



**Heartbeat
Victoria**

Heartbeat Happenings

Autumn 2024

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Linda Macaulay

Vice President: Christine Rees

Secretary: Barry Nixon

Treasurer: Karen Saccuzzo

Assistant Treasurer: Tamieka Snowden

Board Members: Mark Braybrook; Robyn Fennell; Gail Newton; 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 Vice President

On behalf of the Board, welcome to 2024! The end of 2023 saw the Board establish partnerships with Sydney University Solve CHD researchers and the Baker Institute. Both these are now signed off and hopefully will bring more educational materials and greater opportunity to be involved in research. Research involvement can range from an internet questionnaire to biological measurement and everything in between. Being involved in research can have an impact on the future and change the management and understanding of cardiac disease. Other partnerships are being discussed, and we will keep you updated.

The role of education in the cardiac community can never be understated, as we learn we can make more informed choices. I would encourage you to find time to go to the website and check out the resources that are there. We will be forwarding new material from our partners as it becomes available. If you wish to comment, please address these to hello@heartbeatvictoria.org.au

During the final months of 2023, we also made some connections with scientists and researchers from other groups, some of whom have voiced a wish to be involved with Heartbeat Victoria. I would encourage you to keep thinking about the type of education you would like. While some of these people have websites and information that we will share, others are interested in showing the cardiac community their workspaces, or even presenting at meetings. If there is something specific your group is looking for, please let us know and we will attempt to source it.

Take care in 2024 and remember those resolutions, particularly the health ones. Let's make 2024 the year of being the best version we can of ourselves. Let's also spread the word about the fun, learning and support that comes from being a Heartbeat Victoria member. Have a wonderful 2024! **Christine Rees**



Partnership with the Baker Institute



A formal partnership has recently been established between Heartbeat Victoria and the Baker Institute to support engagement with individuals with lived experience of heart disease and heart conditions.

The Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute (the Baker Institute) is an independent, internationally renowned medical research facility, with a long history. The Institute's work extends from the laboratory to wide-scale community studies and is focused on the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diabetes, heart disease, obesity and related conditions.

Community engagement at the Baker Institute relates to all activities that involve patients, carers, healthcare professionals who work with its researchers. The Baker Institute believes in active and meaningful partnership with the community. Its researchers engage in activities and research projects with a focus on carrying out projects WITH or BY the community and shifting from an approach focused on delivering programs TO them.

There are several ways in which community members share experience with researchers. This is dependent on the design of the study and the objectives of the project. Examples of activities include:

- Brainstorming sessions for young researchers to gauge the community interests;
- Consultative workshops to develop research outcomes;
- Community feedback on patient forms;
- Completing survey documents;
- Meet and greet opportunities between researchers and the community;
- Laboratory tours and Q & A opportunities;
- Participation in interviews answering research questions;
- Participation in answering grant-related questions;
- Regular catch ups with researchers to maintain and utilise the community voice; and
- Workshops to generate reports, newsletters conferences, distributing information through community networks.

The Baker Institute has explained that community engagement is different to being involved in research as a research participant (ie. involvement in clinical trials or as a research investigator). It is not a recruiting tool and is more than just a 'tick the box' for research projects. The overall purpose of engagement is to influence the development of research priorities in a project, assist in the dissemination of information to community groups and to inform policies and implementation programs.

ACvA Excellence in Cardiovascular Research Awards



In February, Heartbeat Victoria’s Vice President, Christine Rees, gave a presentation at the ACvA (Australian Cardiovascular Alliance) awards held in Melbourne.

ACvA is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation representing individual researchers, research institutes, peak bodies (advocacy groups/consumer groups), and industry members, which works to bring the cardiovascular research sector together.

The awards event involved some of the most incredible people and research. In the future we hope to feature some researchers and studies in Heartbeat Happenings.

These researchers are also interested in what it is like to have and live through heart issues.

We will be calling for expressions of interest to share your story so that the researchers, particularly emerging researchers, see the human face of the work they are doing. This encourages researchers and gives them a greater focus on the human purpose of their projects. We all want the future of heart disease to move forward so that future generations have a better understanding and life and to achieve this we need to put the human face to the research. The type of research we are talking about ranges from programs for all levels of education to reduce risks of heart disease, to the development of amazing products, such as artery grafts.

If you would like to be involved, there is no length of commitment but rather chatting to a person to tell your story or sharing ideas.

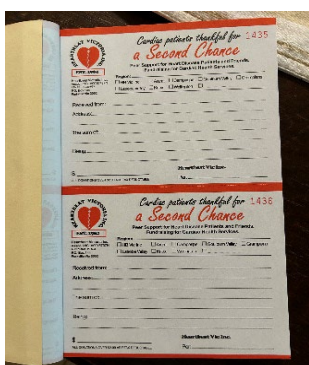
christine@heartbeatvictoria.org.au will get you started.



Heartbeat Branding



As part of the development of Heartbeat Victoria’s new website, a new logo has been created and Branch versions have been sent to each Branch. As communication and marketing documents are developed, the new logo will be incorporated but, in the meantime, there are still marketing materials, including pens, stickers, badges and receipt books, available for use by branches. These items are available by contacting Robyn Fennell (robyn@heartbeatvictoria.org.au).



Prices are as follows:

Item	Price
Stickers	10 for \$2
Pens	\$2
Heartbeat badge	\$3
Life member badges	\$20
Service badges	On request
Receipt book	No cost



The Victorian Heart Hospital



In February 2023 the Victorian Heart Hospital, Australia's first dedicated heart hospital was officially opened as part of the Monash Health group, and welcomed its first patients.

The hospital is located on the Monash University Clayton campus.

In partnership with Monash University and housing the Monash Victorian Heart

Institute, the Heart Hospital will integrate clinical cardiology services, research and education to create a centre of excellence, raising the profile of cardiovascular research, treatment and training.

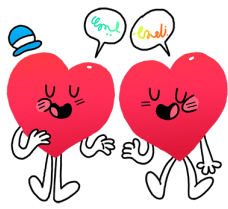
With a capacity for up to 206 beds, the Victorian Heart Hospital each year will provide 28,000 cardiac emergency patient assessments, 10,000 interventional cardiac catheterisation procedures, and 2000 open heart surgeries.

The Victorian Heart Hospital has been carefully designed to enhance patient experience. Patients can expect a warm, open environment with natural light and ready access to landscaped outdoor areas and café spaces. This less-clinical approach aligns with considerable research showing that a lighter, more open hospital environment can positively impact clinical outcomes.

(Source: Victorian Heart Hospital website - <https://victorianhearthospital.org/latest-news/2023/02/19/monash-healths-victorian-heart-hospital-officially-launches/>)

Prescription medication

Some prescription medication is now available as a 30 or 60 day supply. Your doctor needs to specify the supply amount on the prescription. Currently, the Safety Net for PBS medicine is at \$277.20 for concession card holders and \$1647.90 without the concession card. Next time you attend your doctor or request a repeat prescription you will need to ask if there is an advantage in you moving to a 60-day script. The cost for a 60-day supply will be the same as for a 30-day supply but you get double with fewer trips to the pharmacy. Not all medications are available on 60-day prescriptions but the best option for you should be discussed with your doctor and local pharmacy. Using the same pharmacy and doctor will also help track your spend for the Safety Net. If you do not use the same pharmacy, keep your records to make sure you get help with this expense. Effective communication with your pharmacist and doctor helps build a strong care team and a strong care team in turn has better outcomes for your cardiac community.



Heart to Heart

featuring one member's heart health experience

Arthur Fennell – Goulburn Valley Branch – Personal Journey



Arthur had rheumatic fever as a 15 year old. It was never ascertained if this was the cause of the problems that required him to have his Mitral Valve replaced in 1980, at the age of thirty-seven, while living in Tatura with a young family of four boys, the youngest being three years old.

The noise his valve made, which was like a whooping sound, could be heard by people sitting next to him and it caused other symptoms. The cardiac team at the time suggested replacement with a mechanical valve known as the Starr- Edwards Valve.

The surgery was performed at St Vincents Hospital Melbourne and was not the short stay experienced today by heart valve repair or replacement recipients. It included pre-admission for three days and preparation prior to surgery, with lots of antiseptic washes to help prevent infection.

It was difficult to manage the family dynamics at the time and family and friends helped with minding the children until Arthur was well enough to have the whole family all home together.

There were not the support systems offered currently to heart patients and no cardiac rehabilitation was available. The post operative care was managed by a Tatura GP and included a few unexpected stays in Goulburn Valley Health under the care of physicians in the Intensive Care Unit for various heart related complications. There was anxiety associated with these episodes, especially with sudden onset of rapid supraventricular tachycardia (SVT). Arthur also travelled to Melbourne to be reviewed by a cardiologist and surgeon.

Arthur was around in the early days of the formation of Heartbeat Victoria in Melbourne. Patients receiving open heart surgery at the time were very grateful for a second chance at life. In 1984 some members of the Masonic Lodge Melbourne, led by Henry Nathan, Grand Master, acted on an idea raised by Gordon McKelvie (Mac) Hudson, from Merbein, who was aware of a similar heart support group, Heartbeat South Australia. He thought it would be beneficial for patients in Victoria to be able to support each other and give back to hospitals by fundraising for cardiac equipment.

Arthur used to attend meetings at St Vincents Hospital and other hospital venues. In 1986 he was asked by a friend to form a branch at Shepparton. The inaugural meeting to form the Branch founding Management Committee was held at a church hall and was even attended by a couple who travelled from Numurkah.

Today Arthur continues to lead an active lifestyle, with a degree of heart failure managed with appropriate medication and is grateful for the support of medical professionals, peer support members and ongoing heart health education, which give him the reasons and motivation to manage his heart health risk factors and always work towards a positive healthy lifestyle.



Offering to volunteer in different ways and in various organisations has remained a focus for Arthur and he has had an extensive volunteering history:

- Shepparton Jaycees, serving as President 1978/79.
- Together with a group of his ex-patient friends formed Heartbeat Victoria in 1984 and was a founding member in Melbourne.
- Started the Goulburn Valley Branch of

Heartbeat in 1998 , where he has served as Branch President for 5 years, and as Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter editor since 1998 and he was made a Life Member of Heartbeat in 2006.

- When his sons joined the Tatura Cubs, he became involved with the local Scouting movement serving as President of the Tatura Group Committee also training as an Assistant Leader.
- A member of Tatura Lions Club for 39 years, serving as President in 2003.
- A member of Tatura Men’s Shed since 2020 and Treasurer in 2023.
- A member of Tatura - Rodney Masonic Lodge for 40 years.
- A volunteer driver at Tatura Hospital for approximately ten years.

This is the 38th year that Arthur has volunteered with Heartbeat Victoria - Goulburn Valley Branch, where he is currently Treasurer. This year he was honoured to receive the Senior Citizen Award for Tatura and District, at the Australia Day Ceremony on January 26th.



*A packed out Australia Day event in Tatura - it was a great honour to present the Tatura and District senior citizen of the year award to Arthur Fennell, who has contributed so much to the community, particularly in establishing 'Heartbeat Goulburn Valley' to support cardiac care after his own experiences with open heart surgery. People such as Arthur giving back to the community is a big part of what makes this such an amazing country.
Sam Birrell MP (Source: Facebook page)*





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

Goulburn Valley

Goulburn Valley Branch had its Christmas function as a social fundraising event in November 2023, as previously reported. For our December meeting, twenty two members met and enjoyed dinner and a social night together at the Peppermill Inn Hotel. Following dinner, we had a short meeting and a Christmas Trivia Quiz. This provided a lot of fun and discussion amongst each table group. The grand champion for Christmas-related knowledge was Jan Phillips and her table of course was the winner of the group prize as well.

At this meeting, members voted to invite clients attending the Goulburn Valley Health Cardiac Rehabilitation Program to our January 22nd Morning Coffee and provide their beverages. They will be given a written invitation before the event, and it is hoped this may encourage them to attend and see the benefits of what heart peer support offers.



February 5th was our first dinner meeting and education event for 2024. We watched, on You Tube, The Project story that featured Dr Elizabeth Paratz, cardiologist-researcher at the Baker Institute, following on from a recent article “Females less likely to be given CPR in public over exposure fears”. This video was very informative and created constructive discussion and some members wanting to have an update in CPR training organised for them. Members also watched a You Tube video, “The Heart and circulatory system – How the Heart Works”, followed by a quiz on this topic. Members said that they learned a lot from this experience, understanding more clearly the heart and circulatory function in relation to their individual heart health problems.

President Max Hyland (left) presented long serving member Gerald Quinn with a congratulatory 60th Wedding Anniversary card and small gift. All members shared a celebratory sponge cake and coffee to round of a very enjoyable evening of Heartbeat activities.

Bendigo

As part of Bendigo Branch’s Christmas events, members visited the Christmas hay bales at Tongala.



The speaker for the Bendigo Branch's January meeting was Barbara Lemin from Bendigo SES who gave a very informative presentation about the role of the SES and being prepared for an emergency, in particular fire or flood. Barbara talked about preparing your property, keeping yourself informed, identifying where you will go if you have to leave, having a 'go bag' and what to take with you.

The Branch has also been very proud to support Inglewood and Districts Health Services with a donation of approximately \$11,500 for the purchase of a rehabilitation treadmill for its new community rehabilitation centre.

Ballarat

Heartbeat Ballarat renewed sixty 2024 memberships in December 2023 and held three standout events to close out 2023.

- A members Meet & Eat Night at the Golf House Hotel, with special guest Kirsty Grinos, a clinical educator in resuscitation. Kirsty was a popular guest and a lively Q & A session followed Kirsty's presentation. Heartbeat Victoria's Vice President, Christine Rees, also attended and addressed the members.
- A traditional Christmas lunch event at the Ballarat Golf Club Bistro attended by 45 members. Photography graduate Jaime McMillian attended and provided a series of very professional souvenir photos. A jazz band played, lunch was delicious, and every member had a good time.
- There was a strong turnout for a Christmas event for Heartbeat walkers held at Ballarat Wildlife Park, in the company of free roaming kangaroos, koalas, wombats, Tasmanian Devils, eagles, giant tortoises, crocodiles and alligators and a large display of lizards and snakes.



Heartbeat Ballarat President Bernie and Ballarat Committee members Caroline, Ross, Jean, Liz, Cris, Arthur, and Rhonda at Heartbeat Ballarat Christmas Lunch at Ballarat Golf Club Bistro.

Heartbeat Ballarat members Deb, Maria, Jacy, Joy, Julie & Barry who are walk leaders.



Please send us your latest news for inclusion in the Winter 2024 edition of Heartbeat Happenings which will be published in May (please send to Vivien@heartbeatvictoria.org.au by Friday April 26, 2024.