



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

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

Estella Hutchinson will be talking about VAD

June Meeting

by Brian Chauncy

- We had about 10 members present, so before the presentation on **Canberra Memorial Parks**, we discussed the declining number of participants at our meetings and what to do about it; on-line meetings via Zoom may help people with mobility issues. Pick-ups for members unable to drive were discussed.
- Our next stall will be at the Seniors Expo in September and we have paid to be in the main hall, to ensure more exposure to the public. Beanies were discussed but knitters were needed.
- Our Christmas in July will be held on the last Friday in July at the Raiders Club Weston. We need donations for hampers and for raffles. They can be brought to the next meeting.

On to our speakers

Sharna and Grace from Canberra Memorial Parks told us about the range of options available in Canberra for cremation, burial, ashes preservation and dispersal of our deceased loved one. They showed a video of the cremation process, which detailed the checks required by law and technical details of the actual process.

Many options are available at Gungahlin, including a **Memorial Hall and Indigo Lounge** for meaningful and inclusive memorial services and large screens for projecting photographs. Facilities

are in place for streaming services. They can cater with various food and beverage packages but you can self-cater for wakes if you wish.

Hall cemetery is now closed to new entries and Woden is close to full. A new cemetery at Symonston has been proposed but few details are known at the moment.

Sharna and Grace provided a number of booklets on the interment options available in Canberra. A detailed account of these options is also included in the web site, including who to contact for more information such as fees - www.canberramemorialparks.act.gov.au.

Sharna and Grace also presented a 'show bag' of a booklet on available options, a poster of new facilities at Gungahlin and a note pad and other knick-knacks to those present at the meeting.

An area for **bush burial of ashes** is available at Gungahlin and Woden.

The members present showed their appreciation of the presentation by a round of applause.



May Lunch



Some of the members enjoying a lunch at the Mawson Club. Thanks to Val Siemionow for the photo.

Have a great Day and Laugh, "Do not regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many".



An Update From the Coordinator - Marina Siemionow

Although Caroline Polak Scowcroft had kindly managed the May meeting during my absence, May turned out to be a very busy month for me. After returning from our extended 4 week stay in Adelaide, halfway through the month, the final 2 weeks of May were hectic. I managed to squeeze **6 Canberra Lung Life Support Group (CLLSG) events** between 4 separate medical appointments and procedures for Val.

1. **On Wednesday 20th May:** I had a project meeting for the BREATHE project I've been working on with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), for 2.5 years now. The BREATHE project is a collaboration between IMPACCT and several other organisations, including Lung Foundation Australia. The project is in its final stage now, testing the **'Breathlessness Episode Recovery Plan'** an easy-to-follow guide that summarises what to do when breathlessness becomes worse using simple, non-medicated strategies to help breathing and thinking. During this last phase we are also translating the Plan into an **APP for the phone**, through a series of codesign workshops held in Sydney. The APP will soon be ready for testing. We hope that this version will help many to always have the plan at hand.
2. **Friday 22nd May:** we set up a stall to mark **Lung Health Awareness Month** at the Belconnen Mall. The Mall provided a high-tech desk for the event which resulted in my quickly developing two digital slide shows for the 2 screens provided. The stall was supported by several of our members who took shifts between 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. The photo is of our stall with Val Siemionow, Marina Siemionow and Caroline Polak Scowcroft helping during the mid-afternoon shift.
3. **Friday 22nd May:** the **Domiciliary Oxygen and Respiratory Support Scheme (DORSS)** Committee scheduled its Quarterly meeting which was cancelled at the very last minute. However, we were asked to review the Equipment Loan Service Procedure, a sixteen-page document by the end of May.
4. **Monday 25th May:** we had our bi-monthly **Advisory Group Meeting** at which we discussed ways to increase our membership, the possibility of Live Streaming our meetings to members who cannot attend in person when we have speakers; what we can do to improve the way we raise awareness of Lung Health across the Canberra community; and agreed to continue exhibiting at COTA's Seniors Exhibition in September, and pay the \$550.00 fee for a stall.
5. **Wednesday 27th May:** I attended the **Better Together Peer Leader** meeting run by the **Peer Support Coordinator at Lung Foundation Australia (LFA)**. The meeting was a special meeting recognising the work of Peer Support Leaders as part of National Volunteer Week, run in late May.
6. **Friday 29th May:** we had our monthly Lunch which this month we held at the Hellenic Club. (See photo page 2)

New 1800MEDICARE offers free, 24/7 health advice anywhere in Australia

[New 1800MEDICARE offers free, 24/7 health advice anywhere in Australia | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

You can now get free health information and advice anywhere in Australia, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by calling **1800MEDICARE (1800 633 422)**. If you're feeling unwell, caring for someone, or unsure whether to seek medical help, call **1800MEDICARE** and a registered nurse (RN) will:

- listen to your concerns
- assess your symptoms
- advise on next steps—whether that's looking after yourself at home or getting help from a GP, Medicare Urgent Care Clinic, pharmacy or emergency department in your area.

For emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

Why use 1800MEDICARE?

- ✓ Immediate support for non-emergency health concerns – the first point of contact for health information and advice.
- ✓ 24/7 access to registered nurses who guide patients to the right care.
- ✓ National service available through phone and digital channels.

Along with the phone service, 1800MEDICARE also includes a website and app. The service is free, available to anyone, anywhere in Australia - you don't need a Medicare card.

For more information visit: [medicare.gov.au/1800](https://www.medicare.gov.au/1800).

Thinking about VAD

Our speaker in July will be talking about VAD. VAD (**Voluntary Assisted Dying**) allows terminally ill individuals with decision-making capacity to request help from a doctor to end their suffering. The scheme is available to people aged 18 or over who have lived in Canberra for at least 12 months. The process involves three requests to an authorised practitioner, followed by independent assessments by two authorised practitioners to determine eligibility.

Here are some links you may like to access for further information:

[Accessing voluntary assisted dying in the ACT](#) This is the ACT Government's website. It contains detailed information about VAD.

[Voluntary assisted dying in the ACT - Go Gentle Australia](#)

Go Gentle Australia was founded in 2016 by broadcaster Andrew Denton. They are a national charity which promotes and enables choice at the end of life, including the option of voluntary assisted dying.



[Accessing VAD in ACT - Dying With Dignity ACT](#) This is a brief and simplified guide to the ACT Voluntary Assisted Dying scheme.

Videos [of VAD Canberra](#) Come and hear the latest information on Thursday 9 July.

Looking for an oxygen concentrator?

Two oxygen concentrators are looking for new homes. They have not been in use for very long.

Visionaire 5 stationary concentrator: 52.8 x 35.8 x 29.2; 13.6kg; 1 - 5 litres.



Dj Med KSW 5 51 x 41 x 28; 18kg; 1 – 5 litres



A quantity of good quality disposable surgical masks still in their packaging are also available. If you are interested or would like more details, **contact Anne on 0432 542 838.**

Pollen allergies

Canberra has earned the distinction of being Australia's "allergy capital," with nearly 30% of the population suffering from allergic rhinitis—the highest rate in the country. Most of the allergies are due to pollen from four major areas:

- **Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*);**
- **Tree Pollen (Birch, Oak, Plane, Poplar, Pine);**
- **English Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*);**
- **Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*).**

Allergies can also be caused by other factors such as mould, woodsmoke, other pollution.

Canberra has three monitoring stations which give hourly reading of the air quality, including pollen count: these are at Florey, Civic and Monash. It also has an official monitoring service run through ANU which gives daily information about pollen levels.

There are quite a few websites which give you Canberra's information. Some are specific to pollen; some to broader pollutants. Here are some:

- [Check current air quality readings in the ACT - ACT Government](#)
- [Air quality health advice](#)
- [Home - Canberra Pollen](#) : Today's Grass Pollen Forecast for Canberra
- [Pollen Count in Canberra Today | Hourly Forecast | Pollen Count](#)
- [Canberra Pollen Count & Forecast | Real-Time Allergy Alerts.](#)

There are also apps you can download:

The Pollen Count & Alerts App provides real-time pollen monitoring specifically for Canberra residents, tracking grass, tree, weed, and mould spore levels. It also gives you personalised alerts when necessary. [Pollen Count App](#). There is also an app for all Australia looking at different factors that cause an allergic reaction: [Air Quality Monitor & Allergy Symptom Tracker - AirRater](#). These websites and apps give you so much more information about pollen than just the daily levels. It's worth checking them out.

From Spiral

Spiral meets in the hall at the Woden Valley Uniting Church, Curtin, between 10 am and noon every Thursday. It's free (maybe a donation) and very popular. If you have any questions or would like their email, you can contact Brett Yeats, at brett.yeats@gmail.com or on 0406 379 119 or John Eyers at jseyers25@gmail.com or on 0408 497 899.

On June 18, Val Dempsey was the speaker, speaking about St John's Ambulance and about ageism. Val and her husband Lindsay have been regularly attending Spiral since they 'discovered' it earlier this year. Val is a remarkable woman, one of only 27 people to be named Senior Australian of the Year (AOTY). Slim Dusty was the first back in 1999. The first Australian of the Year, in 1960, was Sir Macfarlane Burnett. [Here](#) are all the 'winners' since then.

Some light relief

An Arab Sheikh was admitted to the hospital for heart surgery, but prior to the surgery, the doctors needed to have some of his blood type stored in case the need arose. As the gentleman had an extremely rare type of blood that couldn't be found locally, the call went out around the world.

Finally, a Scotsman was located who had the same rare blood type. After some coaxing, the Scot donated his blood for the Arab. After the surgery, the Arab sent the Scotsman a BMW, a diamond necklace for his wife, and \$100,000 US dollars in appreciation for the blood donation.

A few months later, the Arab had to undergo a further corrective surgery procedure. Once again, his doctor telephoned the Scotsman, who was more than happy to donate his blood. After the second surgery, the Arab sent the Scotsman a thank-you card and a box of Quality Street chocolates.

The Scotsman was shocked that the Arab did not reciprocate his kind gesture as he had anticipated. He phoned the Arab and asked him: "I thought you would be more generous than that. Last time you sent me a BMW, diamonds and money, but this time you only sent me a thank-you card and a box of chocolates? "

To this, the Arab replied: "Aye, laddie, but I now have Scottish blood in ma veins".

Membership Payment

This is a voluntary payment but it helps with Lung Life costs for materials, expos and other events. 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.

Cut-off date for any newsletter items and photos

To assist in the efficient editing of the newsletter, we need to have a cut-off date for any items or photos that you are sending. Cut-off date for the July newsletter is Monday 20 July.

