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NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2026

WELCOME TO 2026

We are so grateful for the incredible impact we made together in 2025. Here's to a new year of generosity, purpose, and meaningful progress.



Thank you for being part of a group that believes in kindness and lasting impact. Together, we welcome a year of connection, care, and hope. Your compassion will bring hope to those who need it most in the year ahead.

PRESIDENT WELCOME 2026

Welcome to 2026 everyone.

A new year always gives us time to think about what this year will bring. Will we go on that long awaited holiday? Will we win the lottery? One thing I do know is that I will continue to volunteer. Volunteering is never just about giving time. It's about showing up, offering care, sharing skills and reminding people they're not alone. Every act of volunteering, no matter how big or small, creates ripples of kindness that reach far beyond what we can see.

2025 is now just a memory for some and it also showed the strength of this group; compassion and a willingness to help even on the hardest days. That spirit is something we carry proudly into 2026.

This year, may we continue to support one another, welcome new faces, and remember that what we do truly matters. Together, through volunteering, we make a difference, not just in moments, but in lives.

So, here's to a new year of connection, care and community. Thank you for being part of Illawarra Cancer Carers and thank you for all that you give.

Narelle Langridge
Your President



I attended a pre-game morning tea with the ladies from Thirroul Bowling Club last week to accept a very lovely \$1500 donation. Here I am with Ann Clarke, the President.

ARE YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE?

Our database is currently being updated and we have noticed some anomalies. Maybe you have moved, maybe you no longer have your landline? We are asking all our members to either email Cathy at cathyhaney1@hotmail.com or phone/message her on 0409 357 821 to confirm the correct spelling of your Christian Name, Surname, Residential Address, Email address and your Phone Number (preferably mobile number).

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.

CONDOLENCES FOR AUDREY WALSH

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the recent passing of this exceptional woman. Audrey, the very first Life Member served as Secretary for over 26 years, remaining as an active Committee member for more than 30 years. Audrey's commitment, kindness and generosity were felt by so many. Through years of dedication to the Illawarra Cancer Carers, she gave her time and care to others, making a real difference in countless lives. Audrey will be remembered not only for what she did, but for who she was - compassionate, hardworking, dependable and deeply valued. She leaves behind a legacy of service and will not be forgotten.

Our heartfelt condolences are with Jim, her husband, her family and her many friends during this very sad time. Audrey's spirit and contribution will always be remembered with deep gratitude.



OPEN MEETINGS FOR 2026

Please make a note in your diary:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Monday 16 February | Monday 18 May |
| Monday 17 August | Monday 16 November |

Our Open Meetings are held at 1.00pm at Berkeley Sports Club, so why not come along and see what our group is up to – we're always open to new suggestions. Several members grab a bite to eat beforehand, which is always great for a quick chat and catch up.

GUEST SPEAKER

At our first Open Meeting for the year on 16 February, we will have a guest speaker. Shawn Tyler is from the Graduate School of Medicine at the University of Wollongong and will share information with us on the *Simulated Patient Program* and will be happy to answer any questions from members.

SEWING GROUP 2025 – EARNINGS UPDATE



Congratulations for the hard work undertaken last year by the Sewing Group – thank you for all your support!

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| This is an overview of the group's 2025 earnings: | |
| Gift Wrapping (3 centres) | \$ 11,249.60 |
| Sales at Sewing | \$ 12,933.40 |
| Stalls, Raffles etc. | \$ 63,428.25 |
| High Tea Fundraiser | \$ 20,581.30 |
| TOTAL | \$108,192.55 |

Total monies raised 2010 to 2025 **\$590,606.77**

The ladies have also sewn 208 breast cushions, which have been delivered and shared between; Wollongong Public Hospital, Wollongong Private Hospital and Shellharbour Public Hospital.

Throughout the year 1712 tea towels were purchased and sold for \$8 each giving us a profit of \$10,447.40.

What an amazing effort by these ladies!!!

OUR NEXT BUS TRIP

The next Illawarra Cancer Carer's bus trip will be to Sussex Inlet on Saturday 14 March 2026 at a cost of \$20. Morning tea will be at Berry, with a lunch stop at Sussex Inlet RSL Club.

We can pick you up from Wollongong Dan Murphys at 8.00am or at the Ribbonwood Centre Dapto at 8.30am.

To enquire about this trip or to book your seat, then either contact:

Grahame – 0407 647 604

Margaret – 0411 413 912

CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAPPING

At our Warrawong Christmas gift wrapping, Life Member, Marie Davidson, volunteered with two of her great granddaughters, Alierye and Mia who did a fantastic job. Thanks girls!!



At Figtree Grove the 2025 Christmas wrapping was a very successful event. The grand total of donations for the week was \$2409.80. We did not have a stall but still managed to raise \$206 for the raffle, with the winners being:

1st Prize Annette E (Blue Ticket E17)

2nd Prize Joyce S (Blue Ticket E4)

3rd Prize Paula H (Blue Ticket E16)

A big thank you to our present wrapping volunteers who helped us make this amazing tally.

An extra thank you to Liz King, who every year makes my life as Co-ordinator, so much easier. People walked away with the most beautifully wrapped presents. This year Liz made 505!!! Yes, 505 bows which she distributed to all three centres. She is so dedicated, that when we were running low, she made more bows overnight.

My most challenging gift was to wrap a horse, but I also enjoyed a cuddle from Santa.



Sonia Jennings
Figtree Grove Gift Wrapping Co-Ordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR JEANNETTE EMMERICH AND THE LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC TEAM

I would like to acknowledge the work that Jeannette Emmerich and her team do at the Dapto Ribbonwood Centre.

After having breast cancer surgery and radiation, I did not know where to turn to for some support and care to help me get through the shock of getting breast cancer. There was no services or help given to me after treatment and I felt neglected. I found the leaflet in Wollongong Hospital on a board and rang the Lymphoedema group, where I was warmly welcomed by Jeanette and the girls there.

After being treated by them for the past year I feel much happier and also healthier in myself, bodily and mentally, which can be attributed to the care and support of these ladies.

I wanted to acknowledge these wonderful ladies for the work that they do voluntarily. A big shout out to them and I hope that they can get more volunteers to help on board to extend their time and days to serve the community of Lymphoedema patients in Dapto and surrounds.

Thank you.

Suzanne Izzard

LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC

The Clinic at the Ribbonwood Centre returns on 13 February 2026 with 2026 clinic dates as follows:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 13 & 27 February | 13 & 27 March |
| 10 & 24 April | 8 & 22 May |
| 5 & 19 June | 3, 17 & 31 July |
| 14 & 28 August | 11 & 25 September |
| 9 & 23 October | 6 & 20 November |

Should you require further information then please contact me on 0423 135 342.

We're always looking for more volunteers, even if you would like to make a cuppa and have a chat with some of our clients, then that would be most appreciative.

Jeanette Emmerich
Lymphoedema Support Clinic Co-Ordinator

PRAISE FOR OUR PRESIDENT

Letter received



Many members would have no idea just how hard Narelle Langridge works for our organisation.

I would like to tell you about eight days in her life leading up to Christmas.

Narelle was at Christmas wrapping for 8 days from 9.00am until 4.30pm wrapping gifts and engaging with the public. That totals around 75 hours. Whilst there she was taking calls from other carers, organising future craft stalls, organising extra paper and ordering craft supplies. Additionally, if a customer enquired about something specific, she would go to the container at the showground on her way home so they could pick it up the next day. For two of those nights, she also went with Vera to hand out bon bons at a Christmas light display in Dapto for another couple of hours as well - another 5 hours. Obviously, that was just for those 8 days!

On normal weeks, she is working on stalls, collecting items from Dapto and packing the car, then working all day and then back to Dapto to unpack. On top of that she is doing radio interviews, picking up donations, liaising with other groups, attending symposiums, writing emails to all and sundry and keeping diaries, monitoring stock levels, sewing nighties for Palliative Care and making shortbread for everybody else in between, and not forgetting her amazing poetry writing.

I don't know of any other volunteer organisation, whose President shows this level of time and commitment.

THANK YOU NARELLE – your dedication and commitment have not gone unnoticed!!

LATE BLOOMERS LUNCHEONS

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

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 5 January | 2 March | 4 May |
| 6 July | 7 September | 2 November |



“BUNNINGS ON A SUNDAY” from the President

*At the Bunnings stall, down Kembla Grange way
The snags and onions are cooking away
There's bagpipe music floating faintly through the air
We didn't quite plan it, but hey.....it was there.*

*There are dogs everywhere, it's Bunnings after all
Poodles, Moodles and Doodles – all make their way
to our stall
They wag their tails and come over for a pat
Instant therapy for us and what's better than that?*

*The food table is laden with lemon butter delight,
Anzacs, shortbread, chocolate muffins all baked just right
As usual our kitchen towels are walking out the door
Some buying one, two, three and even four.*

*Between cuppa's and laughing and stories quietly shared
It's time for us to show each other we care
When's your next holiday I hear someone ask
Working out where to go is such a serious task.*

*We sample the snags and onions; they taste so nice
So much so, some of us go back twice!!
And soon it's time for us to pack up and go
Very grateful for the generosity Bunnings customers all show.*

MEMBER NEWSLETTERS FOR 2026

Please note that Newsletters will be published every two months in 2026.

Please forward any news inclusions or other articles to Cathy Haney: cathyhaney1@hotmail.com

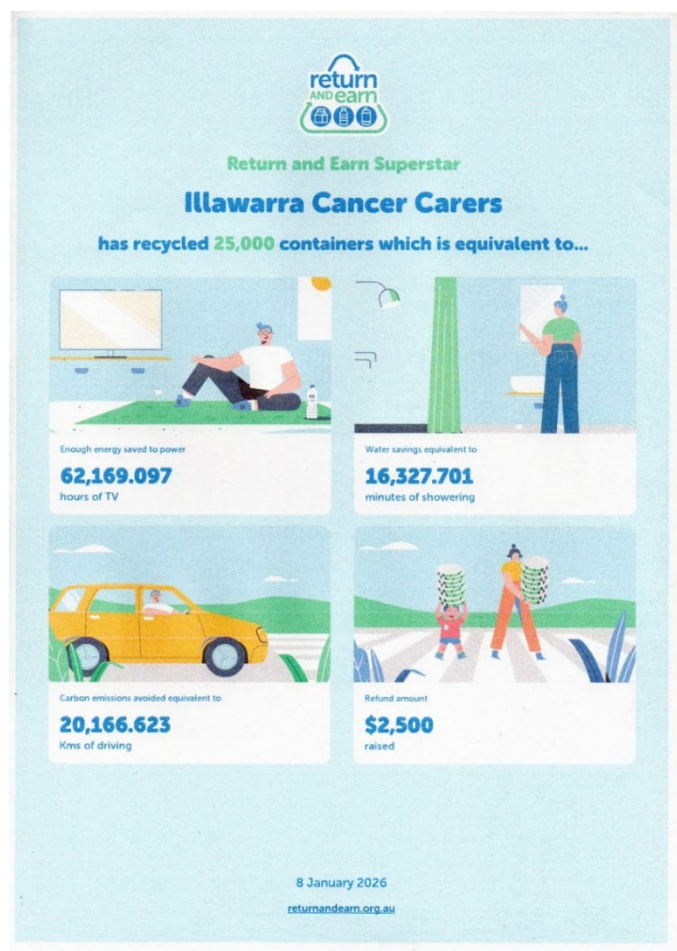
Vera would sincerely like to thank Cathy for taking on the role of Public Officer and producing our newsletter.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU SOCIAL LUNCHES

These lunches are held at the Builders Club in Church Street, Wollongong and will resume in February 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 and a lovely meal and a chat.

| | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| 11 February | 8 April | 10 June |
| 12 August | 14 October | 9 December |

RETURN and EARN PROGRAM UPDATE ICC are SUPERSTARS



Special thanks to Heather Cunningham, Paul Bessant and Kerrie Lawler who have devoted a lot of time to collecting and depositing these cans and bottles and raising funds for the Illawarra Cancer Carers (also to Narelle Langridge and David Berry who step on up when one of the regular collectors are away).

Did you know that when you deposit your own cans and bottles, you can select the Illawarra Cancer Carers and nominate them to receive the proceeds?

THE ILLAWARRA WIG LIBRARY INC

The Illawarra Wig Library is a volunteer-run, registered charity based at Wollongong Hospital that provides free or low-cost wigs, turbans, and headscarves to people experiencing medical-related hair loss.

Our Office is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays from 10.00am to 1.00pm. We have a roster of 14 ladies with most spending one to two shifts a month with us. We are always pleased to increase our numbers, so if you would like to join, please don't hesitate to contact Petrina Chalker on 0438 659 059 or Yvonne White on 0402 298 397 to arrange a meeting or drop into the office during our open hours for a chat.

CONSUMER ADVOCATE OPPORTUNITY BREASTSCREEN NSW (SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY ILLAWARRA)

We have been contacted by Jacinta Rice, who is the Health Promotion Officer at BreastScreen NSW, South Eastern Sydney Illawarra.

BreastScreen is the nation-wide breast cancer screening program that provides free mammograms to women aged 40 and over, to support early detection and improve health outcomes for women across NSW.

They are currently in the development phase of a new initiative designed to strengthen community awareness about the importance of regular breast cancer screening - particularly given the critical role early detection plays in improving survival and treatment options.

As part of this work, they are seeking to recruit volunteer Consumer Advocates who would be willing to help promote breast cancer screening within their networks and the wider community.

This advocacy role may involve:

- Encouraging women to prioritise screening for early detection
- Sharing key BreastScreen NSW messages through community conversations
- Helping distribute information or share posts via social media and community channels

If you feel this may be of interest to you, then please contact Jacinta on:

jacinta.rice@health.nsw.gov.au