



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



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## NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2026

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello all – well, the year is progressing and we are nearly 6 months gone already. Nearly time to get out the heater and electric blanket and I know where you can get some warm bed socks or a warm knitted rug!! – Dapto Showground on a Friday between 9am and 12 noon.

In April we had our pop-up shop again and this time we ventured to Figtree Grove for just on a month. We were joined by some of our other volunteers and we did very well. Our profit was just over \$13,000 and we managed to take home a LOT of empty bags and containers. I am sure that most of Figtree, West Wollongong and Unanderra now have one or two of our famous kitchen towels. I'd like to thank everyone who helped at the shop and also to those of you that came along and purchased one or two of our items.

We are on the lookout for some new drivers and one of our drivers, Judy Mercer, managed to "advertise us" extremely well on WIN TV a few weeks ago. We've had quite a few enquiries and if you've been thinking about becoming a driver, come on down!!

Our major fundraiser this year, which is our Black & White High Tea is fast approaching and tickets are going well, but we still have some left. We had such a good time and a great turn out last year, and we promise this year will be bigger and better.

I'd like to thank Vera Rupa for taking the reins whilst I was away. The stalls Vera ran bought in over \$3000 and thanks also to the ladies who

helped her, and of course the ladies for making all the items that were sold.

Finally, a wave to Leslie Adie, our Cancer Centre Volunteer Co-Ordinator, who is having a break from the hospital for a while. Leslie does a great job, and we hope you are back in no time.

That's it for now, take care everyone and don't forget .... Dapto Showground on a Friday between 9.00am and 12 noon is where our sewing ladies will be. Please come out and see what they all do, and at the same time, you can buy anything you see.

*Narelle Langridge  
Your President*

### A HUGE THANK YOU TO



Ross Transport has been a major sponsor of ours for many years and we are extremely grateful for the support they have given. Once again, Alan Ross, Managing Director of

Ross Transport, has assisted us by giving us another storage area temporarily in the unit next door, which has allowed us to move 9 of our scooters and wheelchairs in, to open up much needed workspace in the current workshop. To Alan and his crew, our heartfelt thanks.



## MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

While Keith is having a break, Barrie Lewis and the boys are holding down the fort. If you know of someone requiring equipment, then give Barrie a call on 0438 842 756.



## THANKS RECEIVED FROM A VERY GRATEFUL PATIENT

As advised in our last newsletter we had purchased a Bladder Scanner for Ward A5 and an Ultrasound machine for Ward C7.

We have since received a lovely thank you note: Thanks to the generous donation of a new ultrasound machine from the Illawarra Cancer Carers, a patient in Haematology Outpatients has already experienced its benefits.

Ultrasound-guided insertion meant the patient did not require a PICC line for transfusion support, avoiding an invasive procedure. He shared his appreciation for being able to preserve his quality of life and continue meaningful activities, including spending time at the beach. Having access to updated ultrasound equipment allows more patients to experience these same benefits, with earlier access to ultrasound-guided care, fewer delays, and a reduced need for repeated needle attempts or invasive procedures. For patients, this means less discomfort, reduced anxiety, and a smoother, more positive treatment experience that supports both wellbeing and quality of life.



## FURTHER EQUIPMENT PURCHASED FOR WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

We're now excited to advise that we have purchased some more equipment. In April we were contacted by Dr Soni Putnis from the Division of Surgery seeking support to purchase three Scout Probes and two Trophon Disinfecting Systems.

The Scout Probe would replace the cumbersome pre-operative "hookwire" placement for breast cancer patients, which enables surgical tumour location without a physical wire extruding from the patient's breast in the stressful days between radiological placement of identifier and day of surgery.

For those patients who have unfortunately been through this procedure, they would know and appreciate the benefits of this new equipment. Our committee did not hesitate on this request and by the time you read this newsletter, all components should have arrived at the hospital.

## FIGTREE SHOP

We had an amazing time at our pop-up shop in Figtree Grove during April. We're all packed up now and have said our goodbyes, but we would love to thank all our volunteers who came along to lend a hand and to those who made so many beautiful items to sell. Of course, our success would have not been possible without the support of the community, and we thank them for their generosity.

Once the bills were paid, we came away with an amazing profit of \$13,114.39. Two people in particular who made this possible were Narelle Langridge and Lorraine Davidson, who worked day in, day out for the whole of the time we had the shop. Between them, they ensured the shop was open on time every day, juggled the rosters, restocked and packed up at the end of the day, not forgetting banking the monies each day. Thank you for your commitment and dedication ladies!!

## STALLS POSSIBLY RETURNING TO WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

We are currently in negotiations with hospital staff and hope to be setting up our stalls again real soon. We have had numerous queries over the last few years from patients, staff and the community asking when we are going to return. Watch this space!!!!

## MOTHER'S DAY GIFT WRAPPING AT FIGTREE GROVE

During the 3 days at Figtree Grove, we made \$456 in raffle ticket sales and \$287.30 as donations for wrapping 77 presents, giving us a total of \$743.30.

We had two lovely raffle prizes, thanks to our very generous members for their



kind donations. The glorious presentation was put together by Maggie and Vera, and the bows were made by Liz King – thanks ladies!!

### Raffle Winners:

1st prize

Ticket Q49 Leah (sold by Kerrie Lawler on Saturday just hours before the draw!!) Leah lives in Figtree, so was there to pick up her prize almost immediately after she was notified of winning it.



2nd prize

Ticket Y40 George (from Gwynneville) who, thanks to Kay Kent, bought the winning ticket from a very generous \$100 outlay. George was so surprised to win that he rang Kay to check that he wasn't being scammed! Russ Jennings kindly delivered the prize to his home.

A big thank you to our present wrapping volunteers who helped us make this great tally. An extra thank you to Liz King, who every year makes my life as Co-ordinator, sooo much easier. People walk away with presents baring beautiful bows made by Liz, and this year she lovingly made 45 bows for the Figtree stall.

Thanks to Figtree Grove for the space in the Centre, providing beautiful wrapping paper and great quality ribbon.

*Sonia Jennings  
Figtree Gift Wrapping Co-Ordinator*

## MOTHER'S DAY GIFT WRAPPING AT DAPTO MALL

The stall at Dapto was only for one day, being the day before Mother's Day and we were busy. We were also fortunate to have a stall with our gift wrapping and by the time we had packed away our scissors and sticky tape we had made a grand total of \$1,162.60. As always, our crocheted top kitchen towels were a winner and flew out the door. Some of our customers were very pleased to find a lovely handmade gift at the stall and then have it wrapped up beautifully.



Thanks to those ladies who came along to offer their wrapping expertise and also to Liz King for her selection of beautiful handmade bows.

Thanks to Dapto Mall Centre Management for the great spot at the top of the travellator, and for providing the beautiful wrapping paper and ribbon.

*Vera Rupa  
Dapto Gift Wrapping Co-Ordinator*

## ICC JACKETS & SWEATSHIRTS

As the weather begins to move into those cooler months, one of our drivers has enquired about our group having something warmer to wear that displays our logo. A couple of our Committee Members thought this was a great idea and are currently obtaining quotes from a number of companies to see what they can offer us. These would be optional and entirely up to the individual volunteer if they would like to wear one, so as with the name badges, they would need to be purchased by the individual. Watch this space for more details!!

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Volunteer Week this year was celebrated from 18 to 24 May. **Theme:** *"Your Year to Volunteer"*. This theme highlighted the vital contributions of current volunteers and invited everyday Australians to make 2026 a year of meaningful involvement.



Wollongong Hospital hosted a morning tea on Wednesday 20 May to say thank you for everything we do and some of our volunteers were able to attend.

## LYMPHOEDEMA CLINIC

One of our lovely clients, Janet Scott, gave the clinic a beautiful gift for Mother's Day, and our volunteer, Ann Kershaw, was the lucky one to win it.



Woolworths at Albion Park has also recently given the clinic a gift card for \$50 to purchase morning tea supplies, for which we are extremely grateful.

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

5 & 19 June	3, 17 & 31 July
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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**

## COMPASSION HEARTS

Our compassion hearts have been very warmly accepted at the Palliative Care Unit at Bulli Hospital, at David Berry Hospital, as well as a supply has been given to the Social Worker at Wollongong Hospital for distribution as required.



A selection has also been given to staff who provide Palliative services in the community.

Thank you to those ladies who have already either knitted, crocheted or stitched a couple of hundred of these hearts already.

A lovely note has been received from David Berry Hospital – Dear Petrina and the Cancer Carers, thank you for your recent gift of compassion hearts and toiletry items for the Karinya patients. Karinya is very fortunate to have such thoughtful and generous support. Your kindness helps us provide comfort, dignity and compassion to those at Karinya Palliative Care Unit.

## 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 LUNCHES

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:



10 June	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.

6 July	7 September	2 November
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**All are welcome!!**

## WE'RE ON THE HUNT FOR MORE VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Due to a shortage in our volunteer drivers, we recently launched a recruitment campaign. Thanks to Geoff Failes, who originally put together our media release for the Illawarra Mercury, which, was then picked up by WIN Television.

Thanks also to Judy Mercer and one of our clients, as a very informative story was filmed and went to air on Wednesday 6 May 2026.



The article focused on the service we offer relying on volunteer drivers who use their personal vehicles to get immuno-compromised patients to and from their hospital treatments, and also acknowledged the very recent donation of \$100,000 from the i98FM Illawarra Convoy and the Illawarra Community Foundation, so we are now able to continue to offer this service.

We have since received over a dozen enquiries and six new applicants have already been interviewed. We're still after more drivers though, particularly from the southern suburbs, so if you know of someone looking for a voluntary role, then please let them know what we do and how they go about applying to join our group, or alternatively get them to phone Vera Rupa on 0413 548 983 and she'll be happy to answer any further questions.

## 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.



## OUR ANNUAL MAJOR FUNDRAISER IS THE BLACK & WHITE HIGH TEA

Our Black & White High Tea at The Fraternity Club is fast approaching (30 August 2026).

**3** months to go but who is counting .....????

High Tea ticket sales are going well with over 200 seats sold, even without advertising. Thank you to all of you who have purchased tickets already. We still have some tickets left, so please contact me if you want to come along. Tickets are \$60 each and we have tables of ten or just come with a few friends. We will have two raffles and some games on the day, and it's going to be a great day out that you won't want to miss. I'm hearing a lot of talk about what people are going to wear – some suggestions have been zebras, penguins, cows, cats, but it doesn't have to be fancy dress; just something black and white (don't forget there will be a prize for best dressed).

We have just started to advertise on Facebook so hopefully we will get a few more sales. We expect to have around double the number of people from last year, which was 120 participants.

We have some great raffle and prize donations coming in (from exquisite artwork, amazing gift vouchers, to diamond jewellery); some for our games, some for our major raffle and some for the High Tea raffle to be held on the day, so we'll let you know when the raffle tickets go on sale. If you wish to donate something to the High Tea, then please contact me so that we can organise a collection. I'll give you all another final update in the next newsletter before the big day!!

Call me ASAP on 0416 104 274 if you would like a ticket or two, so you don't miss out.

*Lisa Smith*  
*High Tea Co-Ordinator*

## UOW CANCER CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT EVENT

Recently two of our volunteers, Geoff Failes and Jeanette Emmerich, attended a consumer workshop and were very impressed with the session. Geoff commented about the implantable drug delivery device for easier access to Pancreatic Cancer tumours as being just one of the exciting research projects that have been partly financed by the Illawarra Cancer Carers at the University of Wollongong.

In the medical research sphere, a cancer “consumer” is described as someone with lived experience; whether as a patient, carer, friend, or family member of someone affected by cancer. The speakers at the workshop and their topics/research focuses included Dr Kara Vine-Perrow (Implantable drug delivery device for Pancreatic Cancer); Dr Samantha Wade (Implantable drug delivery device for Glioblastoma); Dr Bruce Ashford (Cutaneous Squamous Cell Carcinoma); Associate Professor Daniel Brungs (Liquid biopsies in cancer) and Professor Ronald Sluyter (Blood Cancers and Graft vs Host disease).

Dr Vine-Perrow and her team are determining the safety and effectiveness of immunotherapy/chemotherapy-loaded implants to treat Pancreatic Cancer.

Dr Wade said the Cancer Consumer workshops were designed to be relaxed, informal, and low-pressure gatherings that encouraged two-way conversation between researchers and community. “We share updates on our current projects and future project plans, and in return gain feedback and insight which is valuable in ensuring our research priorities remain aligned with what actually matters to patients and families,” she said. During the meeting, all the researchers paid tribute to the Illawarra Cancer Carers for their previous and ongoing support of their projects. Following the workshop, a group of the attendees

were taken on a tour of the Molecular Horizons state-of-the-art biomedical facility.



## TARGETED THERAPEUTICS LAB UPDATE

After 5 years working as a Research Assistant at the University of Wollongong, the time has come for Chelsea Penney to move on. Chelsea has secured an industry job with Racura Oncology. While we are all very sad to see her leave our team, we are also so happy for Chelsea to start this new and very exciting chapter of her career. Chelsea’s position was part funded by the Illawarra Cancer Carers, which allowed her to work across a whole suite of projects; projects spanning pancreatic, breast, brain, gastric, and colon cancer.

But when one door closes, another opens. We are so thrilled to welcome Ruby Shepherd back to the team!



Ruby completed her Honours research year in 2024 under the supervision of Dr Kara Vine-Perrow. During this time, she developed expertise in histopathology, conducting in-depth analyses of tissues collected from previous mouse studies to evaluate how different treatments affected tissue health and toxicity profiles. Her work focused on assessing whether the Vine-Perrow lab’s chemotherapy implant technology could reduce organ toxicity compared with traditional systemic treatments. The quality of her research was exceptional and contributed to one of our recent publications in a leading materials science journal.

Ruby has returned from a year overseas and has hit the ground running in the lab. She will continue to work on this project, as well as helping out across a broad range of other cancer related projects. Ruby is passionate about cancer research and brings great enthusiasm and dedication to the team. We are excited to have her on board, and she looks forward to meeting you all soon.



# Creative Art Group

*You're invited to join us  
every Monday morning  
9am-12pm*

Scribbly Gum Room  
Ribbonwood Centre, Dapto

**Cancer Patient Support  
Group Illawarra**

The aim is to provide respite from the cares of living with cancer and to provide access to other people in similar situation and to share gentle support.  
Morning tea/coffee provided.



Discover your hidden talents and find confidence in completing art simply for the enjoyment, share family and friends or to exhibit.

It is a place to relax, enjoy a laugh and companionship. There is also respect for emotions and an expectation of trust and confidentiality.

To register please phone  
**Faye on 0417-042-762 or Irma 0403-695-764**

**Members Lunch - 1st Monday of the Month (optional)**  
12pm - held at various close-by locations. All patients, carers, partners and friends are welcome.