

"The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volwiteers."
-Terri Guillemets

National Volunteer Week 20 - 26 May is a great opportunity to thank all our volunteers, past and present, for their dedicated hard work, depth of commitment and their invaluable donation of giving the gift of time as we work together for a healthy community.

Thank you!

Volunteer
Something for Everyone Week

### CEO'S & CHAIR'S Report

Human beings are, by nature, social creatures. And we rely on interactions with others to fulfill our need for connection and belonging. Considering we spend almost a third of our lives at work, it makes good sense for organisations to focus on community as one way to improve workplace culture and enhance the well-being of the workforce.

A positive workplace culture improves teamwork, raises the morale, increases productivity and efficiency, and enhances retention of the workforce. Job satisfaction, collaboration, and work performance are all enhanced. And, most importantly, a positive workplace environment reduces stress in employees. Safer Care Victoria (SCV) states that a positive workplace culture increases clinical safety and effectiveness.

At TDHS culture has a strategic and operational focus and our ICARE values, Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Empathy act as guiding principles on all levels to provide us with purpose and direction and set the tone for our interactions with our consumers, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. Celebrating our staff and volunteer achievements at our Heart of TDHS Awards night is a sign of respect for the important role every department and their members make to the successful running of TDHS.

After being on our Board of Directors for more than 6 years, Anne Skordis recently resigned from her director's position, and we also farewelled Board of Director's member Alison Byrne after more than 3 years of service. We would like to thank them for their care and commitment to the health

and wellbeing of our community and their involvement in the strategic direction of our healthcare service.

The Victorian health sector is currently facing sector wide financial issues and every health service in the state has been asked to find relative savings and to present a Financial Management Improvement Plan to the Department of Health for approval. At TDHS we have identified our solutions which do not impact any staff or services. Our Board of Directors are committed to TDHS continuing as an independent and thriving health service that serves the community's needs.

One important function of leadership is to be transparent with our staff and community, which demonstrates respect and encourages collaboration, ultimately resulting in a healthier work atmosphere and community and a stronger healthcare service.

Take care and embrace the wellness wonders of this wonderful autumn season.

**Board Chair** Frank Carlus

**Chief Executive Officer Gary Castledine** 





# Seeking Expressions of Interest TDHS Board of Directors Subcommittees and Operational Committees consumer representatives.

TDHS are looking for consumer representatives to sit on our TDHS Board
Subcommittees and Operational Committees.
These roles will provide consumer views in relation to health service
governance, service planning and development.

For more information and/or to apply, please contact Sabine McKenzie by calling 5558 6064 or emailing smckenzie.tdhs@swarh.vic.gov.au.

### Tuing Off FOR CANCER RESEARCH

While Darren Smith and son Luke might not agree on the same AFL team, (Darren is Carlton and Luke barracks for Essendon) they do agree on the importance of vital research for cancer, so they didn't have to think twice when they were asked by TDHS CEO Gary Castledine to participate in the Timboon Longest Day Golf Challenge held on 5th January 2024.

The Longest Day is an endurance golf marathon designed to test skills, strength, and stamina. The challenge is to successfully complete your chosen number of holes from dawn to dusk and raise funds for the Cancer Council's research, prevention, and support services. Teams can choose the total amount of holes they play, with the ultimate challenge being 72 holes (4 rounds).

"Cancer doesn't discriminate and unfortunately everyone somehow has or will be affected by cancer, whether it is a family member or themselves," Darren said. "Our family is no different and so it was a no-brainer to grab this opportunity to raise money for this important cause."

Luke agreed. "Cancer runs on both sides of the family and more research needs to be done, which costs a lot of money."

He especially remembers his granddad's battle with oesophagus cancer. "I had a special relationship with granddad "Raddish"; we both supported Essendon and liked to play pool; I even inherited his grey hair," Luke affectionately said. "Granddad spent his last days at TDHS, which meant care closer to home and we could visit him as often as we wanted."

Darren knows how important research is as his father Murray was diagnosed with prostrate cancer and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL). Fortunately, due to a chemo injection 6 months ago he is doing well and continues to play golf and bowls. His granddad passed away at 72 due to throat cancer and Hodgkin's Lymphoma. "It looked very promising for about 3 to 4 years, but then it came back and he said it's time to go Darren," Darren said sadly.

Four Timboon teams registered with all participants taking on the ultimate challenge of 72 holes!

Team Don't Leave it Short Judy Delaney, Phillip Brown, Brett Worrall

Team Timboon Mafia
Darren Smith, Luke Smith, Peter
Cashmore, Chris Huffadine

<u>Team Zigmeisters</u> Tori Ziegelaar, Jack Rowe

Team Gary's Team:
Gary Castledine, Finn Castledine,
Brendan Hickey

Weather conditions were perfect, with the sun shining and a light breeze, and after an energy filled bacon and egg breakfast, prepared by our Chief Executive Officer and participant Gary Castledine, the 4 teams teed off at 6.10 am.

A quick pitstop was held at about 1pm to refuel with a casserole lunch, provided by the TDHS kitchen, after which teams continued to 'green' and bear it as the legs were getting heavier. They wanted to continue to raise as much money as possible. Family and friends turned up to join them, cheer them on and walk some holes with them.

As temperatures rose to around 28 degrees everybody made sure they stayed hydrated and followed the five golden rules of sun safety by slipping on protective clothing, sliding the sunnies on, seeking shade if needed, slapping on a hat, and slopping on the sunscreen – even if it did affect the grip on the golf stick.

The Longest Day was just that... one very long day of endurance, strength, and stamina walking in the footsteps of a cancer sufferer for one day!

There were 'slices', plenty of 'hooks', some duffed putts and birdies, an ace, banter, laughter and tears on the green.

Personal stories were shared about why participating and/or donating was so important, with teary eyes as a result.

The finish line was reached at 6.30 pm with terrific results! Over \$10,000 was raised, which is absolutely amazing!

"It was very well organised and people walking with us made us feel supported and the banter, treats and laughter made the day go quickly," Darren said.

At the end of the day the exhausted

and hungry golfers were able to sit down and enjoy a well-deserved BBQ (Camperdown Butchers donated the sausages and Baker's Delight the fresh bread), and a cold beverage.

Prizes, donated by TDHS, were presented to:

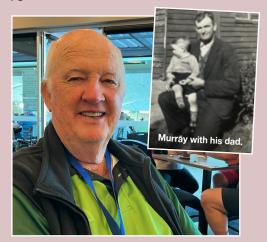
- Best Female (Judy Delaney)
- Most Money Raised (Timboon Mafia)
- Hole in One (Tori Ziegelaar)
- Most Consistent Player (Phillip Brown)
- Best Dressed (Darren Smith)
- Best Round 1 (Peter Cashmore)
- Best Round 2 (Luke Smith)
- Best Round 3 (Brett Worrall)
- Most Courageous (Jack Rowe) and
- Best Sponsor/Player (Brendan Hickey)

"We walked all day; a total of 39.7 km," Luke added. "Dad wanted to round it to 40 km, so we walked the extra 300 metres."

Amazingly Darren participated in Parkrun the next morning and played another 18 holes! Both felt pretty sore after a couple of days but won't hesitate to participate again when TDHS is hosting another Timboon Longest Golf Day challenge with the Timboon Golf Club in December this year.

"It was great to be part of such a great day and to raise that amount of money for a small town, is absolutely fantastic," Luke said. "Every little bit helps towards a cancer free future."

Darren agreed. "We all can be part of the cure. We are all pieces of a puzzle and they all come together in this big jigsaw at the end of it."



Darren's dad Murray is doing well

# Long Could finding a silver lining

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines long Covid, or also called post -COVID-19 condition, as the continuation or development of new symptoms 3 months after the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection, with these symptoms lasting for at least 2 months with no other explanation.

Tahlia still remembers the exact date she contracted COVID-19, 13th June 2022, as she changed from a healthy and fit 17-year-old to being unable to move. Her initial COVID-19 symptoms were quite mild as she only felt a bit lethargic, had a chesty cold and some brain fog.

"I didn't feel too bad, so I kept on doing things, including exercising." Tahlia said. "I've always been very fit and love exercising, so continued doing YouTube workouts on the treadmill that I started doing during lockdown in 2020."

Unbeknown to Tahlia this was the beginning of an illness from which she is yet to recover completely as following her COVID-19 infection, she went on to develop longer-term effects that can now be recognised as post-COVID-19 condition or long COVID.

For a while she tried to ignore the initial signs and pushed through, but when she kept on having chest pains, after she felt something pop while changing after a netball game in Warrnambool, and experienced hot flushes and brain fog at school, she started to think something a bit more sinister was going on.

"My mum, Christie, was working away from home for work and even though she checked up on me all the time, I started to get very anxious about my health, especially being alone at home during the nights," Tahlia said. "More than once I woke up during the night experiencing what I thought might be a heart attack as the pain I felt mimicked a lot of similar symptoms, like chest pain, heart palpitations and feeling hot and cold."

Mum Christie was getting very concerned as well, as she saw her always very healthy and fit young daughter changing into a very anxious and tired looking teenager. "As I work in healthcare, I know not to ignore the signs and Tahlia started to change in front of my eyes, so we decided it was time to see a GP and get things checked out," Christie said.

The GP couldn't find anything physically wrong with Tahlia and suggested she might have depression. As Tahlia was still grieving the marriage break-up of her parents back in April 2021, both Christie and her daughter considered this could be a contributing factor to Tahlia's deteriorating health, not knowing that Tahlia's health would decline even further in the upcoming weeks.

Studies have associated more than 200 symptoms with long COVID, which has made it difficult for the medical profession to diagnose and treat it. This is complicated by the fact that the condition often has a relapsing and remitting pattern.

"I kept pushing through and kept going to school, even though my head felt so tired a lot of the times, that I had to rest it on my desk. It was like somebody was pushing it down," Tahlia remembered. "But then I thought: you're young and fit; you can't feel like this!"

The morning of the netball final in September, Tahlia woke up and could barely drag herself out of bed, but she was determined to play in the final as that was what she and her teammates worked towards all year and it was very special. While she made it to the game, she wasn't able to play, which might have been a good thing in hindsight as some research shows that exercise while having long COVID could exacerbate the symptoms even further.

"Tahlia's team won and she stayed to celebrate, but the next day she couldn't even get out of bed," Christie said. "She was bedridden for two days with fatigue, sensory overload and inability to process information and still had a chesty cough and runny nose."



Christie decided to take Tahlia to the Emergency department at South West Healthcare where she was seen by a young intern, who, after a 6-hour complete check (including depression interview and blood test), diagnosed Tahlia with long COVID - chronic fatigue.

"I am so grateful to this intern and was so happy that he finally made sense of the different symptoms I had over the last 3 months and that it wasn't in my head," Tahlia said. "I was also very relieved that my heart was fine and that I didn't have cancer, which runs in the family."

Although the news was positive in some ways, Christie and Tahlia were told that they might have a long 12 – 18-month struggle ahead of them as, what was becoming clear from early studies was that, people experience wide differences in their long covid symptoms, so treating this condition is an exercise in personalised medicine: no single approach will work for everyone.

"We had to do a lot of our own research to see what treatments were out there, that could work for Tahlia, but we were also very fortunate with the support we received from local health professionals (GP, naturopath and osteopath) and Mercy Regional College," Christie said.

"The lack of understanding about how debilitating this illness is, is the hard part," Tahlia said. "Often people would suggest to just go home and have a nap. If only it was that easy," Tahlia said.

A coordinator at Mercy Regional College was very understanding about Tahlia's condition as his wife had chronic fatigue syndrome, which has similar symptoms to long COVID, and he brought his wife in to have a talk to Tahlia. "I found a kindred spirit, who understood completely what I was going through, validated how I felt and

accepted me for who I was, which made me also accept my new me," Tahlia said.

The coordinator would also talk to the teachers to work out a schedule (one day off a week to recover physically and mentally), which took away the stress and pressure and meant Tahlia and Christie could focus on finding ways that would help Tahlia's recovery.

"Mum and I found some treatments that have really helped me with my recovery, but they might not be right for everyone," Tahlia said. "We didn't want to resort to any medication but worked on a healthy and balanced body and mind, which included mindset coaching and post-viral fatigue education/program delivered by exercise physiologists."

After an 18-month journey Tahlia feels she has almost found the right balance and is positive again about the future.

She is even looking at spreading her wings overseas and taking on a new, exciting adventure to leave the struggles from the last 1.5 years behind.

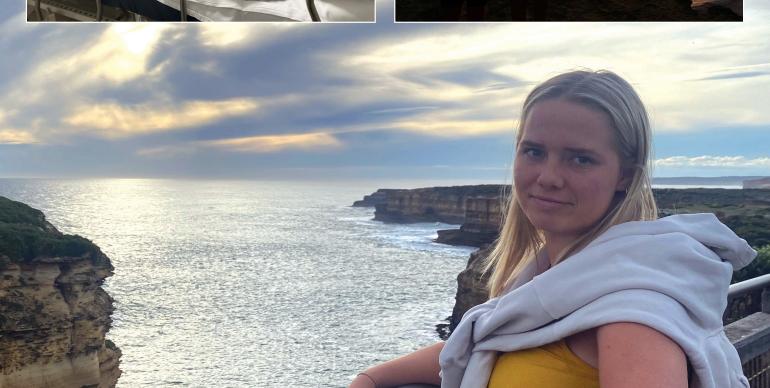
"It has been tough, but I feel very lucky that I had a great support network in my mum, my friends and health professionals that believed me," Tahlia said. "Long COVID is an invisible condition that requires recognition and understanding as you don't know what goes on behind closed doors or inside somebody's mind or body."

Christie is very proud of Tahlia and they both believe they were meant to go through this for a reason.

"We've learned a lot along the way giving us an opportunity to share our experience and let others know they are not alone and that there is help out there," Tahlia said.







# CELEBRATING THE BEATING HEART OF TDHS: OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS!

Our inaugural Heart of TDHS Staff and Volunteer Awards night was held in 2019 to provide a separate opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the great work that our staff and volunteers do. It's often difficult to stop and take time out of our busy day-to-day schedules to formally recognize the fantastic work that our team does.

Due to pandemic restrictions several were held online or were postponed (2023 celebrations were held in November), but this year we were back at the usual March celebration for the second time held at the Port Campbell Surf Life Saving Club with the bay as the magnificent backdrop.

On the night the following Awards were recognized and applauded:

- Length of Service Award
- Heart of TDHS Volunteer Award; an award nominated by peers for the volunteer who goes above and beyond
- Heart of TDHS ICARE Dr Peter
  Fox Staff Award recognising the
  most outstanding staff member,
  nominated by peers, who
  continually makes a difference,
  constantly goes above and
  beyond demonstrating our ICARE
  values of Integrity, Compassion,
  Accountability, Respect and
  Empathy in all they do.

Tanya Wines, Director of Community Health, was a fantastic MC glueing together the different formalities, engaging with the attendees, including playing some trivia games with donated prizes, while TDHS staff and volunteers enjoyed tasty finger food and a beverage.

Chief Executive Officer Gary Castledine emphasised the importance of the night acknowledging the great work TDHS staff and volunteers do. "This awards night is a very special opportunity to bring the whole team together, giving us, the Executive Team and the Board the opportunity to show our appreciation for your efforts. The nature of the awards tonight is that every employee is eligible. It is a true sign of respect for the important

role that every department and their members make to the successful running of TDHS," Gary said.

The TDHS Length of Service Awards were a remarkable collective of 265 years by 14 recipients, ranging from 10 years to an incredible 40 years:

Sharon Bourke	10 years
Katrina Currell	10 years
Sharon Shanahan	10 years
Andrea Stewart	10 years
Kathy Blake	15 years
Jodie Couch	15 years
Katherine Gorringe	15 Years
Kristen Hain	15 years
Kasey McGlade	15 years
Karen Kennett	15 years
Erin White	15 years
Anne McMeel	40 years
Amanda Nash	40 years
Margaret Tesselaar	40 years

The collective number of years our TDHS volunteers have dedicated to our healthcare service since its inception is boundless and TDHS is grateful for all our volunteers and their dedicated hard work, depth of commitment and the invaluable donation of their gift of time and energy. We could not operate without our volunteers; they make our community stronger, especially during times of need, crisis, or isolation.

The Heart of TDHS Volunteer Award is for the Most Outstanding Service as a volunteer, who is nominated by their peers for going above and beyond their duty as a volunteer and this year's winner was Meals on Wheels volunteer couple Monica and Rod Easterbrook. They were nominated because of their compassion through kindness, caring and regularly volunteering outside the rostered shifts, often at short notice.

Hotel Services and Social Support Assistant Tina Hrebenyuk received the ICARE Dr Peter Fox Staff Award. The Award is named after Dr Peter Fox, who served the community for over 50 years and whose work defines the history of our healthcare service and we were very privileged to have his children, Dr Jane Fox AM and John Fox, to help present this special award and join us in the celebrations.

Several TDHS peers nominated Tina for displaying the TDHS values, including her positive, kind, and caring nature towards all staff and our consumers. "Tina is a breath of fresh air and radiates gratefulness. She is always positive and focused on the wellness of others, not her own. Her positive attitude and gratefulness is aspiring and an example for all, especially knowing that she has family in the Ukraine fighting for their survival."

Tina couldn't believe she'd won and was lost for words being more worried about the other nominees missing out on the award themselves!

After the official proceedings, attendees continued the celebrations laughing and chatting with colleagues and/or busting a move on the dance floor.

"It takes the whole team to make it work. So, while tonight is about individuals who have excelled, none of their achievements are possible without the combined efforts of all of our TDHS staff, "Gary said. "Tonight is a night to celebrate the achievements of those who have been nominated, to acknowledge the extraordinary service of some of our team and above all to have an enjoyable time with your colleagues."



Dr Peter Fox Heart of TDHS Award recipient Tina Hrebenyuk with Jane an John Fox



Heart of TDHS Volunteer Award recipient Monica Easterbrook and Director of Community Health Tanya Wines

## LIVING WITH Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a common inflammatory condition in which cells similar to the endometrium (lining of the uterus) grow in other locations in the body. Endometriosis is commonly found in and around the pelvis and reproductive organs. Still, it can also be seen in other parts of the body, including the bowel, bladder, and as far away as the lungs and the brain.

Nearly 1 million Australian girls, women, and those assigned female at birth live with endometriosis at some point in their life, with the disease often starting in teenagers. Around half of those living with endometriosis are challenged by fertility, but 70% will go on to have children.

The delay in diagnosis has reduced in recent years, but it still takes an average of 6.5 years to be diagnosed with endometriosis. Symptoms can occur as early as eight years of age. Common symptoms include pelvic pain that puts life on hold around or during a person's period. It can impact fertility for some but not for all.

Recent statistics (AIHW 2023) found that 1 in 7 (14%) women, girls and those assigned female at birth (AFAB) will be diagnosed with endometriosis by the age of 44 to 49.

TDHS Director of Clinical Services, Larissa Barclay, has lived with endometriosis from her early 20s. which was undiagnosed for a long time.

"Back then, the pain could be excruciating, but the topic was not widely discussed or publicised," Larissa said. "Seeking medical help didn't cross my mind, even as a healthcare professional."

Even during the fertility struggles while trying to conceive her eldest, Luca, with the assistance of a fertility specialist, endometriosis wasn't considered. Like many with endometriosis, she persevered through the pain, oblivious to its abnormality.

"After the birth of our twins, the pain and symptoms worsened," Larissa said. "Despite consulting various GPs, I received only temporary solutions without any specialist referrals or definitive answers."

Two years ago, after enduring pain for over 20 years, she finally sought out a specialist in endometriosis. It was at the time it was decided that further investigation was required in the form of a laparoscopy.

"Post-surgery, I was relieved to learn they had identified and removed endometriosis," Larissa said. "The relief from the debilitating pain and diagnosis restored my quality of life."

Unfortunately, the relief was short-lived. After 8 pain-free months, it returned



with greater intensity. Larissa coped by incorporating exercise and adhering to a low-inflammatory diet.

"Strangely, the gym provided 45 minutes of respite despite the persistent pain," she remembered.

In December last year, Larissa underwent additional surgery, including a hysterectomy and removal of more endometriosis lesions.

"While the hysterectomy won't cure endometriosis, there is hope for longer periods between lesion growth," Larissa said. "To those experiencing pain or other symptoms, my advice is to consult a specialist without delay—period pain is not normal."

ENDOMETRIOSIS CAN BE MANAGED IF DIAGNOSED AT AN EARLY AGE AND WITH THE RIGHT HEALTH CARE TEAM IT TAKES AN AVERAGE OF 7-10 YEARS TO BE DIAGNOSED. PERIOD PAIN IS NOT NORMAL. TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.

PREGNANCY OR A HYSTERECTOMY WILL NOT CURE ENDOMETRIOSIS. THERE IS NO CURE.

Endometriosis affects more people compared to asthma or diabetes yet it takes 7-10 years to be diagnosed.

#### Symptoms of Endometriosis

If you or someone you know experiences any of the following symptoms, talk with your doctor about endometriosis.

Our free downloadable Endometriosis Symptoms Checklist can be found at www.qendo.org.au



Cramping & Heavy bleeding









# WHAT'S ON Events



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



#### **MARCH**

- Exercise Physiologist, Occupational Therapist, Timboon SSG
- 4. Exercise Physiologist, Physiotherapy, Timboon Walking Group
- Cobden SSG, Cobden Walking Group, Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, Private Dental, Social Worker, Timboon Men's Shed
- Cobden SSG, Exercise Physiologist, Maternal Child Health, Private Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Radiology
- 7. Cobden Walking Group, Diabetes Educator, Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, Maternal Child Health, Timboon Men's shed
- 8. Exercise Physiologist, Occupational Therapist, Timboon SSG

#### 11. Labour Day Public Holiday

- Cobden SSG, Cobden Walking Group, Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, Occupational Therapist, Social Worker, Continence Nurse, Timboon Men's Shed
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#### 29. Good Friday Public Holiday

SSG = Social Support Group

#### **APRIL**

#### Autism Awareness Month /Parkinson's Awareness Month

#### 1. Easter Monday Public Holiday

- Cobden SSG, Cobden Walking Group, Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, Private Dental, Social Worker, Timboon Men's Shed
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#### 25. Anzac Day Public Holiday

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#### MAY

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

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The digital version of our Quarterly can be found on our website by visiting: TIMBOONHEALTHCARE.COM.AU/NEWS-EVENTS/NEWSLETTERS