


Quarterly

Autumn 2020



Multiple Sclerosis THE PRIVATE FIGHT OF A PUBLIC FACE PG 4



No more Falls PG 3



Dental convenience PG 6



New clinic column PG 7

WELCOMING ³ NEW FACES

CHRIS MCGRATH Director of Corporate Services



Chris is a CPA qualified accountant who has over 20 years' experience in various financial roles and industries.

After completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Deakin Warrnambool, he worked and lived overseas and returned to work in corporate travel in Melbourne.

In 2008 he moved back to Warrnambool to commence at South West Healthcare where he worked in various accounting

roles, most recently as Manager of Performance and Budget. Chris is married with three children. Chris has also achieved a lot of personal satisfaction through volunteering on a number of sporting and professional committees.



JASON HAY Director of Clinical Services



Jason has extensive critical care nursing experience, having worked in both Intensive Care and Emergency Department environments in both metropolitan and rural settings for over a decade. With a passion for rural health, clinical innovation, and delivering quality healthcare to rural communities, Jason is excited to be joining the team here at TDHS. As the Director of Clinical Services, Jason is passionate about empowering the team to continue to provide high-quality healthcare services to the community. Jason is a massive North Melbourne fanatic, and is married with two children.

TANYA WINES Community Health Manager

Tanya has an applied science background and comes to us after working in the Northern Territory (NT) as the NT Laboratories Manager for Western Diagnostic Pathology. She has over 20 years' experience as a Medical Scientist and 8+ years' experience in management/ leadership. Tanya has recently relocated back to Warrnambool with her family and is looking forward to settling into the region.

CEO & CHAIR'S *Report*

We have had a very productive holiday season and are pleased to announce a number of new staff members including two new Directors and our Community Health Manager.

These appointments put TDHS on track to meet the needs and expectations that you identified in the community survey of 2018, particularly growing and developing community health.

Jason, Chris and Tanya all have extensive experience in rural healthcare settings and are great additions to the team, please join us in warmly welcoming them.

As a Board we have been able to spend time focussing on TDHS's strategic direction. Everyone came together for the day on Sunday the 16th and Monday 17th February to identify those priorities most significant to TDHS. It was a wonderful opportunity for our new Executives to meet the Board and share their background and learnings so far. Our Director of Rural and Regional Health, Andrew Crow met with the Board and continues to support the direction and vision of the Service.

Lastly FebFast – our “Pause for a Cause” fundraiser focusing on providing more support to our troubled youth, is gaining much traction this year. We surpassed our target of \$4000. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated – you have been an inspiration!

We look forward to the year ahead!

Board Chair
Maryanne Puli Vogels

Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Van Wollingen





Joan McKenzie

JOAN'S FALLS, A BIG WAKE-UP CALL

Gardening means a lot to Joan McKenzie. She describes it as her 'addiction' and the thought of not being fit enough to garden makes her very uncomfortable.

The 83 year-old now lives alone on the family farm in Newfield and less than two years ago she had two falls in her garden within weeks. It was the wake-up call she needed.

She immediately signed up for the Balance Plus class run by Tracey Heeps at TDHS. She's regained her strength, improved her balance and she hasn't had a fall since.

"I've always been very active with gardening and golf. If I wasn't in the garden, I was on the golf course," she said.

"It will be two years this April since my husband John passed away. I had been caring for him throughout his Parkinson's disease. Then he fell and broke his hip and spent a lot of time in hospital at Timboon and I needed to be with him a lot.

"So I'd become more and more inactive. I have back issues and sciatica, but I wasn't walking as much as I used to and had become very unfit."

Joan said it was shortly after John's passing that she had her first fall and began to realise she needed to focus on her physical wellbeing.

"I was out in the garden and it slopes away a bit. I was just standing there and much to my surprise I lost my balance and tumbled," she said.

"That first time I managed to stop rolling and I was fine, but then a few weeks later it happened again. This time I couldn't stop and rolled over a garden bed and down onto a lower tier of the garden where there are rocks."

"Thankfully I wasn't badly injured, but it shook me up a lot.

"My grandson has taken over the farm and is around most days, but I don't see him every day. I started to think what if this happens and I'm stuck down there on my own hurt and no one knows."

Joan said it was enough for her to take action and the following week she started the Balance Plus class and Tracey's exercise program at home.

"I know I can stay here on my own for as long as my health allows and that the garden may get too much, but I'm so much stronger and fitter now that I've focused on it," she said.

"I garden every day and I haven't fallen since those two incidents. Gardening makes me happy and I enjoy having it looking nice.

"It's good for me. I've always mowed the lawns as well and I really enjoy them looking neat and tidy. I used to use a push mower, then graduated to a self-propelled one but now I've got a ride on."

April is No Falls Month

To attend any of the exercise classes at TDHS, please call reception on 5558 6000 to book a physio assessment and to discuss the most appropriate class for you.

An Occupational Therapist, which also can be booked on 5558 6000, can also assist in improving your balance.

For peace of mind and a sense of security for the elderly and their loved ones or carers, a personal alarm might be an option. For more information you can contact Fiona Hanel on 5558 6000.



Multiple Sclerosis

THE PRIVATE FIGHT OF A PUBLIC FACE

The St Patricks Day fires in March 2018 changed a lot of lives forever. Among them, was the then Corangamite Shire Mayor, Jo Beard - the face of the community-led recovery.

It was an awful time – a time of great pain. Cr Beard’s emotional pain was easy to see – this was her community and it was hurting. The stress and anxiety was raw - it still is.

Cr Beard’s physical pain however was something few knew about. That’s how she wanted it for another eight months. Then she would step down as Mayor and make her MS fight public.

The 41-year-old mother of two agreed to tell her story to mark World MS Day on May 30 and to provide an insight for others into the life of someone living with a chronic illness.

Jo Beard is no stranger to doctors and hospitals – she has a heart condition, has a history of kidney stones and now speaks openly about her struggles with mental health.

It was these, and other, pre-existing issues that hid her ultimate MS diagnosis. Symptoms that would have rung alarm bells for other people were not new to Cr Beard, were easily rationalised in her mind and, in some cases, by specialists.

“For me incontinence wasn’t abnormal. I’ve always had trouble with kidney stones and always had really low regularity bowel movements,” she said.

“For someone who had never wet themselves before, what started happening would have really stood out as a real problem, but I rationalised it with my history.

“My eyesight was declining as well, but dad was diagnosed with glaucoma and it’s hereditary so we were going down the wrong path with that as well.”

Cr Beard was someone who would walk, run, ride or go to the gym every day and ultimately it was issues with her left leg that pointed her towards a bigger problem.

“With my running and playing sport, there were times when the leg just wouldn’t work and I’d trip over. Or I’d just miss a step and stumble – it was worsening...at times it felt like I was lifting bricks attached to my leg just to walk,” she said.

“We thought I might have had nerve damage in the leg and then just before Christmas in 2017 my urologist ordered an MRI of my brain and spine.



“Within 24 hours he rang and said the scan had found demyelination...I said what does that mean and he said I’m so sorry, but unfortunately it means MS.

“I remember almost feeling relieved that they had found something and we now had a possible explanations for why my body was doing certain things. The news could have been so much worse, it still can, I still feel like that – I’m pretty positive.”

One lesion caused by MS can have an impact on part of the body. Cr Beard was diagnosed with 13 and significant demyelination.

“It’s explained to me like an electrical wire. The plastic sheath is stripped away by the lesion and the wires are exposed which makes it harder for the messages to get through the nerves to the rest of the body, and that causes the fatigue because your brain and body has to work much harder,” she said.

Cr Beard, her husband Daniel and their two sons Jordan and Cooper had a “pretty normal” Christmas weeks later. Her immediate family were the only other people she told.

“We wanted to wait until we saw the specialist and thankfully that happened quickly in the new year. I went to a specialist in Geelong, Professor Cameron Shaw, for another MRI and formal diagnosis. I got lucky with him, we felt comfortable and

knew he was my person.

“I have Primary Progressing Multiple Sclerosis (PPMS), which is less common. It’s what they call ‘steady worsening MS’.

“Relapsing forms of MS are more common. It’s when sufferers have attacks and then improve and then potentially have another attack. It’s more up and down, whereas mine is steady and worsening. PPMS represents about 10 percent of all those with MS.”

Cr Beard said with careful management she can have periods where it is more stable, but ultimately she had to live with the frustration that it was progressive.



“There is no cure and not many treatment options. Luckily Ocrevus was new on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme – it’s delivered by IV every six months.

“Nothing reverses the damage to my nerves – it’s an antibody therapy. It tries to stop the immune system attacking the nervous system and wipes out the immune system to do it.

“I had my first treatment two days before the St Patrick’s Day fires. The first treatment is split in half two weeks apart so that they can carefully monitor side effects and make sure it’s safe.”

Cr Beard said she was recovering from that first treatment on the evening of March 17 when her phone started ‘pinging madly’ with news of the fire event developing.

“It was adrenalin I suppose – I went into fight mode and went straight to the CFA station in the singlet and shorts I’d been sleeping in,” she said.

“I was still there, still in those clothes the next day when I addressed the public meeting – almost no one knew about the MS let alone my first treatment two days earlier.

“My MS was totally shelved. Those at the Council who knew were wonderful and my family knew I was exhausted, but I didn’t care. I had the public role and I needed to step up.”

Cr Beard said that first night was heart wrenching and as the scale of the event grew she let her guard down ever so briefly.

“I remember Daniel came to see what I needed and to make sure I was okay and I fell into his arms...the firefighters that

were coming back...what they were describing – I said to Daniel ‘we’re going to lose lives tonight’.

“The impacted people were people I knew – it was personal. What I was going through was nothing compared to them. But here I was with no immune system hugging people and hosting the Prime Minister, the Premier and doing national media. It was surreal in every way.”

The peat fire went for 53 days, and Cr Beard lived and worked the fires and community recovery for many months after that. The only time she slipped away was two weeks after St Patrick’s day for the second half of her treatment in Geelong.

She said her dear friend and fellow MS sufferer Cathy Merrett had been a big support.

“Cathy has lived with MS for nearly three decades and she’s an inspiration. She mentors me through it and helps me understand what’s happening with my body, as well as the social aspects that MS throws at you. Life does change, but it doesn’t have to define you...we think the same. Cathy and her husband Herbie, continue to be incredible and supportive friends to both Daniel and I.

“Science has come so far and I’m fortunate to be diagnosed in this day and age and to have access to treatment.

“I’m still coming to grips with having a walking stick and I’m probably guilty of not using it publicly as much as I should. I’ll work on that.

“My mind is fine, I still love being a Councillor and until I think I can’t contribute to public life I’ll keep putting my hand up.

“Memory loss is part of it, but I manage that by writing things down. I still have purpose and drive for life and I want to give a good example to our boys around resilience.”

Cr Beard said she was learning to give into her body at times, to be less stubborn, to rest and recharge when required and to accept help.

“The progression of the symptoms is frustrating, but it’s teaching me that I can manage that. I have my moments though – of course I do.

“I was a gym junkie and I resent that being taken away, I get angry that my body won’t do things I want it to and that it impacts family life. We had plans – now they’re different.

“It’s painful, debilitating and depressing. Daniel, the boys and our family have been incredibly supportive – it’s life changing for all of us. But I’m positive, I’m still me and I have plenty to give.”



This freeze-frame from a live video during the fire recovery period shows Jo Beard secretly coping with her left leg which was painful, clumsy and causing her much frustration.

World MS Day is May 30

TDHS provides a range of services that might be helpful for those that have been diagnosed with MS or other Chronic conditions including;

- **Speech**
- **Exercises/Physio**
- **Continence**
- **Home Help/Maintenance**
- **Community transport**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **District Nursing**
- **Dietitian**

Please contact 5558 6000 for more information or to make an appointment.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW CONSUMER PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Timboon and District Healthcare Service (TDHS) is committed to embedding genuine consumer and community participation opportunities in our service planning, development, implementation and evaluation of all our healthcare and wellbeing services. For that purpose our Consumer Participation Committee (previously called Community Advisory Committee) was established in October 2016 to advocate on behalf of the local community, consumers and carers and advise TDHS in relation to community participation and its impact on service delivery outcomes.

As five of the initial members, Donna Ellis, John Wilson, Ray Smith, Terry O'Connor and Erica Elliot, resigned in 2019, after serving 3 years on the committee, we sought Expressions of Interest in October last year for community members to join our Consumer Participation Committee (CPC). We had a great response and Scott Munro, Bronwyn Rantall and Simone Renyard have joined existing CPC members Heather Bullen (Chair), Gabby Theologous, Zoe Neal and Aimee Hose.



Scott Munro

Scott moved to Port Campbell 10 years ago from Melbourne and is married with two young children. He works at one of the local oil and gas companies and is interested in learning all about the local health system and how

he can contribute to Timboon & District Healthcare Service and its many facets.

"The more we give to our community, the more we will receive."

Bronwyn Rantall

Recently retired Secondary School PE Teacher, Bronwyn Rantall, is thrilled to contribute to the wonderful place that TDHS is. Even though she is now busy running an Airbnb business in Port Campbell, she had no hesitation in joining the CPC as she enjoys contributing to the local community and shares the Committee's desire to make TDHS meet the needs of the local community to the best of its ability.



"Volunteering makes me feel connected to my amazing community, helps me to build friendships and gives me a sense of satisfaction that I am being a good role model for my kids."

Simone Renyard

Simone has lived in the Timboon area for 23 years and married into a local Dairy farming family. She is actively involved in the Dairy community and chairs Westvic Dairy, which aides farmers to access any extension or business support they need. She has a strong background in supporting people through



her previous work life in counselling roles throughout the region as well as a few years as the first Counsellor working at Timboon hospital over 21 years ago.

"I believe volunteering is at the heart of our community and the health service is a vital component of it."

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

"A change is brought about because ordinary people do extraordinary things" – Barack Obama. This couldn't be more true at TDHS. I wanted to take this opportunity, National Volunteer Week, to recognise and celebrate all our volunteers for your dedicated hard work and invaluable donation of your time and energy.

TDHS couldn't operate as we do without you. In a day and age when there are increasingly more rules and requirements to volunteering, I am overwhelmed by the generosity and willingness of our volunteers to dedicate themselves to TDHS and our patients. We truly are 'Working together for a healthy community'.

At TDHS we always welcome new volunteers. If you think that you have a few hours a month and the passion

to contribute please contact our Community Engagement Officer, Sabine McKenzie, to talk about how your experience and enthusiasm might be best put to use.

Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Van Wollington

Community Engagement Officer
Sabine McKenzie



DENTAL SERVICE: 'IT IS SO CONVENIENT'

Port Campbell's Brett Wallace only recently became aware that the Barlow Dental Group operated from TDHS every Wednesday.

"I'd been going to Colac for dental services and I was happy to find out I could come to the dentist here in Timboon. It is so convenient," he said.

"I had a bad tooth that wasn't worth repairing. I made an appointment, came in here and they took it out straight away for me."

Dental services were restored at TDHS in August last year when Barlow Dental Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding to meet community needs.

Director Dr Dominic Barlow was personally delivering services in Timboon until recently when Dr Caitlyn Huang took over the role.

Commonwealth Child Dental Benefit Schedule

Did you know that the local community can now utilise the Commonwealth Child Dental Benefit Schedule which provides up to \$1000 of diagnostic and dental treatments for the majority of children aged 2-17. To make a dental appointment please call TDHS reception on 5558 6000.



SAY AAH..

A column from the Doctors at the Timboon Medical Clinic

Are you ever with your GP and they turn to their computer and search the internet - seemingly looking for answers?

Please be aware that we don't use Google or other online searches to make a diagnosis, but sometimes it can look that way.

The truth is, the internet is a much more reliable and up to date database of information that is far superior to the volumes of books used in yesteryear. Our patient care is better if we access the most up-to-date information.

Through our membership of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), we regularly use sites and resources that are not available to the general public such as the Therapeutic Guidelines and Health Pathways.

Sometimes, what was correct five years ago is no longer the best available course of action because experts in a particular field have developed new treatments and methodologies.

In some cases, a patient may present with an unusual rash, for example, and it's important for us to make visual comparisons to other pictures online to confirm our diagnosis.

In our profession, advancements in science and knowledge are always ongoing so we can't just rely on our training and what we already know.

We use a myriad of online resources now to supplement our existing knowledge and to provide the very best advice and treatment we can.

It's important to note that 'Dr Google' can be dangerous when used by the public in an attempt to find their own answers to symptoms they are experiencing.

The reality is sometimes a patient presents to us and they have got it right, but the majority of the time their research is wrong and sometimes this causes unnecessary stress.

We're not saying don't use 'Dr Google', we're just saying please be careful and consult your GP to either confirm or refute what you have researched yourself.

As always, if you have any concerns about your health or the health of a friend or family member please come and see us so that we can help in an appropriate way.

GP's working at the Timboon Clinic are Dr Ferdinandus Pranadi, Dr Warwick Rouse, Dr Andrea Hedgland and Dr Diana Peneva-Arabadjyska.

Opening times Monday - Friday 8.30am-5.30pm and Saturday 9.30am-11.30am; appointments can be made by calling 03 5558 6088 or by calling into the clinic at 14 Hospital Road.



GLUTEN FREE LIVING IS A *piece of cake*

Living with Coeliac Disease is no big deal for Marlene Van Nieuwkerk – especially in this day and age when groceries are labelled and restaurants offer gluten free menus.

Marlene never had severe symptoms, just unexplained belly aches at times. She was diagnosed by haematologist Dr John Hounsell in 2013 and hasn't eaten gluten since.

"I have been unwell over the past 10 years and to be honest of all the things I've had go wrong Coeliac Disease is the easiest to cope with for me," she said.

"Blood tests are something I have all the time and I wasn't really even aware of the Coeliac until Dr Hounsell diagnosed it.

"I remember asking if it mattered if I still had gluten because it wasn't really affecting me and he said 'well it is affecting you, it's affecting your bowel' and that eating gluten could potentially increase my chance of developing bowel cancer.

"So that was it, I stopped immediately and I'm that sort of person who finds it easier to just make it black and white. There's no grey area, I haven't had gluten for seven years."

Marlene, 70, has survived non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and while many think her hair loss is cancer related it is caused by her lupus.

"Lupus is far worse than Coeliac Disease for me. I suffer from Raynaud's and scleroderma in my fingers. They go white in the winters, I get clumsy, can't feel properly and there's some numbness," she said.

"So with the Coeliac it doesn't really bother me – other than really missing a fresh bread sandwich. Gluten free bread isn't the same – it's not as soft and much denser.

"I'm sure it's easier now than it used to be for sufferers though. My cousin has had Coeliac much longer and used to have to make her own bread.

"Now everything is labelled – even Timboon Fine Ice Cream is gluten free. I went out for a meal in Port Fairy recently and their entire menu was gluten free."

Marlene is an avid attendee of exercise classes at TDHS, including Tai Chi which she loves.

"Tracey Heeps is great. My balance is shot because I have a problem with my hip and all my tendons and muscles aren't connected to the bone anymore," she said.

"The classes help me work on my strength and balance and keep my mind and body as healthy as I can. I've also attended some food classes with the dietitians there which helps with my meal planning to add variety to my gluten free diet."



COELIAC AWARENESS WEEK IS FROM MARCH 13-20.

Jessica Pietsch is an Accredited Practising Dietitian at TDHS. Please call TDHS on 03 5558 6000 to make an appointment on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

WHAT'S ON Events



MARCH

EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH

2. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
3. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry Dietitian
4. Cobden SSG, Dietician, Private Dentist, Audiology
5. Men's Shed, Occupational Therapy, Timboon SSG, Private Podiatry
9. **Public Holiday**
10. Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Continence Clinic
11. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
12. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed
13. Timboon SSG, Speech Pathology
16. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
17. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Dietitian
18. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental
19. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
20. **International Day of Happiness**, Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
23. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
24. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Dietitian
25. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental
26. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
30. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
31. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Dietitian

SSG = Social Support Group

APRIL

NO FALLS & GO BLUE FOR AUTISM MONTH

1. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dentist
2. Men's Shed, Occupational Therapy, Timboon SSG, Private Podiatry
3. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
6. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
7. Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Public Podiatry
8. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
9. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry
10. **Good Friday**
13. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
13. **Easter Monday**
14. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Dietitian, Continence Clinic
15. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental
16. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
17. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
20. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
21. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Dietitian, Public Podiatry
22. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
23. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
24. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
27. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
28. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG, Dietitian
29. Men's Shed, Dietitian, Private Dental
30. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry

MAY

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

1. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
4. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
5. **World Asthma Day**, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental, Public Podiatry
6. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental
7. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry
8. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
11. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
12. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Dietitian, Continence Clinic
13. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
14. Timboon SSG, Occupational TherapPrivate Podiatry
15. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
18. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
19. Cobden SSG, Men's Shed, Dietitian, Public Podiatry
20. Cobden SSG, Dietitian, Private Dental
21. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
22. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
25. Walking Group, Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy
26. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG, Dietitian
27. Men's Shed, Dietitian, Private Dental, Audiology, Friendlies – (visually impaired group)
28. Timboon SSG, Occupational Therapy, Private Podiatry
29. Speech Pathology, Timboon SSG
31. **World No Tobacco day**

The digital version of our Quarterly can be found on our website by visiting:

TIMBOONHEALTHCARE.COM.AU/NEWS-EVENTS/NEWSLETTERS

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

8am every Saturday in Timboon.

Meet at the Timboon rail trail
Remember to register before you take part.

<http://www.parkrun.com.au/register/>
For more info contact Event Director:
Donna Ellis 0408 529 543