

28 years seizure-free pg3

life 'almost symptom free'.

The 46 year-old husband and father of two sons

lives with Crohn's disease. Now, for the first time

in the 18 years since his diagnosis, he is enjoying



Month in May.



to share his story to raise awareness and help

mark National Crohn's and Colitis Awareness



The cancellation of the 2020 Murray To Moyne due to COVID-19 didn't stop the Timboon Cruisers from making their annual donation to the town's healthcare service.

Timboon Cruisers representative Todd Baxter visited Timboon and District Healthcare Service chief executive officer Rebecca Van Wollingen recenty to see the new gym equipment purchased with the funds raised during a very different 2020 campaign.

"We were already well into our fundraising when the call was made that it wasn't going ahead. Although it was disappointing not to ride, we are proud that we could still make a donation to TDHS, which we've done for more than 25 years," he said.

TDHS allied health assistant Tracey Heeps said the funds helped purchase a new physio step machine which was already used daily to benefit TDHS clients.

Ms Van Wollingen said the Timboon Cruisers had raised many thousands of dollars for TDHS and the entire organisation was incredibly grateful.

"It's a real tradition now, the Timboon

Cruisers are a wonderful part of our history that shows how hard the community has worked over a long period of time to help maintain our health service," she said.

Sponsors in 2020 included;

- Lago Pastoral Trust
- Midfield Meats
- The Vet Group
- Timboon Motors
- Coprice
- 12 Rocks Port Campbell
- Australian Dairy Farmers Corporation
- Popes Timboon



CEO & CHAIR'S Report

This year, our Board and Executive are more dedicated than ever to support Timboon and District Healthcare Service to thrive and deliver a service that is the centre of health and wellbeing for our community. We keep working to ensure our services are of the highest quality and to extend services where they best meet community need.

In 2020 we have discovered a new found strength, resilience and ability to adapt to change. In 2021 TDHS would like to focus on thriving, including an emphasis on nurturing and growing the services we have and ensuring the best health outcomes for you, our community. We are grateful that we can return some of our most popular and supportive services, including Social Support Groups, after temporary closures due to COVID-19.

This year we would also like to highlight the positive health outcomes of some of our most resilient community

members. The stories shared by community members in this issue of our Quarterly reflect strength, courage and hope in the face of challenge and adversity.

Lastly, we would like to thank all of the TDHS staff and volunteers and our valued community members for the resilience and dedication to great health outcomes you have shown. Together we have stepped up to every challenge, learnt along the way and ended up with greater strength, resilience and resolve.

Here's to 2021, a year of thriving together and a year where we all take time to celebrate the Year of the Health and Care Workers of our community. Warmest regards,

Board Chair Maryanne Puli Vogels

Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Van Wollingen



Epileptic seizures dogged the first 40 years of Faye Tregea's life. They began when she was 10 months old and barely a week went by without at least one seizure.

Faye's seizures were periods of about 20 seconds characterised by total blankness. She would stand, sit or lay and stare into space completely unaware of anything around her.

When the emptiness stopped and her consciousness returned, Faye would once again try to get on with her life – all the while knowing she'd never be like other people.

"I would have easily had over 1000 seizures. Sometimes I felt them coming, sometimes I didn't. School life wasn't good," the 68 year-old said.

"The day I had the first one, when I was just 10 months old, I'd had the triple antigen vaccine that day. Doctors told my parents that might have caused it...but they also said it could have been from eating a banana. It sounds funny now, but no one knew.

"Many years later it was confirmed that I had some scar tissue on my brain from some knock to the head at some stage. "The fits are hard to explain, but as an example I could be sitting there knitting and I'd drop the knitting needles but my hands and fingers would continue to knit and I'd just be staring into space completely empty...it's really difficult to tell people what it was like."

Faye said her childhood and adolescence were full of seizures, which resulted in chronic sleepiness and an overwhelming sense of helplessness.

"When I was really young, about four or five, I think I can remember mum and dad explaining the seizures to me when I had them. It was after them that I'd be confused about what had happened," she said.

"There were lots and lots of doctors and trips to Melbourne but it got worse, not better. I met my husband John when I was 18 and we married just before I turned 21.

"We started a family and had three children and when I was pregnant I never had a seizure. It wasn't clear why...Dr Fox always just said 'nature takes care of its own'." Faye said the seizures were as bad as they had ever been by the time she turned 40 and local GP Dr Peter Oliver found a neurologist in Melbourne to try and find an answer.

"They did some testing. I was in a chair by day and bed by night with sensors connected to my head and wires through my skin near my jaw. I had scans as well and they managed to pinpoint the scar tissue sitting on my brain," she said.

"I was offered surgery that had an 80 per cent chance of fixing it, but that also carried a risk of stroke. It was scary for the family – our children were teenagers and understood.

"The surgery took five hours. They opened up my skull, took out the dead scar tissue without leaving a new scar and put me back together.

"I remember waking up feeling pretty good. They took me for testing to make sure my motor skills were still fine and they were. I haven't had a single seizure since, which John always says is so much better than us winning Tattslotto."

Faye said the last 28 years had easily been the best years of her life.

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month and Purple Day, for Epilepsy, is on March 26.

MEET OUR 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.

This committee meets bi-monthly and is guided by an Annual Work Plan, which includes review of the Quality of Care calendar, Volunteer Engagement, as well as their feedback on updated brochures and service requirements/needs within our community. During the pandemic, the members have adapted to meeting online instead of in person.

Community feedback is a pivotal part of our mission statement "Working together for a healthy community" and we thought we would reintroduce the members, putting a face to the name, so you can pass your feedback onto them if you don't have the opportunity to approach the healthcare service directly.



Heather Bullen (Chair)

Heather is married and has three adult boys. All of her children as well as herself were born at TDHS.

She has worked at the Timboon Pharmacy for the past 11 years and has gained an appreciation of the needs and concerns of community members through her daily interactions.

Having always been actively involved in the community on different committees she believes it is a privilege to be chair of the CPC and also a consumer representative on the Clinical Governance, Quality and Credentialing Committee at TDHS.

"I enjoy being a voice for the community and networking with others and I view volunteering as an inspiring way to make a difference."



Scott Munro

Scott moved to the South-West area 10 years ago from Melbourne and is married with two young children. He works at

one of the local oil & 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 share 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 including her role as Chair for Westvic Dairy, which aides farmers to access any extension or business support they need.

"I believe volunteering is at the heart of our community and the health service is a vital component of it. I'd like to be able to offer my knowledge and experiences to listen and assist with the consumers of the healthcare service through participation in the Committee.

We are so fortunate to have such a great facility in our local town and any small part I can play to help it continue and grow, is worthwhile."



Bobbie French

Bobbie works at the Timboon Medical Clinic as an osteopath, which gives her an opportunity to hear from

a lot of people and get a sense of their health needs. She grew up near Lavers Hill and completed the final three years of her high school education at Timboon P12 School.

"I certainly think that with COVID-19 there are some unique challenges. I am proud to hear how TDHS staff have supported Colac throughout the pandemic and I'm also looking forward to stepping up in a challenging environment."



Ellen Podbury

Ellen has lived in
Timboon for the past
15 years with her
husband and three
young children. She
is currently a teacher

at Timboon P-12 School. Ellen is the school representative on the committee and is passionate about health and wellbeing for not only the school community but also the wider community. "As a user of Timboon and District Health Service, I want to contribute to its continued success."



Emily Morden (Student Representative)

An aspiring young athlete and school captain of Timboon P-12 school, Emily is

lucky enough to have lived with her family in Timboon for most of her life. She is interested in the health industry and hopes to help TDHS continue to provide excellent customer service by acting as a voice for young people in the community.



"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."

DeAnn Hollis

We wanted to take this opportunity, in recognition of National Volunteers Week, to recognise, celebrate and thank all our volunteers for your dedicated hard work, your depth of commitment and invaluable donation of your time and energy.

TDHS could not operate as we do without you. In a day and age when there are increasingly more rules and requirements to volunteering. We are overwhelmed by the generosity and willingness of our volunteers to dedicate and commit themselves to TDHS and our patients. You make our community stronger, especially during times of need, crisis, or isolation. 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 to spare and the passion to contribute and commit, please contact our Community Engagement Officer, Sabine McKenzie, to talk about how your experience and enthusiasm might be best used.





Mother's intuition told Charlene Payne her son Nathan had special needs. While he wasn't diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome until he was seven years old, her gut feeling told her Nathan was on the autism spectrum long before that.

"He was born six weeks premature and everyone kept telling me he was way behind other kids his age because he was prem," she said.

"His fine motor skills, ability to speak, and bodily functions were just so far behind. We were living in Melbourne and I just knew it was more than being a premature baby.

"It was hard for me, but also hard for his younger brother Matthew. When Nathan got to five, Matthew was three and talking...verbally Nathan was still really bad."

Charlene said she moved to Timboon with her two sons when Nathan was eight. She said that although that meant travelling further for specialists, growing up in a small, close-knit community had been good for Nathan.

"Between prep and grade one he changed a lot. He became very angry and even violent. We moved down here and started working with local psychologists, counsellors, nutritionists and just got to work finding help," she said.

"The local speech therapist discovered he was also tongue tied, which explained a bit. But, he joined the I CAN Network, which meant he spent more time with other kids on the spectrum. He just changed...he became more confident.

"He had his challenges at school – not so much academically, but socially. Then in Year 9 he was in

a leadership program and went to China...he came back a different person.

"I never thought he'd be able to go halfway around the world like that without me, but he did and he was excited to go. Timboon has been great for him."

Charlene said Nathan excelled at maths and struggled with English. She said he had completed two VET courses at TAFE the last few years and now held down a job in the kitchen at the Timboon Hotel.

"I think talking about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) like this is important. There is still a stigma around it, but we know so much more than we did 15 years ago," she said.

"I have great hope for Nathan now. He is very independent and won't need me...I want him to go and explore the world. It will be harder for him, but he'll learn.

"He'll finish Year 12 this year and, job wise, he's hoping to find an apprenticeship as a chef. He's also very interested in filming and maybe something will come of that."

Charlene urged parents who had concerns like she did to find answers and help steer their children on the right path at a young age.

"If you think your child isn't where they should be, however young, advocate for them, find other parents like me who have been through it, talk about it, network with others and you'll find the answer you need to find the hope I now have for Nathan."

April is Go Blue for Autism month



Self-employed builder, Brett Wallace (Wal) is well known in and around Port Campbell. He grew up in Brucknell, played local football and rowed surf boats.

Shortly after his 28th birthday, he remembers the onset of stomach pains being pretty quick.

"It just started with the pains and needing to go to the toilet to empty my bowels frequently - like 20 times a day. So, it was

GP Warwick Rouse and he very quickly diagnosed it as Crohn's. I was tested for bowel cancer first, which was his first the results a week later. It wasn't a great

Once Crohn's was confirmed, Brett was referred to Dr Barry Morphett, Warrnambool where he was educated on the disease and began treatment.

"I suppose mine is a story where the plan of attack for Crohn's back then, advancements have been made over the past 20 years to get me to where I am today," he said.

all the way to their anus. Mine is fairly localised to the join between my large and small intestines.

prednisolone which is a steroid. There were other drugs as well, but that was the main one for 18 months or so.

"There were side effects though, including pains. The plan was to combat the ulcers, to fight it - that's all changed for me now."

Inevitably, part of Brett's treatment plan was surgery. He jokes now about 'baring his bum' to countless people over the years, but it was a tough time.

"It doesn't even bother me now - it's one of those things where you check your dignity in at reception, down your trousers and just accept what needs to happen,"

and procedures now that I am pretty immune to the embarrassment.

Brett's first major surgery was in 2008 when doctors removed 40cm of bowel that was most ulcerated with Crohn's

"It was major abdominal surgery with 60 staples right down the middle of my stomach. Unfortunately two-and-a-half months later the bowel resection split and I needed to have another surgery when they took another 15cm," he said.

need to go to the toilet more. That section of bowel is also responsible for absorbing vitamin B12, so I now need six-monthly B12 shots.'

Brett said after the surgery, doctors helped him get on top of the pain, with the only symptom being needing to go to the toilet frequently.

"I kept a food diary for a while. Ideally, you'd find foods that make me worse but we didn't pinpoint too many - mainly

yet. Brett developed abscesses in the lower part of the small intestine. The new development was untimely as Dr Morphett retired which meant Brett now needed to travel to Melbourne to see a specialist.

"We're getting into the graphic stuff now, but these abscesses make pockets of mucus and puss and you have to cut into that and drain them," he said.

"The first time I had this done I had a drain put in...they told me it could be three months before it was removed. It stayed there for three years.

"It was a tough couple of years...I don't talk about it...it was tough and mentally very challenging.

"I played footy at 95kg and was 115kg on the steroid therapy – I was pretty sick through this period and dropped to 76kg and for anyone who doesn't know me I'm 6 foot 4, so I was a pretty sick looking 76kg.

"From 2015 to 2018 I had about 25 procedures in Melbourne. The logistics of having these surgeries in Melbourne, coming out of anaesthetic, being crook and then spending four hours in the car... it was horrible."

Brett said he was now three years clear of that nightmare and his current treatment had restored his quality of life and was proving "fantastic" for him.

"So rather than trying to combat the immunosuppressant drug which shuts down my immune system so the body doesn't fight the Crohn's and it lays dormant instead.

go to the toilet more than other people but effectively I'm free of all the other

"It's not a nice thing, but I'm actually isolated. Life is pretty normal again and I'm grateful to my specialists, but also

procedures here at Timboon is fantastic for me. Every three years they run a camera up there and look after me here."

TDHS provides procedural surgery (colonoscopy and gastroscopy) every fortnight. To organise a referral, please contact the Timboon Clinic on 5558 6088.

SAY AAH.



Introducing DR SHASHIKA JAYAKODY

The Timboon Medical Clinic has welcomed a new GP, with Dr Shashika Jayakody now taking appointments.

'Dr Shashi', 35, hails from Sri Lanka and moved to Melbourne with her Australian husband in 2016. Earlier this year they moved to Timboon with their one year-old son.

"We visited a few places and Timboon was the place I liked the most," she said.

"It's very leafy and we just loved all the trees. We like the natural environment and we feel it will be good for our little one to grow up in the country.

"Timboon is the perfect place for him – he loves nature as well and we want him to grow up in an environment where he can explore and have nice fresh air.

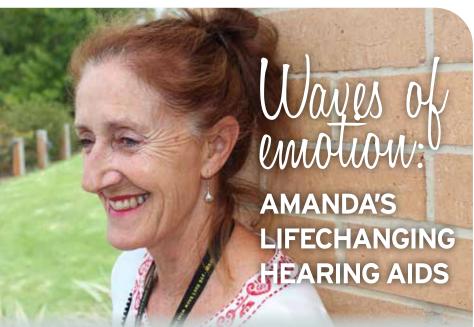
"I would like to say a big thankyou to the Timboon community for the warm welcome.

"As a family, we have started exploring the surrounding areas, but there's a lot more to explore.

Dr Shashi started her medical studies at Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, in 2012. She taught medical graduates for Alan Roberts International Medical Graduates Support & Advisory Services (ARIMGSAS) in Melbourne while completing her Australian exams.

She has experience as a GP in Melbourne but also spent time over the past two years in paediatrics and women's health as well as asthma and mental health services.

Please contact the Timboon clinic on 5558 6088 to make an appointment with Dr Shashi or any of our other GPs.



Amanda Nash cried tears of joy when she drove into her hometown of Port Campbell for the first time with hearing aids.

"I couldn't work out what the noise was...it was the waves and it was only then I realised that I hadn't heard that for a long time. It was very emotional," she said.

"You don't realise what you miss – twittering birds, the sound of rain on the roof. When I take my hearing aids out, I don't hear any of those things."

Ms Nash, 62, is the Women's Health Nurse and Community Health Nurse here at Timboon and District Healthcare Service (TDHS).

She was only 43 when she became aware that her hearing had diminished. Her life changed a couple of years later when her first set of hearing aids were fitted

"I've had hearing aids for 15 years and still many people don't know. They are very inconspicuous and still today, someone I know quite well will notice them and think I've just got them – but I've had them since 2005," Ms Nash said.

"I had been to Vietnam early in 2002. I got back mid-year and just felt there was a vacantness...like my ears were blocked from the flight or something like that.

"It took my kids to say 'mum you're not hearing us'...particularly when they came up behind me. I was aware, with the work I do, that it was also becoming increasingly difficult to hear and understand people in a group setting.

"I booked into my GP thinking I just needed them syringed out and unblocked, but I left that appointment with an audiology referral to Tim Rayner in Warrnambool. That was the first time I thought 'oh no', where is this leading...am I going deaf?

"Then I remembered my mother was about the same age as I was then, 43, when she had what is called a stapedectomy – a surgical procedure to restore her hearing."

Ms Nash said she was also going through early menopause and as a women's health nurse she knew that lessening oestrogen at menopause may result in some women suffering hearing loss.

Ms Nash said she remembered March 6, 2005 vividly as it was the day her hearing aids were fitted and her quality of life was restored.

"It really was life changing. My only knowledge of hearing aids until then was looking after older people and them ringing and squealing, but they're not like that now," she said.

"I'm only on my second set in 15 years, but I'm due for new ones later this year. The ones I've got now can Bluetooth to my phone, the car and TV and the new ones will be even more advanced.

"My mum, who is 84, subsequently got hearing aids after I did and loves them also. Apart from the dog eating one of mine once and accidentally hopping in the shower a couple of times, I've never had a problem."

Ms Nash encouraged anyone with hearing concerns to embrace hearing aid technology.

"They don't stop me doing anything, most people don't see them and they really are life-changing," she said.

"I worry that people, who don't do something about it, become isolated, withdraw from social interactions and stop living life to its fullest."

1 – 7 March is Hearing Awareness Week. Tim Rayner comes to TDHS every month and appointments can be made by calling reception on 5558 6000.

WHAT'S ON Events



Please note that some activities might still be on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Please call us on 03 5558 6000 to check.

MARCH

Epilepsy Awareness Month Melanoma March

- 1. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 2. Private Dentist, Social worker, Public Podiatrist, Cobden SSG, Men's Shed
- 3. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG, Men's Shed
- Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Private Podiatrist, Timboon SSG. Diabetes Educator
- 5. Timboon SSG
- 8. Public Holiday
- 9. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social worker, Continence Clinic, Cobden SSG
- 10. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator
- 15. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Private Dental, Cobden SSG
- 17. Social Worker, Dietician, Cobden SSG,
- Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Men's Shed, Diabetes educator, Timboon SSG
- 19. Timboon SSG
- 22. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 23. Social Worker, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Private Dentist
- 24. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed
- 26. Timboon SSG
- 29. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 30. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social worker, Cobden SSG
- 31. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG

APRIL

Autism Awareness Month

- Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
- 2. Good Friday
- 5. Easter Monday
- 6. Private Dentist, Social worker, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG
- 7. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- 8. Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
- 9. Timboon SSG
- 12. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 13. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social worker, Continence Clinic, Cobden SSG
- 14. Dietician, Cobden SSG, Social Worker
- Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG
- 16. Timboon SSG
- 19. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 20. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Social Worker, Private Dental, Cobden SSG
- 21. Social Worker, Dietician, Cobden SSG
- 22. Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG
- 23. Timboon SSG
- 26. Anzac Day Public Holiday
- Social Worker, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG
- 28. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- 29. Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG
- 30. Timboon SSG



MAY

Thyroid / Crohn's & Colitis Awareness Month Eczema Awareness Month Mindful in May 65 Roses (Cystic Fybrosis)

- 3. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 4. Private Dentist, Social worker, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG
- 5. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- 6. Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
- 7. Timboon SSG
- 10. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 11. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social worker, Continence Clinic, Cobden SSG
- 12. International Nurses Day, Dietician, Cobden SSG, Social Worker
- Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG
- 14. Timboon SSG
- 17. National Volunteer week 17-23, Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 18. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Social Worker, Private Dental, Cobden SSG
- 19. Social Worker, Dietician, Cobden SSG
- 20. Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG
- 21. Timboon SSG, 24. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietician
- 25. Social Worker, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Private Dental
- 26. Dietician, Social Worker, Cobden SSG
- 27. Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SS
- 28. Timboon SSG

SSG: Social Support Group

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

TIMBOONHEALTHCARE. COM.AU/NEWS-EVENTS/ NEWSLETTERS

