



# THE WALNUT

FEBRUARY 2019

Newsletter of the Prostate Cancer Support Group—ACT Region

Affiliated with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA)

Postal address: PO Box 650, Mawson ACT 2607

Website: <http://prostate-cancer-support-act.net>



## Next monthly meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be held on  
**Wednesday 20 February 2019.**

Our speaker is urologist Dr Kieran Hart. Dr Hart grew up in Wollongong and completed a BSc (Medicine) at the University of Sydney before graduating from the University of Queensland with MBBS in 2006. He undertook his surgical and urological training in Queensland, the ACT and NSW, and obtained his FRACS in 2016. He undertook a urological fellowship at the new Gold Coast University Hospital in general urology and was invited to undertake a Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) accredited fellowship at Imperial College, London, UK. Here, Dr Hart was trained in the sub-specialised management of a high volume of urological malignancies, specifically laparoscopic prostatectomy, laparoscopic partial and radical nephrectomy and laparoscopic-assisted and radical cystectomy.

All are welcome to attend our regular monthly meetings and coffee mornings, including partners and carers. No notice is required simply come along and introduce yourself, or contact one of the people listed on page 2 of this newsletter.

Meetings of our support group are held on the third Wednesday of the month (except in December) at 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm. The usual location is Room 22, Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce, ACT 2607. See our website [here](#) for details and map showing the location.

## Next coffee mornings

**10:00 am, Tuesday 12 February 2019** at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Woden.

**10:00 am, Tuesday, 12 March** at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Jamison.

Coffee mornings are held at 10:00 am on the second Tuesday of each month and alternate between the Woden and Jamison venues of the Canberra Southern Cross Club.

## President's Message

What an interesting presentation we had in January from Tim Stewart and Ben Marks about options for doing something about erectile dysfunction! It was good to see so many at the meeting.

We have a very interesting program of speakers arranged for coming meetings.

As will be seen from the notice opposite, our speaker in February is urologist Dr Kieran Hart.

We are also privileged to have Paralympian Michael Milton OAM as our speaker at our meeting in March. Michael has been a strong advocate of the early detection and treatment of prostate cancer.

In April, Dr Catherine Paterson from the University of Canberra will be speaking to us. Catherine has recently arrived in Australia from Scotland and has a strong interest in pre-rehabilitation for men who need treatment for prostate cancer.

Our coffee mornings continue to be great occasions and are well attended. If you have not attended one of these events, I encourage you to do so. Until now, we have not held these events in January. However, because of interest expressed to me, we will in future hold these events each January.

John McWilliam

## Appreciation

The Group recognises and expresses its appreciation for the support provided by: the PCFA, SHOUT staff, Harness Racing ACT, staff of the Australian Department of Human Services (Chief Technology Office), the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Holy Family School Gowrie, Paddywack Promotional Products, the Naval Association of Australia, German Auto Day and the many individuals who have assisted in our fund-raising activities.

## Personal support

For general information, please call SHOUT (Self Help Organisations United Together) during normal office hours on (02) 6290 1984, and their staff will arrange for someone to contact you.

If you would like immediate advice, support or assistance, please contact one of the following two people:

President: John McWilliam  
Phone: 0416 008 299

Email: [president@prostate-cancer-support-act.net](mailto:president@prostate-cancer-support-act.net)

Secretary: David Hennessy  
Phone: (02) 6154 4274

Email: [secretary@prostate-cancer-support-act.net](mailto:secretary@prostate-cancer-support-act.net)

## Seniors Expo

As part of Seniors Week, the Group will again be participating in the Seniors Expo at Exhibition Park on 21 March. This is a good opportunity for us to outreach to people on prostate health awareness. If you are able to assist in staffing the Group's stall at the Expo, please contact John Hayhoe on [treasurer@prostate-cancer-support-act.net](mailto:treasurer@prostate-cancer-support-act.net).



## Our January meeting

We had an excellent attendance of 30 members at our January meeting. It was good to see so many there.

We were treated to a most informative and interesting presentation on ways of treating erectile dysfunction by pharmacists, Tim Stewart and Ben Marks, from Cooleman Court Pharmacy at Weston Creek.

Tim and Ben said that:

- Penile erection is a psychogenic reaction to stimuli wherein a signal from the nerves causes vasodilation of the blood to the penis. Invariably these nerves are affected by treatment for prostate cancer (both surgery and radiation) and erections post treatments are reduced, although there is generally some improvement over time. Also, men on ADT have less successful "erections" than before the medication.
- Popular oral medications that can enhance or assist erections include Viagra (Sildenafil) and Cialis (Tadalafil), which is newer and fewer side effects. However, Cialis is more expensive than Viagra and like Viagra requires a prescription.
- Injectable formulations are available if the oral ones are unreliable. These include: Calverject, which comes in a two pack with instructions and needles for injecting into the shaft of the penis and may be used from 6 weeks post-surgery, but not earlier; and Trimex, which is a compounded product and causes less discomfort than Calverject, but costs more. Trimex is also available as a gel which requires injecting directly into the urethra—but this is less effective than the liquid formulation.



Tim Stewart (L) and Ben Marks (R) being thanked for their wonderful presentation

- A manual method discussed was the "Vacuum Erection Device" (penile pump), which physically draws blood into the penis to cause/sustain an erection. However, a "constriction ring" needs to be inserted on the base of the penis to maintain the erection at the end of pumping.

Both Tim and Ben indicated that men being treated for diabetes could use the medications that were discussed, but that those on nitrate-based stimulants for Angina should not take the oral medicines. They also urged men affected by erectile dysfunction to undertake regular exercise.

## February Executive Committee Meeting

There was no Committee meeting in December 2018. At its meeting in February 2019, the Committee, among other things:

- noted that certificates of appreciation are being sent to Harness Racing ACT and those companies and other persons who supported the Harness Racing ACT event in December, the proceeds of which were donated to the Group;
- agreed to sponsor two nurses at the Canberra Hospital initially (and other nurses in later

semesters) to undertake a Prostate Nursing Care short course offered by the School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, with expressions of interest being sought by 14 March 2019;

- agreed to provide a donation of \$1,000 to *Rise Above* to contribute to the financial assistance it provides to cancer patients (some members of the Group have been supported by *Rise Above*);
- agreed to investigate ways in which the Group may be able to support the Canberra Hospital in its treatment of prostate cancer patients (e.g. through a financial contribution to needed equipment) and to contribute to research into prostate cancer treatment (e.g. through participation in trials);
- discussed arrangements for coming meetings and agreed that we should seek to arrange for speakers on exercise, diet, pelvic floor exercises, in addition to inviting other specialists (urologists, medical oncologists and radiation oncologists) to speak to the Group;
- discussed arrangements for our participation in the Seniors Expo on Thursday, 21 March, including the need to print some publicity material for the stall;
- agreed that we should write to a number of government departments and workplace associations asking whether they would be interested in the Group giving their staff or members a presentation on prostate health; and
- received reports from the Secretary and Treasurer.

## Combined Prostate Cancer Support Groups of NSW Second Conference

The Combined Prostate Cancer Support Groups of NSW are holding a conference in Dubbo from 3 to 5 May 2019. The aim of the conference is to provide participants with the latest information

about prostate cancer and its treatment. There will be speakers on many aspects of prostate cancer, from treatment options and the latest recovery advice to oncology and pathology.

The speakers at this stage include:

- Urologists: Dr Phillip Katelaris and Dr Bala Indrajit
- Bowel cancer: Dr Dean Fisher
- Medical oncologist: Dr Florian Honeyball
- Pathology: Prof Warwick Delprado
- Mental health: Camilla Kenny.

There will also be guidance on succession planning for prostate cancer support groups.

We will be looking to organise a group of people to attend the conference to provide some car pooling. If you would be interested in joining such a group, please contact John McWilliam ([president@prostate-cancer-support-act.net](mailto:president@prostate-cancer-support-act.net)) by Tuesday, 12 March. Alternatively, you may wish to make your own arrangements.

[Click here for further information](#) about the conference, including accommodation options.



## Stay up-to-date by joining the PCFA Online Community

The PCFA Online Community is open to everyone who has been impacted by prostate cancer to share their experiences and connect with others. Through the Research Blog, PCFA Online Community members can also learn more about the latest prostate cancer research developments and findings.

The February 2019 edition of the *PCFA Online Community Digest* has articles on:

- pain relief for men with prostate cancer ([read article](#));

- prostate tumour growth driven by oncut2— results of a study that has uncovered a new way to target prostate cancer, aside from drugs that suppress testosterone ([read article](#));
- top 10 prostate cancer research stories from 2018 ([read article](#));
- is CyberKnife (a new form of radiation treatment) better than the current standard treatments for localised prostate cancer? ([read article](#)); and
- which scans are best for men with recurrent prostate cancer? ([read article](#)).

It is free and easy to become a member of the PCFA Online Community. You can sign up at: <http://onlinecommunity.pcfa.org.au>.

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## Glossary of terms to describe cancer tests and treatments

Those who have been diagnosed with cancer encounter new terms and phrases and these can often be confusing. Find out what all these terms and phrases mean by clicking [here](#).

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## Borrowing items from the library

You can borrow items from the Group's library. There is a wide range of materials, from books to videos. Those who are interested in borrowing items from the library or finding out more about our collection can contact U.N. Bhati, email:

[librarian@prostate-cancer-support-act.net](mailto:librarian@prostate-cancer-support-act.net)

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## Articles and reports of interest

The following articles have appeared recently on web sites or other sources and may be of interest to some members. Any opinions or conclusions expressed are those of the authors. See Disclaimer below. With thanks to Don Bradfield for his assistance with this segment.

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## Survival outcomes of treatment options for men under 60 years

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The January 2019 edition of the American Urological Association's Journal of Urology reported on [a study by Hubert Huang et al](#) that sought to compare the impact of initial radical prostatectomy vs radiation therapy on survival outcomes in young men less than 60 years old with high grade prostate cancer.

The study cohort consisted of 2,228 men less than 60 years of age at the time of diagnosis between 2004 and 2014. After adjusting for disease-specific factors, the researchers concluded that radical prostatectomy was associated with substantial improvements in prostate cancer-specific and overall survival when compared with radiation therapy for men of this age group.

These findings add to the existing data supporting aggressive initial surgical therapy in those younger men with more aggressive prostate cancer. However, this is a limited study and all patients should seek advice from both surgeons and radiotherapists in regard to their individual case.

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## Benefits of statins + ADT in advanced prostate cancer

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Science Direct in February 2019 reported on a [large-scale observational study](#) by Harshman et al on the impact of statins when used by men who are on androgen-deprivation therapy (ADT) for prostate cancer. The study suggests that men on ADT for prostate cancer who are taking statins have a lower risk of skeletal-related events, less chance of dying of prostate cancer, and, most impressively, substantially improved overall survival. This builds on an [earlier study](#), published in JAMA Oncology in July 2015, that had similar findings.

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## From the editor

If you are aware of news, products, publications, web sites, services or events that may be of interest to members of the group, we would like to be informed of them.

If you have received this newsletter indirectly and would like to be emailed a copy direct, or if you would like to add any of your friends or carers to our distribution list, or if you no longer wish to receive copies of the newsletter, please send us an email through the form here:

<http://tinyurl.com/ybkxnlq4>.

John McWilliam

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## Disclaimer

From time to time in our newsletters we provide information about developments in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer, research articles, documents, audiovisual products, presentations and other interesting materials. However, the Group does not have the medical expertise required to make an informed evaluation of the conclusions and recommendations presented in such materials, and we have not verified such conclusions and recommendations through appropriately qualified medical professionals. The information presented in this newsletter must not be interpreted as being endorsed or recommended by the Group. Any recommendations made in such materials may not be applicable in your case. Before implementing any recommendations made in the materials that are reported, it is essential that you obtain advice from appropriately qualified medical professionals. The view of the Group is that no two prostate cancer cases are alike and that no single treatment option is better than any other in all cases. While the information in this newsletter should be of interest, there is no substitute for getting informed medical advice from your own GP, specialists and other medical professionals.