



Prostate Cancer
Foundation
of Australia

PROSTATE SUPPORTER

The newsletter of the Prostate Cancer Support
and Action Groups of South Australia

June 2008

<http://www.prostate.org.au>

Valuable new DVD launched

An important new information resource
for sufferers of prostate cancer has been
made available, thanks to many helpers.

THE Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia has released a vital new resource for all men and their families who encounter this dangerous disease – a DVD.

Funded by PCFA and Astra Zeneca, and produced by Westymedia and Rock Media Video Productions, the two-disc DVD set is available for \$15 (including postage) from the PCFA by calling 1800 22 00 99, or go to the foundation website www.prostate.org.au

All PCFA support groups will be supplied with a copy of the DVD set for their lending libraries in early June.

Some of Australia's leading medical practitioners and many prostate cancer survivors are featured, providing a rich supply of current information from people with relevant experience and a passion to assist men and families in an easy to use format.

All speakers volunteered their services to produce this new resource, presented in plain language for easy understanding in the hope of

assisting in sound decision making about treatment and to help men to manage their own health.

Andrew Giles, chief executive officer of the PCFA, offers specific thanks to all the following contributors who gave freely of their knowledge and experience:

Professor Pamela Russell, Dr Rosie King, Dr Michael IZard, Dr Warick Delprado, Dr Gavin Marx, Dr Con Poulos, Dr David Ludowici, Dr Phillip Katelaris, Stephen Carroll, Taryn Katz, Assoc Professor Phillip Stricker, Professor Tony Costello, Dr Peter Royce, Dr Peter Sutherland, Roger Climpson, John and Elizabeth Allen, Alan and Judith Grace, Margaret Adams, Nerolie Gate, Leisa O'Connor, John Goodall, Tony Sonneveld, Robert and Trish Ellis, Mark Tweeddale, Wayne Doney, Andrea Möhler, Brian Allan, John Yee, John Dick, Jeff Goss, Jeffrey Mortimer, Gerry Anthony, Graham and Adele Staggs, Bill McEnally, and David and Pam Sandoe.

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

A guide for men and their partners
living with Prostate Cancer

Your son Your father

Your friend Your brother

So, I have Prostate Cancer, what now?

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia AstraZeneca DVD



Clipping reproduced
thanks to Messenger
Newspapers.

in brief...

PUBLICITY for prostate cancer support groups in South Australia received a significant boost through the recent placement of advertisements in Messenger Newspapers, organised by FosterHill Public Relations as part of a campaign praising volunteer organisations.

CONTRIBUTIONS to these newsletters from all Support Groups and members are welcomed; send items and images by email to prostate-news@fosterhill.com.au

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99
or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

**COMING
EVENTS****ACTION GROUP
JULY MEETING**

The next Prostate Cancer Action Group meeting will be held in the upstairs meeting room, Cancer Council SA building, 202 Greenhill Road, Eastwood, at 5.30pm on July 8. Enter via the back stairs. New members are most welcome.

JUNE – International Men’s Health Week is being staged from Monday June 9 to Monday June 16.

NOVEMBER – The inaugural Australian Prostate Cancer Conference (and Men’s Health Forum) will be conducted from Saturday November 15 to Monday November 17. The conference will be held on the Gold Coast (location to be advised).

Also, get ready to grow a Mo in November to help raise funds for prostate cancer research.

• For more information about the Action Group, visit the South Australian Prostate Cancer Action Group’s dedicated website, with detailed archives containing its newsletters, at <http://www.pcagsa.org.au>

Lobbying quest calls for funding equality

The Action Group’s call for national lobbying action has prompted some vigorous responses, as Dean Wall reports.

IN the May issue of this newsletter, I raised the possibility of a political lobbying campaign on issues of concern to survivors of prostate cancer. I followed this introduction by canvassing most of the prostate cancer support groups throughout Australia via e-mail, asking for subjects which members felt were worthy of being highlighted through such a campaign.

A member from Perth responded, suggesting a campaign for the inclusion of costs associated with penile prosthetics for restoration of sexual functionality after surgery, where nerve sacrifice has been necessary.

In his letter to the WA Health Minister, Jim McGinty, the member explained that he had a nasty prostate cancer removed over four years ago, followed by radiation and hormone therapy. His urologist had given the 58-year-old only 18 months to live; now he is cured with no trace of the cancer (PSA reading of <0.03). However, despite his good health he suffers from erectile dysfunction.

He wrote: “I have tried all the alternate treatments for erectile dysfunction with no success. Viagra, Cialis or Levitra tablets do not work. The vacuum pump is cumbersome and time consuming and consequently ineffective. Injections failed to give satisfaction and a larger

MORE AWARENESS EVENINGS BEING PLANNED
THE Prostate Cancer Action Group has been planning information awareness evenings for Murray Bridge in October, where the keynote speaker will be urologist Dr Adrian Porter. Another session is also being planned for the South Eastern region – watch this space for more details.

dose ended up with me being in hospital for two days with a compression pad applied every five minutes.

“As a married man with wife of similar age, the functionality of my sex organ is important and vital to both our welfare and wellbeing. We have both been depressed, argumentative and frustrated. This is placing an enormous strain on our relationship.

“The simple answer is to implant a penile prosthesis, but surgery costs between \$16,000 and \$20,000, and is not covered by Medicare. Women who have had breast cancer and a mastectomy can get implants under Medicare for cosmetic purposes – not even functionality.

“I believe the function of the organ is critical for my sense and identity as a man, and critical for the ongoing health and vitality of my marriage.”

His plea was to make the penile prosthesis available under Medicare – or to at least place the operation, surgery, theatre and medical costs under Medicare and allow the

patient to cover the cost of the implant.

The Minister replied that Medicare works through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, and is independent of State responsibility.

However, the chief medical officer within the State Health Department does have some discretionary powers to approve payment for a medical procedure not currently refundable by Medicare.

To assist the CMO to make an informed decision, medical records from the treating urologist need to be supplied, with a request for special consideration.

I would like to know whether this issue is of major concern among other survivors, and ask that support groups discuss this matter to ascertain whether it is worthy of activism at a Federal level.

Any campaign would need to be backed by statistics and data gathered from support groups. Perhaps this is a possible case of sexual discrimination. What do YOU think?

COMING EVENTS FOR 2008

The Adelaide Group meets on the third Monday of each month, in the Park View Room of the Fullarton Park Centre, 411 Fullarton Rd, Fullarton.

Monday June 16

Guest Frances Combe, President of the SA Voluntary Euthanasia Society, will speak about medical wills, health wishes, voluntary euthanasia as an option of last resort, and the prospect of this being enacted in SA with defined safeguards.

Monday July 21

General discussion evening concerning prostate cancer.

Monday August 18

Guest speaker will be urologist Mr Denby Steele, who will give a lecture on Brachytherapy and the latest developments in this field.

Monday September 15

Guest speaker will be Wendy Tuckwell, a medical physicist at the Dept of Medical Physics, Royal Adelaide Hospital, will complement Mr Denby Steele's speech regarding Brachytherapy by discussing the role/function of the medical physicist and also the different disease areas that can be treated with brachytherapy.

The delicate task of relieving the suffering through palliative care

Understanding the extent of palliative care options proved interesting to Adelaide's support group, as Phil Davis reports.

THERE is no easy way to sugar coat serious illness and end-of-life issues. The reality of our mortality can be quite unsettling, not only for someone living with a terminal illness but also their family and friends. In such times, palliative care becomes a very important means of providing necessary help.

Dr Mary Brooksbank, director of the Palliative Care Unit at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, provided a valuable insight into palliative care in South Australia during the Adelaide support group's May meeting.

Her presentation started with a brief historical outline of palliative care, leading to the current hospice and palliative care services available at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, larger metropolitan and country hospitals.

Dr Brooksbank defined palliative care as an approach that improves quality of life for patients and families facing problems associated with life threatening illness.

The care program aims to prevent suffering through early identification, assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychological and spiritual symptoms.

Palliative care is provided according to choice, needs and

availability by a palliative care team comprising:

- **Palliative Care Professionals:** specialist nurses, doctors, social workers, counsellors, pastoral care and volunteers.

- **Other Clinicians:** GPs, surgeons, oncologist, district nurses and other community organizations.

- **Supporters:** Family, friends colleagues and other government agencies.

Dr Brooksbank explained that palliative care can be provided at home, in a residential aged care facility, in an acute care hospital or in a hospice.

Caring at home can demand a huge commitment from a carer, but may be achievable with the support of family, friends, a doctor, district nurse, domiciliary care and other palliative care professionals.

It should be understood that circumstances surrounding types of palliative care often change but the ultimate goal is the care of the patient, and to lighten the load for the main carer.

A photographic presentation depicted the interior of the Mary Potter Hospice, built in 1987 at the eastern end of Calvary Hospital in North Adelaide. The palliative care

rooms, located on the ground floor to allow easy access, are spacious and quiet. Individual rooms each have doors opening to the surrounding garden, offering peace, privacy and serenity. A chapel and lounge areas are available for patients, family and friends.

The main function of the hospice is for patients to address symptom control, or for end-of-life care. She did mention that pain is often a key issue and that pain management is necessary, but the approach is to treat pain earlier as opposed to later.

Dr Brooksbank's great knowledge allows her to perform a necessary but demanding occupation with compassion and care, always considering how best to address the needs of the patient and family. Trained palliative care staff provide a necessary service at a very difficult time for families – though Dr Brooksbank mentioned they are often unpretentious and there is honesty without fear.

- *For more information, visit the Adelaide Group's dedicated website at www.psaadelaide.org or contact group president Phil Davis (phone 8263 2217), or secretary Ian Fisk (phone 8296 3350).*

COMING EVENTS FOR 2008**JUNE 8 BARBECUE:**

The City of Onkaparinga support group will have its mid-year barbecue at the Willunga Lions Saleyard from 11am on Sunday June 8 (Queen's Birthday long weekend). It is a great all-weather venue with toilets. This event will be in lieu of the usual monthly meeting at Noarlunga Hospital. Members of other Prostate Cancer Support groups are welcome to attend, but will need to BYO food and drinks.

JULY MEETING:

Jane Stanley, a guest speaker from the Cancer Council South Australia, will be accompanied by Ms Gill Miller to give a presentation on Breast Cancer. It is an often overlooked fact that men can get Breast Cancer – though this talk will be of interest to ladies within the support group.

• For more information, visit the City of Onkaparinga Support Group's dedicated website at www.pcsog.org

• Special thanks to the City of Onkaparinga Support Group sponsors: Southern Primary Health Woodcroft, Port Noarlunga-Christies Beach RSL Sub Branch, Thaxted Park Golf Club Inc, The Original Open Market, and to all who provide valuable support to our group – especially the City of Onkaparinga Council.

Improving education of wider cancer concerns

Understanding more about different cancers proves beneficial for group members, reports Group President John Shields.

THE support group's May meeting enjoyed an interesting talk by Cynthia Edwards from Cancer Council SA about bowel cancer – a timely reinforcement of information after Graeme Goodings' presentation in April about his own bowel cancer experience.

Cynthia explained that bowel cancer (also known as cancer of the large bowel, colon or rectum, or colorectal cancer) is the most common internal cancer in Australia.

It is the third most common cause of death from cancer in women (after breast and lung cancer) and the second most common cause of death from cancer in men (after lung cancer).

Colorectal activity involves the process of the colon absorbing liquid from digested food, while the rectum stores remaining solid waste (faeces) until they pass out of the body through the anus.

Cynthia explained that cancer develops when our bodies cells multiply excessively and form a lump or mass called a tumour. If this is not treated, the cancer may spread to surrounding tissues – sometimes spreading to other organs, forming a secondary cancer, or metastasis.

Bowel cancer is a malignant tumour that begins in the mucosa, or inner lining of the colon or rectum. It often

develops from a small growth called an adenoma (polyp) which is usually benign, but can become cancerous.

Some early symptoms which may signal bowel cancer could include:

- Changes in normal bowel pattern.
- Bleeding from the bowel.
- Anaemia (lack of iron in the blood) due to bleeding in the bowel.
- Abdominal cramps or pain.
- Bloating, weight loss, general feeling of being unwell.

If you notice any of these changes, see your doctor immediately.

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world.

The disease becomes more common in people as they get older and mainly affects people over 50. If it is diagnosed and treated early, there is a good chance of cure.

The causes of bowel cancer are not fully understood, but are likely to involve several factors: age, diet, behavioural, lifestyle and cultural factors.

Need more information?

Thanks to The Cancer Council South Australia, we have copies of the booklet *Bowel (Colorectal) Cancer*, or phone the helpline on 13 11 20.

INFORMATION DAY

ANOTHER Information Day was staged at Seaford Shopping Centre, arranged by the group's patron – Councillor Artie Ferguson. It proved very successful, with many people stopping to talk with volunteers and take information away with them. A big thank you to all who helped out on the day.

The support group's next Information Day will be at Normanville Shopping Centre, which has been arranged by Bill Griffin, then another Information Day at Woodcroft Shopping Centre, arranged by Jules Van Kekem.

FAMILIAL LINKS BETWEEN BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER

FURTHER to reports that sons and brothers of mothers or sisters who suffered breast cancer are likely to carry the prostate cancer gene, ABC radio reported that this gene had now been found, however there would be no benefit from the discovery for several years. This information echoes the findings of The China Study, which says "inherited genes are not the most important factors leading to disease. The emphasis is on diet."

Mitcham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Powers of attorney explained

GUEST speaker Dr Lloyd Evans spoke with the small group of members that attended the May meeting about competence and capacity, both mental and physical, for people to make legal decisions.

There often comes a time when people cannot make sound decisions (extreme illness and dementia are examples). In such times, it is not enough to only have a will drawn up; incapacitated people will also need to have up-to-date legal documents, such as Enduring Power of Attorney, Medical Power of Attorney and Power of Guardianship.

Dr Evans explained differences between these various documents and stressed that they need to be kept up-to-date, similar to how people monitor their will, because circumstances are always changing.

Dr Evans explained the role played by local GPs in assisting with a diagnosis of mental/physical competency, outlining how they assist and facilitate the entrance of a person into a nursing home

or similar institution that can ensure they are well cared for.

Dr Evans also spoke to the group of his recent involvement in the Great Cattle Trek, where 80 people on horseback paid for the privilege of mustering a mob of 500 head of cattle through the outback to William Creek.

The riders were pitching tents at night, living under the stars and sampling the life of jackeroos and jillaroos. A 4WD with trailer (with two portable toilets) served as an ambulance.

There was only one casualty – a lady fell off her horse and fractured her spine. She was airlifted to Adelaide by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

At the end of the trek, the volunteers received a certificate of appreciation from the State Government for their involvement.

Dr Evans has had significant experience as a doctor in the bush and promotes medical students, doctors and nurses to volunteer for the cattle trek, to give them some experience of life in the bush, with a

COMING EVENTS

THE next monthly meeting of the Mitcham Support Group will be held on June 26, in the Colonel Light Gardens RSL Clubrooms, at 4 Prince George Parade, Colonel Light Gardens, from 7pm to 8.45pm. The guest speaker will be Dr Graham Lyons, Harvest Plus Research Fellow, School of Agriculture Food and Wine, University of Adelaide (pictured), presenting a talk on the relationship between diet and prostate cancer.



The importance of diet in relation to all cancers is now generally acknowledged and this certainly applies to prostate cancer. Men, partners, carers and families are encouraged to attend this interesting and informative presentation.

AUGUST: Availability problems with the venue has forced a change in the August meeting date, which will now be held on Thursday August 21.

• For more information, visit the Mitcham Group's dedicated website at www.psamitcham.org

view to encourage them for volunteering to serve in rural and remote areas.

SURVEY ASSESSED

IN OTHER matters discussed at the May meeting, joint chairpersons Roland Harris and John Baulderstone presented a

survey that had been received from James Cook University, revolving around cancer issues. After some discussion among the members present, the relevance of this survey to prostate cancer sufferers is to be followed up with the university.

Research findings and news items from around the world

Submitted by Trevor Hunt

Drug reduces prostate sufferers' hot flashes

BIOTECHNOLOGY company GTx says a late-stage trial showed its experimental drug, toremifene citrate, reduced hot flashes in men who were on androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), a common treatment for advanced prostate cancer.

Reducing hot flashes was a secondary goal for the 80mg dose of the drug in the trial, which studied 1389 patients over two years.

In late February, the company said a late-stage trial showed the drug reduced spinal fractures and other side effects

caused by ADT, a hormone therapy that works by reducing testosterone and estrogen.

"Hot flashes are the most common and bothersome symptomatic side effect of ADT. Up to 80 per cent of men on ADT report being troubled by hot flashes, which

are often cited as a cause of noncompliance with hormone therapy," says Matthew Smith, the lead investigator of the trial.

GTx is seeking US approval for toremifene, licensed from Finland's Orion Corp.

Source: Reuters, 3/3/08

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99
or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group

Plans discussed to help growth of Pirie group

DURING PCFA officer Paul Redman's visit to South Australia in May, the Port Pirie Group arranged a special meeting on Tuesday 20th to meet with him and discuss developing the group, and the type of assistance now available from the foundation.

While the Port Pirie group is relatively small, all members are keen to be a presence in their community. Some potential awareness events were discussed and, as plans

are made, funding and media support will be available from the foundation to help attract the attention of the local community.

The group agreed on a distribution schedule to place and sustain prostate cancer brochures in the medical centres and the local hospital, to provide contact opportunities for the public.

Nicola Champion, the facilitator of the group, will be arranging for the visiting

urologist to also have supplies of these brochures.

Supplies of PCFA books and branded materials will be sent to the group for use at public events.

To help attract new members, Paul advised that the foundation is working with medical groups as avenues to introduce newly diagnosed or treated men to the existing network of support groups across Australia.

Support groups such as the

COMING EVENT

The Port Pirie group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the BHAS Bowls Club, Halley St, Port Pirie, at 7pm. Therefore, the next meeting is on June 10.

Port Pirie model are absolutely vital in smaller communities, where specialist medical and support services are not immediately available to provide assistance when it is most required.

Importantly, the Port Pirie group also enjoys strong social links – a key feature of all successful support groups.

Barossa and Gawler Prostate Cancer Support Group

Providing greater support to Gawler

BREAKING new ground by holding a meeting in Gawler, the Barossa/Gawler Support Group is making bold new efforts to reach out to new members.

When the group formed 10 years ago, after public meetings in the two regions, most interest came from the Barossa. The Barossa Council and Barossa District Health Service provided venues and financial support. A small number of men from Gawler with prostate problems made the 30-minute trip to Tanunda for meetings each month, and this arrangement has continued ever since.

As a result of the Barossa focus, few people in Gawler know that the group exists. Occasional distribution of brochures and a few reports in the Gawler Bunyip newspaper

have not been enough to improve awareness.

Therefore, the group's next meeting on June 17 in the Gawler RSL Clubrooms marks the beginning of a campaign to put prostate cancer support on a better footing in Gawler. With a population of 20,000, Gawler will certainly include many families touched by prostate cancer and in need of support services.

The only previous prostate cancer awareness meeting in Gawler was held at the RSL Clubrooms in 1997. It is fitting that the group's return to Gawler after 10 years will involve the same venue.

SUPPORT SERVICES

A SPECIAL meeting of the Barossa/Gawler group called at short notice on May 21,

COMING EVENT

NEXT MEETING: June 17, from 2pm to 4pm in the Gawler RSL Hall, corner of Gosford St and Overway Bridge Rd. Bringing a plate of afternoon tea will be appreciated.

coincided with the visit to South Australia by Paul Redman, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's support group services manager. The Vine Inn Hotel/Motel made a meeting room available and a few of the group heard Paul outline several important initiatives emanating from the PCFA:

- The PCFA has a Lending Library which can be accessed by groups or individuals.
- Each group will receive three

copies of a DVD containing comprehensive information about the detection, treatment and psych-social aspects of prostate cancer.

- A state manager for PCFA will be appointed before the end of this year.

- Support group brochures will be supplied. Business cards will also be provided for GPs and urologists to issue on behalf of local support groups.

- Training for core members within support groups will be offered later this year.

- The PCFA National Conference will be held on the Gold Coast on November 16 and 17. Support group members will be offered discounted air fares with Virgin Blue and an all inclusive registration fee of \$50 a person.

McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group

Back pain info strikes a nerve

Wider health issues are proving to be of great interest to McLaren members, according to group president Bryan Hearn.

LOCAL chiropractor Dr Joseph Charles spoke at the support group's May meeting, explaining the spine and associated nerve structure. Using a life-size model of a human spine to illustrate his points, he explained how many people suffer broken spines without realising it, often just dismissing it as a sore back.

Dr Charles described one condition known as "clay shoveller's back", prevalent in the McLaren Vale area due to its heavy clay soil. He also explained how skin changes in people about every six weeks, and that bones are also continually changing over a period of about 18 months.

Chiropractic started in the United States in 1895 by D.V. Palmer, a magnetic healer. Examining a man who had been deaf for 16 years, Palmer manipulated a small bump adjacent to one ear, which almost immediately cured the deafness. He continued experimenting with back manipulation as a cure for headaches, believing that the back affected a person's general health. This was confirmed once human bodies were dissected, illustrating how the nervous system and spine were interrelated.

Dr Charles explained his own university training, especially "FIB" (the student's own amusing acronym), which involved the use of a plastic model containing prostate glands in various conditions and allowed medical students to feel them with a finger as



McLaren Vale chiropractor Dr Joseph Charles conducting his prostate support group talk.

they would in the course of a normal examination.

Several other conditions were discussed – even explaining what happens when somebody "cracks" a knuckle. A sealed joint that contains fluid will make a cracking sound when a small bubble within the fluid in the joint is popped. This action apparently has no effect on arthritis; it also can't be repeated on a knuckle for about 20 minutes, by which

time fluid resumes its normal state within a joint.

Dr Charles also explained other areas of his professional interest, from manipulating the spines of dogs, to treating babies who had suffered some minor trauma to their spines during the birth process.

It was a most interesting and engaging talk about general health matters that greatly impressed the group members.



PCFA support group services manager Paul Redman

National support

PAUL Redman, the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's support group services manager, attended the McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group's May meeting and explained in detail some of the foundation's work – some surprising to many group members.

Paul explained that the foundation does not expect support groups to specifically raise funds for the foundation. However, he explained several ways that support groups can assist the foundation in their fund raising activities, citing such events such as "Blue Days".

He outlined how these activities will be organised in South Australia, listing the benefits that could be accrued from affiliation with the foundation and undertook to forward the necessary paperwork to allow this to occur in the near future.

COMING EVENT

Thursday May 22

The McLaren Districts group will next meet in the Administration building at the rear of the McLaren Vale & Districts War Memorial Hospital, Aldersey St, McLaren Vale, at 7pm on Thursday June 19, commencing at 7pm.

Guest speaker will be Lez Shiell, an acupuncturist and Chinese Herbalist who has had some experience in the treatment of prostate cancer sufferers particularly from dietary point of view.

Anyone planning to attend should contact group president Bryan Hearn on 8323 7924 or 0410 539 274, to confirm the meeting details and their attendance.

Farewell to a dear friend

Barry Oakley pays tribute to REG MAYES, a valiant prostate cancer battler whose fight with the disease came to an end on May 27.

WHILE visiting Reg and his wife Amy at the Mary Potter Hospice recently, my wife Margaret and I found Reg sleeping peacefully. As we were about to leave I leaned close to Reg, for I am sure he was conscious of our presence and could hear us, and said: "See you again, Reg when our spirits mingle together in the here-after." And Amy's quip came back instantly. "Yes, and he will have heaven all organised by the time you get there."

That's our Reg. If anyone could say that life had been full, Reg certainly could. A former railways employee and train enthusiast, Reg was responsible for salvaging and restoring many old locomotives and other memorabilia.

I came to know Reg as a friend and colleague in the Adelaide Prostate Support Group.



Reg Mayes (photo courtesy of Ian Fisk)

While Reg was not a founding member, he was one of the early people to get heavily involved, being treasurer for the founding president, Gerry McCreanor and later for me, as treasurer/secretary.

More than this, Reg was an organiser of excellence. His letter writing skills did much

for PSA advocacy and fund raising for the group, which even enabled the purchase a computer and photocopier.

For a significant time he was not only treasurer/secretary, but also writer and publisher of the monthly PSA newsletter, and organised the group's guest speakers.

Reg fielded many telephone calls and provided able and competent peer support to anyone who phoned seeking help. I can personally vouch for his willingness to help and organise matters.

In many ways Reg was the constant who was able to stabilise our group.

Perhaps above all this, we remember Reg for his wit and effervescent spirit, which was always inspiring to the group members. This same wit and spirit accompanied Reg through to his last whistle stop.

The members of the support group wish to convey to Amy and the family our sincerest sympathy, and thanks for sharing this great man's life with us.

Vale, Reg, and may God go with you.

Research findings and news items from around the world

Submitted by Trevor Hunt

Sunflower seed may halt cancer spread

A TINY protein found in sunflower seeds is showing potential as a new therapy to stop aggressive prostate cancer tumours spreading to the bone.

Australian scientists have developed a novel way of preventing enzymes from breaking down connective tissue around tumours, that allows cancer cells to migrate to other parts of the body.

The breakthrough has so far only been demonstrated in test tube, but if current trials

on mice are successful, a new human therapy will be available targeting prostate cancer spread.

"The dream end-product is having a drug which could be produced in sunflower seeds and given as a simple dietary supplement for people with prostate cancer," says study leader Dr Jonathan Harris, of the Queensland University of Technology.

Research investigated the mini-protein as a potential treatment of prostate cancer,

in particular for patients who relapse.

"The best thing to do in those cases is block the disease spreading to other organs, particularly the spine, which is very debilitating," Dr Harris said.

"It is not the prostate tumour that kills you. It is when the cancer cells escape from the prostate, so we want to prevent that."

The spread is largely caused by enzymes called

proteases which break down the connective tissue around tumours, allowing the cancer cells to migrate.

In test tube-based trials researchers discovered the sunflower mini-protein (the protease inhibitor) was able to block these enzymes.

Cancer Council Australia chief executive Professor Ian Olver said new targeted therapies for prostate cancer are much needed.

Source: *The Age* 5/1/08