



PIP'S N PIECES

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MARCH 2008

Chairman: Paul Kolatchew
Secretary/Vice Chairman: Peter Chapman
Treasurer: Janelle Kirk
Education: Carole Hooper
Committee:
Linda Swain Trish Marjoribanks
Carole Hooper Rebecca Boyd
Cecil Hill Elizabeth Slevin
John Rumball

Congratulations to Jake Sylvester who has been selected in the 4 person, Uner 16 "Team Australia" to represent his country in the ISA World Junior Surfing Championships in France in May. I wonder what the French will think of our "Use Your Melon" slogan.

A personal story always has a greater impact, so we were very grateful to Kelly Smith (aged 26) from Aberglasslyn and Erin Lewis (aged 22) from Stockton. These young women agreed to tell their stories, in The Maitland Mercury and The Post respectively, to highlight the fact that young people can and do get melanoma. Their stories are included in this newsletter.



Chairman's Report

Paul Kolatchew - Chairman HMF

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2007 Annual General Meeting, in particular those who accepted nomination for the 2008 committee. As Chairman it is great to once again be working with such an energetic and inspired committee.

It was pleasing to see the number of skin cancer awareness adverts during the summer season – the graphic "Dark Side of Tanning" campaign by the NSW Government certainly got a lot of people's attention. We are delighted with our "Go Undercover" campaign featuring our young ambassadors Cory and Jake. It's great that they will continue to work with us to spread the word throughout the year. We are also most appreciative of the tremendous support we receive from the local media who are very generous with their in-kind and subsidised support.



Jake Sylvester surfs his way into Team Australia

We have had an incredible response to the "Gimme 5" money boxes and, although this was initially in conjunction with the Polglase family function held on 26 January, the HMF will continue with the money boxes indefinitely. If you would like any extras or need replacements – please contact Jenny Noblet on 49850103.



The HMF has always had a strong commitment to supporting melanoma research in our region. At the end of 2007 we were asked by Professor Peter Hersey, the Director of Research at Newcastle Melanoma Unit, to consider offering a PhD scholarship in melanoma research to David Wroblewski. David is a Class I Honours graduate and Professor Hersey was eager to have David join his research team. We look forward to receiving progress reports from David on his research and wish him well with his PhD.

I look forward to your support of and participation in HMF fundraisers and events in 2008. I also urge you to join us in our awareness campaign by arranging for a HMF representative to visit your local school, club or organisation and help us spread the melanoma message.

Paul Kolatchew



Treasurer's Report

Janelle Kirk

• There must be a lot of people who share an aversion to 5 cent pieces – or carrying them around in their wallet or purse. They obviously had stock piles of them as deposits into our account for the "Gimme 5" campaign started as soon as it was opened in mid December. Please keep them coming in.

Just take your (full) money box to any Newcastle Permanent branch. The teller should not have a problem locating the

account but for your records the account number is: **983726602**. It is probably a good idea to write this on the side of your money box. Future prints of the box will include the account number.

• The 5 cent piece challenge received a huge boost on January 26 when family and friends of **Scott Polglase** gathered to celebrate what would have been his 30th birthday. It was a private function organised by Scott's parents Garry & Kim, sister Angie and wife Kirrilley. For a donation of \$30 to the HMF, guests were invited to enjoy an evening of good food (a hungi), drink, music and memories of Scott. The event was well supported by over 100 people whose lives were touched by Scott.

The family worked hard to make it a successful fundraiser and their efforts were well rewarded with the generous donations of food, drink and numerous prizes for raffles. Over \$7,000 was raised & Kirrilley said that Scott would be very humbled to think that this was done in his name.

• If you have attended the Melanoma Unit you will be well aware of the professional and caring nursing staff. Their support & advice on the various procedures & treatment that you may require helps to alleviate the stress & demystify the unknown.

The nursing staff has our full support and we were very pleased to be able to fund the attendance of Donna and Sue at the 6th Biennial International **Sentinel Node Society Conference**

held in Sydney in late February. The conference presented current data on sentinel node biopsies and the treatment of melanoma and provided invaluable information to assist them in their care of melanoma patients.

• Continuing our support of melanoma research, the HMF committee has agreed to fund the first year of **David Wroblewski's PhD**. Dr Hersey introduced David to the HMF committee at its February meeting where he also outlined the area of melanoma research that David's PhD would focus on.

• March was a busy fundraising month with the well supported **Bush Poets Night** held at Ducks Crossing on March 7. The event was organised by the Newcastle OASIS Club (old Apexians) in memory of ex Apexian, long-time member and dear friend - Warwick Symes. Our thanks goes to all the organisers and supporters.

• The second event was the Elmore Vale Lions/Adamstown-New Lambton Rotary **Charity Golf Day** held on 10 March at Merewether Golf Club. The HMF is co-beneficiary with PCYC and, as was the case in 2007, the AMP Foundation has agreed to match funds raised \$1 for \$1 up to \$10,000. A very big thank you to Sally Blake of Premier Financial Services, Charlestown, who submitted the application to AMP on our behalf.

• **GREAT NEWS!** The HMF **Charity Race Day** has been confirmed for Saturday 26 July, 2008 so mark your diaries!! Be quick and contact Jenny to secure your Race Sponsorship or to book your table in the Pavilion (includes 3 course lunch & drinks) or in the Party Marquee (includes light lunch, with bar & tote facilities). Our race days are great fun and very popular so make sure you book early.



The Polglase family fundraiser ... in memory of Scott



Foundation News

Jenny Noblet

I hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas. Unfortunately Geoff & I weren't able to spend it with either of our sons and their families but enjoyed having my niece (whose family is in Adelaide) stay with us for a few days.

I am very excited to be visiting my son and his family in England in April – I leave on 31 March and am counting the days. I will meet my youngest grandson for the first time and be there to celebrate his 1st birthday. We have enjoyed webcam 'visits' but, as lovely as they are, they are definitely not the real thing. Be prepared for plenty of photos when I return.

Surf Lifesaving Carnival

Trish, Glenyce & I were with Melanoma Unit medical staff at a surf lifesaving competition at Redhead beach in early February offering skin checks and sun safety advice. During my time with

the HMF I have attended a number of these events & I must say that despite all of the education, promotions and advertisements warning of the dangers of unprotected sun exposure we were dismayed at the amount of sun damage apparent on the majority of young teenagers we spoke to that day.

When asked, they know all the things they should be doing but they are not turning their knowledge into action. Most said they had sunscreen on but it was probably only the one application at the beginning of the day & we saw only two young people wearing a hat and protective clothing. Yes, it was a cloudy day but it was the middle of summer and ultra violet rays are still present. Also, at this time of year, when the sun does break through the clouds – as we all know – it is fierce.

Sue Collins spent a great deal of time talking to the young people (gathering them in a circle) and explaining proper sun protection and why their skin was worth protecting.

A recent Cancer Council survey indicated that teenagers still think a suntan makes them more attractive. Most Australians (whatever their age) will never tan, unless they 'fake it', but one thing they certainly will get is badly sun damaged skin and the high likelihood of skin cancer in later life.



Who's next for a skin check? HMF in action at Redhead Beach.

The majority of our pre-schools & primary schools implement the SunSmart policies introduced by the Cancer Council a number of years ago. Unfortunately, all the effort that goes into creating sun-savvy children in primary school is not reinforced in high school.

We know sun exposure during adolescence is a major contributor to skin cancer, yet simple things like wearing a hat or a rashie when swimming are often forgotten once kids get to high school especially as they tend to become more image conscious.

Gwandalan Lioness Art/Porcelain Show

The Fourth Annual Art / Porcelain Show held from 10th to 12th January was a resounding success with 20 paintings sold from 160 entries and a large amount of porcelain & silk

scarves being sold. Many of the sales were on the opening night, when about 150 local people attended the function.

Wonderful prizes were donated by Gosford Coastshelter such as a painting by Australian Artist of the Year, Noeline Millar. The show attracts some very well known artists, with Noeline selling all of her four entries on opening night. The raffle exceeded last year's sales & most of the lucky winners were local business people, which was lovely to see as these people constantly support the local community in its fundraising.



Gwandalan Lioness successful fundraising event

Gwandalan and Summerland Point are two very small villages with only about 2400 homes in total, so this is a great fundraising effort for such a small community.

On the last day a fundraiser was held for the HMF, with Gwandalan Lionesses running the BBQ, Gwandalan Lionesses running the cake, craft, bric-a-brac, jewellery and chocolate wheel stalls, held outside in Lioness Park. We were also ably assisted, by the Lioness Club of East Gosford, who held the fairy floss & snow cone stalls, donating \$100 from sales. With a separate raffle for the HMF donated by Sanctum at the Entrance - a 3 hour Beauty Pamper Package, & won by one of the newest Lioness recruits Lyn McGee, who is looking forward to being pampered.

All the Lionesses involved worked very hard on a very hot day, to achieve this success, with a total profit of \$4998. The proceeds were shared between the HMF and Gosford Coastshelter, who feed and house homeless men, women and children in the Central Coast area.

Parking

As visitors to the Unit will be aware, parking continues to be a major problem. The hospital is trying to alleviate the situation with the construction of a temporary parking area on part of Wrightson Reserve, just behind the Platt Street carpark. There should be an extra 75 additional car spaces created in this area.



Research

**C/Professor Peter Hersey,
Research Director, Newcastle Melanoma Unit**

Overcoming Resistance of Melanoma to Treatment

The vast majority of melanomas on the skin (~90%) are cured by surgical excision. Nevertheless, melanoma that has spread to distant sites in the body can be extraordinarily difficult to treat by chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Our research has shown that multiple factors are involved in resistance to treatment but one of these is the presence in the cells of proteins which inhibit the death pathways (anti apoptotic proteins) initiated by the chemotherapy. Much is known about these proteins & the pathways in the cell that regulate their levels. Several companies have made agents which directly block their activity. One of these is a drug called Obatoclax, made by Gemin X in Montreal. We have established a collaboration with the company & will evaluate the effectiveness of this drug for treatment of melanoma.



David Wroblewski and Professor Peter Hersey

David Wroblewski is a Class I Honours Science Graduate from the University of Newcastle who will help us in these studies as part of his studies for a PhD. David's Honours science project was on different forms of a receptor on leukaemic cells called c-Kit, which is also involved in some forms of melanoma. His background from this project is therefore very appropriate for his studies on melanoma. We expect to be able to report progress on the project at a later date.

Kelly's Story

Kelly Smith grew up oblivious to the dangers of life in the sun. She spent her youth outdoors unaware that the sun's rays were playing Russian roulette with her life. But now at the age of 26, she is paying the price.

Kelly was diagnosed with a melanoma in September last year and her life has changed. "When I first found out I had a melanoma I didn't know that much about it but after a few consultations it all hit home and I was terrified", she said. "It was all so confronting and all I could do was sit there and cry.....I couldn't believe what I was hearing".

Kelly's melanoma measured 1.4mm and had spread to her lymph nodes. "My husband Ben and I were mucking about with the dogs when a mole on my lower back started to bleed and became sore and itchy and then it turned black," she said. Kelly made an appointment straightaway to have it checked out and awaited her diagnosis.

"I've had quite a bit of surgery to have the cancer removed and I'm still waiting to find out about further treatment but at the moment I'm doing okay. It's all very scary and I guess it always will be but I'm getting there," she said.

Kelly and Ben decided to share their story following news that melanoma rates were on the rise, especially among young people. "We see young girls at the beach or at the cricket covered in oil, tanning themselves and we want to scream at them", Ben said.

"Melanoma does not discriminate and because you're young, it does not mean you're untouchable. Skin cancer does happen and it can kill you".

Erin's Story

Erin Lewis received a sun umbrella for Christmas, something she would never have thought about using a couple of years ago.

"I have a very, very dark friend who I used to sunbake next to for hours without sunscreen," Erin said. "I used to get that burnt that I passed out from sunstroke a few times, I very much abused my skin."

But that was before the 22 year old had an eight-by-two square centimeter piece of skin removed from her leg after noticing an unusual mole that was later found to be a melanoma. "It was like a normal brown mole but another mole, with a lighter irregular shape, had formed over the top of it," she said.

Erin said she now had a tumour in her neck that she can't rule out as related to the cancer cut out of her leg. "The worst part of the experience was when the doctors would not guarantee

me that I would survive,” she said. “It annoys me a lot and frustrates me that I have friends who still go to a solarium & continue to go to the beach to sunbake. I’m the first one in my family to have a melanoma so it’s not genetic – it’s from constant sun abuse & I just wish young people would get the message about how dangerous it is.”

Erin said that although the new campaign was shocking for those who had endured skin cancer, she was concerned the message would still not get through to many of her peers.



Education Report

Carole Hooper

School Visit

With the commencement of the new school year, we have resumed our sun safe school visits. If you would like HMF representatives to visit your school, please contact Jenny Noblet to organise an appropriate time.



Jenny, Trish & HMF ambassador Jake Sylvester at Carrington Public School promoting sun safety.

Our first visit for 2008 was to Carrington Public School and we were lucky that Jake Sylvester – one of our young ambassadors promoting the sun safe message – was able to come with us.

Jake told the students about surf competitions he had recently competed in & how he avoids getting sunburned, even though he surfs most days. The children had a lot of questions for him, particularly wanting to know if he had ever been dumped or fallen off his board. Jake was happy to answer their questions (& yes, he has done both on more than one occasion). Unfortunately Jake & Cory are not always available to make school visits as

Jake has school to attend & Cory has training commitments with the Knights but if it is possible they are more than happy to join us.

"Go with your own glow" campaign - The Skin Cancer Foundation

Just like hairstyles, make-up trends and hem lines, tans have gone in and out of fashion – unfortunately in the past four decades they have been more ‘in’ than ‘out’. But we hear now from the fashion and beauty industry that radiant skin is the new beauty ideal – the tanned look is no longer fashionable. A natural, glowing healthy skin is the preferred look. Some comments from beauty editors include:

- Tanning as a life priority is over.
- Skin that’s not tanned is gorgeous.
- A healthy glow does not mean a tan & that’s what we have to clear up – a healthy glow is you looking luminous.
- Everybody is pretty much changing their opinion of how great a tan is. Now women just want to look healthy.

Congratulations to *marie claire* magazine for joining this campaign with its February issue featuring “SunSmart: We care about Australians in the Sun”. The campaign runs right through the magazine and is spearheaded by our very own Jennifer Hawkins. To ensure that this very important message reached as many young women as possible, *marie claire* very cleverly included a pair of gorgeous “Paris Hilton” style sunglasses with each magazine purchase.

Sunbeds continue to be a hot issue

Solariums continue to be in the news with new regulations being introduced. As discussed in the last newsletter, regulation will be very difficult but regulators can now impose large fines to solariums not complying.

It is good to hear that regulation prevents people under the age of 15 years from being allowed to use a solarium at all and those between the ages of 16-18 years will need parental permission. However, the highest usage is probably in the 18-30 year old age bracket. Hopefully the government will launch a media campaign warning of the dangers of solariums in conjunction with the introduction of new regulations.

Sunscreens SPF 50

Sunscreens with an SPF 50 rating won't be available in Australia until 2010. But SPF 50 sunscreen is not necessarily better at protecting from UVA rays.

"On the surface an SPF 50 rating on sunscreens sold internationally might appear to provide more protection, but this is mainly from burning UVB rays and not UVA rays," Standards Australia tells us.

Currently sunscreens must comply with an Australia/New Zealand standard that states they can only be labelled up to SPF 30. The standard sets out tests that determine the SPF of a sunscreen, such as if it is broad spectrum or water resistant.

Australia was the first, and remains one of only a few countries where sunscreens are actually regulated.

COMMON MYTHS

Myth 1:

A common misconception is that one application of sunscreen will provide complete protection.

Reality:

Sunscreen needs to be applied 20 minutes before going into the sun & reapplied every two hours as it is sweated, wiped or washed off. No sunscreen provides 100% protection and should always be used in conjunction with hats, clothing & shade.

Myth 2:

Another misconception is olive-skinned people or people who tan easily believe they are immune to skin cancer.

Reality:

A natural tan does not provide protection against skin damage – regardless of skin type, anyone who has lived in Australia can be at a high risk of developing skin cancer.

Myth 3:

The very young and the very old don't need to worry about protection from the sun.

Reality:

Although most skin damage takes place during youth no-one is too young or old to protect their skin from the sun. Everyone should get to know their skin and see the doctor immediately if any changes are noticed. Melanoma can develop on all parts of the body, not only in areas exposed to the sun.

Myth 4:

We need more sun to obtain Vitamin D.

Reality:

In order to maintain adequate Vitamin D levels during the summer months, most people living in NSW need only expose themselves to 10 minutes of daylight outside the peak UV hours of 11am and 3pm. Most people will achieve this going about their usual daily activities. Babies and young children should not be deliberately exposed to direct sunlight, especially not to treat nappy rash or jaundice.



Unit News

Hi everyone! My name is Kathleen Worth and I have recently joined the Newcastle Melanoma Unit as a Registered Nurse. The learning curve has been steep and I am enjoying gaining new skills and knowledge with the help of everyone here.

It has been a big change for me coming from a community health background but I have been nursing a long time. I have an ID photo of me at Wallsend Hospital with a starched white hat – so that gives it away!



Registered Nurse Kathleen Worth

Life outside of work is busy, keeping up with my 12 year old daughter, mowing my nine acres and finishing my further study. Otherwise I enjoy book club, folk music festivals, trying vegetarian recipes and spending time with friends.

I have found it helpful to have a sense of humour and to listen closely. I enjoy getting to know people and am learning from patient stories. It is hard to write my profile (this is my 7th attempt) but basically I am very enthusiastic to be working here and I look forward to catching up with you on your next visit.

Check out our new website @
www.hmf.org.au



In the Media

Sun's link to health woes supported

Studies on baby mice back the theory that childhood exposure to sunlight makes long-term immune system changes. The damage might lead to other cancer & diseases as well as melanoma.

Tasmanian researcher Heather McGee said many studies had shown exposure in childhood had led to later melanoma. "It's thought that's because of immune system changes," she said.

In mice exposed to ultraviolet light, the development of two kinds of immune cells in the skin was altered. One affected skin, but the other kind of cell showed a response in the lymph nodes.

"We're looking at whether there's a general suppression of immune response, which would give the potential for other sorts of cancers and different diseases," Ms McGee said.

Hobart Mercury 30/11/07

Check Sun Danger

A new product developed at Queensland University of Technology is designed to help workers who spend most of their day outdoors to monitor their sun exposure. The Sun Badge, not much bigger than a 50-cent piece, is made of a polymer material that degrades when exposed to sunlight.

"It works by undergoing a photochemical reaction when exposed to UV light. It can be easily attached to a person's clothing," Associate Professor Michael Kimlin, from the Australian Sun and Health Research Laboratory, based at QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, says. "Using the badge we are able to measure the amount of sun exposure a person gets over a set period, whether an hour or a day, which is an important tool for assessing the risk of exposure to UV radiation."

"Outdoor workers have a higher risk of skin cancer given the amount of time they spend outside exposed to UV light, whether from direct sunlight or reflected light from surrounding surfaces such as buildings, water and surfaces," Kimlin says. "Though it is important to know the level of UV exposure, it is just as important to work with employers to provide sun-safe policies for the workplace," he says.

Herald Sun, 3/12/07

Sun safety at school

The HMF Education Team - Jenny, Trish, Carole & Ces - are ready to spread the Sun Safety Message across the region.

As evidence linking the occurrence of melanoma to sunburns & sun exposure in childhood & adolescence has recently come to light - it is even more important to continue the sun safety message to kids.

Having visited 50 primary schools & distributed over 6000 Sun Safety Education Kits, the team is stocked up & ready to hit the playgrounds in 2008. If you know of a primary school



that would like us to visit, provide a short assembly presentation about the importance of sun safety, as well as a sun safety education kit for every child - please contact Jenny on 49850103 or email melafdn@tpg.com.au (kits are provided thanks to the very generous support of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation. Kits comprise: 1 x large reuseable bag, wrist band, magnet, tattoo, sticker, & Sun Safety work sheet tailored to each group)

Cancer Council dispels sun myth

It was advice passed down from grandmothers, but mums are now being given the opposite message: don't leave your baby in the sun. The NSW Cancer Council is warning parents about the myth that a spell in sunlight can do wonders for a child's health.

A recent survey revealed 80% of people still believe their baby needs direct sunlight to be healthy. Cancer Council skin cancer prevention manager Kay Coppa warned parents to be wary of the sun.

"An adult's skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes," Ms Coppa said. "Babies' skin is a lot more sensitive and needs to be protected from the sun, even on cool or cloudy days."

Daily Telegraph, 3/12/07

Speaker Spot!

If you have an organisation or group who would be interested in a guest speaker on melanoma please contact Jenny Noblet on 4985 0103 and help spread the word.



THANKYOU for your support

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Hennessey
Mission Beach
Castaways Resort, Qld
Reids Quality Meats, Telarah
New Lambton
Badminton
Woolworths
- Glendale
- Charlestown,
- Lake Macquaire Fair
- Mount Hutton
- Maitland
- Jesmond



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Please find enclosed my tax deductible donation for \$ _____

I have enclosed my cheque / money order made payable to: **Hunter Melanoma Foundation**

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