



## March 2026 Newsletter

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

**Editor:** Helen Cotter  
[lung.life1@hotmail.com](mailto:lung.life1@hotmail.com)

**Coordinator:** Marina Siemionow 0429 629 180  
[lung.life1@hotmail.com](mailto:lung.life1@hotmail.com)

**Web Sites:** [Canberra Lung Life Support Group | Web Site](#)  
[Canberra Lung Life Support Group | Facebook](#)

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday 9 April 2026  
10:15 am – 12:00 noon  
Weston Creek Labor Club  
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

### March Meeting

The meeting commenced at 10:30 am. We had eight apologies and we had only 6 people turn up. We thankfully decided to continue as four members joined us later.

Marina went over a number of news items:

- Val Dempsey is organising a guided tour of the Bonsai Exhibition at the National Arboretum for April; the date yet to be advised.
- The Advisory Group met on the 30<sup>th</sup> February and,
  - reviewed what the January planning meeting had come up with, and talked about what was actually possible for this year. It was agreed that for this year at least, we would stay with our current programme of monthly meetings and monthly lunches and just provide visits to the National Arboretum and Australian National Botanic Garden. Any additional activities would only be possible if other Group members volunteered to organise them.
  - discussed the value of the COTA stall and agreed it was worth continuing as it was a valuable opportunity to build a presence in the community.
  - agreed not to pay for advertising in the future as it was an expensive exercise with very little benefit.

- discussed our financial situation and canvassed new opportunities for raising money (we spent \$1,380.94 more than we made last year) - it was a year of unusually high expenditure as we reworked and printed all our marketing materials. It was agreed to continue this discussion in future meetings.
- Lung Foundation of Australia has asked whether we would be willing to put on an event in the month of May, to raise awareness of the work they do and to mark the “Lung Health Awareness” month.
  - Lung Foundation Australia’s mission to keep Australia’s lungs healthy focuses on prevention, providing information and creating tools and resources, and this year their goal is to raise \$100,000 through the ‘**Plunge In For Lungs**’ challenge.
  - It is the ultimate cold-water challenge through which people commit to swim 1km per day or a certain number of hours or laps in May, or to plunge their body into an ice bath. The Lung Foundation is encouraging all Aussies to set a personal goal and make a positive impact on the lives of people impacted by lung disease.
  - The meeting discussed what we might do and agreed that it was important for us to raise awareness across the community and that we should work towards finding a suitable location for a stall, given that we had all the trappings needed and that the Lung Foundation would supply a kit of materials. Marina would contact Belconnen Mall then Woden Mall.

We then had a general discussion.

- The 2026 list of lunch venues was revisited and one change was made for Friday 29<sup>th</sup> of May lunch, changing the venue from the Space Kitchen to the Hellenic Club Bistro (both venues had received the same number of member votes at the planning meeting). It was also decided that as many as possible should check out the Kingston Pub over the next couple of months, to decide its suitability for our Christmas lunch.
- Marilyn raised the issue of hampers for the ‘Christmas in July’ raffle and advised that we no longer had anything of substance to include in our hampers. The beautiful hand crocheted blankets have now all been raffled and we have run out of our supply of gifts.
  - A number of suggestions were made including asking businesses or individuals outside the Group to donate items or prizes, asking members to bake cakes that could be raffled. It was also suggested that raffle ticket prices might need to be raised.
  - Marilyn offered to attend the next Advisory Group Meeting on the 30th March to progress this issue further.

The meeting finished at 11:45 pm and we broke for lunch. Our monthly lunch for March is on **Friday 27 at the Pialligo Bakehouse, Beltana Rd, Pialligo.**



“Be careful about reading health books. Some fine day you'll die of a misprint.”  
 — **Markus Herz (German Philosopher 1747-1803)**

## It's Time

It's time to renew your membership for Lung Life. This is a voluntary payment but it helps with Lung Life costs for materials, expos and other events.

### 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.**

## Care Finder Program

The **care finder program** provides face-to-face support for people who don't have family, friends, a carer or a representative they are comfortable receiving help from and who is willing and able to help them apply for and set up support services.

It's a free service, assisting those who need intensive support such as:

- having difficulty communicating because of language or literacy problems
- finding it difficult to understand information and make decisions
- being reluctant to engage with aged care or government
- being in an unsafe situation if they do not receive services.

If someone doesn't meet the criteria above, there are a range of other support options available.

### In Canberra and the ACT

In the ACT, the care finder program is run by **Community Options** through the auspices of the **Primary Health Network (PHN)**. Community Options is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which has been working across Canberra for 30 years.

They can support you by:

- Registering with My Aged Care
- Understanding and preparing for assessments
- Finding and connecting with local aged care and community services
- Completing forms and understanding service agreements
- Checking in once services are in place to ensure everything is working well.

The care finder will visit you, usually in person. This can be in your home or another place you would like to meet. They will ask questions to understand your situation and support you to work through the steps to address your needs.

To get in touch, call their Care Finder team on (02) 6109 6655 or email them at [finder@communityoptions.com.au](mailto:finder@communityoptions.com.au) .

## Primary Health Networks

[Primary Health Networks](#) (PHNs) are independent, not-for-profit, regionally based organisations, with responsibility for working with local communities, clinicians, service providers and state and local governments to identify and prioritise the health care needs of the population in their region. They commission services to meet the prioritised health care needs of their communities.

**Capital Health Network** is the ACT's primary health network. They address community needs by collaborating with consumers, GPs, clinicians and sector stakeholders to improve health outcomes. They support primary health care professionals and design services which fill gaps and deliver lasting improvements. [Capital Health Network | Home](#)

Here's some of what the CHN has done for the ACT to improve health outcomes:

- ✓ It supported workforce recruitment with nine Practice Nurses. It delivered educational events for Practice Nurses, covering topics such as chronic disease management, immunisation and baby checks.
- ✓ As a first in Australia, it funded 4 general practices in the ACT to participate in the Social Workers in General Practice Pilot, with Social Workers as an integrated part of medical centres. The Social Workers received support from clinical supervision and were involved in various activities that directly supported patients.
- ✓ It is testing an innovative model to reduce demand on public Emergency Departments, by strengthening integration between ACT general practices and the public health system for people with complex health needs who either attend hospital frequently or are at risk of attending in the near future.

And:

- ✓ It commissioned the University of Technology Sydney to co-design the **ACT Breathless Intervention Service (ABIS)** and Southside Physio to deliver it. ABIS supported 140 patients through one to 6 (median 4) home visits from a Physiotherapist. All patients showed improvement on activities of daily living, breathlessness mastery and/or severity. Benefits were usually maintained at 3- and 6-month telephone follow-ups.  
ABIS reached people with high needs: elderly, less mobile and/or unable to access rehabilitation services and/or approaching end of life. 21% of patients reported avoiding calling an ambulance on 46 occasions by using ABIS-learned strategies. 79% of carers reported improved confidence in supporting breathlessness episodes.  
Acute-on chronic 'episodes' cause ED presentations which are not clinically necessary. Breathlessness intervention services 'coach' people to self-manage using non-pharmacological strategies, targeting breathing, thinking and functioning domains of breathlessness. It improves awareness of non-pharmacological strategies to manage breathlessness of both the individual and health professionals.

Lung Life co-ordinator, Marina Siemionow, was a member of the committee running the project.

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## February Lunch: Deakin and Me

from Val Siemionow  
Friday's lunch at "Deakin & Me" was a very pleasant experience. The menu provided a wide variety of options, the food was nice, the staff were friendly, and the service was good.

All of us were quite relaxed and the conversation just kept buzzing along.



## Introducing the LiveUp website

From: AusFrailty Network [info@afn.org.au](mailto:info@afn.org.au) via Caroline Polak Scowcroft

**LiveUp** is powered by not-for-profit organisation iLA and funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. It offers a free, confidential, and personalised Navigation service to help you understand and explore your healthy ageing options. [support@liveup.org.au](mailto:support@liveup.org.au) [1800 951 971](tel:1800951971)

**LiveUp** is designed to make healthy ageing information free and accessible for all. It also provides evidence-based resources and professional development opportunities for the aged care sector. They are also building up a network of organisations promoting healthy ageing across Australia, working to improve the health, independence, and quality of life for older Australians.

Learn more about what they do and what they offer here: [Discover Your Path to Healthy Ageing | Expert Tips and Guides | LiveUp](#)



## Health Literacy Tool

[Bespoke health navigation tool directing Canberrans to the most appropriate care | Riotact \(the-riotact.com\)](https://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 needs. 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. Check it out.

## Taxi Subsidy Scheme

If you're having trouble getting around, you can get assistance from the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS). It provides assistance to ACT residents with a disability or significant mobility restriction preventing them from using public and community transport. To be eligible, you must have a severe or profound activity limitation that prevents you from using public transport. These limitations include:

- severe mobility limitations;
- legal blindness or severe vision impairment;
- cognitive, intellectual or psychiatric disability; and
- severe and uncontrolled epilepsy.

You have to be a permanent resident of the ACT, or an asylum seeker with proof of status from Companion House; and not be a member of an interstate taxi subsidy scheme.

The application form is available [here](#) or by contacting the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Office on the details below. The application form must be completed and signed by an authorised medical practitioner or occupational therapist – and you have to provide a passport type photo – but it can be taken on your mobile. The application form is long because it looks at various conditions and therefore most can be ignored.

The ACT Revenue Office runs it. You can contact them on: ph: (02) 6207 0028 - Select Option 5 or email: [concessions@act.gov.au](mailto:concessions@act.gov.au) Or you can download the forms by typing **taxi subsidy form ACT** into the internet.

