



THE WALNUT

MARCH 2021

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

<https://prostate-cancer-support-act.net>



Monthly meetings

Our regular meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month (except in December) in Room 22, Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce, ACT 2607 ([see map](#)).

Our next monthly meeting will be held at **7:00 pm on Wednesday, 17 March**, where we will be joined by Tim Stewart from Mens Health Downunder. Our COVID Safety Plan is now in place so please check in on the app when you arrive.

Next coffee morning

Our coffee mornings are normally 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.

Our next coffee morning will be held at **10:00 am, Tuesday, the 13th of April** at the **Jamison Southern Cross Club**.

All are welcome to attend our meetings and coffee mornings, and we'd love to see you there.

New PCFA Resources!



PCFA has recently released an updated range of evidence-based resources to assist men, their partners and families following diagnosis of prostate cancer, and to help raise awareness of prostate cancer in the wider community. These resources provide general information about prostate cancer, detailed information following a diagnosis, and information for health professionals.

The new resources replace existing packs and include:

- **Information Packs** for recently diagnosed men and their families,
- **General Information Leaflets** to help raise awareness,
- **Information Guides** with further detail on specific treatments and side effects, and
- **Resources for Health Professionals.**

The Information Guides, in particular, will be of interest to many in our group, with the guides dealing with treatment options, urinary and bowel problems, sexual issues, health and wellbeing, and other issues.

To order your copies, please fill in and submit [the order form](#), call **1800 220 099** or email enquiries@pcca.org.au.

You can also download the resources or read them online yourself from [here](#).

Our Strategic Plan is alive and kicking!

Thank you to everyone who has helped us develop our new Strategic Plan, which has now been approved by your Committee following consideration at our Group's February monthly meeting.

Developing the Plan has given us the opportunity to closely examine what we are here for and where we have been, so that we can then plan where to go in the future to best support you, our members.

Some of the key points from the Plan are listed below:

Vision

Our **Vision** is a future where lives are not limited by prostate cancer.

Mission

Our **Mission** is to provide support to men and those in their lives by:

providing **ongoing peer support**,

promoting **early intervention**, and

raising **awareness** of prostate cancer in the community.

Core Values

- **Honesty.** We are honest with each other about treatments and outcomes.
- **Integrity.** We do not provide false expectations regarding treatment options and outcomes.
- **Approachability.** We are approachable and provide support to each other when needed.
- **Empathy.** We have all gone through or are going through our own treatment journeys, so we can understand how difficult the journey through treatment and into recovery can be.

Strategic Priorities

As a group, we have identified the following strategic priorities:

- **Improving public awareness** of our group and the need for early intervention.
- **Improving our strategic partnerships** to help provide better support to men and their families who are impacted by prostate cancer.
- **Updating our Constitution** to reflect current legislation and our operations.
- **Updating our membership database** and developing supporting processes to ensure its ongoing accuracy.
- **Improving fundraising and funding** opportunities.

So where to from here?

Our Strategic Plan documents a range of opportunities and activities that we'll be undertaking over the next year so that we can implement our strategic priorities listed above.

You can access a copy of the Plan [here](#).

Current Activities

Membership database update. Our membership database audit is just about done and all of you should have received emails by now to help us validate your details. Some of you may have also taken phone calls as we try to track everyone down

- If you have received an email titled '**PCSG-ACT Membership Audit**' and not responded, **could you please respond to the original email, even if the information is correct?**
- If not, please email Dave Newman at secretary@prostate-cancer-support-act.net so that we can validate your contact and other information.

A key outcome of our membership audit is the identification of membership records that appear to be no longer active and that may, under the proposed constitution update, be tagged Inactive. **This is why your response to our membership audit is so important** - we don't want to risk inadvertently reducing our support to you because we can't get in contact with you.

So what have we found so far? Well, we have built up 433 (pew!) individual records.

- We have validated just over 230 of these so are still trying to track down about 200.
- Of the 433 records, we are currently showing 289 Full members (ie. the default), 58 Support Network members (eg. from PCFA and our peer support groups), 32 Inactive members, with 8 showing as Deceased and 42 having resigned. We expect that some of the 289 Full members may end up being dispositioned into some of the other categories.

Constitution update. The draft update to our Constitution ([you can also download it here](#)) was sent out on the 31st of January for your review by **Sunday, 14 Mar 21**. The review period is now closed, so we will be tabling the draft and vote for/against it by Special Resolution at our Special General Meeting on **Wednesday, 17 Mar 21**, on the same night as our monthly meeting.

STARGATE - It's not TV science fiction after all!

The [STARGATE Project](#) aims to improve prostate cancer awareness by providing nationwide information on the burden of disease at a regional level.

You will be able to search by postcode or area name for factsheets of specific

Australian regions and share these with your friends, family, and workmates to help improve community understanding and save lives. The data includes diagnoses, deaths, and prostate cancer stage at diagnosis, which is unlocking information with the community that has not previously been shared in this way.

Greg McRoberts and three other members of our group recently attended soft-launch of the Stargate project at Parliament House with Jim Lloyd from PCFA, with the launch receiving bipartisan support from Warren Entsch MP, Jason Clare MP and other MPs.

Greg will also attend the project's formal hard-launch later this month and will report back to us.



Cancer Survivors and Successful Return to Work – The Role of Job- and Organisational-Level Resources

Prof Victoria White and her team at Deakin University have recently run a fascinating study under the **Pathfinder** program, which looked at the following key questions:

- How can workplaces best help their employees with cancer return to work after treatment?
- What are the key factors that help or hinder this process?

Background. The study noted improvements in the early detection and treatment of cancer over the past 30 years have seen the number of cancer survivors increase, with many being of working age. Despite returning to work being a priority for working age survivors, many continue to experience significant barriers when seeking to return to their work.

Aims. The study examined the role of **job-level factors** (e.g. return-to-work planning, supervisor support, colleague support, and workplace accommodations), and **organisational-level factors** (e.g. supportive senior leadership, psychological safety climate, human resources practices and policies) on returning to work after a cancer diagnosis. The study looked at whether these factors influenced several indicators of 'successful return-to-work'; ie. job satisfaction, engagement and intentions to leave work.

Findings. Workplace factors influencing whether people return to work included:

- **greater levels of planning and communication** prior to return to work,
- **senior leaders who were seen as supportive and encouraging** of people to return to work, and
- **a workplace that was seen as promoting wellbeing** in their employees.

The study found that **employees who were provided with higher levels of control and autonomy in their work were more likely to be satisfied with their job, to feel more engaged, and were less likely to be thinking about leaving the organisation.**

Supportive senior leadership was also important in reducing thoughts about leaving the organisation and job satisfaction.

The study also found that once the influence of supportive senior leadership and return-to-work planning and communication had been considered, **greater involvement of Human Resources (HR) in things like discussing sick leave availability and leave arrangements with people were associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and engagement.**

This may suggest that if communication between HR and people returning to work is seen as '*checking up on*' rather than helpful conversations, HR practices can negatively influence the return-to-work process.

Conclusions. The study's findings suggest **the importance of planning** in the return-to-work process, including consideration of how the workplace can accommodate the needs of survivors before and after their return-to-work, particularly by providing employees with greater levels of autonomy. Findings also suggest the important role that senior leaders have in setting an environment that encourages and supports people returning to work. The study also found that HR communications and practices can reduce people's engagement and satisfaction in their work after they return to work requires further investigation but may mean that different strategies are needed to assist people to return to work.



PCFA Online Community

PCFA runs Australia's largest online group dedicated to connecting Australian men and families who have been impacted by prostate cancer. By joining the conversation in their Community Forum, you can learn more about medical and other scientific breakthroughs. You can access the Community [here](#).

PCFA's Research Strategy.

The goal of PCFA's research funding is to create and promote the uptake of knowledge that will improve the lives of Australian men with prostate cancer, their partners and their families. The associated research strategy for 2019-2022 is documented [here](#).

PCFA has awarded three [Priority Impact Research Awards in 2019](#), two in priority research area 1 and one in priority research area 5.

- *"Using new epigenetic information to better predict which men are most likely to develop aggressive prostate cancer"* (Prof Melissa Southey, Monash University, VIC - Priority Research Area 1)
- *"Finding new genetic risk factors for prostate cancer"* (A/Prof Renea Taylor, Monash University, VIC - Priority Research Area 1)
- *"Multimodal pre-habilitation in couples affected by prostate cancer"* (A/Prof Catherine Paterson, University of Canberra, ACT - Priority Research Area 5)
 - Catherine recently spoke about her study at our February monthly meeting.

[Download your Jan 21 Blue Sky News here](#)



Cancer Council 13 11 20

Cancer Council 13 11 20 is a free, confidential telephone information and support service.

Their specially trained staff can answer your questions about all aspects of cancer, including prevention, early detection and treatment. They can also assist with practical and emotional support as well as referring you to appropriate services in the area.

They are open Monday to Friday, from 9am – 5pm. Outside these hours, you can leave a message and they will call you back.

Podcasts 'Self-care for Carers'

If you're caring for someone with advanced cancer in their last months, everyone will tell you that you need to take care of yourself, too – but how exactly do you do that?

To find out, Julie McCrossin chats with Liz Lobb, Professor of Palliative Care at Calvary Health Care Kogarah, who talks about why self-care is so important, some of the demands a typical carer may be juggling, how the carer can find the time to look after themselves, and much more.

More information can be found [here](#).

Publication: Cancer, Work and You

How cancer affects your work and finances will depend on your individual situation. This booklet talks about how cancer can affect your ability to work, tips about working during treatment, things to consider when returning to work, information for working carers, and an overview of your rights and entitlements. [Download the publication here](#)

Appreciation

Thank you to PCFA, the ACT Government, SHOUT, Paddywack Promotional Products, Harness Racing ACT, and everyone who has assisted in our fund-raising and other activities.

Social Media

Facebook has a range of Open and Private groups that may be of interest to you:

- [Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia](#) (Open)
- [Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia Support Groups](#) (Private)
- [Prostate Cancer Support Australia](#) (Private)

Borrowing items from the Library

You can borrow items from the Group's library, which has a wide range of books and videos. Those who are interested in borrowing items or have suggestions for additions to our library can contact U.N. Bhati by email: librarian@prostate-cancer-support-act.net

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:

President: Greg McRoberts

Phone: 0413 480 864

Email: president@prostate-cancer-support-act.net

Secretary: David Newman

Phone: 0412 812 875

Email: secretary@prostate-cancer-support-act.net

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 an email to: secretary@prostate-cancer-support-act.net.

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.