



# Heartbeat Happenings

Autumn 2023

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

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## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Linda Macaulay

Secretary: Barry Nixon

Treasurer: Karen Saccuzzo

Assistant Treasurer: Tamieka Snowden

Board Members: Mark Braybrook; Robyn Fennell; Gail Newton; Christine Rees; Kevin Reid

**VISION:** To be an excellent and well recognised peer support organisation which assists in improving the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of people living with heart disease or a heart condition.

**MISSION:** To advise and promote associated support groups in conducting peer support activities for people living with heart disease, to ensure they have a better understanding of the impact of their heart disease or condition; how they might seek ongoing services and support in their local area; and how to raise funds to improve cardiac services.

## A Message from the President



Greetings to all Victorian Heartbeat Members.

I hope that this message finds you well. I also hope that none of our members are still being impacted by the recent floods. If you were amongst the many who have lost their homes, livestock, or livelihoods, then our

thoughts are truly with you. We can only wish that this coming year presents us with no further challenges!

As many Heartbeat members on fixed incomes are all too aware, cost of living pressures are now causing a significant amount of distress and hardship in our communities.

A few things spring to mind as I am writing this:

1. How lucky we are to live in a safe and free society such as ours in Australia. I felt so deeply saddened, when I saw yet more footage of the war in Ukraine. One wonders what else can be taken from these people. Many have no power, heating or homes. And yet, they remain determined to stay in their homeland, they cry, but they cry together, and they are making do the best they can.
2. How good it is to be able to go out and spend time with friends and family after all of the lockdowns, restrictions and fears for our safety during COVID. Many of our Heartbeat members hail from regional areas. Hence, we were the fortunate ones who did not experience the most severe of the rules that changed the way that we lived. Some things will never be the same again. Simple things that we had done all of our lives, like greeting each other with a handshake.
3. The role that peer support played in helping us stay both mentally and physically well. Even during the depths of the pandemic, our Heartbeat teams have kept their sense of humour, and kept in touch with each other.

Oh, and one last thing....your new website is on its way in 2023!!!!

**Linda Macaulay**



Following the departure, in late 2022, of the Board Secretary to take up a teaching appointment in the remote Northern Territory, as announced in the Summer 2022 edition of Heartbeat Happenings, Barry Nixon (previous President) has taken up the role of Secretary and Linda Macaulay (previous Assistant Treasurer) the role of President.

In addition, the Board is excited to welcome two new members, Tamiaka Snowden (Assistant Treasurer) and Christine Rees (Board Member) who will bring yet more skills, professional and life experience to the Board. We are all looking forward to working with them.

### **Tamiaka Snowden**

Tamiaka is currently employed as a Cardiopulmonary Nurse at Grampians Health Ballarat and as a Cardiac Health Nurse at Ballarat Community Health. She sees patients in the outpatient and community setting, helping in the recovery process after a heart procedure or diagnosis of a heart condition. She also helps to provide preventative care to those at high risk of cardiovascular disease to help them lower the chances of having a cardiovascular problem in the future.



Tamiaka has experience in different aspects of nursing including cardiovascular, neurology, stroke and medical care. She is also currently studying at the University of Tasmania completing her Graduate Diploma of Cardiovascular Nursing and working towards completing her Masters of Cardiovascular Nursing. Tamiaka is currently a member of Heartbeat Victoria- Ballarat Branch and a subcommittee member of the Australian Cardiac Rehabilitation Association (ACRA).

### **Christine Rees**

I am a mum of 4, granny to 10 under 8 years old and have 2 fur babies. Family is a large part of my life but the bush, my 4x4 and cameras round out my retirement.



My work life has been dominated by health, as a nurse and health educator at all levels of the education system. I am now enjoying a consumer role with Safer Care Victoria.

I have been living with heart failure for 17 years and have come to see it as a challenge but not a sentence.

I see peer support as a beneficial add on to the health care of those challenged with a cardiac issue and their careers and families, and look forward to working with Heartbeat Victoria to achieve the best lives possible for all of us.



## Five Myths About Living with Heart Failure

[Source: Jyoti Sharma MD, [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com), March 2017]

Heart failure is a chronic condition in which the heart fails to pump enough blood through the body, causing significant stress to other organs. Let's talk about a few heart failure myths.

**Myth 1:** Chest pain is the first symptom of heart failure. Swelling in your legs, fatigue, increased heart rate, and shortness of breath are earlier warning signs that your heart may not be functioning properly. It's important to talk to your doctor about your risk for heart failure.

**Myth 2:** Taking medication means you don't have to work against other risk factors. Living with heart failure requires a multifaceted approach. Medication is not enough to prevent the disease from progressing. Making lifestyle changes like eating a heart healthy diet, exercising, and quitting smoking gives your heart the best chance.

**Myth 3:** If you have heart failure, exercise can be dangerous. Exercise is one of the best ways to help your heart function properly and keep your body healthy while living with heart failure. Getting referred to a cardiac rehabilitation program, will teach you how to work out safely and build confidence to continue exercising.

**Myth 4:** It's too late to quit smoking and make other changes after a heart failure diagnosis. Don't assume a diagnosis of heart failure is a death sentence. You can't completely undo the damage that was done to your heart while smoking, you can certainly prevent more damage from occurring.

**Myth 5 :** Heart failure is more serious for men than women. Women tend to have worse outcomes than men for all forms of cardiovascular disease, including heart failure. Women have gender specific symptoms for heart disease and heart failure.

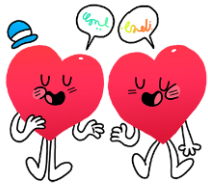
## Priority Primary Care Health Centres



The State Government has recently announced the opening of ten Priority Primary Care Centres (PPCCs), with 15 more on the way – to provide a free alternative to visiting a busy emergency department (ED) or when your local doctor is unavailable. Those already open include several in the Melbourne metropolitan area, as well as Ballarat (supporting Grampians Health), Albury Wodonga Health –Wodonga; Goulburn Valley Health – Shepparton; Latrobe Regional Hospital; University Hospital Geelong; and West Gippsland Healthcare Group. Work is also underway to finalise the locations and timing of more centres in Bendigo and Mildura.

The Priority Primary Care Centres have been established to reduce wait times in hospital emergency departments, as well as to provide an alternative local health service for patients who might not be able to see their regular GP.

The Centres accept bookings and walk-ins, with doctors and nurses on site to treat a range of conditions like mild infections, fractures and burns, in addition to diagnostic services including pathology and medical imaging. Many of the clinics are operating seven days a week and up to 16 hours a day.



## Heart to Heart

featuring one member's heart health and Heartbeat experience

### Maire Cartwright – Long term member of Heartbeat Bendigo

(Marie, aged 88, has recently retired from the Social Committee of Heartbeat Bendigo but continues to be an active member of Heartbeat Bendigo)



Marie reflects that .....

*A public meeting was held at Bendigo Hospital on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1986 to consider the formation of a Heartbeat branch – 32 folk attended and Heartbeat Bendigo was formed on that day.*

*I attended to support my husband who had undergone two successful open heart surgeries by that date and so began my life as a Heartbeat member.*

*After a couple of years, a Social Committee was formed and I found myself involved with organising and bringing to fruition all kinds of outings and adventures – 5 day holidays – Musicals in Melbourne – Fashion Parades etc. The icing on the cake was a cruise to Tasmania which was “fun” to organise and got the thumbs up from all who went, except me who couldn't go because of illness!*

*We endeavoured to bring back confidence and enjoyment to members who had lost the zest for life after a cardiac issue.*

*Membership grew to 450 families and by this time my husband, Arthur, was President and we worked closely with other committee members to ensure that things travelled along smoothly.*

*We looked on Heartbeat as our second family and have gained some cherished friendships over the years.*

*We were pleasantly surprised in April 2006 when we were invited out for lunch with a couple of close friends, only to discover 100 Heartbeat members gathered for lunch to help us celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.*

*Sadly my husband passed away in 2012 but my life with Heartbeat continues on.*

### Marie Cartwright, Heartbeat Bendigo



*'Angelic' Marie Cartwright amongst the street art in Tongala*

# What's Happening

## What's been happening at some of our branches and affiliates lately?

### Bendigo



Members shared a delicious Christmas Luncheon at the Bendigo Pottery with extended time to socialise and share in lots of great raffle prizes.

Bendigo Heartbeat was also fortunate to gain \$2,500 as its share in the latest Rotary Club Trailer Raffle for which members assisted with ticket sales.

Planning is progressing for a high tea to be held on Saturday May 6, to celebrate King Charles' coronation.

Bendigo Heartbeat has been included as one of the two organisations nominated by CommBank's Strath Village Branch to receive a funding boost from CommBank.

The funding is based on votes, so it would be great if other Heartbeat members could vote for us – it's easy.

Follow the link below and enter Strath Village to access your local voting options and vote for us! Voting closes on March 31.

Visit [www.commbank.com.au/communitydonations](http://www.commbank.com.au/communitydonations)



### Goulburn Valley

It was great to see 37 members present at the Heartbeat Goulburn Valley Branch Christmas function in December, all enjoying the meal and time to socialise together.

Member Dawn Macdonald has a hidden talent which we all now have seen; in that she is quite a successful watercolour artist. Dawn donated an Australian landscape scene she had painted to raffle among members on the night. The grateful winner was Mark Rovers, with \$120.00 raised from Dawn's generous donation – BIG THANKYOU, DAWN.

At the function, we also said goodbye to our young member Lisa Garcia. Lisa spoke about her difficult journey with her heart health following surgery and the benefits that Heartbeat GV had provided for her. Lisa has successfully started a new nursing career, having now completed her Bachelor of Nursing and she will be moving to Darwin to complete her Graduate year at Darwin Hospital. President Lance presented Lisa with a gift and best wishes for her future from all members.

February 6th was our first meeting for 2023, with 27 members attending. All were pleased to be back, sharing experiences and socialising. Deanne Brown gave a very informative presentation including photos of their recent "Western Australian Adventure" a great caravan trip to some beautiful destinations in our wonderful country and included seeing family for the first time in three years.



*Lisa (middle) with two of our long serving members Astrid and Arnold Gough*

We distributed our calendar of activities for 2023 and we are looking forward to seeing new faces joining our coffee mornings, walks and luncheons. It is also very exciting to be able to volunteer again at Goulburn Valley Hospital and to attend events in our broader community. We are so pleased to be able to now spread the word again about the positive benefits of peer support for people with heart conditions or those who have had heart surgery.

## Sunraysia

The last three months we have been fairly quiet due to the festive season. December saw us having our Annual Christmas Dinner at the Irymple Hotel where we had 11 attend, which included a new prospective member and our Auditor, Gary and his lovely wife Helen.

Due to many of us either being away or having visitors over the holiday period we do not have any meetings or events during January. However February saw us starting our monthly coffee mornings again which was held at Cawoods Bakery in Mildura. These will now be held on the first Wednesday of the month.

## Ballarat



*Grampians Health board chair Bill Brown, Bernadette O'Loughlin, Barry Nixon, Patricia Fiskien, Merrilyn Hastings and Grampians Health CEO Dale Fraser*

Barry Nixon (Secretary of Ballarat Heartbeat and Heartbeat Victoria) was one of several Grampians Health volunteers and donors who were celebrated by the health service's board in December, receiving inaugural Life Governor Awards.

Barry was among several acknowledged for their long-term commitment to the health of the local community and outstanding commitment, dedication, and support to Grampians Health. He has volunteered for the health service in various areas for more than 12 years and was Ballarat Health Service Volunteer of the Year in 2019.

Heartbeat Ballarat has donated over 50 (!! ) sets of scales to heart failure patients. Heart Failure Clinic Nurse Practitioner Linda gratefully received the scales from the Secretary of Heartbeat Ballarat, Barry Nixon, and member Julie Jules.

Members of Heartbeat Ballarat, including Barry Nixon, Anne Gow and Linda Macaulay, have also been involved with the Ballarat Highland Bowls Region with a bowls tournament held specifically to support local cardiology services. Over the 34- year history of the tournament it has raised approximately \$110,000 for cardiac care at both Grampians Health Ballarat and St John of God Hospital.



**Please send us your latest news for inclusion in the Winter 2023 edition of Heartbeat Happenings which will be published in June (please send to [Vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au](mailto:Vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au) by no later than Friday April 21, 2023.**