



# ILLAWARRA CANCER CARERS<sup>INC</sup>



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## NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2026

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello once again!

As the year rolls on, we can finally say goodbye to Summer and hello to Autumn and Easter, which are both just around the corner. Lots of bunnies and eggs are in the shops, not to mention hot cross buns. With the price of chocolate these days, I think some of us will need to beg, borrow or steal to pay for them. And don't get me started on the price of petrol!!!

We had a lovely presentation a week or so ago of a Bladder Scanner to Wollongong Hospital. The staff were all so surprised as none of them knew it was coming. It's a great feeling to be able to present a Ward with a machine that they have been wanting for so long and now there's no need to borrow one from another section of the Hospital. Plus, it's good to let you all know where the money has been spent.

Just a bit of sad news as well. We recently lost our very first Life Member, Audrey Walsh, back in January and more recently, her husband Jim also passed away. Jim had a private funeral and our thoughts and condolences go to his family. And lastly as April approaches, enjoy your April Fool's Day, Easter and Anzac Day.

*Narelle Langridge  
Your President*

### IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO BE READY FOR WINTER

Garry (the dog) has just purchased one of our doggy jumpers and is all set for the cooler weather.



### UPDATE FROM OUR SPONSORED RESEARCH ASSISTANT

ICC have funded wages for Cancer Research Assistant, Chelsea Penney, for the last five years. Chelsea has reached out to advise that she is now moving on and has asked to share the below with ICC members.

"I hope you have been well!

I am reaching out to share some exciting news, and to say thank you. As I take the next steps in my career as a Cancer Researcher, I've accepted a new position with a company called Racura Oncology. This company is developing a very promising drug that could potentially be used to treat multiple cancer types, with several clinical trials currently underway. In this role, I'll still be working here in the laboratory space at the University of Wollongong, and I'll just be down the corridor!

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude to the Illawarra Cancer Carers, for your endless support over the past five years. Thank you for the generous salary support, for inspiring me to work hard, and for believing in me.

I would love to stay in touch and will continue to come to our morning teas (I'll make sure to bring cake!). Best wishes, from Chelsea."

The below link is shared to provide an inspiring update into the work undertaken by early career researchers at UOW laying groundwork for the future of cancer treatments.

<https://www.uow.edu.au/the-stand/2026/meet-the-researchers-advancing-cancer-research.php>



## IAN MACKAY AWARDED OAM

ICC member, Ian Mackay, was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for outstanding service to the community of the Illawarra.

This well-deserved recognition is a testament to his remarkable record of leadership and community commitment over many decades. Ian's involvement as a foundation member and President of the University of Wollongong Cricket Club, his enduring contributions through the Lions Club of Figtree and the Illawarra Cancer Carers, he has exemplified values of generosity, integrity and dedication to others.

*Congratulations for this well-deserved award!*

## AVAILABLE MOBILITY STOCK

We have plenty of stock available at our Workshop at Port Kembla.



- Wheelchairs - manual and electric
- Mobility Scooters
- Walkers
- Toilet Risers and Shower Chairs
- Cushions, Transfer Slides, Crutches and Walking Sticks

The cost to current cancer patients for an electric wheelchair or mobility scooter is \$50.

To all others, this cost varies, but very cheap. It would be great to clear excess stock and to assist those with needs.

**Call Keith direct on 0412 466 017 for further details.**

## A NEW ADDITION BRINGS JOY TO THE WARD AT WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL



Thanks to the generous support of the Illawarra Cancer Carers, staff on Ward A5 are celebrating the arrival of a new bladder scanner – an addition that will help improve timely care for patients. The device, funded after the Illawarra Cancer Carers heard about the challenges staff had been facing without a scanner. After learning how important the equipment was to patient care, the group gave the purchase an “easy tick of approval” at their meeting. Once the scanner arrived at the Hospital, it was kept under wraps and carefully hidden within the Division of Surgery to ensure the ward team would be completely surprised when it was officially presented.

Judy Mercer and Cathy Haney from the Illawarra Cancer Carers personally delivered the machine, arriving to squeals of joy as staff gathered at the entrance of the Ward to celebrate the long-awaited equipment.

Also in attendance were Gordon Stephens and Sarah Zia from Biomedical. Sarah had decommissioned two bladder scanners in June 2025 and recalled how staff were “devastated” when they were taken out of service. Gordon, who built the new scanner, came along to see where it would be used. Since 2023 when the supplier support ended, Biomedical navigated fixing probes being dropped and broken, calibration, buttons no longer working, battery replacements and mobile stands being damaged. News of the scanner quickly spread among the team on A5. Off-duty staff began sending messages of disbelief, asking, “Is that ours to keep?” and declaring it’s “what dreams are made of!”

The team has since named their new Bladder Scanner “Vera,” christened on the very day it arrived.

## WOLLONGONG LADIES GOLF DAY



*Jeanette Emmerich, Craig Osborne RMB Lawyers (major sponsor of the day), and our volunteer Ann Kershaw*

On 19 March Wollongong Ladies Golf held their yearly fundraiser for the Illawarra Cancer Carers Lymphoedema Support Group.

The major sponsor for the day was RMB Lawyers, Craig Osborne OAM, Managing Partner along with Wollongong Golf Club and the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole providing the venue.

With their continued support we can provide Lymphoedema treatment to the people of the Illawarra who have a Lymphoedema diagnosis. This year volunteers from the clinic's morning tea room attended to show the social support of the clinic, where clients can chat and have a cuppa.

The final fundraising figure update will be available in the next Newsletter.



*Amanda with winner of the Gloria Swift Trophy*

## TRAUMA TEDDIES

ICC volunteers have recently made contact with staff at the Ronald McDonald Family Room at Wollongong Hospital and were asked if ICC members could supply the children with some Trauma Teddies. Of course, these volunteers weren't going to let them down and delivered a bundle of brightly coloured teddies, which went down like a treat.



They have since been contacted to let them know that a family with 6-day old twin girls in ICU being visited by their Dad and two brothers, did not go alone! The family selected a couple of teddies to take to the newborn twins and kept a couple for themselves!

Staff and families visiting the Ronald McDonald Family Room are very appreciative of these teddies.

*Thank you ladies!!!*

## LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC

The upcoming Clinic at the Ribbonwood Centre dates are as follows:

10 & 24 April	8 & 22 May
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Should you require further information then please contact Jeanette on 0423 135 342.

We are always looking for more volunteers, even if you would like to make a cuppa and have a chat with some of our clients – please reach out.

*Jeanette Emmerich  
Lymphoedema Support Clinic Co-Ordinator*

## GET ON BOARD AND HELP MAKE "COMPASSION/MEMORY HEARTS"

With the assistance of a few ICC volunteers (thanks Vera & Judy) Sonia Jennings has instigated a new project for Cancer Carer volunteers. Please consider being involved in knitting or crocheting a Memory Heart.

These hearts are often called "Compassion" or "Memory" hearts.

They provide comfort to patients and their families in Palliative Care. The heart is held in the hands of the patient and loved one, symbolising connection. It usually goes home with the loved one.

You can access the patterns on our website at: <https://illawarracancer carers.org.au/sewing-craft-stalls>



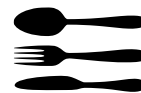
This link provides a crochet pattern and a knitting pattern for the Hearts, which volunteers can then download. If you do not have access to a computer or printer, please contact Vera on 0413 548 983 and a copy will be mailed direct to you.

**UOW PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH STORY** - The Shaping Australia Awards recognised university initiatives that deliver real-world impact. For your interest the link is below:  
<https://www.uow.edu.au/media/2026/pancreatic-cancer-treatment-innovation-wins-national-peoples-choice-award.php>

## NAME BADGES

Members are encouraged to wear a name badge while representing our group in their various roles. If you are new to the group, or yours is looking a little shabby, then a new one can be purchased from Gala Trophies (3 Ellen Street Wollongong) for \$12.50. Gala Trophies are a family run business and are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm during weekdays.

**GETTING TO KNOW YOU SOCIAL LUNCHEONS** are held at the Builders Club in Church Street, Wollongong during 2026. It's a great opportunity to meet other members who are involved within other roles with the Illawarra Cancer Carers. There is no need to book, just come along and join us – you deserve a break! We look forward to seeing you there for an informal get together on 8 April.



## LATE BLOOMERS LUNCHEONS

The next Late Bloomers luncheon will be held at the Collegians Illawarra Leagues Club in Church Street, Wollongong opposite McCabe Park on 4 May 2026. This is a great opportunity to meet "yesterdays" carers, who are now not necessarily active members, but love to keep in touch with current members. Why not come along, share your stories, enjoy good company and have a nice meal.

**All are welcome!!**

## McGRATH FOUNDATION CRUISE

Even while taking a break from her volunteering duties, Sandra was still supporting a cancer initiative.

"I was invited to take part in a McGrath Foundation cruise. The ship was donating \$200 per passenger to the Foundation. Included were a high tea, dinner and show, plus other activities. There were also very interesting talks from Tracy Bevan, Foundation Ambassador and Director, explaining how she and Jane McGrath set up the Foundation in her kitchen and how it has since grown, and what they now do. Tracy spends a great deal of her time travelling around the country speaking at different events to raise awareness about the vital role the Foundation plays in funding McGrath Cancer Care Nurses in the community. While attending the various events



on the cruise, we were asked to wear pink, which had other passengers curious as to why so many wore pink on those particular days, which was a great conversation starter."

## C7 WARD VERY HAPPY WITH THEIR NEW EQUIPMENT

Narelle and Judy recently had the pleasure of presenting a SonoSite Ultrasound machine to C7 Ward, which was purchased by ICC. What an impressive gadget. Narelle offered her arm and we were given a display of what it can do as Annie found all the veins in her arm. A large green circle appeared over the best one and it told them it was 1.1cm from the surface and which gauge needle to use. Other coloured circles were also seen which were smaller and included red ones with a cross for arteries. The joy on their faces was evident at what we were seeing. Staff had been told not to use it until the official handover, however a patient 3 days earlier, had veins that were hiding and was about to be sent to have a pick line put in. He loves to surf and wouldn't be able to with that in, so they used the machine and found a vein. One very happy patient who can now continue surfing.

The machine is the envy of many and will be kept hidden, but will be shared with the Oncology Unit in the Cancer Care Centre. Staff in C7 will undertake a one-day training course to use it as Annie is currently the only one who can. It was a real privilege to gift such an amazing new 'toy' to staff who were so excited to receive it.

Nursing Unit Manager, Melanie Sellers, was extremely grateful and has said: "To Our Dear Cancer Carers – on behalf of ISLHD Cancer services, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for your generous donation of the SonoSite ultrasound machine named "Jarelle" (after Judy and Narelle).

This invaluable equipment will significantly enhance our ability to deliver timely, safe, and high-quality care to our patients. Its portability and precision will improve patient comfort and contribute to better outcomes.



*Narelle & Judy very proudly handing over the new Ultrasound machine to Annie & Mel*

Your continued support and commitment to improving the patient experience in cancer care is deeply appreciated.

Donations such as yours make a meaningful difference not only to our service, but to every patient and family we care for. Thank you again for your generosity and dedication."

Amanda Paloff (ISLHD – Operations Manager) has also voiced her gratitude: "On behalf of our patients, families, and staff, I would like to sincerely thank you for your incredibly generous donation of the SonoSite Ultrasound machine.

This donation will make a meaningful and immediate difference to the care we provide. Access to bedside ultrasound greatly enhances our ability to deliver timely, safe, and compassionate care, particularly for patients undergoing cancer treatment who often require complex and sensitive procedures. Your support directly contributes to improved patient comfort, clinical efficiency, and better outcomes.

We are deeply grateful to the Cancer Carers for your continued commitment to supporting people affected by cancer and the clinicians who care for them. Your generosity reflects a genuine partnership with our service and a shared dedication to providing the very best care possible during what can be an extremely challenging time for patients and their loved ones."

## GET WELL WISHES

Unfortunately, we have quite a number of members who are currently "out of action" due to illness or recent surgery. Cards and well wishes have been sent to these members, and we are hoping you are recovering quickly.

If you are aware of any other members feeling a little "under the weather", then please contact us so we can send a card and let them know their friends from ICC are wishing them all the best for a speedy recovery.



## EXCITING NEWS

Hot off the press – we will be having a shop again. This year you will find us at Figtree Grove, just opposite the Fish Market. We will be all set up and ready to go from Tuesday 7 April right through to Friday 1 May 2026. You will find our amazing volunteers, along with a smorgasbord of goodies from 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday and from 10.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday and Sunday.

If you would like to volunteer to be rostered on at the shop, then contact Narelle on 0414 280 127. Maybe you're not able to help, but you are happy to whip up a batch of jam or pickles and then drop them down, then that will be very much appreciated as well.

Make sure to tell all your friends and family about our shop – great opportunity to pick up something nice for Mother's Day, or maybe a new rug or scarf for Winter.

As soon as the shop is finished and all packed up, we will have a few days break before commencing working at our Mother's Day Gift Wrapping stalls.

We will be back at Figtree Grove on May 7, 8 & 9 from 10.00am to 4.00pm wrapping all of those gifts for Mother's Day, each for a gold coin donation. We will also have raffle tickets to purchase, so don't miss out on the chance to win one of our amazing gift baskets.

Of course, we will also be at Dapto Mall on Saturday 9 May from 10.00am to 4.00pm, right at the top of the travelator, all set up and ready to wrap your Mother's Day gifts, each for a gold coin donation. We will also have some of our lovely handmade items for sale, which would also make a lovely gift for a Mum or someone special in your life.



## TOUR DE CURE DINNER & PRESENTATION

On Monday 30 March, both Judy Mercer and I attended a donation dinner hosted by Tour de Cure. We were lucky to be the recipients of \$10,000 which was raised from one of their great bike riding events. That money will go towards helping out our drivers.



*Judy & Narelle accepting the \$10,000 cheque from Tour de Cure*

There were over 160 bike riders and support crew at the dinner, and it was a great night. They showed plenty of interest in what the Illawarra Cancer Carers do as the majority of the riders were from Sydney and a lot from interstate as well. They were very impressed that we are all volunteers and the money we raise remains here in the Illawarra.

Tour de Cure in conjunction with Westpac, help cancer research in Australia by holding cycle tours, walks, runs, swims, virtual and gala events and since 2007, they have raised over \$160 million.

If you are interested in joining a bike ride somewhere or just to find out more, just Google "Tour de Cure". There is so much information on their website about what they have achieved and what they are continuing to fund.

We thank Tour de Cure for their generous donation.

