



September 2020



Heartbeat Happenings

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Alan Hutchison

Vice-President: David Menzies

Board Secretary: Louise Zambello

Treasurer: Chris Kunaratnam

Board Members: Lynda Andrews, Robin Trotter, Meredith Crowe

Branch Development Advisor: Robyn Fennell

Editor: Louise Zambello

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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Message from the Editor



For many of us the last few weeks have been difficult. The road map, as laid out in mid-September by our Premier Daniel Andrews, has turned out to be a lot tougher and longer than most of us were expecting. After the shock and denial, I expect there has been more pain, anger and depression.

On 13 September we started taking the first baby steps to what is being referred to as a COVID-19 "normal". For Melbourne this meant that the nightly curfew commenced an hour later from 9pm to 5.30am, exercise was extended to 2 hours and I was really pleased to learn that there was an allowance made for "social bubbles" for Melburnians living alone who could choose one other person to visit them in their homes. For many older people living alone, with some in severe lockdown unable to see family or friends since March, these social bubbles were a crucial step.

Our colleagues in regional Victoria have been a little more fortunate. Students have been returned to the classroom and pre-school children to childcare and kindergarten. Businesses are slowly opening as are cafes, however still with strict restrictions on how many people can gather in one place, and of course thankfully, the wearing of masks remains compulsory. I hear that some of our regional branches and affiliates are restarting their walking groups and coffee catchups, not exactly "normally", but all the same it's a start.

There are a lot of rules about what we can and cannot do, something I am not too unhappy about if it means we can arrest this terrible virus. Seeing the average of infection rates in the community reducing daily, certainly indicates that the restrictions are working.

Since I suspect that some of you are as confused as I am as to what a COVID-19 “normal” actually means, I decided to do some research.

As I understand it, as long as the world has not found a cure or a vaccine for COVID-19, we shall need to adjust to a “new normal”, meaning a new way of living and going about our lives, work and interactions with other people and this may be for a very long time. One thing I have discovered is that our new normal will keep changing and it will change very quickly so we need to be flexible to help us cope.

- We shall be wearing face masks outside for some time to come and even if the Australian Government does not mandate it, I know I shall feel better psychologically wearing one!
- Many people will continue to work from home and online meetings will continue to grow.
- Schools may reduce the size of their classes and increase teaching some subjects online.
- We’re going to be cooking a lot more at home, or having food delivered to our door more regularly.
- E-businesses like online food ordering, online shopping and video on demand, will thrive.
- For some time to come, restaurants will not be able to seat the same number of people, due to social distancing requirements.
- There will be increased sanitation and cleaning everywhere.
- Everyone will endeavour to keep up the 1.5 metre distance from each other for some time. Polite personal space will have a wider circumference.
- Cinemas and airlines will mandate spaced out seating, as will public transport like buses and trains.
- Live concerts and sports, will be postponed indefinitely, but streamed or played online.

It’s not exactly ‘welcome back Victoria’, but we’re getting there; there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel! As we seek to reimagine ourselves after COVID-19, so must all members of Heartbeat Victoria look to each other to reimagine the ways in which we fundraise, recruit new members and most importantly continue to support our members.

Our branches and affiliates may not be able to return to monthly face to face meetings, assisting at local community cardiac rehab programs, coffee catchups, bus excursions and fund raising for some time. However, with a little bit of imagination, bravery and an adventurous spirit, we can add to the existing Heartbeat model, by embracing computer technology, online meetings with a speaker, even digital entertainment for our members and the community complete with an opportunity to fundraise. Our branches and affiliates can restart its walking groups by dividing the group into smaller units. We shall be able to practice social distancing during a coffee catchup at a local cafe with some of our Heartbeat mates. We can still make a regular telephone call to check on a vulnerable Heartbeat member. All of this means that we can continue to function as a peer support group to share experiences, be motivated and educated to embrace a healthy lifestyle, socialise, keep in contact with existing members and make new friends.

As you would be well aware by now, the Heartbeat Be Connected program is the perfect opportunity to improve everyone’s computer skills and it’s free! It’s not too late to join the program and I strongly urge all committee members of each of our branches and affiliates to encourage their members to join the program.

It will take some time, but COVID-19 will pass. As we face an uncertain future, let us continue to think positively, abundantly and prepared to embrace change when and where necessary. Heartbeat’s mission is to conduct peer support activities for people living with heart disease to ensure they have a better understanding of the impact of their heart condition. The role of a not for profit is to care and advocate for the most vulnerable amongst us. So, whatever it takes, let’s keep up the good fight and continue to work tirelessly to make good choices now and post-COVID by being savvy, strong and resilient and embracing whatever changes we need to make to continue with our Heartbeat mission well into the future.



Louise Zambello



Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc. held a virtual Annual General Meeting on Zoom on Wednesday 16 September 2020. Twenty-five people including Heartbeat members and stakeholders attended.

Every branch and affiliate was represented ... a first full attendance at an AGM for many years. Online meeting do offer some advantages!

The Board thanks our guest speaker, Dr Rosemary Higgins, Cardiac Health Psychologist. Australian Centre for Heart Health for her excellent presentation entitled '*Caring for your heart, your body and your mind: Using goal planning and self-compassion to get the best out of yourself.*' The feedback from our Heartbeat members was overwhelmingly positive. Many commented on how they resonated with her comments and found her presentation motivational and inspiring.

Congratulations to the Board which was returned unopposed. Our current Board is:

-  Alan Hutchison – President
-  David Menzies – Deputy President
-  Louise Zambello – Board Secretary
-  Chris Kunaratnam – Treasurer
-  Lynda Andrews – Board Member
-  Meredith Crowe – Board Member
-  Robin Trotter – Board Member



Online Heartbeat Meetings

Delegates Meeting on 28 July 2020

Due to COVID-19, our Delegates Meeting planned in May 2020 at Ballarat was postponed. Subsequently Heartbeat Victoria held its very first online Delegates Meeting on Zoom on 28 July 2020. Twenty-eight people attended including guest speakers from the Australian Centre for Heart Health. Again, a first that every branch and affiliate were able to attend and represented at a Delegates Meeting for quite some time! There are some good things that have come out of COVID-19 afterall!

The Board thanks our guest speakers Professor Alun Jackson, Executive Director and Dr Barbara Murphy, Senior Researcher from the Australian Centre for Heart Health [ACHH] for their presentation explaining how the ACHH's Back on Track Program and Teleheart works.

ACHH's mission is to improve the lives of people with heart disease, which includes research on the psycho-social and behavioural aspects of heart disease, to train health professionals working with cardiac patients and support cardiac patients through their Cardiac Wellbeing Program. See ACHH website -

<https://www.australianhearthealth.org.au/>

Robyn Fennell, our Board Advisor and Secretary of Goulburn Valley Branch launched a promotional video and we again take the opportunity to thank various people including the Victoria Department of Health and Human Services for providing the funding, Robyn Fennell, Preface Films, Dr Jennifer Collier, cardiologist for her guest appearance and of course, probably the most important people involved in this project several Goulburn Valley Branch members who appear in the video! Well done everyone on a star performance! The video now appears on YouTube, Heartbeat Victoria's FaceBook and LinkedIn pages and our website. The YouTube link has been emailed to all our branches and affiliates and several stakeholders for viewing and distribution. In case you haven't seen it can be viewed at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_3IBS1bBgE&t=29s

www.heartbeatvictoria.org.au

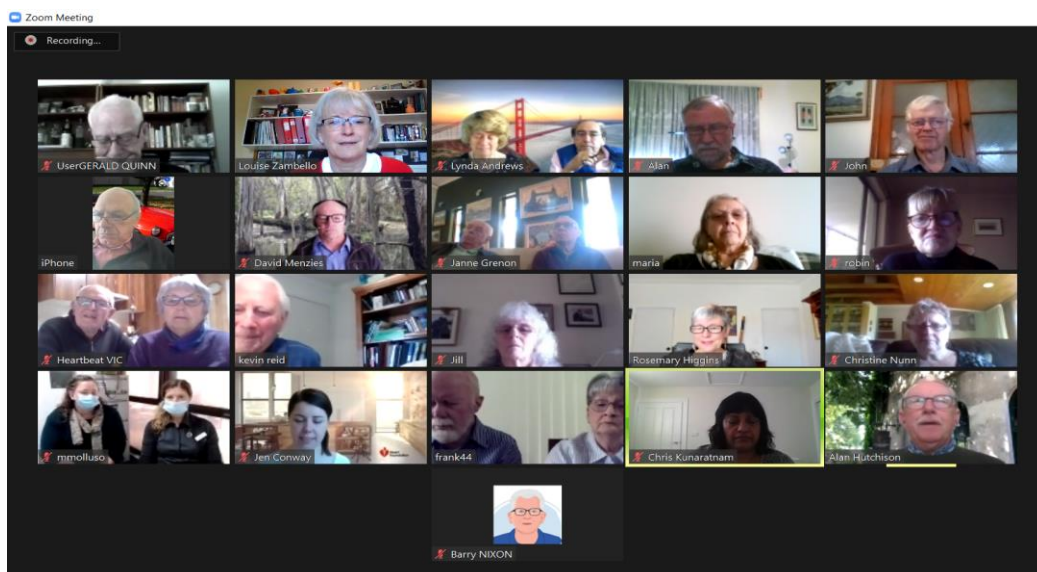
<https://www.facebook.com/HeartbeatVictoria>

Louise Zambello, Board Secretary has been coordinating the Be Connected Program, an ambitious program funded by the Federal Government to get seniors online. The program is proving popular and the Board is delighted to report that we now have 32 Heartbeat members who to date have taken advantage of the free training with an emphasis on Zoom from our online mentor, Jon Moyses of Mountain District Learning Centre.

Delegates Meeting/Members Forum on 30 September 2020

On 30 September 2020, the Board held a Zoom Delegates/Members' Forum, the idea being to give all Heartbeat members an opportunity to socialise and raise and discuss issues with board members. 22 members attended the meeting and during the hour long meeting another first for Heartbeat[!] ... participants were divided up and placed in 3 chat rooms.

Self-care, especially how is everyone coping during COVID-19 was high on the agenda including feedback sought on the kind of activities people are undertaking to assist with stress, unhappiness, illness, depression and any other negative emotions. The second topic was a sharing of ideas on the way forward. The Board was particularly interested to receive feedback and ideas on how branches/affiliates are planning to provide peer support going forward. The Board wishes to thank everyone who attended and thank members for their invaluable feedback which will help us put plans in place for 2021 to assist everyone post-COVID.



*PHOTO:
Heartbeat
Victoria
Council Inc.'s
first online
AGM on 16
September
2020*

Staying Healthy and Covid Safe this Grass Pollen Season

[Source: Media Release, Premier of Victoria, The Hon Daniel Andrews – 1 October 2020]



This Spring it is more important than ever to speak to your doctor to manage your hay fever and asthma and if your symptoms are new or different to usual you should get tested for coronavirus.

Hay fever or asthma can produce symptoms similar to coronavirus such as a runny nose, cough or shortness of breath, and while good management can help prevent these, it is critical to get tested for coronavirus if these are different to your usual symptoms.

Minister for Health, Martin Foley, said wearing a mask,

maintaining physical distancing and practicing good hand hygiene remains critical during the pollen season. People who are sneezing and coughing from hay fever or asthma may produce more droplets and if they have coronavirus, it could spread quickly.

People with asthma and hay fever symptoms may also touch their face more frequently, increasing their risk of being infected with coronavirus if they are not practicing appropriate hand hygiene.

Grass pollen season officially begins on 1 October, bringing an increase in asthma and hay fever and the chance of thunderstorm asthma. Victoria's thunderstorm asthma risk forecasting system will also be switched on and will run until the end of December.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

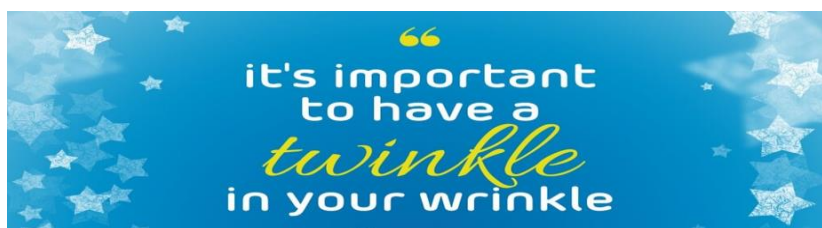
"This is not an ordinary spring. It is more important than ever to properly manage your hay fever and asthma this pollen season and check in with your GP to make sure your asthma action plan is up to date."

Quote attributable to Victorian Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton

"If you have symptoms such as a cough, shortness of breath, or runny nose, and these symptoms are different to your usual hay fever or asthma symptoms - get tested for coronavirus and stay home until you receive your results."



"No, honestly, my #hayfever isn't too bad at all today".





Again, despite the lockdown and restrictions, the Board has continued working away behind the scenes and networking where possible.

With a variety of topics, meetings and conferences now being offered online, a number of board members have joined various free webinars, some of which are listed below.

Mental Health Professionals' Network

- July 2020 – Primary Care, Older Persons and Mental Health

National Voices

- July 2020 – The Doctor will Zoom you now – getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience

Kaizens Synergy Law Chambers

- July 2020 - GoToWebinar - How to set up your COVIDSafe Plan and meet your legal compliance requirements

Be Connected

- August 2020 – Online Partner Network Meetup

Chronic Illness Alliance

- August 2020 – Health Literacy for Peer Support Groups
- September 2020 – Chronic Illness Alliance Extraordinary Meeting to wind up the organisation

Health Issues Centre

- August 2020 - Are your COVID-19 concerns being heard?

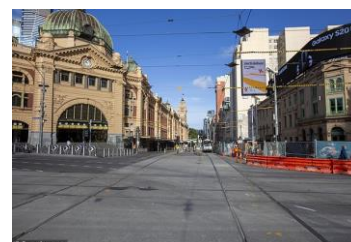
Our Community

- September 2020 – Get Campaign Savvy and Take Control

Heart Foundation

- September 2020 - The Future of Cardiovascular Disease Risk Assessment

Memorable images of Victoria during COVID-19 lockdown





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

Editor's note: As I reported last quarter, COVID-19 has had a huge effect on how our branches and affiliates usually function. However, it is pleasing to see that some branches and affiliates are embracing the new online way of holding meetings. The Board is pleased to see that more people are getting online, some branches are holding meetings, members are communicating by phone and there are even some instances of resorting to writing letters to members to keep in contact. Below are snippets of news regarding just some of what the Board is hearing:

Ballarat

Ballarat has recommenced its walking group. Masks, social distancing, whatever it takes[!], t's a great opportunity to walk and talk and have a coffee and since it had been some time since the walking group had been held, everyone participating enjoyed being able to interact.



A delightful story that Barry Nixon, Secretary, relayed, and I hasten to add was music to my ears[!], was that of Heartbeat Ballarat member, Jean. Jean has never owned a computer, but she recently decided that if she didn't embrace technology she would seriously miss out on what's going on around her given COVID-19 restrictions. Jean joined the Be Connected program and Jon Moyses, our resident online mentor, covered all the basics, was extremely positive and encouraged Jean to communicate with him on Zoom. There were challenges, but I understand the lovely Jon was patience and the session was extremely successful. Jean's philosophy is that she wants to keep "Zooming" as much as possible ... if she doesn't use it, she will lose it!

Meanwhile, the committee of Ballarat is considering introducing Zoom to their branch so that they can restart their monthly meetings.

Editor's note: Incidentally, as part of the Be Connected program, Jon Moyses, online mentor, is not only available to provide one on one free training for our Heartbeat members to improve their computer skills. He is also available to assist committee members of all branch and affiliates in a co-hosting role if they require assistance running their first couple of Branch Meetings online. Contact Louise Zambello if you need assistance.

Knox

It's good to see that Knox has held a couple of online Knox Zoom catchups over the last 3 months. Knox held its very first online AGM on 31 August and the current committee was returned unopposed.

Goulburn Valley

Goulburn Valley is certainly leading the way with regard to embracing the new style of holding meetings online. They report that slowly additional members are joining the Zoom meetings and have introduced an opportunity for an online chat after each meeting. Robyn Fennell continues to produce a regular newsletter despite the obstacles of COVID-19 restrictions meeting face to face and the printing of the newsletter and is to be commended for her enthusiasm, creativity and positivity in assisting to keep the Branch running during this unusual time.

In July, Kelly Donnelly, Dietitian and Heart Health Coordinator of the Heart Foundation, Heart Health Coordinator gave a presentation entitled "*Healthy Heart Eating Patterns*".

In August, Dr. Jennifer Collier, Cardiologist/Heart Failure Specialist, Head of Clinics, JMS Educational Supervisor of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and who also recently featured in Goulburn Valley's recent promotional video mentioned earlier [see links on page 4], was the guest speaker. Jennifer is a strong advocate for heart peer support,

On 7 September 2020, Goulburn Valley held its very first online AGM. The current committee was returned unopposed. Guest speaker on that occasion was Christine Robey, RND1 Cardiac Rehab Nurse from Goulburn Valley Hospital and her presentation was entitled "*Cardiac Rehab in the COVID-19 Environment*".



One very exciting piece of news was that in September, Greater Shepparton City Council awarded Heartbeat Goulburn Valley *Volunteer Team of the Year* in recognition of all Heartbeat volunteers who have been part of the organisation over many years and the significant support and services provided to people with heart conditions and their families. The Awards Night was held online with a pre-recorded session by Ian Powell and Robyn Fennell who had been interviewed on Zoom. Below is the link to that presentation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrnpBWDtcUc>

The Goulburn Valley Heartbeat Award commences at around 25.30 mins and finishes at approx. 33.55 mins. Well done Goulburn Valley!

Plans are afoot in early October to restart walking groups with a cuppa afterward now that the weather is picking up.

As part of the new way of doing things, Goulburn Valley is putting together a COVID-19 Plan on how to run their walks which will include the wearing of masks, social distancing, no more than 10 at one time in a group, "cuppa" etiquette etc.

Sunbury

Sunbury has joined the COVID-19 virtual world[!] and has held a couple of online chats on Zoom for members over the last couple of months. Several members from Sunbury have taken advantage of the free training offered as part of the Be Connected Program and slowly joining chats and meetings online.

Sunbury will hold its first online AGM towards the end of October.



Restart a Heart Day is an annual training event on 16 October relating to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillator use or first aid surrounding heart attacks. Education and training is offered to the general public in CPR and what to do in the event of a heart attack. This year's Restart a Heart Day is 16 October 2020 and entitled "Call Push Shock". With the assistance of Ambulance Victoria, Heartbeat Sunbury Branch is hosting a half hour Restart a Heart Day Zoom presentation on 16 October 2020 from 10.30am to 11am. Guest speaker will be Mark Griffin, Team Manager from the Sunbury Branch of Ambulance Victoria. Fifteen minutes will be

dedicated to the presentation and then there will be 15 minutes for Questions and Answers.

Not only committee members of our branches are invited, but **all** Heartbeat members are invited to attend. So there's no confusion, this event is hosted by Heartbeat Victoria Sunbury Branch and Ambulance Victoria and an invitation has also been sent to various organisations that Heartbeat Victoria deals with regularly including local organisations, stakeholders etc. so you certainly don't necessarily need to be a Heartbeat member to attend this event.

Most importantly though, Heartbeat Sunbury requests you distribute this information to all your Heartbeat members so that they in particular, are given an opportunity to attend such an important topic regarding heart health. Please RSVP to louise@heartbeatvictoria.org.au as soon as possible. Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2326414084?pwd=cHpBajJKTWtsTTZlNGVQVXlvemEzZz09>



Editor's note: To wrap up on What's Happening at a branch/affiliate level and the way forward, I think it's important to add and point out here that now that more of our branches are embracing this new way of meeting online on Zoom, that this opens up a whole host of opportunities for **ALL** our Heartbeat members to join any meeting our branches/affiliates may be holding. As outlined, each branch/affiliate is organising different agendas and a variety of interesting speakers at each of their meetings.

I, as I suspect many of you, are wondering where we will be in 6 months, a year, perhaps 3 years from now. We all naturally hope that life will return to normal when the restrictions to slow the spread of coronavirus are lifted, but in reality it might not. Realistically, we need to be prepared that the world after COVID-19 is unlikely to return to the world that was.

Now having said that, I don't want you to view this as all doom and gloom! The Board is here to assist all branches and affiliates embrace online technology. Let's see this as redesigning the "old" way of doing things and adding to the Heartbeat model to make it even more successful. Trust me ... it is possible. Many organisations, particularly not for profits that I am coming into contact with are facing the same COVID-19 related obstacles. With patience, enthusiasm, creativity and innovation we can do this together.



Some online jokes

Since there's been a focus on embracing online activities over the last few months, I thought it is timely to add some online jokes to make you laugh.



"Your online profile stated you were tall, dark and handsome. Have you considered a career in fiction writing?"



The Land of Notknowing

This is the Land of Notknowing
where many things are new.
We're not exactly sure
of what to say or what to do.
Our world seemed normal yesterday.
Today it all feels strange.
We cannot know exactly
how our lives will change.
There is much we can't control
(we never really could).
But we can choose to help.
We can use our gifts for good.
When one girl saw that hugs had stopped
she drew small hugs to offer cheer.
A symphony played songs for free
so folks heard beauty through their fear.
Each of us has power
we can use in little ways.
We each can choose a gift to share.
Sharing lights the darkest days.
Notknowing can feel scary.
We have not been here before.
But the moon is still so splendid.
Come look with me.
I'll hold the door.

Amy Ludwig VanDerwater

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

The 2019-2020 Annual Report is in the process of being printed and hard copies shall be

posted to secretaries of all branches and affiliates including our sponsors and stakeholders shortly.

An electronic copy has already been distributed, but here it is again in case you haven't seen it.

<https://heartbeatvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Heartbeat-Victoria-Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>

