



**Heartbeat
Victoria**

Heartbeat Happenings

Winter 2024



Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Christine Rees

Secretary: Barry Nixon

Treasurer: Karen Saccuzzo

Assistant Treasurer: Tamioka 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.

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In March this year, Heartbeat Victoria's President, Linda Macaulay, resigned her position as President and Board member, for personal reasons.

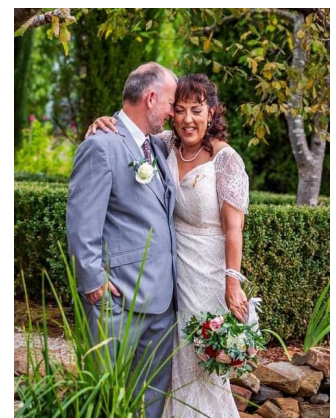
Current Vice-President, Christine Rees, will act as President, at least until the next Annual

General Meeting in September. Christine has long standing heart disease and was a nurse in her earlier days and says to members that "I hope I can serve you well".

A Message from the President

Thankyou Linda for sharing your time and energy with Heartbeat. You have held a number of roles on the Board and have worked to involve Heartbeat in some valuable partnerships which will help us have impact for the cardiac community into the future.

The Board and Heartbeat members would also like to congratulate you and Mark (Linda and Mark Braybrook are members of Ballarat Heartbeat and both have been Board members) on your wedding in April at Hepburn Springs and wish you every happiness in your new life together.



I encourage members to contact me if there is anything that I can help you, your branch, or the cardiac public with. Let's make sure the next generation has a better experience of all heart health, from prevention, diagnosis to treatment and beyond.

"We are all consumers, and we need to be heard to improve the system, education and facilities."



*Board
Business*



**Heartbeat
Victoria**

IS SEEKING ADDITIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc is an incorporated association run by volunteers and its Board of Management is seeking at least two additional Board members to support its role of creating and promoting cardiac peer support groups across Victoria for individuals living with heart disease or a heart condition and their families.

The role of a Board member is voluntary and will require attending bimonthly Board meetings and some Committee meetings, as well as attendance at some functions for members and assistance with specific Board functions, such as liaison with members and partners.

Building on the skills of its current Board members, Heartbeat Victoria is seeking new Board members with particular skills in information technology, website, social media and/or financial management.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Christine Rees at christine@heartbeatvictoria.org.au

Partnering with researchers

We hear a lot about secondary prevention and its importance, so what is it?

Secondary prevention aims to reduce the impact of the disease that has already occurred. This is achieved by detecting and treating the disease as soon as possible to stop or slow the disease process, then encouraging personal strategies to prevent recurrence of the disease and implementing programs to return people as close to their original health and function as possible.

In the case of heart disease this may include early detection (e.g. heart health check), education and health coaching, medication and rehabilitation.

Solve CHD is seeking to transform post-hospital care for people with heart disease through its multidisciplinary research team of researchers and clinicians with allied health, nursing, cardiology, public health, health economics and psychology backgrounds from across Australia. Of course, research cannot be complete without consumer input.

SOLVE CHD

Solve CHD's goal is to transform post-discharge secondary prevention and reduce the burden of heart disease by decreasing deaths, hospitalisations and costs via a program of work that integrates data, technology, partnerships and capacity building.

Heartbeat Victoria is currently exploring the opportunity of a partnership with Solve CHD to ensure that researchers have a better understanding of those living with a cardiac disease or condition and can gain data evidence to support the best outcomes for the cardiac community.

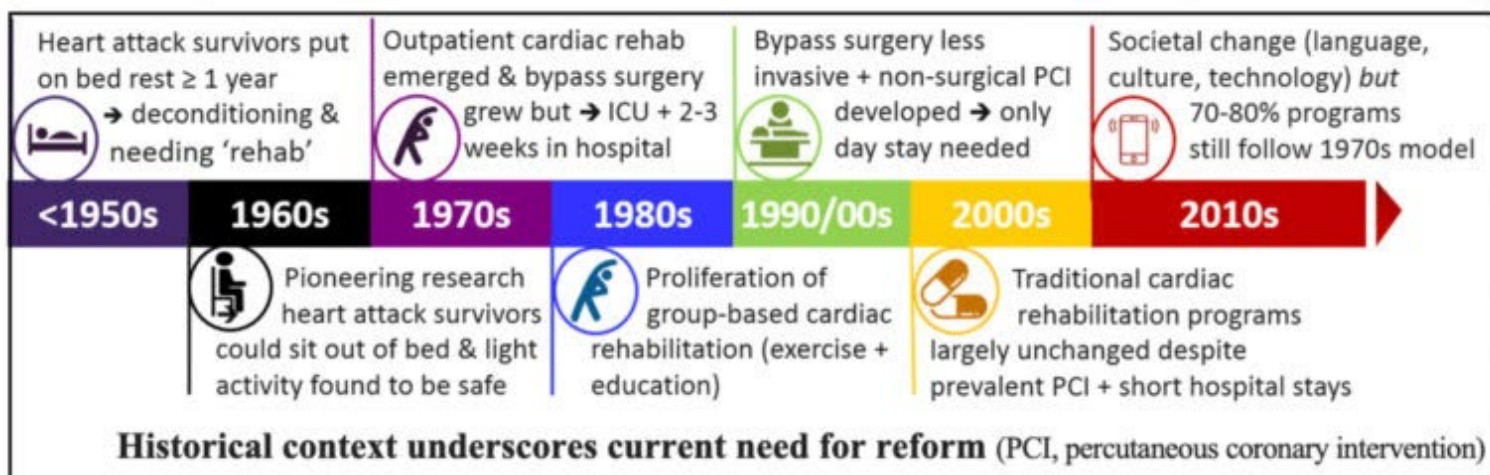
Background

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), including coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke, is the leading cause of death and disease burden globally. CVD resulted in greater than 1.1 million hospitalisations in 2015-16 and incurs the highest level of health care sector expenditure in Australia. Over 65,000 Australians experience an acute coronary event (heart attack or unstable angina) each year and importantly, many are preventable.

With an aging population, more people surviving initial events, and an epidemic of lifestyle-related health problems, the health burden is escalating globally. Most patients now survive an initial myocardial infarction (MI), have a short stay in-hospital and are discharged with minimal physical effects. Thus, improving post-discharge care through secondary prevention strategies (healthy living, adherence to medicines) is a current national and international priority.

The History of Cardiac Rehabilitation

Modern day “rehabilitation” was born at a time when bed rest and physical inactivity were recommended for people with heart disease. Most heart disease secondary prevention programs today continue to follow the 50-year-old model, despite fundamental changes in society and medical care.



More about SOLVE-CHD

SOLVE-CHD is a 5-year program of research work aimed at optimising access to and quality of secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. Since its establishment, it has commenced 14 projects that align with this goal and collaborated on 5 additional projects.

Its more specific objectives are to:

- Develop comprehensive, continuous and national data, with the aim to implement an Australian-first nationwide, electronic data collection and reporting platform for cardiac rehabilitation and secondary prevention programs;
- Support research that optimises access to and quality of secondary prevention; and
- Identify and cultivate multidisciplinary research capacity, community engagement and future health services researcher leaders.

An opportunity to be directly involved in one of Solve’s current projects is included on the following page and Heartbeat members are encouraged to read about it and get involved if eligible and interested.



OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER FOR A NEW RESEARCH STUDY

Our team of Australian researchers and clinicians is currently seeking volunteers to be part of an exciting new research study. We are working with Heartbeat Victoria to make the study available to as many people as we can.

The study aims to test if an online peer-support program (delivered via an app on your phone) is helpful and meaningful for patients. This is a world-first study of this type and will likely influence availability of future peer support programs.

To participate, you must be an adult diagnosed with heart disease in the past 12 months and have a mobile phone.

If you are willing to volunteer, half of the group will have access to the peer support app straight away and the other half will have access to the peer support app in 1 year. Our research team will also ask you to fill in some questionnaires about your heart health. When using the app, you will be able to access patient-friendly resources and to share your experiences with others in a similar position to yourself in an online forum that is moderated by healthcare professionals.

It takes less than 2 minutes to confirm if you are eligible and get started - click here [[survey link](#)] or scan the QR code.



We would also love to answer any questions you may have. For more information, please feel free to reach out to our friendly team members Wendy (wendan.shi@sydney.edu.au) or Joe (joseph.weddell@sydney.edu.au).





The importance of physical activity and exercise after a cardiac event

At the Heartbeat Goulburn Valley Branch April meeting, Chloe Carr, Exercise Physiologist at Goulburn Valley Health, delivered a very informative presentation about the importance of continuing physical activity and exercise following a cardiac event or diagnosis of cardiac condition.

Chloe outlined the history of cardiac rehabilitation. A study known as the Framingham Heart Study identified risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). That study followed a large cohort of residents in Framingham in the USA over several decades and several generations from 1948 and identified a variety of modifiable risk factors for CVD. Risk factors included high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, diabetes and physical inactivity, along with non-modifiable factors including age, gender and genetic disposition. These factors have subsequently become an integral part of primary and secondary prevention of CVD. This also increased the focus and emphasis on the importance of physical activity and exercise in addressing multiple risk factors.

Now fast forward to 2024 when, informed by a range of studies, cardiac rehabilitation protocols have changed and evolved.



Chloe Carr (centre) with members of Heartbeat Goulburn Valley

Why keep exercising?

Although the value of physical activity and exercise (a component of physical activity) is well established as a component of cardiac rehabilitation, it must be maintained beyond the structured cardiac rehabilitation program for optimum benefit.

Chloe talked about the benefits of exercise, explaining the different range and types of exercise and how it must be suitable for the individual's level of health. Types of heart conditions, potential barriers to exercise for each and solutions were discussed by the group.

The benefits of exercise include:

- Improved heart strength
- Prevention of blood clotting and blood vessels narrowing further
- Improved physical function and wellbeing
- Improved respiratory function- reduced shortness of breath
- Improved exercise tolerance (cardiovascular, strength, balance and flexibility)
- Decreased blood pressure and cholesterol
- Improved recovery from heart attack or other heart problems
- Reduced risk of secondary cardiac events
- Improved long term health
- Improved energy levels
- Weight management
- Stronger bones (lower risk of osteoporosis)
- Assistance with management of blood glucose for those with diabetes.

Exercise guidelines and the importance of signs or symptoms of when to stop exercising were outlined and discussed by the group, followed by the benefits of exercise maintenance and general tips to enjoy safe physical activity and exercise.

Members asked some interesting questions and thanked Chloe for a valuable and informative presentation.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK – 20-26 MAY 2024

National Volunteer Week is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering.
The theme for 2024 is "Something for Everyone"



The Board of Heartbeat Victoria thanks all affiliate and branch committees and member volunteers for the time, commitment and energy that you give to supporting Heartbeat's aims.

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

Sunraysia

Heartbeat Sunraysia has made a generous donation of \$8000 to Mildura Base Public Hospital for the purchase of an ultrasound probe which will be primarily used for vascular ultrasound procedures, such as finding veins for taking blood and inserting lines.

Clinical nurse consultant Greg Plummer said the hospital is very appreciative of Heartbeat Sunraysia's donations because the portable ultrasound machine is a very valuable asset not just for them, but for the entire community.



Heartbeat Sunraysia's Elaine and Jeff Gregory present their donation to Mildura Base Public Hospital clinical nurse consultants Greg Plummer



Heartbeat Sunraysia present a donation to Ross Skinner

Through its long-term partnership with the Almond Board of Australia, and in particular the 520-kilometre Murray to Moyne Charity Ride, a donation of \$10,000 has also been made to Riverland General Hospital.

This year's Almonds for Heart cyclists and three support crew took on the

520km ride from the Murray River in Mildura to the Moyne River in Port Fairy over two days in April. The team of four units of five riders rode in relay fashion completing four 30-kilometre legs on the first day and the whole team was able to complete the final 90 kilometres from Hamilton to Port Fairy on the second day.

The Almond Board of Australia partners with Heartbeat Sunraysia as its charity for the ride and works with the Heartbeat Committee and the regional hospitals in deciding on the equipment to be purchased with the funds raised from the ride.

Bendigo



In April, Bendigo's Spring Gully Dance Group held one of its regular fundraisers, this time for Heartbeat Bendigo. Over one hundred people attended the Sunday afternoon event, including several members of Heartbeat Bendigo who, while not dancers, thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and the delicious afternoon tea.



Spring Gully Dance Group has been organising dances every Saturday night for 65 years and holds regular dances on Monday nights and holds occasional Sunday dances to raise funds for local charities. This social, friendly, ballroom dancing is very beneficial for physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

At the conclusion of the afternoon, Frank Ward, President of Heartbeat Bendigo, was presented with a total of \$3165!

Heartbeat Bendigo was also very excited to receive a \$4000 Volunteer Grant from the Australian Government via the Federal Member for Bendigo, Lisa Chesters MP, and hopes to be able to celebrate receipt of the grant at an event for grant recipients to be held during National Volunteer Week later in May.



The grant supports the purchase of a range of eligible items that will benefit the volunteers in Heartbeat Bendigo.

Ballarat



Diane and Barry from Heartbeat Ballarat with Mary and Anita from Ballarat Floral Art Group

Heartbeat Ballarat members Barry, Deb and Diane attended the March meeting of the Ballarat Floral Art Group and received a donation of \$4,000. Mary, Anita, and their members hosted a varied and delicious morning tea. Heartbeat Ballarat sincerely thanks Mary Doyle and the Ballarat Floral Art Group for their generous support and friendship.

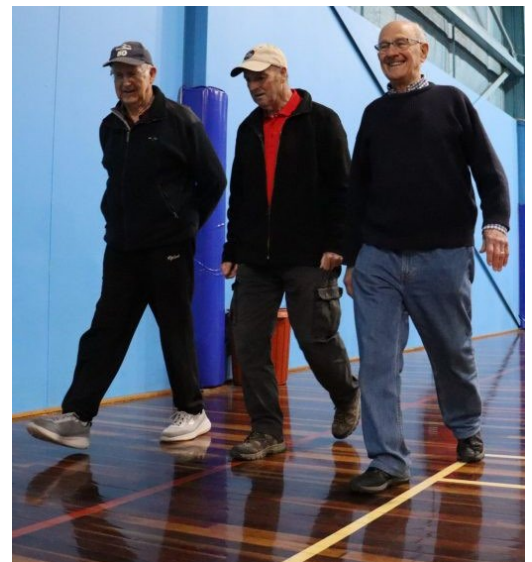
Ballarat Heartbeat's Friday walking group has a weekly booking for thirty in Pipers Café.

The walking group's catchy motto is "Walk, Talk, Coffee, and Repeat".



**WALK
TALK COFFEE
REPEAT**

Edwina Williams captured this photo (right) of Geoff McLean, Ross Wiggins and Kevin Huf raising their heart rates, walking indoors with Heartbeat Ballarat in the Ken Kay Badminton Stadium.



Popular Ballarat GP, Nicholas Bredenkamp, was guest speaker at the April Heartbeat Meal and Meet.

Ballarat members participated in a lively Q & A session and asked Dr Nick about chronic disease (e.g., Diabetes and obesity), and the availability of health screening. There were also questions about preventative health, geriatric, general and plant-based medicine.

Dr Nick is a foodie and enjoys cooking - and pampering his cat.

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