October 2026 Newsletter

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

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NEXT MEETING: Thursday 12 November 2026
11:30 am – 1:15 pm
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Information and discussion day

NOTE: Arrival for meetings is now 11:30 am. We continue until 1:15 pm.

October Meeting



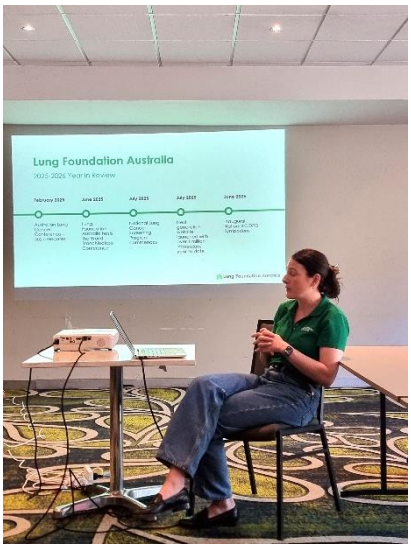
Helen, Chris, *Alicia*, Helen, Joe, Chris, Win



As Marina was away Helen Crombie led the meeting. We had a new member, so we went around the room introducing ourselves and talking about how Lung Life has benefitted us. Helen then talked about the following:

- Our stall at the Seniors Expo on Wednesday and Thursday 23 and 24 September went very well. More about it later in the newsletter.
- Our Christmas lunch is still being organised – costs and venue still being finalised. All will be revealed at the November meeting.

- The October lunch is on Friday 30 October at Snappers, Southern Cross Club, Yarralumla.
- The November meeting is the last meeting for the year – so is the last opportunity for you to bring some suitable goods for Marilyn Allen to make into hampers to be raffled at the Christmas lunch in December.



And then it was over to our speaker, **Alicia Goodwin, from Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) to talk about the work of the Lung Foundation, the services it provides and how we can access them.** Alicia is LFA's representative in the ACT. She has a background in public health promotion, especially in the respiratory area.

Alicia talked about LFA's updated vision of promoting healthy lungs through impactful programs, policy, campaigns and research. LFA is looking at a wide range of areas such as pollution and its impact on people, including those with little children. It's also looking at equity and quality care in provision of services.



LFA provides a wide range of services including a help line, telehealth, pulmonary rehabilitation, peer support, and a lung cancer screening helpline. And it provides a whole lot of fact sheets in all areas of lung health.

As well as these services, LFA is involved in advocacy, including such areas as tobacco and vape free generation, better access to telehealth and improved research for lung conditions. They have advocated for increased access to pulmonary rehabilitation (which is now occurring – see later in the newsletter).

They have events at Parliament House, connecting with the Parliamentary Friends of Lung Health and at Government House promoting lung awareness. They hold events during Lung Health Awareness month.

They hold conferences and symposiums for which representatives from all over the world come.

LFA encourages you to become involved. You can become a consumer representative on their committee; or join the Consumer Advisory Committee; or assist at fund raising events.

Alicia's talk showed how broad LFA's interests and work have developed, both for professionals as well as for consumers.



Seniors Expo

Helen Crombie

The Seniors Expo Cota ACT ran over two days from Wednesday 23rd to Thursday 24th September. Our Lung Life Support Group had a very good site near the food area seating and entertainment area. Our new tablecloth looked impressive. The green balloons were very popular and soon ran out; also our mint leaves and smiley lollies were popular. We had quite a few people coming to talk to us on both the open days. Having two open days meant more people were given an opportunity to attend the event. Marina, Alison and Helen Crombie helped out on the first day of the event with Marina and Helen on the second day as well.

Good News: expanded Pulmonary Rehabilitation services

Expanded Pulmonary rehabilitation services to cut wait times and ease pressure on ACT hospitals - University of Canberra

From Caroline Polak Scowcroft and Alicia Goodwin

Pulmonary Rehabilitation has for years been held at Canberra Hospital with an ever increasing demand for its services. With pressures such as an ageing population, it's expected that demand for its services will grow. To help meet this need, the University of Canberra Health Clinics are going to establish a pulmonary rehabilitation clinic, resulting in 375 patients with COPD being able to access rehabilitation every year.

The existing pulmonary rehabilitation program at Canberra Hospital will also double in capacity.

Physiotherapy students from the University of Canberra will work at the UC Health Clinics as part of their work-integrated learning placements, under the close supervision of experienced CHS clinical staff.

Pulmonary rehabilitation is one of the most effective non-pharmacological interventions available for people living with chronic lung disease. It helps people manage their symptoms, remain active and independent, improve their quality of life and reduce their risk of hospitalisation – which of course, eases the pressure on the hospital system.

The Program

As part of the program, groups of 20 patients will attend two group sessions per week over eight weeks, with a focus on exercise and education.

Over the course of the program, they will also attend at least two individual appointments – one on commencement and one on discharge.

To access it, you need a referral from a Respiratory Specialist, a Physiotherapist or a COPD Clinical Nurse Consultant. You must have a current respiratory specialist and confirmed diagnosis of chronic respiratory condition.

So this is good news for both Southsiders and Northsiders. As Alicia Goodwin from LFA says, "We commend the ACT Government and Canberra Health Services for prioritising respiratory care and look forward to continuing to work together to improve lung health outcomes for people across the ACT."

Healthier Choices To Make This Summer

From Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute magazine - Summer 2026

From Chris Moyle

For many of us a cup of coffee or a glass (or two) of alcohol is a regular part of life. But Professor Peter Kistler from the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute is encouraging us to reconsider our choices.

It was once thought that regular consumption of red wine was good for the heart. But Professor Kistler's trial exploring the role of alcohol in the heart showed 50% of 'social drinkers' no longer experienced *atrial fibrillation (AF) if they stopped drinking.

'Alcohol is not 'good for the heart',' he explains. 'One standard drink of alcohol per day increases the incidence of AF by 8 per cent, and up to 50 per cent of emergency department attendance for AF are triggered by alcohol.'

It was also considered that regular coffee consumption could cause damage to the heart. Professor Kistler disagrees. 'A common misconception is that coffee causes AF,' he says. 'Large population studies show regular coffee drinkers live longer and have a lower incidence of heart disease including atrial fibrillation. 1 to 3 cups of coffee per day are considered part of a healthy diet.'

So the message for a healthy heart is: avoid or limit consumption of alcohol and enjoy 1 – 3 cups of coffee per day.

> *Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most important cause of an irregular heartbeat, associated with ageing, obesity and regular alcohol consumption. Symptoms may include fatigue, breathlessness, palpitations, irritability, poor concentration, or there may be no symptoms at all.

A few ways to develop lung infections

The Conversation: June 25, 2024 **Author:** Dan Baumgardt, University of Bristol

Our lungs are the interface between blood and air. Their role in oxygenating our bloodstream is their primary function, and they bear the brunt of a lot more. Borne upon the air are numerous chemicals, pollutants and particles that can generate many patterns of lung disease. Here are some:

- Inner-city pollution can lead to inhalation of gases including nitrogen dioxide, which have been shown to affect other respiratory diseases like asthma.
- Coal dust led to a condition known as emphysema – known today as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – in miners. Also called black lung.
- Asbestos breaks apart releasing fibres which can infect the lungs causing asbestosis.
- Asbestos is associated with the aggressive form of cancer known as mesothelioma.
- Those who keep pigeons to race, birds in the house as pets, or poultry farmers can develop extrinsic allergic alveolitis or EAA which is inflammation of the tiny air sacs of the lungs (the alveoli) generated by an allergic response to an alien particle entering the body such as dust from feathers and bird droppings.
- EAA can develop from inhaling the fungi from the rinds of blue cheeses and contracting cheese-washer's lung; or the fungi from moulding grapes. Similar particles can come off coffee beans, molasses sugar, mushrooms and barley.
- Those who work with dried grass or hay – farmers or thatchers, for instance – can also develop EAA. Other sources include sawdust, fertilisers and mosses.

- Even playing music or taking a dip in the hot tub is not entirely risk free. Bacteria related to those causing tuberculosis can be inhaled from a brass instrument or the bubbling water. They're also colloquially referred to as brass player's lung and hot-tub lung.

So don't underestimate how the air we breathe can affect our lungs. Both city and country air can work their influence.

Breathing control

*From **Managing breathlessness in clinical practice** by S Booth et al p67ff*

People with chronic lung conditions often unknowingly develop poor breathing habits. They think it's just their lung condition making their breathing difficult – but sometimes it's the gradual development of poor patterns.

Things like:

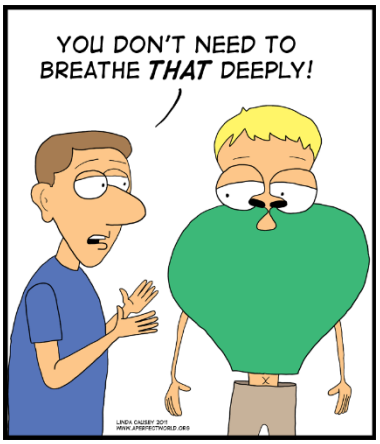
- Fast or variable breathing
- Upper chest breathing
- Tense shoulders
- Hyperventilating just before an activity or speaking
- Light headedness when breathless

Maybe even:

- Frequent sighs, sniffs, yawns, throat clearing coughs
- Mouth breathing
- Noisy breathing

What you can do to help overcome poor breathing habits is learn how to control your breathing, something that is often done in Yoga and Meditation sessions. Here are some pointers:

- Get into a comfortable position, relax the neck, shoulders and upper chest – and relax the mind;
- notice abdominal movement but not forcing it;
- let the breath go in and out without forcing it – be gentle;
- pause slightly after the out breath;
- if possible, lengthen the breath.



You can add to this:

- by developing a rhythm in your breathing
- by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth
- or other techniques you may know.

You can practice these techniques when you go to bed – or before you get up (or anytime else). What could be easier?

People say you can't live without love, but I think oxygen is more important.

USEFUL NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

Health Support:
Lung Foundation Australia is the national non-government body for lung health information and has a variety of useful information. Phone 1800 654 301 or visit www.lungfoundation.com.au.

Travel information:
ACTION: Phone 13 17 10. Web site: https://www.transport.act.gov.au.

Flexible bus service: a free service that picks up from your home and takes you to places in your zone. Phone 02 6205 3555 or email: flexiblebusservice@act.gov.au or fbs@act.gov.au

Taxi Subsidy Scheme: subsidises the transport costs of eligible individuals who are unable to use public transport due to a severe or profound activity limitation. Run by ACT Revenue Office Ph: 02 6207 0028 - Select Option 5 Email: concessions@act.gov.au

Interstate Patient Travel Assistance Scheme: for those who need to travel interstate for medical treatment: **Phone** 02 5124 9082 or email**:** IPTAS@act.gov.au.

Oxygen and life support information:
Oxygen provision: Provided free to those identified as needing oxygen by a respiratory specialist. Phone 02 5124 1063; email: oxygen@act.gov.au; CPAP provision also available for CPAP clients who meet the criteria.

Essential Medical Equipment Payment: provided annually to those who use oxygen, CPAP or other life support equipment. For more details, type in*: essential medical equipment payment* or Services Australia website (link is external).

ACT Electricity Rebate: The ACT Government provides a rebate for users of life support equipment such as oxygen or CPAP. For more details, type in *ACT life support rebate* or www.revenue.act.gov.au/community-assistance/life-support-rebate.

ADACAS (*ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service)* - an independent organisation which provides free advocacy and information on dealing with an issue with your aged care service or your aged care provider.
Phone 1800 700 600 Email: adacas@adacus.org.au
Website: www.adacas.org.au. A very user friendly website.

ACT Health Services Commission handles complaints about all health services provided in the ACT – public and private, services provided at a hospital, a general practice and all individual registered practitioners. You can contact them online by filling out a complaint form: Contact Us - HRC; or phoning 02 6205 2222 or emailing human.rights@act.gov.au.

Health Literacy Tool: shows what local health services are available and how to access them. Check out the range of free public health services to help meet your health care needs.
Click on: health literacy tool.

