



August 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 14th September 2025
10:15 am – 12:00 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Speaker: Sonia Anfiloff, Artistic Director National Opera;
ANU School of Music teacher; Head of Choirs at Canberra Girls Grammar School

August Meeting

Today was an information and discussion day.

- Marina brought us up to date with our new website, business cards and brochures – all are almost ready and should be ready for the **Seniors' Expo on Wednesday 25 September at the Kingston Bus Markets.**



Last Year's Expo. See us in the centre of the photo

- ✚ We have booked a place at the Expo as usual. Helen Crombie, Marina and Val Siemionow, and Val Dempsey will all help with setting up the stand and looking after it. But they are very happy to have help – or to see you during the day. It's a lively event with many interesting stands from community and Government groups, activities and food.
- ✚ We have started to think about our **Christmas lunch on Friday 12 December**. Val Dempsey is currently looking at venues and costs. Marilyn Allen is organising hampers as usual – and would like donations of appropriate items for the hampers. You can give them to her at the meetings.
- ✚ We're having a rethink of **our mission statement** which you'll see at the top of our newsletter. We were presented with three alternatives to vote on – results at next month's meeting.
- ✚ Marina then talked about the things she's been involved with since last meeting:
 - Spoke to a Queanbeyan View Club about Lung Life and lung health issues;
 - On a panel for a HCCA (Health Care Consumer Group) webinar about self-advocacy (see item later in the newsletter);
 - Took brochures to Yarra Rossa Retirement Village who are having a Wellbeing Expo;
 - Is on the DORSS (Domiciliary Oxygen and Respiratory Support Scheme) committee with a meeting coming up at the end of the month.

We were then asked to talk about a place that had made a great impression on us.

Our wonderful experiences

Val Dempsey talked about a wonderful trip she and her husband Lindsay went on to America, including places like New York, Route 66, San Francisco, Yellowstone National Park and the train across Canada. Then they took in the sights of Alaska. An incredible experience was a boat trip on Glacier Lake where the Captain turned off the motor and they listened to the glacier cracking and creaking as it moved. The silence and the environment were incredible – a really memorable moment.

Brian Chauncy talked about his recent experience of going to the new Chifley Gym (remember Dylan spoke to us). Sierra, one of the gym trainers, assessed him and he's now attending the gym. He's totally taken with the friendly atmosphere there and the helpfulness of the trainers.

Helen Cotter talked about driving along the Nullarbor, thinking they were in the middle of the huge Nullarbor plain when suddenly over a hill they saw the whitest of white sand dunes of Eucla. It was so unexpected to suddenly come across the dunes, especially when you don't realise you are that close to the coast. They are so white and are gradually covering the stone buildings which used to be Eucla Telegraph station. So memorable.

Margaret Geaghan talked about loving the outback – the distance you can see with no horizon – the space and the quietness. She also spoke of one time travelling with 50 other caravans in this outback and overwhelming some of the very small towns on the way. All giving her lovely memories.

Christina Constance talked about her son who had a double degree as a paramedic but was unable to find permanent work in that area. He applied for a job in the Northern Territory but didn't even get an interview. However, one day he and his wife were travelling back from seeing Uluru when they came across a road accident where a woman had been very badly hurt. Being paramedics, they stopped and helped and waited with the woman for a couple of hours until the ambulance arrived from Alice Springs. The ambos were most impressed with how they'd helped the woman. The son mentioned that he'd applied for a job with them but didn't get an interview – that had a good effect: he was later interviewed and given a position in Alice Springs. As Alice Springs is where he was born, he feels he's home.



Jacqui Cole talked about being keen on animals and the environment. She and her husband had been to Africa three times. The last time, they followed in the footsteps of Diane Fossey, following the gorillas in the mountains. It was a difficult trek up the mountain - but worth it. At one time, she was so close to a massive, strong gorilla that it was a bit frightening but when you look in their eyes, you see gentleness, softness and connection with them.



Jacqui found the locals absolutely fantastic – very involved in providing for the visitors. They built the places for them to stay in; they guided the visitors to where the gorillas were – after having earlier found the site. All in all, a marvellous experience.

Marina Siemionow talked about moving to Canberra with their two little kids in the cold of July from the heat of Darwin. Canberra was so cold there was snow in the Brindabellas – so up they went to see it – and it was magical. This soft, white, fluffy snow everywhere – so exciting. This was their first experience of snow and it was stunning.

End of the session

It was almost time to end the session, so for a short while, we moved into groups and talked about what we would say to our younger selves. And then we moved onto lunch.

Monday September 1: National Wattle Day



This day marks the beginning of Spring and is a time when the wattle, Australia's national floral emblem, is in full bloom.

Acacia pycnantha, most commonly known as the golden wattle.
Since 1988, the floral emblem of Australia

Don't blame the wattle

<https://wattleday.asn.au/wattles-rarely-cause-hayfever-asthma/>

Lovely to see all the wattle brightening up our lives. But is it causing our itchy and runny eyes, our stuffed up noses, our sneezing? **The answer is no: don't blame the wattle.**

Allergy tests rarely confirm that wattle is what sets off hayfever for most people. Wattle pollen doesn't support the notion either - it's too heavy to travel very far and it just falls down, carpeting the ground.

On the other hand, grass pollen — our most common outdoor airborne allergen — doesn't fall straight down; it gets carried on wind and can travel vast distances. And grasses flower at different times of the year in different parts of the country. That could be the cause of your allergies.

Nevertheless this myth could well be negatively affecting people's health because they are avoiding the wrong plants. It is also damaging to the environment as people who believe they are protecting their own health remove native wattles. They should be planting them instead to create low allergy gardens. So enjoy Wattle Day and all the wattle days to follow.

Self-Advocacy in Healthcare Online Education Module Launched!

From: Health Care Consumers' Association

We are thrilled to release the 'Self-Advocacy in Healthcare' online learning module. It's a collection of HCCA's 'greatest hits' of information and resources on self-advocacy and health literacy - all combined in one handy location!

This module is free to use and can be found on [our website with other e-learning resources](#). There is no log-in or sign-up required, you can view it as many times as you like and share it to anyone you think would benefit. The topics covered in this module are:

1. What is self-advocacy and why is it important in healthcare.
2. Your rights in healthcare.
3. Skills you need to advocate for yourself.
4. Stigma and discrimination – what to do about it.
5. Feedback and complaints – how to raise your concerns effectively.

Let us know what you think!

[Check It Out!](#)

Meteoric rise in medicinal cannabis prescriptions signals serious review

The Senior August 12 2025

The seniors' market is one of the fastest growing sectors for the medicinal cannabis industry, because of its ability to help with pain, arthritis, stress and sleep management. However, cannabis products are being prescribed at "alarming rates through direct-to-consumer telehealth models".

There are increasing reports of patient harm from cannabis, including psychosis, so the current surge in prescriptions is highly concerning,

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is reviewing product-specific telehealth services; the safety risks of the products; and whether there are appropriate regulations oversight of unapproved medicinal cannabis products being accessed via the Special Access Scheme and Authorised Prescriber Scheme.

Further details on the consultation can be found at www.consultations.tga.gov.au. For enquiries relating to this public consultation, please email MedicinalCannabisReforms@health.gov.au. The closing date for this consultation is 23.59 AEST on October 7 2025. All submissions received by the deadline will be considered by the TGA.



Members at the August meeting

Interstitial Lung Disease - What is it?

<https://www.healthline.com/health/interstitial-lung-disease> adapted by Helen Cotter and copilot

Interstitial lung disease refers to a group of more than 200 different lung disorders. Some of the main types include:

- **Asbestosis:** Inflammation and scarring in the lungs caused by inhaling asbestos fibres.
- **Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis:** Also known as **black lung disease**, this is caused by exposure to coal dust.
- **Chronic Silicosis:** Lung disease resulting from inhaling silica, a mineral found in sand and rock.
- **Familial Pulmonary Fibrosis:** A form that affects two or more members within the same family.
- **Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis:** Scar tissue develops in the lungs for reasons that are unknown.
- **Sarcoidosis:** Characterised by small clusters of inflammatory cells forming in organs such as the lungs and lymph nodes.

All of these diseases share a common process: the tissue in the lungs becomes scarred, inflamed, and stiff. Scar tissue develops in the interstitium—the space between the air sacs in the lungs. As scarring spreads, the lungs become less flexible, making it harder for them to expand and contract.

The main symptoms are dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. These symptoms can resemble those of other respiratory illnesses. While these diseases cannot be cured, treatment can help slow their progress.

Causes of Interstitial Lung Disease

Often, the cause cannot be identified—such cases are known as **idiopathic interstitial lung disease**. Other possible causes include autoimmune conditions, certain medications, or exposure to toxic substances that damage lung tissue.

Treatment Options

Treatments cannot reverse already existing lung scarring, but they may help prevent more scarring and slow the disease. Possible treatments include:

- Supplementary oxygen therapy
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Anti-inflammatory and other medications

Outlook

The course of interstitial lung disease varies between individuals. In some, it progresses slowly, while in others, it can advance quickly. Symptoms can range from mild to severe. Although lung scarring cannot be reversed, treatment may slow further damage and improve breathing.

End of Month Lunch
Friday 29 August 11:45 am for 12 noon
At: Rosemary by Eighty Twenty
9/15 Trench St
Kingston 2604
Ph: 0461 507 574
Near the Kingston Shops

Have YOU BEEN or ARE YOU affected by any of these factors below? How have you solved the issues? How about sending tips in a Letter to the Editor.



A Boer War wattle story

After the rescue of the guns at Lindley 22 November 1900

After the rescue of the guns at Lindley by members of the Imperial Bushmen's Corps a little girl, living at Parkside, forwarded to each of the small company of soldiers who performed the gallant deed a sprig of wattle, with the following inscription attached:—

“S.A. Imperial Contingent, from Ellie Wemyss, Parkside, with best wishes. A small token of her admiration of your bravery and dash in saving the guns at Lindley.”

The little floral tributes reached the soldiers safely, and they were much prized.

Captain Leane, who was one of the party, sent his token from Miss Wemyss to his wife, with instructions that she is to carefully keep it.