



Below the Belt!

Vol. 23 No. 1

December 2023 – February, 2024

Newsletter of The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.
(ABN No. 35 871 442 176)

You Are Invited.....

To this year's Group Christmas Party

and, as an added bonus..

We've thrown in the Group Annual General Meeting!

When: - 11.30am on Monday, December 18th

Where: - Emu Sports Club

(Refer Article on Page 2 for full details)

What's to Come

Group Meeting – Monday December 18th

Group A.G.M. 11.30am

Group Christmas Party 12.00 Mid Day

No Group Meeting – Monday January 15th

Due to Holidays

Group Meeting – Monday February 19th

To Be Advised

Meetings are now held at the Emu Sports Club (Home of Leonay Golf Club)

Gather at 6-30pm for a 7-00pm start.



Our Web Site "www.prostatesupport.org.au" is now sponsored
by the Members of Emu Plains Lions Club

December Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Christmas Party

Your Board has again decided to combine the AGM with the Christmas Party this year. The AGM will be held on **Monday 18th December** at the Emu Sports Club, 1 Leonay Pde, Leonay New South Wales 2750 commencing at 11 30 am.

The Annual General Meeting requires 15 paid up members to be in attendance.

The Agenda for this AGM and Minutes of the last AGM have been distributed as required by our Constitution. These include the application to become a new director. We need you to be there as a paid up member to vote. Membership fees are \$10.00 per family group per year.

Your Board needs your support. As an incorporated body we will have to consider our future as a group if we fail to achieve a quorum.

The cost of the Christmas Party is \$5.00 for financial members and \$10 per head for non members. Membership fees are only \$10.00 per family group per year and have not changed for over a decade.

The mathematics of becoming a financial member are therefore pretty clear! So we ask you to join up or renew your membership and ensure we achieve the required 15 financial attendees.

We need to know the number attending prior to the day for catering purposes and will only order for those who have remitted their payment by 12 December 2022 when we must advise the Club of numbers and we are then obligated to pay for those numbers.

Why not pay your membership renewal at the same time? **The Group’s bank account details are BSB: 032-837 Account: 206701.** Please ensure you add your name to the payment details.

We are in a serious situation regarding attendance at meetings so if you want us to continue holding our meetings please pay both prior to the Christmas Party.

The September meeting with the group of medical experts was attended by 30 people so we know there is demand out there. We would like to see meetings of this size every month.

Regards

Wayne

Wayne Singleton
Honorary Secretary & Membership Coordinator



Emu Plains Lions Club

We would like to thank and acknowledge the contribution made to our Group by the Emu Plains Lions Club. The ‘Lions’ are the sponsors our web site.

The LONG run

The Nepean Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group once again entered a team in “The Long Run” (PCFA’s fundraiser held each September to raise funds for Prostate Cancer Research. It is held in conjunction with Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.)

When I entered the team, I put as our ‘Goal’ at \$3,000 A modest amount. In past years, our team has not come close to achieving this target.

This year we “blew it away”!

Our final total was \$4,550!

This ranked us 21st in the ‘Teams’ challenge.

The ‘down’ side of our efforts was that we only had two members participate in our ‘Team’!

(Myself and new Group Member Greg Farmilo.)

Special mention should go to Greg. His efforts raised over \$3000 whereas mine was a modest \$1000. We were also helped by a couple of Corporate ‘Double Up’ days.

Just imagine what our contribution could have been with greater participation from more Group Members.

Notwithstanding, I would like to thank all Group Members that did donate towards our totals.



Retirement of Debra Garroun – PCFA Network Support

We have recently learned that Debra Garroun PCFA Network Support has taken a redundancy and, as Debra said ‘gone into semi retirement’

Many of our members would have ‘met’ Debra when we held “Zoom” meetings during covid.

Debra joined our meetings on a number of occasions.

We would like to wish Debra ‘All the Best’ in her future endeavours.



Hawkesbury Canoe Classic – 2023

The Group once again provided the scrutineering of the craft taking part in the annual Hawkesbury Canoe Classic.

I say 'annual' but the last 'Classic' was run in 2019!

(Two years cancellation due to Covid and last year had to be abandoned because of flooding on the river.)

Compared to previous years, this year was a very subdued affair with less than 100 craft taking part. (In past years there have been over 350 participants)

Still, there were some anxious moments. When our hardworking organiser, John Kemp and his wife Christine arrived at 8.00am there was not another soul in sight!

No Classic organisers, none of the necessary equipment. Nothing!

John was seriously worried that he had got the wrong day!

However, people and equipment began to arrive at about 9.30. Apparently, because of the low number of participants, they had decided to put the start time back to 10.00am but nobody thought to tell us!

Still things eventually got underway and, because of John's hard work in recruiting helpers we had plenty of people on hand all day.

Here is the email of appreciation we received from the Classic Organisers.

"Dear David and John

Thanks to the support of people like yourselves, this year's Hawkesbury Classic Paddle was a resounding success.

As a token of our appreciation we would like to make a donation of \$1000 to the group.

For your information, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the paddlers in the event, we have been able to make a \$70,000 donation to our major recipient, Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation. This result, given the low number of paddlers, is most gratifying.

Kind regards

Rob Cook
President
Hawkesbury Canoe Classic Assoc. Inc."

Well done and thank you to all members that helped out on the day.



Leonay Golf Club Charity Golf Day

This event was due to be held in November however it has been deferred to next February. We'll keep you posted!

Prostate Cancer Awareness Evening – September 18th 2023

Our September Group Meeting once again featured our Prostate Cancer Awareness Evening run as our contribution to “Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”



The evening was run on similar lines to previous years where we invited various local clinicians to give a short talk on their areas of expertise in dealing with Prostate Cancer.

Due to a breakdown in communications, we did not have a GP at this meeting however ‘our’ Prostate Cancer specialist Nurse, Liz McKervey, stood in and spoke of the first ‘steps’ in the Prostate Cancer ‘Journey’.

Other speakers included Urologist, Dr. Nicholas Mehan. Radiation Oncologist Dr. Thompson Ly, Director of Cancer Services at the Nepean Cancer Care Centre & Medical Oncologist Amanda Stevanovic. and Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse, Liz McKervey.

One interesting highlight of the evening was a video shown by Dr, Mehan of an actual Radical Prostate Operation using robotic surgery.



Australia’s First Living Lab to Beat Deadly Prostate Cancers

Australian researchers are among the first scientists in the world to establish a living lab to help find new treatments and therapies for deadly forms of prostate cancer.

The ground-breaking project, funded by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, aims to help end Australian deaths from the disease.

Seed funding has been provided to establish the national consortium, with hopes of raising significantly more from community donations as part of Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia’s annual Christmas appeal.

The lab will expand on the capabilities of the Australian Prostate Cancer BioResource, a national collaboration currently managed by Monash University.

The existing biobank will be enriched by the inclusion of specimens and data from individuals with advanced metastatic disease, and will for the first time include unique collections of patient models of prostate cancer.

<https://www.pcf.org.au/news-media/news/australia-s-first-living-lab-to-beat-deadly-prostate-cancers/>

'Westcare' Community Services



The October Group Monthly Meeting was addressed by Andrew Paesch from the local charity group 'Westcare' Community Services. *"Local Needs Met By Local People"*

'Westcare' is a locally (Penrith) based organisation that provide welfare services for a number of vulnerable groups in our community.

These include Fresh Start and 1000 Safe Sleeps to help people affected by domestic violence. Nepean Home Start assists people to move out of homelessness. They also have a Youth Assistance program. The Emergency Relief Service provides help for people affected by Floods etc. In conjunction with other groups they also provide Care Kits to the vulnerable. There is also an annual Christmas Appeal.

To help with funding, Westcare also have an Op Shop located at 10 Bringelly Road, Kingswood.

Possibly the most relevant to our Group of the organisations assisted by Westcare is the 'Penrith Men's Walk and Talk'.

This group was started a few years ago by a few friends who needed to just talk to someone about their situation. They met up at the Nepean River at Penrith and the walk was felt to be beneficial that they made it a regular event. They spoke to their friends about the walk and the Group continued to expand. Now, the walk attracts about 100 men each week.

The walk is a great outlet for men dealing with Depression and Mental Health

Andrew spoke very passionately about Men's mental health and the need for men to open up and talk to others when facing difficult personal times.



PENRITH MEN'S WALK & TALK

PHYSICAL / MENTAL / SOCIAL

Come and join a bunch of like-minded men for a weekly walk and talk with
FREE COFFEE

Friendly and non-judgmental

Every Thursday evening, start and finish at The Coffee Club Nepean River

March to October: Meet from 5PM for a 6PM Walk

November to February: Meet from 6PM for a 7PM Walk.

www.walkandtalk.org.au

There Is Only One "Rule" At The Walk

"You Never Walk Alone!"

The “Widdleometer”

At our November Group meeting our guest Speaker was Dr. Adrian Sheen.



Dr. Sheen is a well known local family doctor and founder of the ‘Doc Sheen’ brand.

Dr. Sheen spoke about his latest medical device the “Widdleometer”

The Widdleometer is an ‘early warning system’ for Prostate and Bladder issues.

The Widdleometer gives an estimate of urine flow which may suggest you need to see a doctor for further investigation.

While it does not diagnose particular illnesses it may provide an indication of potential problems.

Men are not great at admitting they have a health problem. Poor urine flow in men can be caused by many problems, most commonly an enlarged prostate (known medically as BPH). A reduced urine flow could also be an indicator of further Prostate problems.

Prostate problems are scary and a lot of men would rather not talk about it.

The Widdleometer, on the other hand, is fun. Silly, even. Frivolous and novel for certain.

The device itself resembles a funnel with a cup on the top.

Men are instructed to use it with a full bladder between 10am and 6pm.

If they have a healthy flow, they should be able to fill the funnel section of the device to its brim before it drains nine times out of 10.

Those that can’t are advised to see their family doctor.

Whatever the cause, if a man has a reduced urine flow, he should have it checked out by a doctor.

The WIDDLEOMETER® is a unique device designed by Dr Sheen for use in the privacy of your own home.

The WIDDLEOMETER® is quick and easy to use. It is an “early warning system” for your prostate and bladder.

THE WIDDLEOMETER® DOES NOT DIAGNOSE PROSTATE CANCER

THE WIDDLEOMETER® CAN BE USED TO ESTIMATE URINE FLOW AND SHOW MEN THEY HAVE A POOR URINE STREAM NEEDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

High Rates of Advanced Prostate Cancer Diagnoses in the Blue Mountains and Outer West Sydney

In an article published in the 'Blue Mountains Gazette', based on information supplied by the PCFA, it was revealed that the number of men diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer (Grade 4) is significantly higher in the Blue Mountains and Outer West Sydney than the national average. 8.33 per cent compared to the national average of 4.28 per cent.

In a statement from PCFA CEO, Anne Savage, "*While more research is needed to establish casual associations in the Blue Mountains and the Outer West, we do know that we can immediately improve early detection of prostate Cancer by encouraging eligible men to get a PSA test for Prostate Cancer.*"

THIS IS WHERE WE COME IN – ENCOURAGE MEN TO GET AN EARLY PSA TEST!

(Age 45 – 50 generally but start at 40 if there is family history)



Other Recent News from PCFA

Increased Funding for Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses Program

The Albanese Government is taking action on Australia's most commonly diagnosed cancer, investing \$35.4M over four years to 2026-27 towards the employment of 80 Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses around the country.

The funding will support Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's world-leading specialist nursing service, helping to bridge the gap in care between city and country areas.

The funding continues Government support for the program, which began with expansion of the service from 12 to 26 nurses in 2013.

<https://www.pcfa.org.au/news-media/news/35-4m-investment-in-nursing-program-for-men-with-prostate-cancer/>

New PBS Drug Listing For Men With Advanced Prostate Cancer

A new government medicine subsidy will allow thousands of Australian men battling an advanced form of prostate cancer to launch a three-pronged attack against their disease.

Medical experts are welcoming Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) access to the first and only medicine specifically registered by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in triple therapy to fight cancer in a number of different and complementary ways as soon as it has escaped the prostate.

From 1 December, men with metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer (cancer that has spread beyond the prostate to organs such as the lymph nodes, bone, lung and liver) will receive subsidised access to NUBEQA® (darolutamide) for the first time. It will form part of a three-pronged treatment, used alongside chemotherapy and hormone therapy (androgen deprivation therapy or ADT).

<https://www.pcfa.org.au/news-media/news/new-pbs-drug-listing-for-men-with-prostate-cancer/>

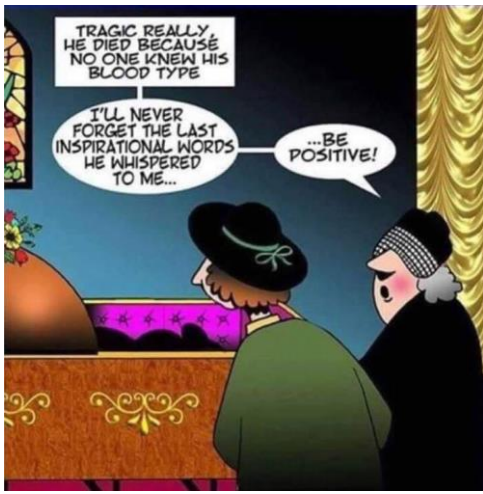
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It's ok to talk to yourself,
it is even ok to answer
yourself.
But when you ask
yourself to repeat what
you have just said...
You have a problem!

silversurfers.com

PAYMENT OF Membership Fees. Members can pay their annual Group Membership Fees by direct deposit to our bank account.

Our Westpac Account Name is 'Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group'. BSB is 032-837 and the Account No. is 206701. Current Fees are \$10.00 P.A. per family. Don't forget to advise who you are in the Lodgement Reference i.e. " John Smith Fees 2024"



Would you like to make a cash donation to our group?
Do you know any Group or Organisation that would like to make a donation?
We are a registered charitable organisation and all donations are fully tax deductible.
All donations help us to support cancer and health related projects in our local area.
If you are able to assist, contact our Treasurer, Graeme Renshaw.

Board Members of the Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group for 2023 are as follows:-

President :-	David Wilkinson	'phone 04 0666 4601
Vice President / Treasurer :-	Graeme Renshaw	'phone 04 1827 6422
Secretary :-	Wayne Singleton	'phone 04 1494 5263
Newsletter Editor / Publicity:-	Alan Howard	'phone 04 1922 0858
Web Site Manager :-	John Parsonage	'phone 04 3851 4707
Promotions Officer :-	John Kemp	'phone 02 4739 2852

The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Support Group Inc. is grateful for the support of its members and various local groups. This enables us to produce this newsletter and cover other incidentals in the running of the group. The Below the Belt 'Zipper' logo (Page 1) is copyrighted to Ms. Caroline Redwood and is used with her kind permission

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Group.

The Group does not offer medical or other professional advice.

Articles presented in this or any other issues are presented only as a means of sharing information and opinions with members.

It is important that health professionals should be consulted before making any decisions about any treatments.

This newsletter has been compiled by Alan Howard from material culled or provided.

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Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Web Site www.prostatesupport.org.au