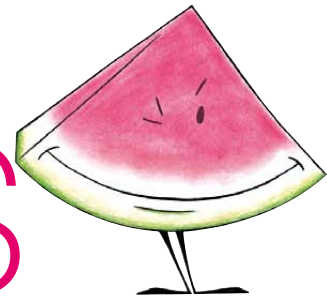


# Hunter Melanoma Foundation

# PIPS'N'PIECES



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MAY 2012

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<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Rebecca Boyd</b>
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<b>Public Officer/Committee:</b>	<b>John Rumball</b>
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	<b>Erin Lewis</b> <b>Holly Edmunds</b>

Not surprisingly, instead of receiving presents, the Committee handed out three cheques for \$100,000 each to leukaemia, prostate cancer and melanoma research in our region.

It was only fitting that the three cheques be donated by three of the Appeal Committee's tireless workers and founding members – Vice President, Ingrid Huymen, Publicity Officer, Alice Bennis and Secretary, Lesley Flannery.



Founding member of the MCAC Lesley Flannery presenting cheques for \$300,000 for cancer research.



## Chairman's Report

Peter Chapman

### Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee

The Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee is celebrating 30 years of fundraising this year and are rightly proud of their efforts having raised, and donated, over \$800,000 in just the past five years. Appeal Committee Secretary and Founding Member, Lesley Flannery, said that over the past 30 years they have donated well over \$1 million to a range of cancer care groups in the Hunter including children's oncology, brain tumour, lung cancer, breast and prostate cancer, leukaemia and melanoma. The group's sole purpose is to raise funds to help with the care, comfort and treatment of cancer patients in the Hunter and for research into cancer treatments and cures.

The majority of funds are raised through their small, but very busy, Op Shop at East Mall, Rutherford and they also receive generous donations from the community. As well as running the Op Shop the men and women of the Committee also operate a free linen service from a laundry located at the rear of the shop. This service is specifically for palliative care patients being cared for at home.

The Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee was established in 1982 and, in conjunction with the NBN Telethon, was instrumental in raising funds to establish oncology services in the Hunter. Against the odds, the Committee forged ahead over the years and eventually purchased their own building at Rutherford and established the op-shop and linen service.

To celebrate their 30th birthday the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee invited supporters, volunteers and benefactors to a morning tea at their Rutherford headquarters on 21st April.

This small group of dedicated volunteers have made an amazing contribution to the Hunter community for the past 30 years and are to be congratulated on their outstanding efforts. We are most appreciative of their support. Over the years the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee has donated \$155,000 to the HMF which has helped purchase vital research equipment and funded PhD students working in local teams searching for a cure for melanoma.

### Fundraising events

What a variety of fundraisers we have this year – there has to be something for everyone from the MBA Black Tie Ball, to the all-age rock concert, to a watermelon eating competition! Not to mention the charity race day for the punters or those who just want to have a fun day with friends at the races. And if you didn't get enough Christmas cheer in December then you must get along to the Belmont 16 Footers for their Christmas in July. Lastly, if you are of the sporting ilk, then the Rankin Nathan Lawyers golf day will give you some exercise and an opportunity to network with other like-minded people.

It's gratifying to note that, apart from the HMF annual race day, all of these events have been organised by members of the community offering their support to the HMF.

An excellent night was had by all at The MBA Charity Ball held in early March so too Gabby Summerville's "Tonight Alive" all-age concert. The watermelon eating competition will be hosted by the Wickham Smart Centre. To book your table or individual tickets for the famous HMF race day, Christmas in July or Rankin Nathan golf day you will find details in this newsletter.

## SunSmart Schools

It was pleasing to read recent Cancer Council statistics showing that the Hunter has more "SunSmart" schools registered than any other region of NSW. Having initiated a Sun Safety program for Hunter primary schools six years ago, the HMF is proud of its contribution to these positive statistics. Congratulations to all the Hunter schools who have introduced the SunSmart policies to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer in our young people.

## Sunbed Ban

When Jay Allen was diagnosed with a melanoma in 2008 he was convinced it was as a result of sunbed use and his doctor agreed that it most definitely would have been a contributing factor. After recovering from his surgery Jay took up the cause to have sunbeds banned and has fought relentlessly over the last 3 years to bring about this legislation.



On 4 February 2012 the NSW Government announced a

total ban on sunbeds from 2014 – NSW is now only the second location in the world, after Brazil, to ban sunbeds and solaria.

## Prof Peter Hersey

In mid March Prof Hersey left the Newcastle Melanoma Unit (NMU) and is now Professor of Melanoma Biology at the Sydney University and working in conjunction with the Melanoma Institute Australia.

Prof Hersey is an internationally renowned and respected melanoma researcher. His position in Newcastle was unique in that most researchers toil away in their laboratories never having any contact with people with the disease they are striving to cure. But Prof Hersey was very hands on with melanoma patients and at his weekly NMU clinics he was involved with their treatment including monitoring of side-effects from that treatment.

Prof Hersey had been at the NMU for more than 20 years and I know I speak for the hundreds of patients and their families that he treated when I express appreciation of his kindness and consideration during what can only be described as one of the most devastating and difficult times of anyone's life. We wish Peter well as he continues his research to find better treatments and ultimately a cure for melanoma.

Experienced Oncologist Dr Andre Van der Westhuizen has clinics now on Dr Hersey's previous clinic days.

## Welcome Jodie Macdonald

We are very pleased to welcome our newest committee member Jodie Macdonald. Jodie will be profiled in our next newsletter.



## Treasurer's Report

Janelle Kirk

As Chairman Peter mentioned, there is certainly plenty of variety in our fundraising events this year and I can't wait to see the photos from the watermelon eating competition! Together with my husband and a group of friends I attended the MBA Ball and it was a great night – congratulations to Simon Webber and his helpers who did a fantastic job organising the night. I didn't get to the all-age concert but was told it was good and loud!

We still have some fundraising events to come and we look forward to your support.

## Race Day – 14 July

The race day is always a fun day (whether there are horses on the track or not!!) and a great opportunity to get together with your friends either in the pavilion or the marquee. Pavilion tickets usually sell very quickly but there are plenty of marquee tickets available and I understand the NJC are going to hold a special morning tea at 11am on that day with hat demonstrations for the ladies.



## Christmas in July – 27 July

Colleen Praniess from Belmont 16 Footers is the organiser of the Xmas in July function to be held on Friday 27 July – having had a melanoma, Colleen is keen to raise funds in support of the HMF and she would particularly like to see the funds directed at raising awareness specifically targeting both men and women over the age of 40.

We agree with Colleen that this is an important target group & we will be developing an awareness campaign for this age group.

Cost is \$95 which includes dinner, drinks and entertainment plus there are heaps of prizes to be won. For ticket enquiries call Jenny Noblet on 4985 0103.

## Rankin Nathan Lawyers Golf Day – 7 September

Sponsors, teams and players are required for this day at Pacific Dunes – please contact Jenny if you are interested in participating. A great day and a great way to show your support for the HMF - you don't even have to be a golfer to join in the fun. Book your team soon to get a slice of the action.

## Bequest – Jillian Beswick

Jillian joined the HMF Committee in 2001 not long after being first diagnosed with a melanoma and was an active member for 3 years until work commitments made it difficult for her to attend meetings. Sadly, Jillian died from her melanoma in February 2010. In appreciation of the treatment she received, and to also assist melanoma research projects to hopefully find a cure for the disease one day, Jillian left a bequest to the HMF of \$38,000. As Jillian was in her early 40's when her

melanoma was diagnosed, we think it appropriate that these funds be directed to the 40+ awareness campaign. The key to surviving melanoma is early detection. If we can encourage more GenXers and Baby Boomers to take a good look at themselves (or get their doctor or partner to) hopefully we can get more melanomas detected early and removed before the cancer spreads.

## Melanoma PhD Scholarship

A PhD scholarship funded by the HMF is due to begin in July. The PhD student will be assisting Dr Nikola Bowden's research team.

## Part time Assistant

Jenny Noblet has been the sole employee of the HMF since 1993. She has done a great job and she has a number of volunteers to lend a hand at various times when needed. However, her workload has increased substantially over the years and it was agreed that Kylie Wilkinson be employed on a part time basis to help her out and to work initially on the three upcoming fundraising events.

Kylie has been a HMF supporter for a number of years – her husband's company Wexfab (previously Wilkinson Excavation and Fabrication) is a race day sponsor and Kylie has always helped out at the race day selling raffle tickets. We welcome Kylie on board - strap on your seatbelt, busy times ahead!

## Membership Renewal

With 30 June approaching it is once again time for membership renewals. Forms are included with this newsletter. (It's also a good time to make a tax deductible donation to the HMF before the end of the financial year).



## CHICKS @ THE FLICKS

The movie was "The Vow" and it was so popular that volunteer Kristy Brown and I were unable to get seats to the screening. As it was, by the time we had greeted the 330 attendees and distributed the complimentary HMF bags, we both would have fallen asleep in the movie.



Kristy Brown spreading the word at chicks @ the flicks.

There were ladies with their mums, sisters, daughters and friends at the Event Cinema Glendale, all to enjoy a night at the movies knowing it would be a 'chick flick' – ergo no violence, no car chases, no swearing, burping or other unseemly bodily functions – no wonder it was so popular!!!

The 'chicks' are invited to arrive an hour before the screening so that they can wander around the foyer and sample some of the treats on offer from the several stalls set up.

HMF was the charity invited for the 8th February event and Kristy and I were kept busy giving each chick a HMF bag containing a Sun Sense sunscreen sample, HMF brochure, wristband, sticker and coffee mug.

We were also kept busy answering a number of questions in relation to sun safety, skin checks and the importance of looking after your skin. Our thanks goes to Events Cinemas Glendale for giving us the opportunity to be involved.

## MBA Charity Ball

It's always great to 'frock up' for a ball, especially when you haven't done it for a while, and the MBA charity ball was no exception. Lots of gorgeous frocked up gals – and I shouldn't forget to mention the men who all looked very dapper in their dinner suits.

Enjoying the ball (from left): Wayne Kirk, Janelle Kirk, Sharon Howes & Glen Howes



Simon Webber from the MBA presents Jenny Noblet with the cheque.

Guest speaker, Paul Hockey left us in awe of his achievements. Paul lost his right arm to cancer when he was just 3 weeks old and made history by being the 1st person with a disability to stand on the summit of Mt Everest. His core message was 'never give up' and Paul certainly lives his life by this motto – a very powerful and inspirational speaker.

After the seriousness of Paul's talk we were entertained by comedian Dean Atkinson who had us in stitches with his prowess as a ventriloquist using audience members as his props.





# Education Report

Jenny Noblet

## Primary school visits

With so much rain in the early part of the year we decided to start our school visits 3 weeks before the end of 1st term – we were getting more sunny days at this time and also a timely reminder to cover up during the holidays.

This summer wasn't a very hot one but there were probably more people who got sunburnt this year than in the past. A lot of mornings started out rainy or overcast but when the sun broke through later in the day – it was very hot and caught many people unawares.

HMF Ambassador, Jake Sylvester, joined me on some of the school visits and as I advised the schools beforehand that he would be with me, a lot of the kids Googled to find out more about him – he even had an interview for the Tighes Hill school paper and made it onto their Facebook page.

With his love of surfing, Jake spends a great deal of time in the water and his message is simply that... yes, you can still enjoy the outdoor activities that you love – just make sure you are sensible! Think about the time you go outside (avoiding the hottest part of the day), use sun screen, a hat, shirt, sunglasses and a rashie in the water and stay in the shade when possible.

Both Jake's dad and grand dad have undergone surgery for skin cancer so he knows first hand how damaging the sun can be to your skin.

## Pit Stop for Youth

We will be once again participating in the program in high schools in the Cessnock Local Government area and we are really pleased to see that the program will now include girls. The boys and girls programs will be held separately with some changes in the health stations for each. The first of the programs start at Kurri Kurri High in mid July.

## Melanoma Myths

Most people are aware that melanoma is a form of skin cancer but many don't realise that it's not like the other forms of skin cancer and the following are some common beliefs about melanoma that are incorrect.

### 1. You only get melanoma where you've got sunburnt: Not true

Melanoma does most commonly occur on sun-exposed skin, but it can grow just about anywhere – on the soles of your feet, the roof of your mouth, in your eyes, under your nails, and in your sinuses or genital areas.

This is because melanoma is a cancer of the melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment. Like any cell in the body, melanocytes can mutate and develop into cancer. Though they are mainly found in the skin, melanocytes occur elsewhere, even in the throat – and anywhere there is a melanocyte, a melanoma can grow.

Simon Webber from the MBA presented a cheque for \$34,000 and formally thanked the event's sponsors before we finished the night off with dancing.

This is the third MBA charity ball that Simon has organised and he does a fantastic job – I really don't know how he finds the time.

The night would not have been possible without the support of a number of organisations including: **MBA Newcastle, MBA Group Training, Air Extreme, Kone Elevators, Goulds, Northrup Engineers, Ironbark Hill Estate, Reece Pritchard Accountants, Altus Q Business Coaching, Hilti, Harvey Norman, Kingston Building Australia, Newcastle City Council and a big thank you to Mike Rabbitt who did a great job as MC.**

## Tonight Alive Concert

Fifteen year old Gabby Summerville did an amazing job of organising this event. It was a far cry from the MBA ball the previous night and I definitely did not need to 'frock up' but it was great to see so many young people enjoying a night of music and fun.

Organising something of this scale was a first for Gabby and she was most appreciative of the support that she received and would like to especially thank Rob Ryan, Ben Neilson, Newcastle Leagues Club, Marcus from Big Apachee, sponsors Reliable Belts, Pioneer Fish Farm and Primate QDA. And of course the bands who donated their time – Tonight Alive, Local Resident Failure, Days Diminished and Gabby's band - Fallin' Angel.



Left: Tonight Alive

Below: A crowd of 300+ enjoyed the concert.



## Thank you to HMF volunteers

As part of the Sun Safe visits to primary schools the kids receive their own take home bag of HMF information – these individual bags are put together by HMF volunteers and the program would not be the success that it is without their support – a big thank you to Deb & Kim Sylvester, Robbie Lane, Elizabeth Slevin, Carole Hooper and Kylie Wilkinson.

If not diagnosed and treated in its early stages, melanoma can spread from its original site to other parts of the body via the bloodstream or lymphatic system.

A regular full body check is essential and if you do see something you are concerned about, make sure you get your GP to look at it promptly.

A Cancer Council Queensland 2008 study of 3762 Queenslanders found that a whole body skin examination significantly increased the chances that a melanoma was picked up early, before it had the chance to spread.

## 2. Only those who spend a lot of time in the sun are at risk: **Not true**

Although it is true that exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation increases our risk of melanoma – with more than 80% of melanomas caused by the sun – intermittent strong exposure to UV (i.e. getting burnt on weekends or holidays) is more likely to damage skin cells and cause melanoma compared to getting a small amount of sun exposure every day.

People who live in hot climates, close to the equator, have a greater risk, but those who live in cooler climates aren't necessarily safe as temperature does not necessarily correlate with radiation – you can have cool weather with high UV. It has a lot to do with where you are on the planet and in Australia, the UV is intense.

The greatest risk comes from sun exposure in early life which is why it is so important to protect children and teach them sun safe habits.

## 3. Melanoma is something only older people get: **Not true**

Your chances of developing melanoma do increase with age however young people do get melanoma as well. In fact, melanoma is the most common cause of cancer death in young Australians.

The link between the sun and melanoma is stronger than that between tobacco and lung cancer, and the more you are in the sun (or use solariums), the greater the risk.

Every time you get sunburnt it's a sign that the DNA in your cells is being damaged by UV radiation and in theory, just one bad sunburn could lead to melanoma.

## 4. People with dark skin don't get skin cancer **Not true**

Good sun protection is just as important for people with dark skin even though they may never burn and their risk of melanoma is lower than that of people with fair skin, they are still at risk of getting skin cancer.

## Remember to pack the Sunscreen when heading to the snow

The snow season is about to start but remember - winter sports enthusiasts are at increased risk of overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The combination of higher altitude and UV rays reflected by the snow puts skiers and snowboarders at an increased risk of sun damage, and ultimately skin cancer.

Higher altitude means increased risk of sun-induced skin damage, since UV radiation exposure increases 4 to 5 percent with every 1,000 feet above sea level. At an altitude of 9,000 to 10,000 feet, UV radiation may be 35 to 45 percent more intense than at sea level. In addition, snow reflects up to 80 percent of the UV light from the sun, meaning that you are often hit by the same rays twice. This only increases the risk for damage.

Both snow and strong wind can wear away sunscreen and reduce its effectiveness, so you have to take extra precautions.



To protect your skin from the cold, heavy winds and winter sun, follow these important sun protection tips:

- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 30 or higher whenever you spend extended time outdoors. Apply 20 minutes before hitting the slopes. Be aware that the sun's reflection off the snow is strong even on cloudy days. (Up to 80 percent of the sun's rays can penetrate clouds.)
- Apply sunscreen liberally and evenly to all exposed skin - most skiers and snowboarders do not use enough. You should apply at least a teaspoon to the face.
- Use a moisturising sunscreen with ingredients like lanolin or glycerin. Winter conditions can be very harsh on the skin.
- Be sure to cover often-missed spots: lips, ears, around the eyes, on the neck, the underside of chin, scalp and hands.
- Reapply every two hours, and immediately after heavy sweating.
- Always wear a lip balm with an SPF 15 or higher.
- Carry a travel-sized sunscreen and lip balm with you on the slopes. Reapply on the chairlift, especially after a long, snow-blown run.

### Cover Up

- Cover your head - it protects the scalp and keeps you warm.
- Wear items like ski masks, which will leave very little skin exposed to the wind and sun.
- Sunglasses or goggles that offer 99 percent or greater UV protection and have wraparound or large frames will protect your eyes, eyelids and the sensitive skin around your eyes, which are common sites for skin cancers and sun-induced aging. The sun's glare can make you squint, so it's important to wear sunglasses or goggles to clearly see the terrain. Plus, it will increase your enjoyment and may even improve your performance while skiing!

Enjoy the winter season, but be sure to take care of your skin.

## Melanoma is the Fourth most common cancer in NSW

### About your skin

Your skin is your body's largest organ and it protects your body from the outside, including sunlight, heat, injury and infection. It also helps regulate your body's temperature, stores fat and water, and produces Vitamin D.

Your skin is made up of two layers. The innermost layer is called the dermis and the outermost layer the epidermis.

The dermis contains the blood and lymph vessels, hair follicles and glands.

The epidermis is made up of flat, scale-like cells called squamous cells. Basal cells are the round cells that lie under the squamous cells in the epidermis. Melanocytes are found in the lower part of the epidermis and are the cells that produce melanin. Melanin is what gives your skin its natural colour – the colour you were born with. It's the distribution of melanin in the skin which results in different skin types, giving us either lighter or darker skin tones or skin with freckles or moles.

Personal traits such as how much melanin is produced and how it is distributed in response to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) influences whether we're likely to develop a skin cancer or melanoma. Our environment and behaviour also play a large role.



## In the Media

### Melanoma patients disappointed with Australian Government Advisory Committee decision

The Australian Government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has decided **not** to recommend Yervoy (ipilimumab) for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) leaving many melanoma patients shocked and disappointed.

Although melanoma is easy to cure in its early stages, there is yet to be a drug developed that will successfully treat melanoma in its advanced stages. In these cases, only a handful of drugs are available, and they have limited application and suitability for each individual patient.

Following the PBAC decision not to recommend Yervoy for PBS listing, the cost for an Australian patient seeking treatment with Yervoy for advanced melanoma is approximately \$120,000. Most patients will not be able to afford this in the final stages of their battle with melanoma. Without government subsidisation, the burden of funding the treatment will mostly be paid by the patient's family at an already difficult time.

Yervoy was developed for melanoma patients in advanced stages for which all other treatments have failed. It is designed to stimulate the immune system so that it can fight the disease to help prolong the patient's life.

Australia, along with New Zealand, has the world's highest incidence rate for melanoma with more than 10,300 cases diagnosed annually. Further to this, Melanoma has the highest incidence in Australia of any cancer in young people and young adults between the ages of 15 and 45 years.

Australians living with melanoma are encouraged to speak to their oncologist for more information about treatment options.

### A Sunburnt Country

As reported in the Telegraph on April 9 - Brisbane Lord Mayoral Candidate, Ray Smith, is thinking big when it comes to sun protection. Under his proposed SunSmart City program the council would provide free sunscreen dispensers in 150 Brisbane parks as well as installing additional shade sails over playgrounds and pools. "I want to ensure Brisbane residents continue to enjoy our fantastic outdoor lifestyle in a safe and SunSmart way." he said. Perhaps the Councils of the Hunter can take up the initiative. After all, this region has one of the highest incidence of melanoma in the world!

### Sun Safe Alarm

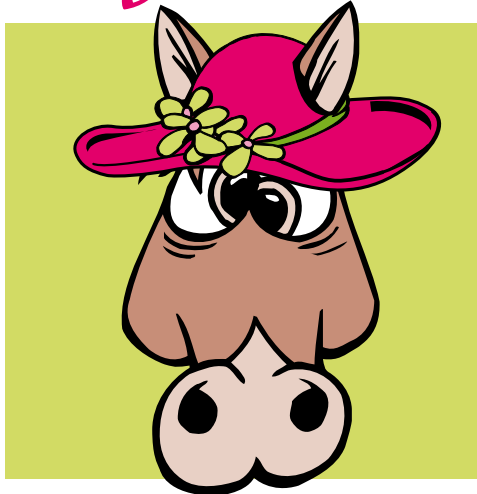
A new device from a WA company is a world first in sun protection. U-B-Safe-1 is a small electronic, ultra-violet alarm that can be fitted to a hat. It gives off an alarm when the user's skin has reached the peak of dangerous UV for the day. Inventor, Tony Pearson, said the device worked by determining the dose of UV light from the sun, taking into account a previous day's dose and the user's skin type. "It will educate anyone who is not sure when their skin will start to burn" Tony said. "There's a real need especially among people who already had skin cancers removed, to know how long they can stay outdoors safely". For more info [www.sunsafe.ws](http://www.sunsafe.ws)



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**HATSONTRACK**  
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...to The Hunter Melanoma

Foundation Race Day

**Hats on Track  
for Melanoma  
Saturday**

**14 July 2012**

Wear your silliest, biggest, brightest, trendiest or best hat and have a flutter at a fun-filled day of fashion, fillies and friends. Get your group together and book your tickets today! **\$65pp** includes entry to the track and to the HMF Marquee with light lunch, tote & bar facilities.

Great prizes! Great racing! Great cause!  
Call Jenny to reserve your seat on **49850103**  
or email **melafdn@tpg.com.au**  
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Yes We'd love to join you at Hats on Track for Melanoma! Please book \_\_\_\_ tickets @ \$65 per ticket. I enclose a cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ OR charge my credit card:  Bankcard  Visa  Mastercard

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Please post to: *Hunter Melanoma Foundation PO Box 278 Waratah NSW 2298.* or fax to: *4985 0101*



