

Quarterly

Autumn 2022

EVERY HEALTHY DAY HONORS FRANK'S *Liver Donor*

Peterborough's Frank Carlus has not surprisingly become a huge advocate of the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Twenty-two years ago, a donor liver saved his life. Now 64 years-old, Mr Carlus was in his early 30s when he found out he had Hepatitis C (HCV) and that the virus would cause irreparable damage to his liver.

His sense of gratitude towards the donor of his new liver is overwhelming to this day – as is his elation after becoming one of the first people in the world cured of HCV years later.

Mr Carlus is the Board Chair of Timboon and District Healthcare Service and he has shared his story to help mark World Liver Day, held on April 19th. - continued on page 4



CEO & CHAIR'S *Report*

Welcome to 2022, what a start to the year it has been. With increased COVID cases in our region during the holiday period TDHS helped test and vaccinate hundreds of our community members and visitors, in just the first few months of the year.

We continue to encourage people to get vaccinated, including a third dose, to ensure appropriate ongoing protection against COVID illness. We are extremely proud of the amazingly resilient and supportive response from both our staff and community – thank you.

It has been an extremely positive start to the year, with TDHS passing the

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards accreditation, with no recommendations. This highlights that our actions and systems ensure great care.

We couldn't have done it without our amazing team, we would like to thank the Board, every staff member and our volunteers for all their hard work in achieving this outstanding outcome.

This year we are excited to get onto COVID 'normal' and we look forward to working with you to grow and develop our fabulous services, including supporting the return of Social Support and Exercise groups this year.

We wish you and yours a happy and positive New Year.

Warm regards

Board Chair
Frank Carlus

Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Van Wollingen



GRATITUDE FOR TOMORROW AND WHAT IT WILL BRING *by Sabine McKenzie* TDHS Community Engagement Officer

What the last 2 years have taught me most of all, is that it's not such a bad thing to stand still and smell the roses.

Our houses have never looked this clean and we have probably learned some things about our family members that we never knew, simply by being forced to sit down and talk.

Over the last 2 years we have lived

through lockdowns and restrictions, but as Australia opens up, we are experiencing a different lockdown – loved ones in our community are testing positive, family members are close contacts and in some cases individuals are too scared to venture out into the community.

How does that make us feel?

Surprise as to how did this reach us here in our remote country paradise.

Anxiety about the uncertainty. Will I or one of my loved ones get it?

Anger/frustration about how this situation is going to affect and disrupt my life.

Defeat as it feels there is nothing I can do about this situation.

Gratitude for lots of things.

For the full story please visit timboonhealthcare.com.au.

Whatever you feel, please know it's ok.

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
- 1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732
- Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 675 398
- Nurse On Call: 1300 60 60 24

If it is an emergency call Triple Zero





Little Aria

IS TAKING DEAFNESS IN HER STRIDE

Zoe O'Neill was feeding her baby daughter Aria one day when the smoke detector went off. While it startled the new mum, Aria didn't jump or react at all.

"She didn't even look at me – it was like it didn't happen and, in that moment, I thought there had to be something wrong with her hearing," Zoe said.

Zoe and husband Morgan celebrated Aria's first birthday last month and while there have been some tough times over the 12 months the family are as happy as any other.

The O'Neill's said the healthcare system had been unbelievable in supporting them with Aria's hearing challenges.

"One of our favourite times now is putting Aria's hearing aids in every morning while she is eating breakfast in her highchair," Zoe said.

"She can't wait for them to go in and she sort of screams with joy and we always get a beautiful big smile when she hears us and that's really nice.

"Only once in the eight months has she taken one out. She loves them being in so much she just leaves them there now, so surprisingly that's not a problem at all."

Zoe said the pair sprung to action after the smoke detector incident and immediately got a referral to audiologist Tim Rayner who visits Timboon and District Healthcare Service monthly.

"From there we were sent to the University of Melbourne Audiology Clinic – right in the middle of COVID-19 which was interesting. It

was made clear to us pretty quickly that Aria needed hearing aids and that she had a deficit of 70-80 per cent," Zoe said.

"When we found out we were speechless...we didn't know what to do. But I suppose, as hard as it was, you just cope and adapt and get on with the next steps.

"Aria can hear noise without her aids, but it's very muffled. So the fact she loves the hearing aids and hearing everything has made it so much easier for us."

Zoe said Aria was referred to an ear nose and throat specialist in Geelong and they were supported to join a Victorian based program for deaf children called Aurora.

"They come to our house once a fortnight to see how she's going and to make sure we're doing all the right things. We do some sound testing together and they have just started a little bit of sign language, which is very early days.

"We're pretty confident Aria will be able to manage with her hearing aids and lip cues, but time will tell when she starts talking whether sign language is something she needs to develop."

Zoe said the couple had a great relationship with Hearing Australia in Warrnambool who fitted Aria with her hearing aids on May 28, last year.

"Thankfully we didn't need to meet the cost of that and because she is growing so much we take her every two weeks to have new moulds made. They cost \$150 and we get them at no cost as well," she said.



"For a small amount each year, Aria gets her hearing aids, the moulds, batteries, maintenance, and replacements if they are lost – it's amazing...we're very lucky."

**World Hearing Day
3 March 2022**



World Hearing Day is held each year on 3 March and Hearing Awareness Week is from 1 – 7 March.

Tim Rayner Audiology visits TDHS monthly and for an appointment you can contact them directly on (03) 5560 5833.

A Maternal and Child Health Nurse from the Corangamite Shire comes to TDHS weekly; please contact 1800 552 902 for an appointment. Or you can make an appointment with one of our GPs at the Timboon Clinic by calling (03) 5558 6088.

Every healthy day honors Frank's liver donor

Walking his beloved dog Skip along the beach at Wild Dog Cove in Peterborough, it is never far from Mr Carlus' mind just how lucky he is to be alive to enjoy his retirement.

He was a fit and healthy young man living an active lifestyle when a routine visit to his GP for a blood test turned his world upside down and signaled the start of a health spiral that saw him hanging onto life by the barest of threads.

"My diagnosis that I had Hep C came as a total shock, but I was young, my career was a priority, I wanted to travel and there was family, sport and other things that pushed the diagnosis to the back of my mind and so I got on with life," he said.

"The most likely cause of the Hep C was the fact I was born and immunised overseas in Spain. Subsequent to my diagnosis, my family got tested and my younger sister and my mum tested positive and my older sister carries the antibodies as evidence she had contact with the virus as well.

"Back in those days, often syringes and vials of vaccine were shared – not needles – but we can only assume that the drawing of immunisation doses from the same vial with the same syringe was the likely cause of my transmission as a child."

Mr Carlus said life went on, but about seven years after his HCV diagnosis symptoms started to take their toll and he was referred to the Alfred's Liver Clinic.

A year later, despite medication and other treatments, his liver was cirrhotic and the subject of transplantation came up.

"That was a bit of a shock at first. I thought, 'surely there is another solution to help me beat this' but there wasn't and I was placed on the transplant waiting list," he said.

"My liver and my health continued to deteriorate, I could no longer drive or do anything involving even minor exertions...with the support of my wife and employer I continued to work as long as I could.

"Finally, in November 1999 I got the

call – my turn had come for a transplant. With great trepidation, my wife, daughter and I made our way to the Austin and the pre-op process started, but within a few hours the bad news came.

"There were some issues with the donor liver and it was not suitable for me. It was the middle of the night and we were sent home."

Mr Carlus spent the majority of his career working for government in the health sector and said he always maintained confidence the process would save him.

"Several weeks passed. My health was terrible – I had leg cramps, poor digestion, esophageal varices, internal bleeding, constipation, and terrible encephalopathy.

"I hadn't lost hope, but I was hanging in there by the barest of threads. Another false alarm was shortly followed by the real thing in early February 2000. I was euphoric on my way to theatre – I thought that one way or another my suffering was coming to an end."

Mr Carlus said he spent 36 very disorientated hours in intensive care after the transplant before being moved to a completely isolated ward to prevent infection.

HCV was still in his body and with a reduced immune system it attacked his new liver quickly which Mr Carlus said tested his resolve.

"We won the first decisive battle though, but not before my new liver had been severely damaged. By week six post-transplant I was on my way home with a new sense of hope though," he said.

"My health was largely restored over time, I resumed work, looked after myself as best I could and tried to be a model post-transplant patient. My sense of gratitude to my donor and his family continues to be overwhelming."



Frank Carlus and Skip walk the beach at Wild Dog Cove in Peterborough every day.


More than a decade later, Mr Carlus and HCV sufferers around the world continued to wait for a cure. All of a sudden, Mr Carlus became aware that there was one in sight.

"In late December 2014 the good people at the Austin came to my rescue again. I was accepted into a compassionate drug program. I subsequently became free of Hep C and that treatment the first batch of us trialled was later approved for general use around the world," he said.

"Not having Hep C took a load off my mind in terms of no longer feeling that ongoing threat to my life. My medical people tell me my overall health is now on par with other 64 year-old men, which is just the best news.

"Hopefully I can continue to pursue a lifestyle that honours my donor, the transplant team and everyone who supported me and encouraged me through the ordeal."

Mr Carlus spent time as a volunteer speaker for the Donate Life organisation and respectfully encourages people to join the Australian Organ Donor Register.



SAY 'HELLO' TO YOUR HARDEST WORKING ORGAN

Liver facts

- largest internal organ
- on the right-hand side of your torso, behind your ribs
- can repair itself and create new healthy liver tissue
- is the key to breaking down and absorbing fats in the body
- 1.5 litres of blood flows through your liver every minute

For more information and resources, please visit <https://liverwell.org.au/services/liverline/> or contact LiverLine on 1800 703 003. You can also make an appointment with one of our GPs at the Timboon Clinic by calling 5558 6088.



THANK YOU
Volunteers!
We couldn't do it without you

Flexibility the key

TO MELISSA'S VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteering for Timboon and District Healthcare Service (TDHS) provides the flexibility Melissa McKenzie is looking for to give something back to her community.

The 45 year-old Port Campbell resident signed up as a volunteer less than two years ago and now enjoys doing Meals on Wheels deliveries and being a Community Transport driver for TDHS.

"The Community Transport is really flexible. They call me up when there's a job to do and if I can't do it, that's fine, they call someone else," she said.

"I was looking for something flexible and it fits in really nicely with other things in my life which is great.

"I had been in the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and enjoyed that, but I just found it was a bit much for me. But I love volunteering, so I decided to see if there was something I could do for the hospital.

"At the moment, I'm doing Meals on Wheels once or twice a month. It's only an hour or so each time, so

I'm finding both that and the driving suits me perfectly."

Melissa said she was finding both roles very rewarding and community members she assisted were always very appreciative.

"My mum passed away a few years ago and she used to do some Red Cross driving through the Lions Club and always said she enjoyed it," she said.

"Now I get to help people stay in their homes for longer which is really nice...I get to be the friendly face who visits people – some of whom don't get a lot of visitors.

"It's really rewarding and with the Community Transport you get compensated for car expenses like fuel, so TDHS make sure you are not out of pocket.

"It's just really rewarding, and I'd encourage anyone who wants to volunteer, and needs flexibility, to contact TDHS Community Engagement Officer Sabine McKenzie to register their interest."

TDHS Chief Executive Officer

Rebecca Van Wollingen thanks Melissa and all the volunteers without whom the organisation could not operate.

"We are constantly overwhelmed by the generosity and willingness of our volunteers to dedicate and commit themselves to TDHS and our consumers," she said.

"Our volunteers 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 Sabine on (03) 5558 6000 to talk about how your experience and enthusiasm can help."

National Volunteer Week is celebrated from May 16-22.

NATIONAL 16-22 MAY 2022
VOLUNTEER
Better Together WEEK

From pain to peace

BEC'S ENDOMETRIOSIS JOURNEY

Port Campbell's Rebecca McAuliffe still grimaces when she talks about years of debilitating pain caused by endometriosis – a disease that affects 1 in 9 women.

This month is EndoMarch and Bec agreed to share her story to help raise awareness and break the stigma around women's periods and talking about period pain.

Bec said celebrity sufferers like Home and Away star Sophie Dillman (Ziggy Astoni) and Emma Watkins (former yellow Wiggle) have helped over the last couple of years to shine a light on endometriosis.

"My main message is that period pain isn't normal. Some cramping or minor pain maybe, but not pain right through your menstruation – that's not normal," she said.

"We don't talk about period pain, but we should. Like mental health, if we can talk about these things and know it's okay to go and get help then that's a great thing.

"I'm happy to share my story and hopefully women who have symptoms will go to their GP and not give up trying to find answers and getting the help they need to live pain free."

Bec said she was a 'normal developer' and teenager. She began taking the contraceptive pill initially to help with period pain and stayed on it for 15 years.

"Then I got married and went off the pill and had some trouble getting pregnant. Not big trouble...I saw a naturopath, fell pregnant, had a healthy baby, breast fed and everything was pretty normal," she said.

"When I went back to having a period again is when everything started going haywire. I was having bowel

issues which was taking the focus away from the problem.

"The pain increased and I remember writhing around on the floor, it was horrible. I was taking Endone everyday which is pretty serious pain medication.

"My husband Tony and I were running the hostel at Port Campbell at the time. By this time Claire was about two and we were trying to conceive a sibling for her."

Bec said after some time and a lot of persistence on her behalf, she finally got a referral to Warrnambool gynaecologist Liz Uren and at the end of 2012 had laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery.

"I'd already had X-rays, ultrasounds, gastroscopes and the only way to get a successful diagnosis of endometriosis was a laparoscope," she said.

"I remember Liz coming into my room at St John of God in Warrnambool after the surgery and saying I was probably one of the worst cases she had seen. All my internal organs were stuck together with endometrial tissue.

"So, I was off to the Royal Women's in Melbourne where I underwent an eight-hour surgery. They removed 18cm of bowel and took as much endo tissue as they could.

"I had them under strict instructions to try and save my ovaries so we could have another baby and they did save them."

Bec said she had an ileostomy bag for three months to help her bowel recover, lost 10kg in 10 days and was nursed back to health by her mum, dad, husband and extended family.

"I was lucky in a way that they took out a great big cluster which meant that after that initial healing I was

pretty much pain free – and that was a big difference to be pain free and off the Endone" she said.

"They told us that three months after the surgery was our best chance to conceive a second child but we didn't fall pregnant.

"We had seven attempts at IVF – the last attempt with a donor egg in South Africa on the advice of a top fertility expert in Melbourne but that was unsuccessful too and ultimately the end of that chapter in our lives."

"I'm still fortunate in that I'm now well, I can manage my health through diet and a holistic approach, and that most importantly, we've got Claire who is 12 years old now and the centre of our universe."



The Worldwide Endo March is a worldwide campaign aimed at raising awareness of Endometriosis, a disease that affects 1 in 9 women and those who identify as gender diverse; that's approximately 200 million worldwide.

For more information you can visit <https://www.endometriosisaustralia.org/> or you can contact TDHS on (03) 5558 6000 to make an appointment with our Community Health Nurse or please call (03) 5558 6088 for an appointment with one of our GPs at the Timboon Clinic.

SAY AAH...

HELP ARRIVES TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

We all know the past two years have presented challenges that will be recognised in history for generations to come, but new Timboon Clinic psychologist Rahman Gray says the community should be proud of its resilience during COVID-19.

Mr Gray is now taking psychology appointments at the Timboon Clinic every Thursday – concentrating primarily on helping children, adolescents and families navigate and thrive through life's challenges.

He said a number of roles working with young people in recent years, including at Headspace, had steered him towards private practice and contracting for Possum House in Warrnambool which is dedicated to child and family counselling services.

"The last two years, for me, have really confirmed how resilient our kids are and how good they are at adapting to new circumstances and stresses," he said.

"As humans, we are pretty adept at adapting to change and I give

a lot of credit to children, adolescents and families for getting through what we have.

"However, there will always be situations and personal stories where individuals and families need additional support.

"Part of living includes experiencing hard times, difficult thoughts and uncomfortable emotions. Evidence based approaches to health and wellbeing can help people move through these challenges."

Mr Gray's family is no stranger to Timboon or the local clinic. His father and stepmother both worked as psychologists at the same clinic.

He holds a Masters of Applied Psychology (Community) from Victoria University and moved from Melbourne to Warrnambool in 2016 to further his career.

"I started my Masters in 2013 and finished it in 2019 and concurrent to that I had a number of community-

Rahman Gray outside the Timboon Clinic where he will provide psychology services on Thursdays.

based roles in councils, State Government and with Brophy," he said.

"I registered as a psychologist in 2019 and my first role was with Headspace, which is run by Brophy and focuses on 12-25 year-olds, so that's the demographic I am most familiar and experienced with."

Mr Gray said appointments to see him were via referral from local GPs.

**Rahman visits our Timboon Clinic weekly.
For an appointment please contact (03) 5558 6088.**

TIMBOON CLINIC



VACCINATIONS FOR CHILDREN

COVID-19 vaccinations for 5-11 year-olds are available at the Timboon Clinic. Please call 5558 6088 to book for a Monday-Friday appointment.

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

MARCH

Epilepsy Awareness Month / EndoMarch / Melanoma March/

1. Hearing Awareness Week 1-7, Private Dentist, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Public Podiatrist, Cobden SSG, Men's Shed
2. Cobden SSG, Audiologist
3. Private Podiatry, Dietitian, Diabetes Educator, Timboon SSG
4. Timboon SSG
7. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
8. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Continence Clinic, Cobden SSG
9. Dietitian, Cobden SSG
10. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian
11. Timboon SSG
14. Public Holiday
15. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Private Dental, Cobden SSG, Social Worker, Occupational Therapy, Dietitian
16. Cobden SSG
17. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Timboon SSG
18. Timboon SSG
21. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
22. Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Private Dentist
23. Cobden SSG
24. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Timboon SSG
25. Timboon SSG
28. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietitian
29. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Cobden SSG
30. Cobden SSG, Audiologist
31. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Timboon SSG

SSG = Social Support Group

APRIL

Autism Awareness/ Parkinson's Awareness Month

1. Timboon SSG
4. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
5. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Private Dental, Cobden SSG
6. Cobden SSG
7. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian
8. Timboon SSG
11. Walking Group, Physiotherapy, Dietitian
12. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Cobden SSG, Continence Clinic, Occupational Therapy
13. Cobden SSG
14. Private Podiatry, Men's Shed, Timboon SSG, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian
15. Good Friday
18. Easter Monday
19. World Liver Day, Public Podiatry, Occupational Therapy, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Cobden SSG, Men's Shed
20. Cobden SSG
21. Men's Shed, Private Podiatry, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Timboon SSG
22. Timboon SSG
25. ANZAC Day, Walking Group, Physiotherapy
26. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Cobden SSG
27. Cobden SSG, Social Worker, Audiologist
28. Timboon SSG, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Men's Shed, Private Podiatry
29. Timboon SSG



MAY

Multiple Sclerosis, Thyroid / Crohn's & Colitis Awareness Month / Mindful in May / Macula Month / Cystic Fibrosis Month / Eczema Awareness Month / Lung Health Awareness Month

2. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
3. Private Dentist, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Cobden SSG
4. Cobden SSG
5. Private Podiatry, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
6. Timboon SSG
9. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
10. Men's Shed, Private Dental, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Continence Clinic, Cobden SSG
11. Cobden SSG
12. International Nurses Day, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Private Podiatry, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
13. Timboon SSG
16. National Volunteer Week 16-22, Walking Group, Physiotherapy
17. Men's Shed, Public Podiatry, Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Private Dental, Cobden SSG
18. Cobden SSG
19. Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Private Podiatry, Timboon SSG, Men's Shed
20. Timboon SSG
23. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
24. Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Private Dental
25. Cobden SSG, Audiologist
26. Men's Shed, Timboon SSG, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Private Podiatrist
27. Timboon SSG
30. Walking Group, Physiotherapy
31. Social Worker, Dietitian, Occupational Therapy, Men's Shed, Cobden SSG, Private Dental