

## August 2024 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 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
10:15 am – 12:00 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

See below: **ACT Seniors and Better Ageing expo - Wednesday 25 September.**

### August meeting – Helen Cotter

Chris Gray (pictured) welcomed us to the meeting and reminded us that the August lunch was on **Friday 30 August at Gary's Kitchen, Erindale shops.**

We decided to hold the September lunch on **Friday 27 September at Space Kitchen, 12 Furzer St, Woden.**

During September, COTA is holding its Expo, **ACT Seniors and Better Ageing, on Wednesday 25 September.** In the past, it has been held at the Showground, but this year it's at the Bus Markets (area 21) Wentworth Ave, Kingston. These expos are always worthwhile visiting – so much to see, including our stand.

Chris asked if anyone had anything to tell the group and we had a good discussion. Kaye mentioned that she'd been to a meeting organised by HCCA (Health Care Consumers' Association) about the ACT October elections. Representatives from the major parties were there to talk about their health policies.

We talked about COTA and how it provides so many services for the public – wills, advanced care planning, housing and ageing assistance are just a few. COTA also provide information sessions, which are held at public libraries (see page 3).



There was some discussion about pulmonary rehabilitation and exercise classes – and some confusion about what was available and when. A few people said they were on the waiting list for pulmonary rehab and had been waiting over a year. There was also confusion about what was available at the UC hub.

We discussed various respiratory specialists – their location, and what we liked and didn't like. The universally liked ones were those who listened to you, asked questions and explained treatment.

Then it was over to our speakers, Lincoln Smith and Hasnain Gunwala (pictured) from Erindale Pharmacy.

## How pharmacies help you

Hasnain talked about three main ways pharmacists help us:

- They understand our respiratory issues
- They know the available treatments
- They help with our lifestyle.

Hasnain talked us through the basics of our respiratory system and pointed out the common conditions, both the **short term** ones like asthma and the **long term** ones like lung cancer and COPD. He made us aware of the possible triggers - such as:

- allergens (e.g. pollen and dust)
- irritants like smoke
- viral and bacterial infections
- physical activity
- stress
- certain medications.

These problems are often affected by co-morbidities such as heart conditions, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease.

We were reminded about the types of medication for respiratory conditions and common treatment for flare ups – Amoxicillin and Prednisolone.

When looking after ourselves, we need to recognise and manage exacerbations. For this reason, they handed out the **Lung Foundation's Action Plans for COPD and for asthma** for us to fill in and learn to recognise when things aren't going too well. They stressed the importance of exercise and pulmonary rehabilitation.

Finally, we looked at inhalers and how they worked; and stressed the importance of rinsing your mouth when you use an inhaler with a steroid.

After our respiratory information, Hasnain and Lincoln talked about the ways the pharmacist can help you. Pharmacies now focus more on community support than they used to and can give advice on such things as your medications, vaccinations, tracking your health and managing any co-morbidities.

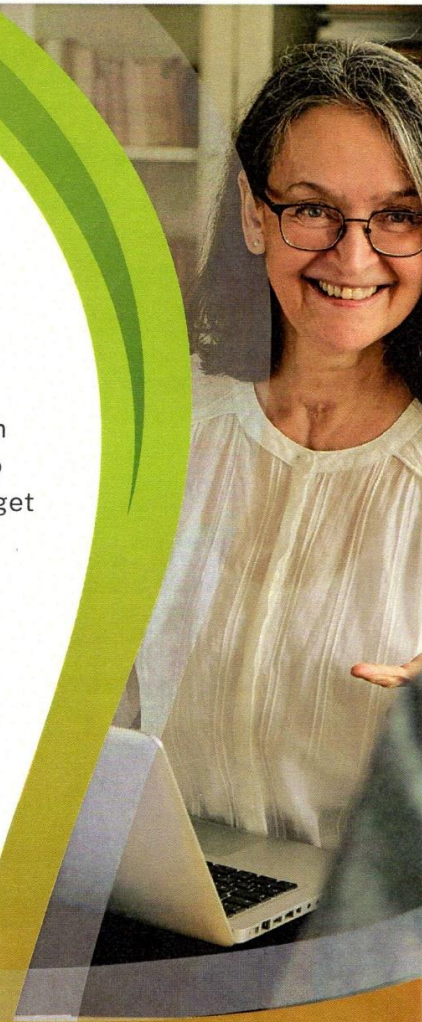
It was a very informative talk and Husnain and Lincoln allowed a lot of time for us to ask questions and talk about our issues – always very useful for everyone.



## Access seniors services at your local library

Looking for seniors information or help with your mobile device? Why not come along to one of COTA's ACT outreach sessions and get help with such things as:

- Information, advice and referrals on a range of areas such as transport, Seniors Cards, community and government services.
- Housing and Ageing assistance – understand and access home services and supports, and information on your housing options such as downsizing, home modifications and retirement living.
- Digital Support – improve your confidence using your mobile device



**2024  
dates  
10am-12pm**

**Belconnen** - first Thursday of the month

1 Feb, 7 Mar, 4 Apr, 2 May, 6 Jun, 4 Jul, 1 Aug, 5 Sep, 3 Oct, 7 Nov, 5 Dec

**Dickson** - second Thursday of the month

8 Feb, 14 Mar, 11 Apr, 9 May, 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug, 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 14 Nov, 12 Dec

**Tuggeranong** - third Thursday of the month

15 Feb, 21 Mar, 18 Apr, 16 May, 20 Jun, 18 Jul, 15 Aug, 19 Sep, 17 Oct, 21 Nov

**Kippax** - fourth Thursday of the month

22 Feb, 28 Mar, 23 May, 27 Jun, 25 Jul, 22 Aug, 26 Sep, 24 Oct, 28 Nov

### Vale Pam Harris by Chris Moyle

Long-time member, Pam Harris, has died after a long battle with emphysema.

A few months ago Pam suffered a heart attack. She was admitted to Canberra Hospital until her passing on 15 August 2024. Pam was 76 years old.

A very sociable person, Pam befriended many Lung Life members over the years. She was always eager to take on jobs for the group and also assist individuals as much as she could. It was no trouble to give someone a lift and in more recent times she would say it was the one thing she still felt confident doing.

Pam will be remembered as a generous, outgoing person who helped many people. We were lucky to have known her.

We will have more about Pam and her contribution to our organisation in the September edition.

## Remembering Andrew Bird

You may recall that the June edition of the newsletter contained some information about the closure of Chifley Gym and Andrew Bird's plaque (which is now held with our archival material). To give you some more insight here is an article that was originally written for the December 2009 newsletter.

### Andrew Bird's Plaque Unveiling

We held the unveiling of the plaque in memory of Andrew Bird on **Wednesday 21 October 2009 in the gym at the Y @ Chifley with about 15 people attending**. It was at the Christmas Lunch last year that our group raised money on behalf of Andrew to donate to the Y Gym. This was put towards gym equipment as Andrew had been very involved with this gym and was significant in getting us to go there.

Helen Cotter, Tony Harber (from the gym), Caroline Scowcroft and Helen Palethorpe (who was in charge of the Y in Andrew's day) all spoke about Andrew – how he was always bright and breezy and very happy to talk - about himself; about what he was doing and how he was going. At the same time, he determinedly worked towards getting himself as fit as possible for the lung transplant.

Andrew often talked about the gym. He worked out at the gym and volunteered on the desk. He talked about what a lovely place it was, with lovely people and good equipment - and how we should all be going there. It's because of him that a lot of us do go to the Y Gym - and we are very pleased that we do.

After we'd spoken, we then asked Noreen Bird, Andrew's mother, to lift the veil and reveal the plaque in memory of Andrew. We've positioned it on a piece of equipment where people will see it as they use the machine. Noreen and Des and others enjoyed having a go to see how it works.

We followed that by moving to another part of the Y for tea/coffee and some lovely eats and a chat. Thanks to all who came and to all who helped. It was a casual, lovely and memorable event.

## Conserving your energy when you have a health condition *-techniques and tips*

Chris Moyle - Reference: <https://www.act.gov.au/health>

Energy conservation is the efficient use of energy in daily tasks, to help you participate in meaningful activities.

Some health conditions can cause you to experience fatigue and reduced energy, which can have a negative impact on a person's ability to participate in meaningful and essential activities. Some of these conditions may include respiratory/lung or cardiac conditions, cancer, and kidney disease.

## Tips for energy conservation:

Technique	Tips
<i>Pace</i>	Take regular short breaks during the activity/task. Regular breaks are better than one long break. Do not rush tasks
<i>Plan</i>	Plan your day/week/month to keep tasks manageable.  Distribute more tiring tasks evenly throughout the week/month.  Be prepared to reorganise your day depending on how you are feeling.
<i>Prioritise</i>	Determine which tasks are necessary. If something is not necessary, eliminate it. Leisure tasks are important too.
<b>Modify/Simplify</b>	Simplify meal preparation, e.g. readily made fresh meals, or pre-cut vegetables. Use equipment when able, to reduce energy spent
<b>Delegate</b>	If you can, ask a friend or family member to help with tasks that require more energy.
<b>Breathing</b>	Pursed-lip breathing: breathe in through the nose (2 seconds), and out through the mouth with pursed lips (4 seconds).  Use this when completing a task that makes you short of breath.
<b>Relaxation</b>	It is important to stay calm.  When you relax, your muscles will relax too. When you get nervous your muscles become tense, and you can become more short of breath.  Find some relaxation techniques that work for you, e.g. meditation, breathing (see above), music.

**Top tip:** stop and rest BEFORE you get tired.

## Bespoke health navigation tool directing Canberrans to the most appropriate care - Information supplied by Helen Cotter

[Bespoke health navigation tool directing Canberrans to the most appropriate care | Riotact \(the-riotact.com\)](#)

Here's a fun thing to do one cold rainy afternoon: explore Canberra Health Services (CHS) new tool to help you find the most suitable type of healthcare for your need. It's the [health literacy tool](#). You click on it, answer some questions and at the end, it suggests what resources they have that could be beneficial to you.

CHS research has shown that, while we know about the Walk-in Centres, we have varying knowledge about other local health services. This tool is showing you what's available and how to access the services.

*The health literacy tool is available through [Canberra Health Services](#). In a life-threatening emergency, call Triple Zero (000) or go to your nearest emergency department.*

## Celebrating Christmas in July at the Irish Club in Weston

Photos by Val Siemionow

According to the website <https://christmascountdown.uk/christmas-in-july/> Christmas in July is primarily celebrated in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, the US and most recently the UK. The last three seem to be missing the point but I guess where money is to be made...



*'The gang's all here' – with former editor Helen in the foreground.*



*Anne and Marilyn*



*Val and Kaye*