the topic, with Val Dempsey commenting that, in your action plan, it's a good idea to write down the positive things you can do as well as the limits caused by your breathlessness. For instance, you may not be able to walk for 15 minutes; but you can walk for 10 minutes – take note of that and feel good about it.

As a group, we felt the Action Plan two-sided page was clear and covered all we could think of, and the booklet looked to cover all aspects. The final copy is out later this year.

Marina then moved on to the second part of the meeting: a survey on how Lung Life can make itself more sustainable in the future. Lung Life has been in existence for 27 years and we want to make sure it continues - and continues to function well with each of us seeing how we can help the group to flourish. Marina handed out the **Members Satisfaction** survey. We were asked what we liked about Lung Life, how well it was meeting our needs, and what we saw as its goals. Marina will now analyse the responses.

Finally, we reminded everyone about the next lunch: **Friday 31 January at the Jamison Southern Cross Club**, meeting at 11:45 am (hopefully to get good parking).

The **February lunch** will be on **Friday 28 February** – most likely at the café near Yarralumla Nursery. It has changed owners so we're checking out if it's still suitable.

The meeting then ended, and it was off to lunch.

*During the meeting, we talked about the benefit of using a **hand-held fan** to make us feel better when breathing is difficult.*

Marina showed us her rechargeable fold-up hand-held fan, bought from K Mart – but other places sell similar fans.



The Answer to the Question from the November Newsletter

Guess the year?

- Cyclone Tracy devastated Darwin
- The ACT and NT were each allocated two senate seats
- The classic Australian album *Living in the Seventies* (Skyhooks) was released.

The answer is **1974**.

You may have heard that 2024 was the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy – the night *Santa didn't make it to Darwin*. Do you remember this song written after the event?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYbgLcIz2s>

Allocation of Senate seats. After much debate (and twice being rejected by the Senate) the Representation of the Territories bill was part of a package of bills that resulted in the Whitlam Government dissolving both Houses of Parliament in April 1974. Following the re-election of the Labor party, the bills passed through both Houses of Parliament at a historic joint sitting on 6 and 7 August 1974. The first senators for the ACT Susan Ryan and John Knight were elected in December 1975.

Living in the Seventies. The debut album by Melbourne band Skyhooks was released in October 1974. It spent 16 weeks at the top of the Australian album charts. The band included Red Symons on guitar (Red became a household name as the snide judge of *Red Faces* - a segment of *Hey Hey It's Saturday*) and lead singer Shirley Strachan (better known as Shirl). Shirl tragically died in a helicopter accident in 2001.

Christmas Lunch at the Irish Club – Photos taken by Val Siemionow



Chris and Jim Gray



Linda (with her crown) and Marilyn

The paper **Christmas crowns** were part of the festivities. Previously an Australian tradition, ABC's **Bluey** has now taken these Christmas lunch items to the world - and the USA in particular.

See <https://www.mamamia.com.au/bluey-christmas-episode-crowns/>.

How To Be More Generous – *Martin Reilly (a writer from outside of Lung Life)*

Information sourced by Chris Moyle

What does it mean to be generous? We often use the word to describe people who donate large sums to good causes. But you don't need money to be generous. You can show kindness in many other ways.

1. Take time to listen

Often, the most precious resources you can give to someone else are time and attention. Lots of people go through life feeling alone and misunderstood. When you meet someone in pain or confusion, lend them an ear. Listen without judgment or criticism.

2. Do something small to brighten someone's day

Small, thoughtful gestures can make a big difference. Ask yourself, 'How can I make someone's day a little better?' Maybe you could offer to fetch them a coffee, do the dishes when it's their turn, or offer to run an

errand.

3. Be generous with your smile

When someone smiles at us, we can't help but smile back. Smiling is the quickest way to spread some positive energy. When you next make eye contact with a stranger, smile. Don't underestimate the power of a brief connection.

4. Treat others fairly

When you support someone, do it wholeheartedly. For instance, if you decide to support your friend's business, don't ask them for a discount. Taking advantage of other people is the opposite of generosity. Treat others how you'd wish to be treated in return.

5. Be quick to forgive little mistakes

Everyone slips up from time to time. Don't hold on to pointless grudges. Be generous with your forgiveness.

6. Be generous with your praise

When someone does a good job or achieves something meaningful, congratulate them. Show that you appreciate their gifts and talents. Give thoughtful compliments.

7. Share your knowledge

Offer to mentor someone or to teach them a new skill. Seeing someone flourish with your guidance is immensely rewarding and helps you feel a renewed sense of gratitude for your own abilities. If someone asks for your advice, give it to them, but don't pressure them to accept it. Trust them to make their own decisions.

8. Be generous to the planet

We are all stewards of the earth. Play your part by picking up litter, taking time to recycle your waste, and donating your unwanted possessions instead of sending them to landfill. When you shop, make mindful choices. Try to support eco-friendly brands whenever possible.

9. Support other peoples' passions

When someone talks about their favourite hobby or interest, give them your full attention. People love talking about the things they enjoy and giving them space to share their joy is a gift.

10. Help those in crisis

If you can, volunteer to help people or animals in urgent need. For example, you could volunteer at a refuge for those who have experienced domestic violence.

11. Show yourself some generosity

You deserve to be treated with kindness. Practise self-care that makes you feel grounded and loved. You could set aside time for meditation, spend time in nature, treat yourself to a small gift, or just take a few hours to sit quietly and recharge.

The January Meeting in Pictures

Val Siemionow



Barry ready for a New Year, and on the right Maryln is pondering the Lung Life survey form.



The 'other Val' (Dempsey) and Margaret enjoying the meeting.

As you are likely aware our organisation has two Vals. Val is a gender neutral name with Latin origins, acting as a short, sweet nickname for Valerie, Valentino and other classic monikers. See <https://www.thebump.com/b/val-baby-name> .

A Message from The Coordinator

Marina Siemionow

Welcome to our new year. As we head into 2025, I thought it time for us all to reflect on who we are, where we have come from and where we are heading.

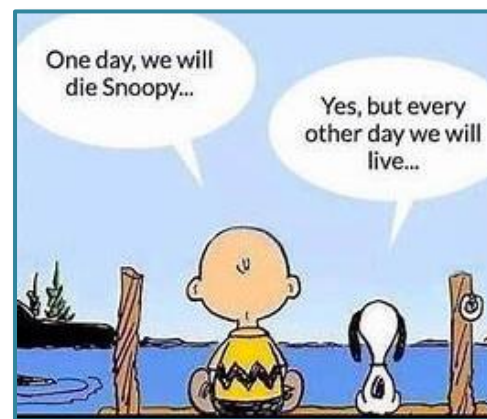
Over recent years we have seen a slow 'changing of the guard' as new members joined and many of the longer-term members who were instrumental in building the Group were no longer able to contribute. As our membership is renewing, I believe it is time for our current members to have a say, take the opportunity to have a look at what we do and how we do it and determine the best way forward for the Group.

The Canberra Lung Life Support Group has been offering friendship, social connections and education to individuals and their families living with chronic lung disorders since 1998. Over those 27 years the Group has empowered people with chronic lung conditions and their carers to work to solve their own problems by providing a safe place for them to learn and share their struggles, thoughts and experiences. As a self-help group members gather to talk and to learn together, sharing common problems and experiences associated with having a chronic lung condition. It is ever so important to be able to talk with people like ourselves - people who truly understand what we're going through and can share the practical insights that can only come from first-hand experience.

The Canberra Lung Life Support Group has grown from a small group of just eight people who first got together to help each other cope with the challenges of having a chronic lung condition. It has since grown to the current seventy members it now supports. Throughout that time members have been passionate about the Group and have voluntarily done what was needed to keep the Group operating and growing. People did what they could and what their condition allowed them to do.

Members took on tasks like:

- sending out birthday, get well, and sympathy cards
- contributing to and editing our newsletter which is critical at maintaining connections across all of our members, especially those who are not able to participate or attend meetings
- organising social functions and stalls at events
- putting together hampers for raffles and leaving brochures in medical surgeries
- supporting current students in the allied health services to better understand the day-to-day life challenges experienced by people with chronic lung conditions
- representing members on committees related to chronic lung conditions
- advocating for better treatment and support for people with chronic lung conditions across the ACT Health services.



We all know how important a support group is to help us through our journey grappling with a chronic lung condition. We want to make sure that the Canberra Lung Life Support Group is sustainable into the future and meets the needs of all its members, providing the best support it can.

I would love to hear your comments on what you think of our Group and any ideas you may have about what we can do better. **Please send any comments or ideas addressed to me, Marina Siemionow, at our email address lung.life1@hotmail.com.**