

LORIS UNLOCKS DROWNING TRAGEDY *to help others*

Jessica Day was an adventurous toddler. She had an inquisitive mind, she loved to explore and, when she wanted to be, she was as quick as a flash.

Her tragic drowning on the family farm near Port Campbell in 1992, when she was just 20 months old, is something her mother Loris has locked away for her own private moments.

Three years earlier, Loris and her late husband Rob, had lost another daughter, Leah, to childhood cancer.

Leah was 13 when she died and the arrival of baby Jessica brought great love and joy into Loris and Rob's lives – and those of big sisters Christie and Melanie (then 15 and 17).

Loris decided to share her story with Timboon and District Healthcare Service (TDHS) to help raise awareness of water safety this Summer – particularly childhood drowning.

– continued on page 4



CEO & CHAIR'S Report



In the words of The Beatles, 'here comes the sun'. Summer is around the corner and we are all looking forward to more time outdoors and with our loved ones. With great vaccination rates in our area and the easing of restrictions, we will all be allowed to get back to the people and things we love. This is a big change for us all and it's ok if you're feeling a bit worried about the changes or what the future may bring. In this month's issue, our Social Worker, Hayley, provides some tips on how to cope with re-adjusting and managing your mental health.

The end of the year is a great time to reflect on what we have achieved in the past 12 months, as we look forward to the New Year. We are pleased to report that TDHS has maintained our vital service provision in the face of COVID changes and restrictions, whilst also supporting our community with information, vaccinations and COVID testing. As we move into "COVID normal" we look forward to returning all of our services and 'working together for a healthy community'.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful staff and volunteers who have come to work every day with a smile on their face and shown great resilience and dedication to our community. We would also like to thank you, our community, for your continued support, understanding of our COVID changes, and willingness to be part of the solution.

We hope you all have a wonderful summer and we wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

Warm Regards,

Board Chair
Frank Carlus

Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Van Wollingen

CELEBRATING SENIOR ACHIEVER AWARD RECIPIENT JOHN FOX

We congratulate our Meals on Wheels and Community Transport volunteer, John Fox, on winning the 2021 COTA (Council on the Ageing) Victoria Senior Achiever Award, an award acknowledging significant contributions by volunteers to local communities and Victoria. For more than 25 years, the Victorian Senior of the Year Awards have recognised the volunteer work and community contributions of older Victorians. This year's awardees highlight the resilience, compassion, and commitment of senior Victorians across the state.

John is a very active volunteer across a range of organisations and services in the Timboon area, including our healthcare service. During the pandemic he stepped up without hesitation to ensure continuation of services. As a Meals on Wheels volunteer he took on the shifts of older colleagues at that time, ensuring that isolated community members continued to be supported with a chat and a smile. In country Victoria, community transport volunteers are vital and his reliability and capacity to respond to last minute requests to provide transport for essential medical appointments is greatly appreciated. John is also actively involved with other community groups including Timboon Men's Shed, Timboon Evergreens Senior Citizens Club and Terang Harness Racing Club.

John was nominated by us as he is a great representative of our wonderful volunteer workforce, our ICARE values and is also an inspiring example of how volunteering can change those struggling with mental health.

The TDHS Board of Directors cordially invites you to the TDHS VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2021

AT 7.30PM VIA LIVESTREAM BROADCAST

Guest Speaker: Cath Gillard
Director of People & Culture at LifeBlood.

A recording of this event will be made available on request after the meeting.

Please forward RSVPs, new business and enquiries to the Executive Assistant by Tuesday 30th November:
Email: enquiries@timboonhealthcare.com.au
or Phone: 5558 6029

(New business must be in writing and received at least 7 days prior to the meeting date)



Sheer luck

SAVES STEVE'S LIFE

Steve Hanel will turn 59 in a few months, but only because he got lucky.

He'd ignored the warning signs of something serious and knows now that his life could quite easily have been over too soon.

Last month (November) was the first anniversary of Steve's lifesaving surgery to reverse some of the damage caused by his smoking.

Steve has Carotid Artery Disease. Put simply his smoking damaged the smooth inner lining of the two main arteries in his neck. This caused calcium build up in the arteries that reduced blood flow to his brain and eventually threw plaque clots resulting in mini strokes.

"One carotid artery was 98 per cent blocked and the other was 50 per cent blocked. The surgery unblocked the worst one and the other one is still half blocked," Steve said.

Two mini stroke episodes should have been enough for Steve to realise something was very wrong, but "like a lot of stubborn men" he ignored the signs until it was almost too late.

"I was driving from Cobden to Timboon and my left arm went all tingly and I had a white spot in the middle of my right eye," he said.

"I was going through the corners at Devils Gully, so I couldn't really pull over and then it all came good and I was fine again. I just thought I must have had my arm resting funny on the console and it had gone to sleep."

In reality, a piece of calcium built up in his artery had broken free and gone to his brain causing the mini stroke. Luckily, it broke up, dissolved and passed.

"Then a week or so later, I was going for a cigarette at home and my hand wouldn't work properly...I couldn't pick it up. I got it though - and made it to the door, my arm was numb again,

the white spot was there again and then my leg gave way," he said.

"I went down on my hands and knees...it lasted for three or four minutes and then everything came good again. My wife Fiona told me I needed to see a doctor, but I just put it off and did nothing."

Again, it was just sheer luck that saw another piece of calcium break up in Steve's brain, rather than lodge and cause a stroke with permanent consequences.

"It was about another week later that I got out of bed on a Friday and I just didn't feel great. I was fatigued...like I hadn't been to sleep at all," he said.

"I had a shower and headed in to work here at TDHS, but I just felt grey...I remember saying I was just spent...exhausted and that I wasn't right.

"They took me over to accident and emergency and found my blood pressure was very very high. I'd always had high blood pressure, but my tablets had sorted that out until then.

"My GP sent me for a brain scan in Warrnambool, but it was all normal so then she booked me in for an ultrasound in Terang of the arteries in my neck."

Steve said the ultrasound results were back with his GP in Timboon before he got back and he was told immediately that he needed surgery as soon as possible.

"The positive out of the COVID-19 situation at the time was that private hospitals were taking public patients to help out, so I was under the knife at the Epworth in two weeks.

"They could have put a stent in through my groin, but because of my age they wanted a longer-term fix, so they opened up my neck, put a bypass in, cut the artery open, removed all the buildup, installed a

patch on the artery and put me back together.

"It was a five-hour surgery and I woke in intensive care the next morning already feeling a bit better. Two days later I was home."

Steve said he counted himself very lucky to be alive. He urged everyone to listen to their body, recognise when something was different and seek immediate attention.

"My strokes could have been so much bigger and so much worse. There's no use hiding behind closed doors, get checked out and deal with whatever is going on," he said.

SAY AAH..

Lifestyle conditions are mostly to blame for the damage caused to the arteries.

Major factors that contribute to this damage include: smoking, history of smoking, high levels of certain fats and cholesterol in the blood, high blood pressure and/or high levels of sugar in the blood due to insulin resistance or diabetes.

When these factors cause damage, your body starts a healing process. The healing may cause the walls of the arteries to become less smooth, making them more likely to catch the fatty plaque as it passes through in the blood.

Blood clots from this attempt at healing can also create a perfect catchment area for the plaque to congregate. The build-up can subsequently cause carotid artery disease, and potentially result in a stroke.

Many men feel uncomfortable discussing health issues affecting them and the pandemic meant that regular check-ups or aches and pains were even more ignored than usual.

Please contact our Timboon Clinic on 5558 6088 for a check up or to just have a chat.

Loris unlocks drowning tragedy to help others

Loris loves the colour purple. She wears it most days and finds comfort and reflection in purple flowers like the roses in the TDHS garden.

Jessica was born at TDHS and less than two years later that joy turned to heartache when the 20-month-old was pronounced dead on arrival after venturing into the family's dam.

"We had a big pavement area at home and I was out sweeping it and Jessica had come out with me. She was an adventurer – more so than most toddlers," Loris said.

"Jessica had gone to the back of the house. The gates were closed, but they weren't the type you couldn't crawl under if you wanted to. That was the last time I ever saw her.

"We had a cyclone fence around the house because we had chickens wandering around. It is my suspicion she went under to follow a chook.

"There was a dam reasonably close to the house. It was also surrounded by a cyclone fence and gate...it was one of those things you never expected could happen.

"It did happen and you have to live with it. It's like any tragedy that happens to anybody, you have to get on with life, but the tragedy never leaves you."

Loris said Rob was away at the family's out paddock at the time and everything happened so quickly. She said panic set in just as quickly and she soon feared the worst.

"She disappeared on me in seconds. I couldn't think clearly but managed to ring our neighbour and another family friend who lived up the road," she said.

"I searched everywhere until they arrived. I couldn't find her. I ran up to the dairy, but she wasn't there. There was a big dam there too and water troughs, but she was nowhere.

"The neighbour arrived and must have gone to the dam closest to the house and he found her, but she was gone by that stage.

"Another neighbour who was in the

surf club knew how to administer CPR. He worked on her until we got to the hospital, but she was dead on arrival."

Loris said the next two weeks were a blur as the shock and devastation took hold of the family and the tightknit community.

"It was a short life, but Jessica brought a lot of love into our family. Christie was 15 and adored Jessica...she was like her mum and spent so much time with her.

"It was incredibly difficult. I think a tragic accident like that causes emotion in a whole community.

"I just sat in a chair for two weeks. I don't remember much...people looked after me. People were beautiful and kind.

"They would drop in all the time, but after a while I couldn't deal with that. I couldn't see people for a while."

Loris said the family knew their lives would never be the same. She said losing two daughters was unimaginable and coping was, at times, too hard.

"When people go through grief...I think men and women experience it very differently. My husband was a quiet and private man – his wall went up.

"We managed to keep our marriage together, but when you lose a child it stretches marriages as much as they can be stretched and we went through that twice."

Loris said as painful as it was for her to unlock Jessica's story nearly 30 years later, she hoped her story could help other parents understand how quickly their lives could be turned upside down.

"It's such a sudden thing. When you lose a child they never go out of your mind. You carry it in your heart, but you lock it away...that's how I have coped," she said.

"The main thing I would say to parents who live on properties is that where there are dangers like dams, troughs, waterholes or pools...they have to be impenetrable, because toddlers like Jessica...if they can get in, they will."

FARM WATER SAFETY

Farms contain many drowning hazards. While dams are the most common location for child drowning deaths, troughs, irrigation channels, water tanks, swimming pools, and even rivers and lakes, pose an equally significant risk to children.

While it is not always feasible to fence off large water bodies, there are some simple measures that can make the farm environment as safe as possible.

- Active supervision should be a priority at all farm locations and children must be supervised at all times in, on, or around water on farms.
- Child safe play areas can help parents to supervise children but they are not designed to replace active supervision. Child safe play areas restrict a child's access to water by creating a barrier between the child and a drowning hazard. They are particularly effective in preventing a young child from gaining access to water which cannot be fenced, such as dams on farms.
- Fill in any unused holes where water can gather such as ditches, dips and postholes. Water storage such as wells and tanks should be securely covered.

For more information visit <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/stay-safe-active/locations/farm-water-safety>



Grief and Loss: Where to go for support.

There are numerous support options available to you if you need to speak to someone about your experience of grief and loss.

Below are some of the places to go for information and support:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 (available 24/7) or chat to a Crisis Supporter online at lifeline.org.au every night.
- Mensline Australia: 1300 78 99 78 (24hrs)
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- BeyondBlue: 1300 22 46 36

You may also consider making an appointment with our social worker Hayley by contacting 5558 6000 or you can make an appointment with one of our General Practitioners by contacting our Timboon Clinic on 5558 6088.

Marg O'Toole returned to the water in November after surgery to remove a melanoma.

*Photo courtesy of Raelene Wicks.

Melanoma Scare

LEAVES MARG WITH A MAJOR SCAR

Marg O'Toole loves the ocean. She's spent her whole life in the water - be it surfing, diving, swimming or boating.

Thankfully, she has just returned to the water after a skin cancer scare saw a spot smaller than a 10 cent piece turned into a scar as big as a grapefruit.

Not surprisingly, Marg has become a huge advocate for skin protection and is urging anyone with a suspect spot to get it checked out ASAP.

"Before we all became more sun smart, I spent a lot of time in the sun. When I was young and silly I went on a surfing trip to the West Indies and surfed in a bikini for days," she said.

"We know a lot more about what the sun can do to our skin now and even before this I covered up and only went to the beach early or late when the UV isn't as bad.

"I'd been to a dermatologist about three years ago and had no issues, but then six months ago I noticed a new spot on my leg...it had appeared suddenly."

Marg's background as a nurse sparked her into action. The spot changed shape and colour quickly and she knew she needed to get it checked out urgently.

"They did a biopsy and it came back as a Stage 1 Melanoma in Situ. That essentially means it is cancer, but hasn't spread...I wouldn't say I was frightened, but I was surprised it had melanoma cells," she said.

"It was too big for a GP to deal with, so I had to go to a plastic surgeon.

He removed it and did a skin flap, which turned into something quite big...I got quite a shock."

Marg explained that the surgeon took the lesion off with a safe margin and produced a much larger skin flap to cover up where it was.

"The surgery was on October 27 and I got the stitches out on November 11 so I was out of action for a couple of weeks. That was a bit frustrating because I'm a keen recreational diver and the conditions were great," she quipped.

"With these 'in situ' melanomas, if just one cell gets deeper you can be in serious strife, so even though I'm pretty relaxed about it, there was certainly potential for it to be much worse and that could have happened very quickly had I not acted.

"Obviously, my message is simple. Look after your skin, monitor your skin, get spots checked out and if any change shape or colour please act as fast as you can."



Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer: each year, more than 13,000 Australians are diagnosed with a melanoma and almost 980,000 new cases of non-melanoma skin cancers are treated. Skin cancer is mostly preventable, and there are effective treatment options available.

There are certain characteristics to look for in spots and moles. Remember the 'ABCDE' of skin cancer when checking your skin:

- Asymmetry — does each side of the spot or mole look different to the other?
- Border — is it irregular, jagged or spreading?
- Colours — are there several, or is the colour uneven or blotchy?
- Diameter — look for spots that are getting bigger
- Evolution — is the spot or mole changing or growing over time?

Please see your doctor if you notice any new spots or an existing spot that changes size, shape or colour over several weeks or months. You can contact our Timboon Clinic on 5558 6088 to make an appointment.

A man with a bald head and a slight smile, wearing a dark blue zip-up jacket, stands in a field of tall, yellowish-green grass. In the background, there are some trees and a white structure, possibly a dam or a building.

Dry snake bite

A WAKEUP CALL FOR GRANT

Living with snakes is part of dairy farming in lower Heytesbury for Grant Stansfield.

When it's warm, barely a week goes by without him seeing a snake. He has always left them alone and until recently they'd done the same.

"It's the surprise encounters – on both parts – that can cause trouble," the 53-year-old said.

"They don't scare me, but I fear catching them when they are unaware. For the most part, if you leave them alone, they'll leave you alone.

"Only the other day, I was in the garden and I saw one coming past. I just kept an eye on him as he passed by harmlessly and that's always been my approach."

Grant grew up in Paaratte and said over the years he had seen hundreds of snakes without incident.

"They are always there. I'd say in the last few years there's been more tiger snakes than usual. When I was growing up we had more copperheads and the odd tiger, but now there is a lot of tigers and the odd brown," he said.

"When I got bitten, I had a water issue down the back of the farm and

had to go and reprime the pump on a dam.

"I bent down to pick up some poly pipe and didn't realise until I had it up near my face that a small brown must have been laying parallel with the pipe and I'd picked them both up."

"I dropped it like a hot potato and noticed some blood. I ummed and ahed about going to TDHS to get checked out and decided I should which is the right thing to do."

Grant said his worker drove him in, he walked into reception, was taken to accident and emergency to get checked out and the paramedics also attended.

"They had antivenom, but first they checked to see if there was venom around the bite and there wasn't," he said.

"They also did a blood test to make sure, but I was all clear. I spent the night in hospital because they like to retest every few hours, but I was fine. Apparently, dry bites are quite common."

Grant said several months later his worker also had a close shave. He picked up some silage wrap and got bitten on the hand and although

venom was detected, the snake hadn't penetrated the skin so he was also totally fine.

"It's that time of year to be wary – even on the cooler days they can find a spot out of the wind to sun themselves. They are always around that's for sure."

Snakes are out and about at the moment and the most important advice is that if you see one, leave it alone.

Seven of the ten most venomous snakes in the world are native to Victoria, so even if you think you might have been bitten, stay as still as you can and call 000 (triple zero).

There are something like 2000 reported snake bites in Victoria each year, but only a small proportion have venom injected.

All snake bites are treated by Ambulance Victoria like they are envenomated, because if they don't and they're wrong, the outcome can be very serious.

Working together for a healthy community

Timboon and District Healthcare Service (TDHS) continues to keep people at the heart of all we do, providing high quality care and safe services. Our focus is to work with our community to deliver integrated health and wellbeing services and provide optimal health outcomes and general wellbeing across the lifespan of our community.

The road to COVID normal will provide the opportunity for long awaited elective procedures to slowly resume, which means that you may require support for a short period of time to help you get back on your feet. Or you are generally able to manage, but just need some help with daily tasks to continue living independently at home.

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme provides a range of services for people aged 65 and over (50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people), with a focus on working with you, rather than doing it for you.

To access this programme, you are required to call the My Aged Care contact centre on 1800 200 422 where My Aged Care staff will ask you some questions about your current needs and circumstances. Alternatively, you can go to their website <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/> for more information and/or to register. After registering with My Aged Care, you will be contacted by our Regional Assessment Services Officer Fiona Hanel to organise a home assessment. If you have any queries or concerns or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 5558 6000.



COVID NORMAL FOR YOU, *may not be COVID normal for me*

How have you adjusted to a COVID-19 world over the past two years?

You might not have given it much thought, but this unique time in our history has left its mark on everyone in different ways.

For example, as we head into the Christmas period, you and the people around you may feel uncomfortable about attending larger-scale social gatherings.

TDHS social worker Hayley Weel said not everyone was ready to go to a restaurant full of people or a busy shopping centre for the first time in two years.

"Our relationship with social situations has changed – we're out of practice and it's okay for you to feel a bit anxious about that," she said.

"Likewise, we're in a period now where there are COVID-19 cases around us, but restrictions are easing so everyone has their own feelings about that level of risk.

"You may not be worried about COVID-19, but you might experience

some social anxiety that you weren't expecting."

Hayley said people's need, and want, for current COVID-19 related information had also changed the way they received news, with social media playing a bigger role for many.

"For some people watching the news and looking at social media provides a sense of control about the current situation, but for others it can cause added anxiety," she said.

"It may help to sit back and look at how you are digesting information and whether taking a step back, or even stopping a behavior could help your current mindset."

Hayley said returning to work, playing sport, enforcing COVID rules at home and in the workplace and taking holidays were other considerations for people.

"We're all different and there's no right or wrong way to feel, so it's important to be mindful of yourself and others as we all continue on the road to COVID normal," she said.

For those who have been affected by lockdown restrictions and also experience social anxiety, the lockdown period may actually have brought reprieve from daily face-to-face interactions. So the thought of going back into the wider community post-pandemic may feel hard.

Below are some of the places to go for information and support:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 (available 24/7) or chat to a Crisis Supporter online at lifeline.org.au every night.
- Mensline Australia: 1300 78 99 78 (24hrs)
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- BeyondBlue: 1300 22 46 36

You may also consider contacting us on 5558 6000 to make an appointment with Hayley or you can make an appointment with one of our General Practitioners by contacting our Timboon Clinic on 5558 6088.

WHAT'S ON Events

Please note that some activities may still be on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please call us on 03 5558 6000 to check.

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

DECEMBER

Decembeard Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

1. Cobden SSG, Exercise Physiology
2. Diabetes Educator, Timboon Men's Shed, Exercise Physiology
3. Timboon SSG, Exercise Physiology
5. International Volunteer Day
6. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise physiology
7. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Public Podiatry, Social Worker, Occupational therapy, Cobden SSG, Exercise Physiology
8. Audiology, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry, Exercise Physiology
9. Timboon SSG, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology
10. Timboon SSG, Exercise Physiology
13. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology
14. Continence Nurse, Social Worker, Occupational therapy, Men's Shed, Private Dental, Public Podiatry, Exercise Physiology
15. Exercise Physiology
16. Diabetes Educator, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry, Exercise Physiology
17. Exercise Physiology
20. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Private Dental, Private Podiatry
21. Social Worker, Occupational therapy, Men's Shed, Private Dental, Public Podiatry
23. Diabetes Educator, Men's Shed
24. Christmas Eve
25. Christmas Day
26. Boxing Day
27. Public Holiday
28. Public Holiday
31. New Year's Eve

JANUARY

1. New Year's Day
3. Public Holiday
4. Private Dentist, Social worker, Occupational therapy
5. Audiology,
10. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
11. Private Dentist, Social worker, Occupational therapy, Private Podiatry, Continence Nurse
13. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator
17. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology
18. Exercise Physiology, Private Podiatry, Private Dentist, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG
19. Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
20. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
21. Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
24. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology
25. Private Dentist, Occupational therapy, Exercise Physiology, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry, Cobden SSG
26. Australia Day
27. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
28. Timboon SSG, Exercise Physiology
31. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology



FEBRUARY

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month Febfast Red Feb

1. Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Exercise Physiology, Private Podiatry, Private Dentist, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG
2. Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
3. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
4. Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
7. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiologist
8. Occupational therapy, Social Worker, Private Podiatry, Private Dentist, Men's Shed, Continence Nurse, Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
9. Audiology, Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
10. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
11. Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
14. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiologist
15. Private Podiatry, Occupational therapy, Social worker, Private Dentist, Men's Shed, Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
16. Public Podiatry, Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
17. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
18. Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
21. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiologist
22. Social Worker, Men's Shed, Occupational therapy, Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Private Dentist, Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
23. Exercise Physiology, Cobden SSG
24. Teal Ribbon Day. Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG.
25. Exercise Physiology, Timboon SSG
28. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiologist

TDHS Board and Staff wish you and your loved ones a Safe and Merry Christmas and may 2022 be a year filled with good health, warmth and togetherness!