



# Heartbeat Victoria

## Heartbeat Happenings

### Summer 2024-25

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

ABN 76 073 229 523

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#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Christine Rees

Vice President: Barry Nixon

Secretary: Vivien Williamson

Treasurer: Karen Saccuzzo

Board Members: John Allen; Elaine Gregory;

Professor Andrew Murphy; Kevin Reid; Vanaja

Thomas

**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.

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#### A Message from the President

The last few months have been very busy – induction of new Board members, speaking engagements and involvement with our partners.

The Board, boosted by its four new members with a wide range of skills and knowledge, is now working to prepare a new strategic plan for the future.

The Strategic Plan will set the direction and priorities for Heartbeat Victoria and will take into account the feedback received from members last year in relation to the issues faced by branches and affiliates and what they needed and wanted from the Board.

The Board is always happy to hear from members of our branches and affiliates, and also from the community. It is best to contact the Board via [hello@heartbeatvictoria.org.au](mailto:hello@heartbeatvictoria.org.au)

This quarter, I visited Heartbeat Sunraysia and I thank them for what they provide to the northwest corner of Victoria. The isolation factor and the distance to help are very evident and provide further challenges to those with cardiac conditions. Most of the cardiac community from Mildura and surrounds comes to Melbourne or Adelaide for treatment and rehabilitation sessions can be some distance away from home. Next year Sunraysia celebrates its 40th birthday - a great effort.

With winter now behind us and Christmas approaching, please be mindful of your health needs while enjoying the party. I would also like to challenge you all to promote the Heart Health Check for those over 30 first nations people, 35 for diabetics and 45 for everyone else. Let's encourage family and friends to get their hearts checked and stay well.

**Christine Rees**



## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc was held via Zoom on September 11, 2024, and included the election of Board members.

The guest speaker was Dr Georgia Chaseling, cardiovascular physiologist at the University of Sydney. Dr Chaseling gave an informative and thought provoking presentation on research relating to heat and heart health. In her presentation, a copy of which is included in the Resources section of our website, Georgia talked about the impact of hot weather and heatwaves and the populations at most risk, as well as the effect of heat exposure on myocardial flow and cardiovascular function. Georgia's presentation also included sustainable and accessible ways to keep cool. Her presentation is available to view on our website.

## Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc – Board of Management 2024

At the Annual General Meeting, three Board members retired and four new members were elected, with some existing Board members elected to different positions, as follows:

<b>President</b>	Christine Rees (previously Vice-President)	christine@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
<b>Vice President</b>	Barry Nixon (previously Secretary)	barry@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
<b>Secretary</b>	Vivien Williamson (new Board member)	vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
<b>Treasurer</b>	Karen Saccuzzo	karen@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
<b>Board members</b>	John Allen (new Board member)	john@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
	Elaine Gregory (new Board member)	elaine@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
	Professor Andrew Murphy	andrew@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
	Kevin Reid	kevin@heartbeatvictoria.org.au
	Vanaja Thomas (new Board member)	vanaja@heartbeatvictoria.org.au

Further information regarding the Board and its members will be provided in the Autumn 2025 edition of Heartbeat Happenings.

## Thank you to Retiring Board Members

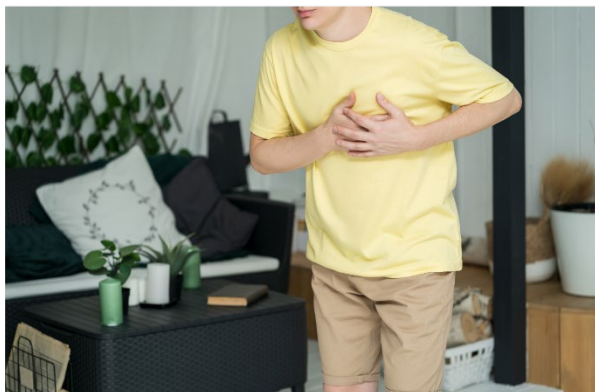
The following three previous Board members did not stand for election at the AGM and the newly elected President, Christine Rees thanked them for their hard work and energy on behalf of Heartbeat Victoria.

- Robyn Fennell - Board member 2022-2024 and a previous Secretary and President of the Board – Robyn has over thirty five years involvement with Heartbeat and continues to be an active member of Goulburn Valley Heartbeat
- Gail Newton - Board member 2022-2024 – Gail continues to be an active member of Heartbeat Sunraysia
- Tamieka Snowden - Board member 2023-2024.

## Heart Health



### Life After a Heart Attack: the untold story



A heart attack is a shocking event that can have a major impact on a person's life.

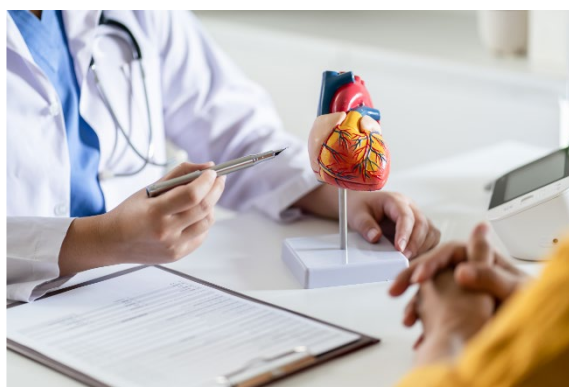
Also known as a 'myocardial infarction', it occurs when blood flow to part of the heart is blocked, often by a blood clot. This blockage prevents oxygen from reaching the heart muscle, causing damage or death to the tissue.

Every year, over 54,000 Australians experience a heart attack. Thanks to advances in medicine, many people will survive their first heart attack, though long-term survival often comes with serious health challenges.

Around 50% of heart attack survivors develop chronic conditions such as heart failure, arrhythmias, or angina, which affect quality of life and require ongoing medical care. About 20% of survivors who have had a heart attack will experience a second one within a year.

This high recurrence rate emphasises the critical importance of post-heart attack care, which includes lifestyle and diet changes, education, exercise, medication adherence, and regular medical follow-ups.

Yet despite vast improvements in these areas over time, post-heart attack care is still failing many survivors – only one in four Australians receive optimal care after a heart attack. To save lives and protect the quality of life of thousands of Australians, we urgently need to develop new and improved methods for managing this life-threatening disease.



Thanks to people like you, the Baker Institute is at the forefront of research and innovation in cardiac rehabilitation to significantly improve patient outcomes. Together, we are helping uncover the answers that will enable survivors to lead full and healthy lives. And we are working towards a brighter future where no person has to live with the debilitating impact of heart attack.



The above article has been provided by our partner – Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute which, in addition to carrying out medical research focused on the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diabetes and heart disease, publishes a wide range of informative research-based materials that support heart health, including a

Healthy Heart Diet Fact Sheet - <https://www.baker.edu.au/-/media/documents/fact-sheets/baker-institute-factsheet-eating-for-a-healthy-heart.pdf>





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

**Ballarat**



Heartbeat Ballarat and Heartbeat Ballarat Walking Groups were excited to be participants in this year's Ballarat City Council, 'Get Connected!' Ballarat Seniors Expo held in October at the Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre. It was a showcase of the wide range of community, social and special interest groups across Ballarat. It was a fun-filled day, with entertainment and refreshments provided.

Ballarat City Council and its Aging Well Team are solid supporters of and constant promoters of Heartbeat Ballarat and our Heartbeat Walking Groups. Team Leader Tammy has spoken at a Heartbeat Eat and Greet members lunch, Vivian and Lee have also visited with and walked with



Heartbeat's indoor Tuesday walkers. They are genuinely interested in our 55+ community, and walked our feet off, chatted to a wide section of participants, explained available opportunities and counselled members in services available. Heartbeat Ballarat has benefitted from participation in the Aged Expo. Fifty try out walkers during October and ten new paid members.



Ross Wiggins Heartbeat Ballarat's fearless walk leader has walked multiple times weekly for 6+ years. Despite covid, lockdowns, and his own health challenges, Ross has continued to step it out for heart health. Congratulations Ross on completing 700 walks.

The First Annual Kevin Tolhurst Memorial Walk, on October 5th inspired many to remember Kevin and walk for heart health.

Former colleges of Kevin's joined regular Saturday walkers and Heartbeat Ballarat President Bernie Brisbane, and many Heartbeat Committee members on the five-kilometre walk.



A former associate of Kevin's, who lives with cardiac health challenges, told walk organiser Barry that Kevin was always encouraging him to walk on Saturdays with Heartbeat. Kevin was a true believer in cardiac rehabilitation and a wonderful advocate for cardiac peer support.

Susan, a new member of Heartbeat Ballarat and who hadn't previously joined the Saturday walk, wrote: *"I would like to say thank-you so much for organising the Memorial walk for today, it gave me incentive to go on that walk, I went in there thinking I'm going to do this 5km walk and I achieved what I set out to do. It has done a lot to help me to achieve a goal, and, I feel so good for it. I appreciate the small things in life. I thank you so much, you are so motivated and caring."*

## Sunraysia

Our monthly Cuppa Catch ups and meetings have continued during the year and provide a great opportunity to socialise. In September we held our monthly meeting at the Werrimull Hotel. We have also been fortunate to have received funds raised at the Wentworth Show from Mallee Sunset Ute Club Inc – thank you so much to them.

Next year will be the 40th year of Heartbeat Sunraysia and planning has started for how we will celebrate this significant event. At this stage plans are underway for a fashion parade and a raffle – more news next time.

## Goulburn Valley

Goulburn Valley Branch members changed their meeting date in September so they could meet on the night of the Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc. AGM. Thirteen members had dinner together in the Peppermill Inn Hotel and afterwards joined the AGM and guest presenter by Zoom on a large screen in the room. This enabled more members to be present for the AGM and see all Board members.



Our branch continues to fundraise for cardiac equipment for health services in Goulburn Valley area. Our second Bunnings BBQ for the year held in September was a very successful event with \$1832.00 raised on the day, thanks to the good work of our team of volunteers. The can collecting project continues to add to our fundraising efforts and we are extremely grateful to members who also donate to our Branch additional to their membership.

Fifteen members attended our September luncheon and social get together at Gargarro Botanical Gardens Café, at Girgarre, following a good walk and look around the gardens and volunteer operated plant sales area.

Another successful luncheon was held in October at the



Shamrock Hotel in Numurkah, where fifteen members attended and met up again with Brian Heard, a long standing member now in his nineties, who for over twenty years used to bring members from Numurkah to our branch meetings. Brian thanked us all for coming and was very pleased to see us all again.

Our October dinner meeting included the Heartbeat Goulburn Valley AGM. Congratulations to Max Hyland who is continuing as our president. The position of Treasurer remains vacant and support is being sought for the Secretary. The Branch acknowledges it must raise the value and importance of the benefits of cardiac peer support to individuals in our community, to attract new members. We are currently looking at ways to improve what we offer and be innovative in how we can achieve positive outcomes for people with heart conditions in our community.

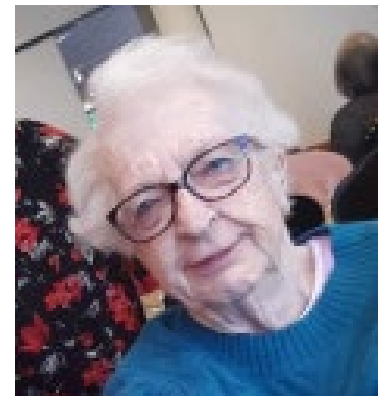
Our year will conclude with a special dinner and social get together later in November and a coffee morning get-together in December.

Special thank you to Heartbeat Victoria Board of Management, Board Members for their ongoing leadership, advocacy and strategic direction of Affiliates and Branches, for their governance and overseeing of the organisation's operations, especially working toward our charitable purpose and Heartbeat Victoria objectives.

Looking forward to a new direction and growth and of Heartbeat Victoria in 2025 and we wish everyone good health, happiness and safe and relaxing holidays.

### **Bendigo**

Bendigo Heartbeat acknowledged the sad passing of our much loved and respected member Edna Callaway in September, aged 87 years. Edna's involvement in Heartbeat goes back approximately 25 years. During that time, she was involved in many activities, was Treasurer of the Social Committee and along with her other Social Committee members, organized trips, raffles and outings. Rest in peace Edna.



Our Kay's Fashions event in October was very well attended with an overall profit of approximately \$1150. Thank you to all who assisted in making the day such a success.

At its Annual General Meeting in September the following members were elected to the Committee:

Frank Ward (President); Vivien Williamson (Secretary); Nola Ward (Treasurer) and General and Social Committee members Rhonda Anthony, Ian Cross, Ted De Kuyper, Di Krieger, Peter McLennan and Laurie Smith.

At the AGM, Barbara Dellar also stepped down as Vice-President and was thanked for her many years of the service to the Committee, including as President.

**Best wishes for  
Christmas & the New Year**

**from**

**the Board of Heartbeat Victoria**



Please send us your latest news for inclusion in the Autume 2025 edition of Heartbeat Happenings which will be published in February 2025 (send to [vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au](mailto:vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au) by Friday February 7, 2025.