



June 2025 Newsletter

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

Editor: Geoff Cox
lung.life1@hotmail.com

Coordinator: Marina Siemionow 0429 629 180
lung.life1@hotmail.com

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 10th July 2025
10:15 am – 12:00 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Guest Speaker: Marianne Kent, a qualified nurse from Niagara Therapy

Vale Pam Gaston - Marina Siemionow, Chris Moyle, Helen Cotter

It is with great sorrow that we are passing the sad news on to you that Pam Gaston died peacefully, with Peter at her side, on Tuesday 27 May. Pam had entered hospital after choking on some meat she had eaten and contracted pneumonia from which she was unable to recover. She was 79.

Although Pam has not been able to attend our meetings over the last few years Pam and Peter continued their interest in our group and regularly stayed in touch. Pam has been a member of our group for over a decade and had been on oxygen for many years.

For many years, Pam had sent out our well-wishing, sympathy and birthday cards to members until this task became too much for her. In 2018, Pam talked to the group about her wonderful experience of cruising through the glaciers of Chile. She told us:

'Four years ago, Peter and I travelled on a 53 day cruise from Southampton: travelling to the Canary Islands, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Pitcairn Island, Easter Island, Fiji and finally Sydney.'



It was a great trip but most memorable were the glaciers of Chile. These unfortunately are being lost through climate change but they were a marvellous sight.'

Peter made it very clear that Pam was a private person who wanted a very simple funeral, attended only by her family. We have already forwarded our condolences on to Peter and members of Pam's family.

June meeting – Helen Cotter

On a bleak, foggy morning, we had few members for the meeting – but there were many apologies, the most enviable being from Marilyn and Rodney Doak who are holidaying in France. We had a very valuable meeting with members talking about their lung and other conditions: how they developed and how the doctors and specialists dealt with the conditions – quite often not very helpfully.

We talked about **Indeterminate Pneumonitis** which is **inflammation in your lung tissue**. In this case, caused by the autoimmune system. Our immune system normally wards off infection but sometimes it attacks the lungs, in this case, the small blood vessels.

We talked about the **lung reduction** of an infected lobe. The lungs have two lobes in the left lung and three lobes in the right. In this case, one lobe was taken from the left hand side – this resulted in an 80% reduction in capacity of the left lung. This was done in Canberra hospital about five years ago. To do the operation, they cut open the left side and spread the ribs, using a rib separator – and worked on the lung that way.

We talked about the way sometimes diagnosis is made. For one member, it was after a knee replacement when his oxygen levels were too low for him to leave hospital; that began an investigation into his lung condition. For another member, it was after he had a double knee replacement, and then a heart attack (as he was allergic to opioids), after which he was diagnosed with asthma, asbestosis and ossification in the bronchiole – a triple whammy.

A couple of members felt that their condition occurred – or worsened – after **special events**: one was the **severe bushfires** a few years ago where the whole atmosphere everywhere was laden with smoke. It was hard not to breathe it in; the other was **COVID** as there were no symptoms before – only after COVID occurred.

When the disease hits quite quickly, you needed to deal with the grief of losing the life you thought you had.

After that discussion, we turned to talking about something that was memorable to us. Helen Cotter talked about the China course she is doing through U3A and the wonderful things she is learning about China and its past literature, culture and history.

Jackie Cole talked about going to Europe including Scandinavia in 1975, then working on a Kibbutz in Israel. The Kibbutz had an interest in the local archaeology – which suited Jackie very much. She said that the Kibbutz was well funded, had a swimming pool, and organised trips throughout the land. She commented on the different atmosphere between then and now, deploring the situation now.

Val Siemionow told us about dancing for the Queen in Adelaide on her 1970 visit to Australia. Val was a member of a multicultural dance company, performing a Russian dance – which can include the low level Cossack steps (hence a double knee operation later in life).

Brian Chauncy talked about his year in 1970 at Bloomington University in Indianapolis, furthering his study in Chemistry. The atmosphere at the Uni was very warm and welcoming. One time they drove from Indiana to Boston – almost a day's drive – a great experience. The whole event was a great experience.

Christina talked about her recent trips to the Antarctic and to South America. As she was having trouble breathing, these trips were memorable - but not as exciting or active as she hoped. (Editor: your editor has also visited the Antarctic and took many photos - see right)

Marina Siemionow talked about her ten years seconded to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, running training programs for management throughout the Commonwealth. The participants included people from many countries including India, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Cyprus, and the Pacific Islands. They usually lived and mixed for a week. There were a variety of differences in attitude, behaviour, and expectations with all their different cultures. A learning time in all respects. For one example, some cultures are rather macho and have a bit of difficulty coping with a female trainer. In another example, Indian taxi drivers could not cope with the huge Samoans wearing their 'skirts' (lavalava – national dress). All in all, a great experience for Marina.

We ended the session by looking at – and discussing – various samples of revised items for Lung Life – the pamphlets, the logo, business cards, the banner, and an induction kit.

Then it was time for home or lunch. By this time, the bleak fog had gone, and the sun had come out.



Joe, Brian, Marina, Helen, Jacqui, Christina, Helen - photo taken by Val S.

Upcoming Events

June lunch: Friday 27 June; Irish Club; 12 noon.

Speaker July meeting: Marianne Kent, a qualified nurse from Niagara Therapy.

July lunch: Special 'Christmas in July' lunch Friday 25 July; Mawson Club.

Membership Payment

Membership fee is \$20.00 pa which can be paid as a direct transfer into our Beyond Bank account. See details below or pay in cash to the treasurer at any meeting.

BSB No: 325 185

Account Name: Community Account

Account number: 04043535

Reference: please write your name in full.

Given the low membership fee, we ask for a small voluntary donation at each meeting which could just be a gold coin.

New Lung Cancer Screening Program Aims to Save 12,000 Lives Over the Next Decade – Sourced by Caroline Polak Scowcroft

A new national lung cancer screening program starting in July is expected to detect an extra 1500 cases each year. Lung cancer is the nation's deadliest cancer and advocates say the new screening program provides long-awaited hope.

What's next? The program aims to save 12,000 lives over the next decade. The new national screening program starts next month and is open to people with a significant history of smoking.

More women die of lung cancer than breast cancer and more men die of lung cancer than prostate cancer. Lung cancer is Australia's deadliest cancer, killing almost 9,000 people a year, but the five-year survival rate for lung cancer was just 26 per cent, compared to breast cancer, which was 92 per cent.

The idea of lung cancer screening is to try and detect these cancers at a much earlier stage where they can have curative treatment.

Statement from Lung Foundation Australia Chief Executive Mark Brooke

'We have a whole range of treatments that can absolutely turn around and improve your chances,' Mr Brooke said.

He said that while the increase in diagnoses of early-stage lung cancer would increase pressure on the health system to treat more patients, it would ultimately cut costs.

'It costs nearly \$60,000 per patient to diagnose them at stage 4 and up to \$17,000, depending upon the treatment, for patients being diagnosed at stage 1,' he said.

The screening program will offer a bulk-billed low-dose CT scan for the 930,000 people estimated to be eligible for the program in the first year. Mr Brooke said the eligibility criteria targeted a demographic of people who grew up at a time when smoking was much more common than today.

‘Growing up in the 70s and 80s, when smoking rates in Australia were up around 60 per cent ... [these people will] be in their 50s and 60s as this program is introduced. It was less than 30 years ago that we were allowed to smoke in our workplaces, in our motor vehicles, in our own homes, indoors in pubs and nightclubs.’

You are eligible for the screening program if you

- Are aged between 50 and 70 years old
- Show no symptoms of lung cancer and
- Have a history of cigarette smoking equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years
- Are currently still smoking or have quit in the past 10 years

If you would like to see the whole article you can click on the link. [New lung cancer screening program aims to save 12,000 lives over next decade - ABC News](#)

Mad Dogs and Englishmen, John Robert ‘Joe’ Cocker 1944 -2014

In 2000, singer Joe Cocker said he smoked up to 40 cigarettes a day until he stopped nine years earlier.

Dying of lung cancer at 70, Cocker effectively lost one day in eight off the life expectancy (80 years) of the average Englishman today.



Your editor saw Joe perform at Sydney’s Hordern Pavilion in 1976. It was a controversial tour with, at one stage, the Minister for Immigration threatening to deport the band.

May Lunch - Val Siemionow



Members:
Anne,
Marina,
Maureen,
Marilyn
and Rodney
enjoying the get
together.

The May lunch was held at Bella Vista restaurant on the shores of Lake Ginninderra. There were ten attendees, and it was a very pleasant afternoon. The weather was great, the venue comfortable, and everyone who attended was in good humour.



Margaret, Val, Lindsay and Christina at the May lunch.

**ACT Health**
10,867 followers

ACT Chief Health Officer Dr **Kerryn Coleman** spoke to local media to officially launch our Winter Wellness campaign. The campaign is focused on encouraging all Canberrans to look after their health and wellbeing during our cooler months.

Our health system often sees an increase in respiratory virus cases during winter, including COVID, influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

It's up to all of us to play our part in limiting the spread of these viruses throughout our community by:

- ✓ ensuring we're up to date with our vaccinations
- ✓ practising good hand and respiratory hygiene (washing or sanitising hands frequently, and coughing and sneezing into our elbows)
- ✓ being aware of our general health and staying at home if we're experiencing any symptoms associated with respiratory viruses.

For more information visit www.act.gov.au and search 'Be well this winter'.



<https://www.act.gov.au/health/topics>