



Below the Belt!

Vol. 19, No. 1

December, 2019 – February, 2020

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



The December Group Meeting
Monday, December 16th
is
Christmas Party Time!

Venue:

Church Hall
Rear of St Stephen's Church
High St, Penrith.
(Our usual Meeting Place)

Commencing 6.30 - 7.00
Food, Soft Drinks and
Music Provided

(Please Note:
Because of Church Policy No
Alcohol is permitted)



What's to Come

Group Meeting – Monday December 16th

Group Christmas Party
See Above

Group Meeting – Monday January 20th

Open Forum

Topics of Interest to Members (See item Page 5)

Group Meeting – Monday February 17th

Liz McKerverey

Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse (See item Page 2)

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

Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia supports a team of Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses located in a range of health care settings across Australia.

A diagnosis of prostate cancer can be a very stressful time for men and their families and friends.

Our prostate cancer specialist nurses can help you and your family by:

- # Providing you with reliable information about your diagnosis and your treatment options
- # Providing information, care and support to help manage the side effects of treatment
- # Helping you access services at your hospital and in your community
- # Helping you access a support group.

Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses can be contacted by you at any stage during or after treatment. It does not matter how many years have passed since you received your treatment.

A word from “Our” Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse, Liz McKervey

“I am based in the Cancer Care Centre at Nepean Hospital, however will see patients in all wards, pre-op and post-op. On treatment or off treatment, whatever they need. My role is very supportive care focused on ensuring the patient, caregivers and family are all cared for. Counselling, information, education and research are all domains I have to focus on. I would be happy if any of the members had research ideas they wanted to pass onto me.”

Liz’s contact details are:-

Phone- 02 4734 1701

Mobile - 0437 699 342

Email - Elizabeth.McKervey@health.nsw.gov.au

**** Liz will be our Guest Speaker at our Group Meeting in February ****



November Group Meeting – A Visit from the ‘Melanoma Man’



At our November Group Meeting our Guest Speaker was Keith Rowe, a speaker from the Melanoma Institute of Australia.

Keith gave us an entertaining and very informative talk on the dangers of Melanoma.

Here are Keith’s thoughts on his visit:

Privileged last night to be able to join the Nepean Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group on behalf of MIA and share with them some thoughts on melanoma - particularly the importance of sun safety prevention and the one critical treatment issue that prostate and melanoma have in common ... early detection. So heartening to see community support groups like this being there for each other -

conscientiously providing information, support and encouragement.

2019 Annual General Meeting

The Group held its Annual General Meeting in October. Elections of Office Bearers for the coming year were held. David Wilkinson remains as President and Graeme Renshaw retains the dual role of Vice President and Treasurer. With the retirement of Ross Baker, Wayne Singleton moves from Assistant Secretary to Secretary.



We are pleased to welcome aboard Misel Hader who has agreed to step into the Web Site Manager role vacated by the retiring Peter Murphy.

John Kemp, Bob Wittrien and Alan Howard retain their positions of Promotions Officer, Librarian and Newsletter Editor.

Many thanks to retiring members, Ross Baker and Peter Murphy, for their efforts over recent years.

The position of Assistant Secretary remains vacant. If you feel you like to assist in the running of the Group, please speak to one of the Board Members.

Ross Baker and former Treasurer Allan Burrow were awarded 'Life Membership' of the Group for their services to the Group.

Ross was presented with his Certificate by Group Patron Alan Moran O.A.M. (Pictured)

(Alan is also a Life Member and was one of the founding Members of the Group serving in numerous positions since the Group's inception in 2001)

Allan Burrow was unable to attend the Meeting.



2019 End of Year Leaders Meeting

Vice President Graeme Renshaw attended the meeting that PCFA hosted at The Chatswood Club on Wednesday 27th November. (This was one of many meetings that PCFA are holding throughout Australia.)

It was obvious from the start when CEO Jeff Dunn spoke that the day was to;

- a. Hear what PCFA highlights, progress and plans were.
- b. To hear activity within the support groups, to take away ideas to plan for the future so that groups move forward.

Groups were also welcomed by Chairman of the National Board Mr Steve Callister.

Throughout the day groups were able to partake in breakout groups to determine ideas that may benefit groups in the bigger community.

The room had a very positive vibe and CEO Jeff Dunn was exceptionally keen to hear from everybody and there input on the day.

Clinical care, changing with the times as electronic media takes hold were topics also discussed. Early 2020 I believe a presentation regarding the group day will be posted on the PCFA web site.

Members and guests should take up the opportunity to meet and hear Jeff Dunn at our Christmas event, his enthusiasm is very infectious and my belief is that PCFA will move forward taking NBMPCSG along with them.

To those that we don't meet at the December meeting may I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.+

Is Masculinity Stopping Men with Prostate Cancer Asking for Help?

A new Australian study has asked whether aspects of masculinity are affecting the help-seeking of men with prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer causes distress

The diagnosis of prostate cancer is a major life stress for many men. After the initial distress around diagnosis, men face treatments that often have difficult side effects. Fortunately the rate of survival is relatively high, with 95% of these men alive 5 years after their diagnosis. But living longer does not necessarily mean living well. Up to 1 in 4 men experience anxiety and 1 in 5 depression after prostate cancer treatment. Unsurprisingly, the levels of distress are usually greater for men with advanced disease.

Men with prostate cancer are more likely to feel distressed if they are younger, socially or economically disadvantaged or are suffering from the symptoms of the disease.

Unfortunately, men with prostate cancer have an increased risk of suicide compared to men without this cancer. Distress is therefore a big issue for many men living with prostate cancer.

Help-seeking by men with prostate cancer

It's normal to feel distress upon a diagnosis with cancer. However, for some men this distress continues for long periods of time and greatly disrupts their lives. These men may benefit from some help. Men can access help in coping with distress, depression and anxiety from a number of sources. These include GPs, psychologists, nurses (especially Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses), support groups, online peer-support such as PCFA's Online Community. Men with prostate cancer can call PCFA on 1800 22 00 99 or the Cancer Council support line 13 11 20 for those seeking emotional or practical support.

Asking for help does not come naturally to many men.

Surveys and interviews of men with prostate cancer have shown that they are no exception to this. Almost half of men with prostate cancer report psychological needs that are not being met. Many men choose to tough it out rather than ask for help, particularly from a psychologist. It's possible that there is some stigma stopping some men from seeking psychological help.

Does masculinity affect help-seeking by men with prostate cancer?

Australian Prostate Cancer Survivorship researchers want to understand how and why men with prostate cancer seek help for psychological or emotional issues. A new study has examined the relationship between masculinity and help-seeking by men with prostate cancer. This research group, from the Centre for Research Excellence in Prostate Cancer Survivorship, were led by Prof Suzanne Chambers.

Their recent results have been published in the journal Psycho-Oncology.

Many previous studies of help-seeking have used surveys at one time point. To better study this topic, the Prostate Cancer Survivorship researchers performed a longitudinal study. They surveyed men at one time-point, then follow-up after 6 and 12 months. This allowed them to identify men who needed help for psychological or emotional issues, those who intended to seek help and those who actually sought help over a 12-month period.

The researchers surveyed 225 Australian men who had been treated for localised prostate cancer. They received their diagnosis an average of 4.1 years earlier. They identified 75 men with unmet psychological needs – men who needed some help but had not received it. Of these men:

- 41% intended to seek help within 6 months
- 20% actually sought help within 6 months
- a total of 33% had sought help by 12 months

These results are consistent with earlier studies showing many men that need help are not seeking it.

Those who did seek support tended to be younger and sourced it largely from their GP or through prostate cancer support groups.

The Survivorship Researchers used various surveys to ask whether aspects of masculinity were affecting men's help-seeking. They wondered whether men who felt strong and self-reliant were less likely to seek help.

Most aspects of masculinity did not affect help-seeking. However the researchers found that men who needed help and reported higher levels of optimistic action were less likely to actually seek support.

This aspect of masculinity may be preventing these men from facing the need for help.

We spoke to one of the authors of this study, A/Prof Nicholas Ralph from Cancer Council QLD and University of South Queensland:

"Our study is the first Australian study of its kind to look at the support seeking behaviour of men with prostate cancer over a 12 month period. We found that men who say they will take action in the face of dealing with their disease, are actually those who are least likely to seek help from a health professional. Given men's responses may be a way to cope with their disease, clinicians need to pay attention to the emotional well-being of men. As part of prostate cancer survivorship care in Australia, psychosocial support is essential and needs to be delivered in a man-friendly way that supports men to seek help in coping with this insidious disease." A/Prof Nicholas Ralph

The results from this study can help clinicians to understand why some men don't seek support when they need it. Discussing the results, the researchers stated that Clinicians should be aware that men with chronic illness who appear to approach challenges with optimistic action, may in fact be in need of psychological care but less likely to seek help. If you or a loved one needs help coping with prostate cancer, please reach out and call the PCFA team on 1800 22 00 99 or email enquiries@pcfa.org.au



Open Forum – January Meeting

At a recent Group Board meeting the subject of our "Open Forum" meetings was discussed.

We hold three of these meetings each year (Usually in January, April and July) and as it says in the "What's to Come" box on page 1 the meeting will cover "Topics of Interest to Members"

The forums usually take the form of Members raising a topic of some difficulty (or problem) that they are experiencing. Other Members will then contribute their experiences (Usually, among the Group, there is someone who has dealt with the same problem)

It is our opinion that new Members get a lot of assurance out of these forums as they realise that they 'Are not Alone'!

The Ladies (Partners) usually hold a separate forum and while we are never advised of what is actually discussed, we are informed that new members gain similar assurances.

We (the Board) would like to gain some feedback from you, the Members, regarding the effectiveness / popularity of these forums.

We would also like to hear opinions from members as to how the Group is being run, what path we should take in the future, how can we improve our methods of 'getting the message out there'

Do you have any suggestions? If so come along to the January Meeting and let us hear them. (or you could send us an Email!)

2019 Priority Impact Research Award (PIRA) grants.

Three projects have been selected from 18 high-calibre applications to receive more than \$1 million in combined funding made possible by the support of signature PCFA events Biggest Ever Blokes Lunch Melbourne, It's a Bloke Thing Toowoomba, and other generous community members and corporate partners.

These are world-leading projects that could help us find better ways of detecting and treating deadly forms of prostate cancer. The successful projects were selected by an independent expert committee, based on their potential to provide the best possible benefits for Australian men affected by the disease.

The first project will help us improve predictions about prostate cancer risks and progression, the second will help to build our knowledge of the role DNA mutations play in prostate cancer, and the third will compare the effectiveness of different styles of interventions in enhancing quality of life outcomes for men who have undergone a radical prostatectomy.

Our ultimate goal is to find answers to some of the most urgent challenges faced by Australian men with prostate cancer – to deliver real breakthroughs for rapid translation into practice.

Each of the three research projects adopts a focus on men at higher risks of mortality and/or significantly reduced quality of life resulting from treatment:

Using new epigenetic information to better predict which men are most likely to develop aggressive prostate cancer

Prof Melissa Southey, Monash University, Victoria

Some families are more susceptible to prostate cancer than others, possibly due to inherited DNA sequence variation (genetics) or DNA modification (epigenetics). We have recently identified several inherited DNA modifications that occur in families with higher rates of prostate cancer. We will now combine this information with existing risk prediction models and molecular testing strategies for prostate cancer to improve prostate cancer risk prediction for all men. Knowing a man's prostate cancer risk will assist clinicians to determine how best to test for the disease and how aggressively to treat the prostate cancer should it occur.

Finding new genetic risk factors for prostate cancer

A/Prof Renea Taylor, Monash University, Victoria

When a man is diagnosed with prostate cancer, it is difficult to determine if his disease will progress rapidly or slowly. This project aims to identify men likely to have aggressive prostate cancer based on changes in their DNA (their gene profile). To do this, we will study new inherited cancer-causing genes in men with prostate cancer to better predict prostate cancer severity. This research will also improve our ability to apply genetic screening to aid early detection and identify the appropriate treatment(s) should prostate cancer occur.

Multimodal prehabilitation in couples affected by prostate cancer

A/Prof Catherine Paterson, University of Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

New evidence suggests that improving the physical and psychological health of people diagnosed with cancer, before they begin treatment, has beneficial effects on their recovery and quality-of-life once treatment begins. This is called pre-habilitation. This study will examine the effects of pre-habilitation on men choosing surgery for localised prostate cancer. It will also determine the benefits of pre-habilitation on a man's partner/spouse. The project findings will provide immediate benefit to men and their partner/spouse being treated through the Canberra Health Services as well as providing important information necessary for a definitive large-scale clinical trial.

These three projects have great potential to change the lives of Australians affected by prostate cancer.

Notably, the laboratory studies will contribute to a rapidly accelerating area of research practice which recognises the fact that no two patients are the same, and aims to improve our chances of beating the disease by building our knowledge of what the disease is likely to do, and why.

Importantly, PCFA is one of few research funding bodies in Australia that has decided to also prioritise investigations into the relationship between psychosocial care, survivorship, and quality of life – responding to the evidence that the side-effects and symptoms of treatment can have devastating impacts.

As you know, Australia has one of the highest incidence rates of prostate cancer internationally, with one in every seven Australian men likely to be diagnosed during their lifetime. While survival rates for prostate cancer are high, with over 95% of men likely to survive at least five years, we must keep up the pace of work to find curative treatments and ensure that the 200,000 Australian men who have survived the disease are now living well.

Research is key to prostate cancer survival and this is Australian research at its finest. PCFA is tremendously proud to support these projects.



Upcoming Events

Australia Day – 2020

For the past several years the Group has manned an information stall at the Australia day celebrations at Glenbrook (The 'Garden Gnome Convention').

Next year, just to be different, we will be setting up our stall at the Australia Day celebrations at Springwood.

These celebrations will be held at the Springwood Public School on Australia Day.

Promotions Officer, John Kemp, will be looking for people to help out on the day. If you are available contact John and give him your details.

Recent Events

Hawkesbury Canoe Classic



Our Group was once again involved in the scrutineering of the craft taking part in the Hawkesbury Canoe Classic.

We have been part of this event for many years (as our colourful 'T' shirt collection will attest!).

This year the number of competitors in the event was down in comparison to other years which maybe was just as well as we struggled to get members to attend.

But, as we are not the only group that provide assistance all was well.

The weather on the day was very windy. Things got quite dramatic at one stage when our shade shelter was ripped apart and had to be taken down. Thereafter we had to work in the little shade provided by the trees.

Again our thanks go out to our hard working Promotions Officer, John Kemp and his wife Chris for organising our involvement in this event. Thanks also to those Members who were able to turn up to assist.

We recently received a cheque for \$1,000.00 from the Organisers for our efforts on the day.

Rooty Hill Car Show



Our Group was asked by PCFA to man an information desk at a Car Show at the Carrousel Rooty Hill Hotel.

John Kemp was again 'on deck' for this event ably assisted by Vice President Graeme Renshaw.

The day was again disrupted by the windy weather with not a lot of cars on display and many of the patrons seeking refuge in the nearby Hotel!

However, we did have our desk set up and our banners on display.

John reports that he handed out about 50 of our information brochures and was able to speak to a number of men about P.C.

The show packed up early due to the weather. Thanks John and Graeme for representing the Group.

(I am reliably informed that John enjoyed listening to Elvis Classics from a well placed nearby PA speaker!)



and they said it would never happen....

"If I had thought about it, I wouldn't have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can't do this."

-- Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3-M "Post-It" Notepads .

A Laugh at Life !

Lemon Squeeze

There once was a religious young woman who went to Confession. Upon entering the confessional, she said, 'Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.'

The priest said, 'Confess your sins and be forgiven.'

The young woman said, 'Last night my boyfriend made mad passionate love to me seven times.'

The priest thought long and hard and then said, 'Squeeze seven lemons into a glass and then drink the juice.'

The young woman asked, 'Will this cleanse me of my sins?'

The priest said, 'No, but it will wipe that smile off of your face.'



Rats & Lawyers

A tourist wanders into a back- alley antique shop in Sydney's Chinatown. Picking through the objects on display, he discovers a life sized bronze rat. This sculptured rat was so interesting that the tourist took it the shop owner to find out how much it cost.

"Twelve dollars for the rat and a thousand dollars for the story of the rat" was the answer. "Just the rat" says the tourist, pays the money and leaves with the rat in his pocket.

As he walks down the street he hears a noise behind him and turning around, he sees a column of rats following him. By the time he reaches the Harbour, he is being followed by thousands of rats.

Climbing up on a lamp post, he throws the bronze rat into the bay and all the rats plunge into the Harbour and drown, causing a shipping crisis.

Shaken, the tourist returns to the antique shop. "Ah, so you've come back for the story" says the shop owner.

"No," says the tourist, "I was wondering if you have a bronze lawyer".

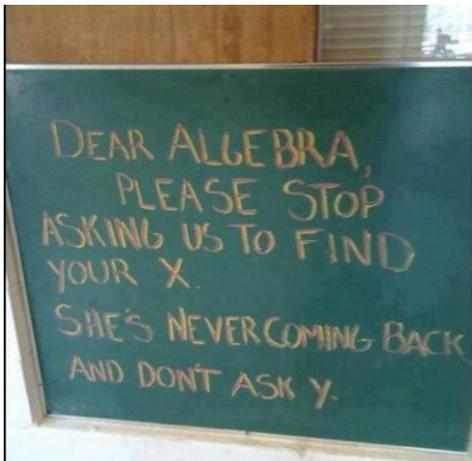
The tribal wisdom of the Plains Indians,

These have been passed on from generation to generation, and say that:

"When you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount."

However, in government more advanced strategies are often employed, such as:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
 2. Changing riders.
 3. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
 4. Arranging to visit other countries to see how other cultures ride dead horses.
 5. Lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included.
 6. Reclassifying the dead horse as living-impaired.
 7. Hiring outside contractors to ride the dead horse.
 8. Harnessing several dead horses together to increase speed.
 9. Providing additional funding and/or training to increase the dead horse's performance.
 10. Doing a productivity study to see if lighter riders would improve the dead horse's performance.
 11. Declaring that as the dead horse does not have to be fed, it is less costly, carries lower overhead and therefore contributes substantially more to the bottom line of the economy than do some other horses.
 12. Rewriting the expected performance requirements for all horses.
- And, of course...
13. Promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position



The year is 2192.
The British Prime
Minister visits Brussels
to ask for an extension to
the Brexit deadline.

No one remembers where
this tradition originated,
but every year it attracts
many tourists from all
over the world!

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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 2019"



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 2019 are as follows:-

President :-	David Wilkinson
Vice President / Treasurer :-	Graeme Renshaw
Secretary :-	Wayne Singleton
Assist. Secretary :-	Vacant
Librarian :-	Bob Wittrien
Newsletter Editor:-	Alan Howard
Publicity / Web Site Manager :-	Misel Hader
Promotions Officer :-	John Kemp

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.

email: nbmpcsgnews@gmail.com

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