



ILLAWARRA CANCER CARERS^{INC}



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NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone – it's been a busy and rewarding time for the Illawarra Cancer Carers since I last wrote with plenty of donations, new members and activity and it's always wonderful to see us getting recognition as I believe we fully deserve it.

We're especially pleased to welcome quite a few new volunteer drivers, new sewing ladies and members in general to the group. Your support and enthusiasm are already making a meaningful difference and we're so grateful to have you on board.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting plans in the works, and I am sure some of those plans will be mentioned in this newsletter, so a good reason to read it cover to cover. We'll continue our Committee and Open Meetings regularly and everyone is more than welcome to come along to the Open Meetings, with our next one scheduled for Monday 17 August, 2026.

As we speak, we are in the process of organising some large-scale advertising to show the people of the Illawarra that we exist and we aren't the Cancer Council, as a lot of people get us confused. Keep your eyes peeled when you are out and about in the coming weeks, especially on the back of our local Premier buses!!!

As always, our group is about more than just what we do – it's about the friendships, support and sense of community we build together. Whether you've been with us for a few weeks, a few years or forever, thank you.

***Narelle Langridge
Your President***

OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO CROWN DIAMOND JEWELLERS

Zak Inan is an Australian businessman and owner of Crown Diamond Jewellers, located in Crown Street Mall, Wollongong. Together with his family, he operates the business and has been a dedicated supporter of the Illawarra Cancer Carers fundraising activities for more than 19 years. Zak made his first donation in 2007 at the Gleniffer Brae fundraising event and has continued his generosity at our annual functions held at a variety of venues, including the City Beach Function Centre, High Tea events at Wollongong Golf Club, and most recently, our upcoming High Tea at The Fraternity Club.

For many years, his donated jewellery pieces were awarded as prizes in our popular Heads and Tails game. Over the past two years, however, Zak's donations have become the first prize in our major raffle, the quality of his contributions and his ongoing commitment to our cause is incomparable.

We are extremely grateful for Zak's unwavering generosity and support over the past 19 years. His contributions have helped make our fundraising events successful and have played an important role in supporting the work of the Illawarra Cancer Carers within our community.



MEMORY HEARTS

As many of you know, since February this year we have been crocheting and knitting **Compassion Hearts**, also known as **Memory Hearts**. These small but meaningful gifts provide comfort to patients and their loved ones during times of grief and loss. The heart is held by the patient and the loved one, symbolising an enduring connection during difficult moments.

This initiative has been made possible through the dedication of many volunteers. From crocheting and knitting the hearts, stuffing them, creating new designs, and donating the bags and tags that accompany each one, every contribution has played an important part in the program's success. It is truly a team effort, and I extend my sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

The distribution of the hearts has also required a great deal of co-ordination. Judy Mercer has been delivering hearts to Wollongong Hospital, where Social Worker, Chinnu, has been instrumental in raising awareness among the hospital's Complex and Critical Care team Nurse Unit Managers about the value and impact of the hearts. Petrina Chalker has also helped extend the program by introducing the hearts to the Palliative Care wards at Bulli and Berry Hospitals.

I would like to share one particularly touching story that highlights the significance of this initiative. A mother who made the difficult decision to surrender her newborn baby received a Memory Heart from the nursing staff. One heart was wrapped inside the baby's clothing while the infant slept, and when the mother left the ward, she was given the heart. She was deeply grateful for this precious keepsake, which provided a tangible connection to her child and a source of comfort during an incredibly emotional time. Stories such as this remind us of the profound impact these simple hearts can have. Through kindness, compassion and the generosity of our volunteers, we are helping to bring comfort, connection and support to people when they need it most.

Our hearts have even been utilised at the St George Hospital and we have received a lovely thank you note from the Social Work Department: "We would like to give you a massive thanks for your kindness in the donation of the Compassion Hearts. We are so grateful to have received them.

It is absolutely touching to be given something so full of love, which will help us care for patients. Spreading love in the world is honorary and we can't thank you enough. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this lovely mission, your time, effort and care is enormous, and sincerely valued. It is only with the support of individuals, such as yourselves, that we can continue missions such as this. So, thank you again for choosing to be wonderful and donating compassionately."

The patterns for our Memory Hearts can be found on our website, should this be something that may interest you and we always have plenty of wool at Dapto Showground every Friday morning.

Sonia Jennings
"Memory Hearts Co-Ordinator"

GRATITUDE FOR OUR DRIVERS

Driving patients to their treatment is the biggest commitment for the Illawarra Cancer Carers. In 2025, we transported 2014 patients to and from their treatment. Our drivers volunteer between 2 and 25 hours of their time each week to provide this service.

The patients are very thankful for the service and don't know how they would get to and from without our help. The need is so great that the Cancer Care Centre is now opening on Saturdays for appointments.

Most of you may have seen the story on WIN TV or Facebook recently in search of additional drivers. I am pleased to say it had the desired effect, and 6 new drivers have been trained with more to come.

We need to recognise the commitment and service of all our drivers and offer our thanks to them all. Additionally, a huge thanks to the Transport Co-ordinators, Jill and Margaret, who complete a massive task every week in allocating transport and answering the huge number of phone calls and emails that pour in.

If you are a driver, please know your time and effort to this invaluable service is recognised and valued.

**YOU ARE ALL
CHAMPIONS!!!**



Judy Mercer
Driver Trainer

STALLS RETURNING TO WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

Fantastic news – at long last we will finally be returning to the hospital with our very popular stalls. We have not been there since prior to COVID and are excited to once again return. We have decided to wait until after our major fundraiser, so we can fully focus on this, but come September, we will be back in full swing. You will find us on the ground floor on the third Thursday of every month.

OUR MAJOR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER IS OUR BLACK & WHITE HIGH TEA

Our Black & White High Tea at The Fraternity Club is fast approaching (30 August 2026). Our High Tea tickets are completely sold out – thank you to all of you who have purchased tickets.



We have a Major Raffle with some great prizes. 14 Carat White Gold & Diamond Ladies Ring and 9 Carat White Gold & Diamond Earrings (valued

at \$2000) donated by Crown Diamond Jewellers, large mixed media artwork, electrical package donated by Harvey Norman Warrawong, timber hall table donated by SEL-f-LESS Furniture Outlet, king size cotton sheet set and underlay from Forty Winks and a Skydive Australia voucher for a tandem skydive. Tickets are \$5 each and are on sale now.

Don't forget you'll also find us selling our raffle tickets at The Fraternity Club on Wednesday 5 August from 11.00am to 2.00pm and also at the Illawarra Steelers Club on Wednesday 29 July from 4.00pm to 8.00pm, Wednesday 5 August from 4.00pm to 8.00pm, Friday 7 August from 4.00pm to 8.00pm, Wednesday 12 August from 4.00pm to 8.00pm and Friday 14 August from 4.00pm to 8.00pm.

If you wish to donate something or know of someone who would like to donate a voucher or prize towards our High Tea, or even if you would like to purchase some raffle tickets, then give me a call on 0416 104 274.

Lisa Smith
High Tea Co-Ordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & THANKS FROM UOW

On behalf of the University of Wollongong, thank you for your recent generous contribution to support cancer research at UOW. Your contribution will directly support the continuation of Ruby Shepherd's Research Assistant position in the Targeted Cancer Therapeutics Laboratory.



We are deeply grateful for the Illawarra Cancer Carers' long-standing commitment to our cancer research program. For many years, your members have stood alongside our researchers, helping to ensure we have the people and resources needed to drive discovery and improve outcomes for people affected by cancer in our region and beyond.

Your latest gift will provide vital continuity for Ruby's role, sustaining the capacity of Associate Professor Kara Vine-Perrow and the team to progress multiple research projects. This stability is especially important in maintaining momentum, supporting promising new lines of enquiry, and enabling the team to respond quickly to emerging opportunities that can translate into better diagnostics and treatments.

Over many years, a genuine and valued partnership has grown between Illawarra Cancer Carers and our cancer research team, and it is always a pleasure to meet with your members and share how your generosity is making a difference. Associate Professor Vine-Perrow and the team are very much looking forward to joining one of your meetings to introduce Ruby and provide a further update on the impact of your support.

Thank you once again for your generosity, your trust, and your enduring partnership with the University of Wollongong. Your support continues to make a real and tangible difference to our cancer research efforts and to the lives of patients and families in our community.

Norman Bradshaw
Associate Director
Advancement
University of Wollongong

ICC JACKETS

Some of our embroidered jackets have arrived and look pretty good. We've still got some cold weather ahead of us, so I'm sure they will get a lot of use. We've already had some feedback – "Great fit, very comfortable and can feel the quality in it. Love it!!"

Some of the sewing ladies were keen to try them on and show the others how snug and warm they are.



We're still taking orders for the jackets, which are very reasonably priced at \$35 for a hooded one, or \$30 without a hood. Just give Lisa Smith a call on 0416 104 274 and she will order one for you. We hope to have a small stock of these available to purchase in the near future.

THANKS, FROM LESLIE ADIE



I would like to thank all the fellow carers for all their phone calls, emails, text messages and visits during my time off. I am doing well and hope to be back on duty in the Cancer Centre in August. THANK YOU!!

TURBAN GIFT PACKS

The sewing ladies have been busy putting together turban gift packs, which have recently been delivered to the Oncology Day Care Centres at Wollongong Private Hospital and Wollongong Public Hospital to be distributed to the patients.

These gift packs consist of one of our turbans, a soap saver, a hot/cold wheat pack and/or a neck scarf or a face mask, which are very much appreciated by the recipients.



TRAUMA TEDDIES

The Ronald McDonald Family Room in Wollongong Hospital have been very appreciative of our Trauma Teddies and are always looking for more, so if this is something that may interest you, or even the Banana in Pyjamas, then a copy of these patterns can be found on our website, or alternatively contact Vera and she can post a copy to you.



Don't forget if you need any wool to make these, then call into Dapto Showground any Friday morning and one of the lovely sewing ladies will be more than happy to assist you with finding some.

BLANKETS & BEANIES CAMPAIGN

This Winter, Oak Flats Bowling Club invited the community to join them and donate new beanies and blankets in support of their “Blankets and Beanies” campaign.



Every donation will help bring comfort to someone sleeping rough this Winter, so the Illawarra Cancer Carers' sewing ladies stepped in and donated a large number of their beanies to help out, which were very much appreciated.

GET WELL WISHES

If you are aware of any 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.



ILLAWARRA LYMPHOEDEMA SUPPORT GROUP

Please join us at our next meeting on Tuesday 18 August at the The Fraternity Club, commencing at 10.15am. To RSVP, please contact Jenny Scoufis on 0499 919 722, Amanda Scott on 0424 158 344 or email them on illawarralaa@gmail.com

You are invited to gather after the support group meeting as the venue features a café with lunch options, providing an excellent opportunity to connect and catch up following the meeting.

The following meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 September.

AN AFTERNOON IN PARIS

Recently, several of our ladies spent an “afternoon in Paris” – not really, but we did attend a delightful high tea with a Parisian theme. Mention the word “Paris” and you will find Jeanette Emmerich, who was first to put her hand up to attend the event on behalf of ICC (for those of you who don’t know Jeanette, she is more than a little obsessed with anything to do with Paris).

A couple of days after the event we received a lovely message from the organisers, Sim and Mel (Melissah Gervaise is the General Manager of Poppets Direct in North Wollongong).



They thanked us for attending their Afternoon in Paris High Tea and advised that with the help of their amazing prize donors, sponsors, guests, volunteers, and supporters, they were thrilled to announce that they will be donating \$6,750 to the Illawarra Cancer Carers.

MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

Barrie Lewis and the boys continue to hold down the fort in Keith’s absence and have oodles of equipment ready to lease out.

Give Barrie a call on 0438 842 756 should you, or someone you know, require our assistance and wish to lease a wheelchair, walker, shower chair, commode etc.



POSSIBLE NEW VENUE

After many, many years of working out of the Pavilion at the Dapto Showground, the sewing ladies might be looking for a new venue.

The Groundz is currently seeking Expressions of Interest from operators looking to establish a recreation, sport, fitness or leisure-based business and lease the Pavilion. Alternative proposals are also welcome, so we have lodged our own EOI and are waiting on the outcome.

In the meantime, if you have a relative, friend or neighbour in the real estate industry that is in the know for available commercial properties, we may need to contact them, as we don't want to be caught out without a suitable venue.

Alternatively, you may know of a hall or large area that may suit our needs (please let Narelle Langridge know if you have a suggestion or a recommendation for someone who may be able to assist us). Please remember that we have a huge amount of haberdashery items and stock that would need to be stored away. Ideally, the property would also have a large, flat parking area, which would be utilised by the ladies attending the sewing group, along with members of the public dropping off donations or calling in to purchase items; particularly when we have our Christmas Market each year.

LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC

The upcoming Clinics at the Ribbonwood Centre dates are as follows (unfortunately, we have had to cancel our September 11 clinic):

14 & 28 August	25 September
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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

NEWS ABOUT THE CANCER CARE CENTRE

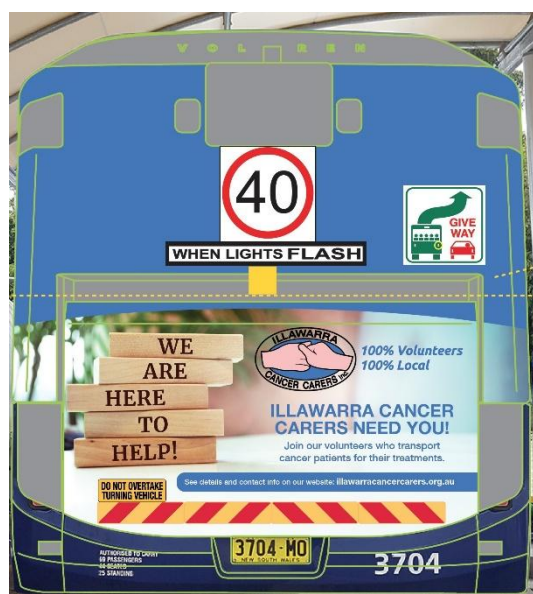
Firstly, can I remind our volunteers about confidentiality agreements, and to please refrain from talking about patients. This is obviously a requirement of all our volunteers, no matter where their roles are undertaken.

Secondly, as some of you may already be aware, the Oncology Day Care Centre at Wollongong Hospital is now also open on a Saturday, so we are looking for volunteers to assist in the centre. There will be less patients on a Saturday compared to Monday to Friday, so only one volunteer will be required. If you have some spare time and are interested, then please give me a call on 0407 899 783.

Leslie Adie
Cancer Centre Volunteer Co-Ordinator

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Due to the need to acquire new volunteer drivers, and now additional volunteers in the Cancer Care Centre of a Saturday, we have recently undertaken further advertising. Keep your eye out as on the back of a couple of Premier buses, you will see this advertisement. Not only is it seeking more volunteers, but it will have a dual purpose of promoting our group in general with further community awareness.



FURTHER THANKS

We have received several thank you notes I would like to share with you:

1. To Sandra and the lovely sewing ladies – thank you so much for making the turbans for me. I love them all. Thanks once again – Chris
2. To all the members of the Illawarra Cancer Carers – many thanks for your ‘speedy recovery’ card I received. To the voluntary drivers; Peter, Paul, Jill, Chris, Liz, Carol, Rob, Brian and John – you all passed your ‘aged driving tests’ HA HA!! Love from Denise (former Driving School Teacher for 32 years)
3. Thank you again for letting me know about your wheelchair hire group. I took my Nan to the Easter Show in her wheelchair, and she just had the best day; she glowed from that outing for about a week afterwards. It has also meant she was able to easily attend her 80th birthday celebration and other events, while still undertaking her cancer treatments – Amy

CANCER PATIENT SUPPORT GROUP ILLAWARRA

An art group runs every Monday morning from 9.00am to midday in the Scribbly Gum Room at the Ribbonwood Centre. This is an opportunity for some respite from the cares of living with cancer. Relax, enjoy a laugh, share some companionship and discover your hidden talents. To register please phone Faye on 0417 042 762 or Irma on 0403 695 764.

NAME BADGES

Members are encouraged to wear a name badge while representing our group in their various roles (you can choose if you would like your whole name or just your first). 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.



ROLLER DERBY DAY

We have been invited to attend a Roller Derby Day – not something you would normally associate with the Illawarra Cancer Carers. No, you won’t find us with our roller skates on, but you will find us with a stall full of goodies for sale on the day.

The sewing ladies have been busy making all their usual goodies for the stall but have even gone beyond these and are whipping up a batch of “bootie” shorts for the skaters to purchase, along with some embroidered “sweat” towels.

If you are looking for something to do on Saturday 15 August, or haven’t been to a roller derby day before, then why not call into the Illawarra Sports & Community Precinct at Berkeley, as that is where the Wollongong Illawarra Roller Derby will be holding a Breast Cancer Fundraiser. The day commences around 12 noon and goes through till about 4.00pm. The juniors will play, then the adults and additional entertainment will be provided by the Illawarra Artistic Roller Skating Club. Food will be available to purchase from the cafeteria and seating is limited, so you might want to bring your own chair or cushion.



Tickets are \$17 each and can be purchased online at

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/roller-derby-breast-cancer-fundraiser-tickets-1992754290727>

THE SEWING BASKET BIG BASKET SALE 2026

Come along and browse more than 15 stalls packed with 100% donated sewing and craft supplies at very affordable prices, being held at Parramatta Town Hall. You’ll find a mix of fabrics, patterns, embroidery materials, yarn, haberdashery and plenty more. If this is something that interests you, then you are in luck as we are going to run a bus trip to it on Saturday 22 August and entry is free. A donation to cover the bus will be \$25 per person and will leave the Ribbonwood Centre at 7.00am, picking up along the way at Unanderra, Figtree and the hospital. To book your seat, give Annette Rayner a call on 0456 042 906.

OUR BUS TRIPS

We have been very lucky with the weather for our bus trips this year. March was to Sussex Inlet; it was a glorious day to be wandering around Sussex window shopping and mooching around the market. The view of the river from Sussex Inlet RSL Club makes you feel like you're on holidays and the food is excellent. Thanks to Paul for driving us.

Because of the fuel fright in April, unfortunately we didn't have a trip.

Our May trip was to Fairground Follies in Bowral. We really didn't know what to expect, and as it turned out, we were all very pleasantly surprised. Morning tea was included and a 2-hour tour, which was very interesting as there was plenty of music and history on the many musical machines.



Our guide had us dancing and singing, and everyone left with a smile on their face which lasted all day.



We had lunch at the Royal Bowral Golf Club before our trip home (still on a high).

We also had a lot of great feedback from the day, which was pleasing to hear.

We stopped at Bingara Gorge for morning tea on our June trip, as it's always a favourite stop, as the service and food are great.

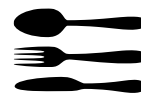
We then moved onto the Dingo Sanctuary at Bargo for a tour, which was very interesting and informative.



We had lunch at Tahmoor Inn, which has just been recently renovated, where the food was great and the bistro was very comfortable.

Cheers Margaret and Grahame

GETTING TO KNOW YOU SOCIAL LUNCHESES are held at the Builders Club in Church Street, Wollongong. 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:



12 August	14 October	9 December
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LATE BLOOMERS LUNCHEONS

Our Late Bloomers luncheons are held at the Collegians Illawarra Leagues Club in Church Street, Wollongong opposite McCabe Park. 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.

7 September	2 November
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All are welcome!