

PIPS 'n' PIECES

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Welcome to Winter!

I think we can all agree that winter has well and truly arrived and it's time to break out the jackets and warm blankets if you haven't already done so.

Be warned though, just because it's a little colder and a little cloudier than the other seasons, the UV can still reach your skin even on the coldest of days. This is especially the case if you're snow skiing as the reflection off the snow can cause sunburn.

Be sure to check the UV before you go outdoors for extended periods and always apply the sun protection rules of slip, slop, slap, seek and slide whenever the UV is 3 or above.

You can download the SunSmart app to keep an eye on the UV reading each day to ensure you're always protected.

The other thing you should be thinking about NOW, is when your next skin check is due with your skin Doctor. A lot of our local clinics are catching up from COVID lockdowns and the current waiting time for an appointment in some clinics is 3-6 months.



Welcome to Paige Hawkins



In our last newsletter we advised of changes to the HMF committee. One of those changes was to welcome Paige Hawkins.

Paige is a Town Planner who works and studies full time. She has a strong history of melanoma in her family after losing both her Maternal Grandmother and Paternal Grandfather to the disease when she was only 3 and 14 years old respectively.

Because of her family history, Paige has a good understanding about the prevention of melanoma and other skin cancers, and

has what can only be described as a wild obsession with trialing new and different sunscreen products. The most common question in her friendship group is "Are you wearing sunscreen?" and that's the exact type of passion we like to see in our HMF committee members. Paige is passionate about the benefits of sun screen and the role it plays in the prevention of skin cancers and anti ageing.

We welcome Paige to the committee and look forward to working with her.

State of the Nation

A REPORT INTO MELANOMA – A NATIONAL HEALTH PRIORITY

From : Melanoma Institute Australia - melanoma.org.au

The above report was launched and presented to the Australian Federal Government in February this year.

Commissioned by Melanoma Institute Australia and Melanoma Patients Australia, and prepared independently by Insight Economics, the report was prepared with a mission to improve outcomes for melanoma patients and their carers Australia wide.

Involvement was widespread and included input from patients, carers, clinicians, researchers and policy leaders.

Alarming, the report estimates that without critical action being taken, by 2030 a further 14,000 Australians will die from Melanoma, 205,000 will be diagnosed with the disease and the economic cost to the nation will be in excess of \$8 billion.

The report outlines a 5 point strategy to achieve zero

deaths from melanoma by 2030.

1. Implement a national melanoma prevention and awareness campaign.
2. Invest in Australia's high impact research
3. Improve early detection and targeted screening programme
4. Reduce variation in diagnosis and treatment
5. Establish a model for melanoma supportive care and survivorship

HMF fully support the report, acknowledge and thank MIA and MPA for their leadership in undertaking the report, and thank all of those who contributed.

To read the report in full, please visit the Melanoma Institute Australia website : [MIA-and-MPA_SoN-Report_Final-Report_28-March-2022.pdf](#) (melanoma.org.au)

The Final Whistle

VALE DAVID WALLACE.

We first met David Wallace in 2019. David was standing in line at the Bank one day, when a stranger tapped him on the shoulder and asked him when he had his last skin check as there was a suspicious looking spot on the back of his arm. Having had a melanoma removed from his back 12 months prior, David had been undergoing regular skin checks, so took this very seriously.

A visit to his Doctor confirmed that the spot on the back of his arm was an invasive melanoma, and it was removed immediately.

We shared this story about David in early 2020 in the hope that we would find the gentleman that tapped David on the shoulder so that he could thank him, but to this date, David's mystery man has never been found.

Unfortunately, that was just the

beginning of David's melanoma story.

In June 2020 David was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic melanoma when tumours were discovered in his bladder, gall bladder and brain.

He fought courageously and with a positive attitude through his entire treatment plan.

On Saturday, 2nd April 2022, David was taken from us far too soon.

David became an 'accidental' HMF ambassador, or as he used to call himself, the "HMF PIN UP BOY". He selflessly allowed HMF to share his story in an effort to raise awareness about melanoma and the importance of early detection. What he actually did was so much more than that. David became a beacon of hope for other melanoma patients. His positive attitude was an inspiration giving hope to others battling this awful, unforgiving disease, and he touched the lives and hearts of many in the



process.

Our deepest condolences go to David's family – wife Susan and children Emily & Michael, extended family, friends and colleagues.

Thank you, David, for all of the selfless work you did in helping us to raise awareness, you made a difference in the lives of many. May you now Rest in Peace.

Lace Up for Melanoma

David Wallace was many things, and an active member of the Newcastle Rugby Union Referee's Association (NRURA) was just one of his passions. David was Secretary of the NRURA, an active referee and a referee coach. His ties to the local Rugby community were strong, having been involved with the Southern Beaches Rugby Union Club where his son Michael, also a Rugby Referee, played as a junior.

One of the things David and I often discussed at one of our many coffee dates, was the opportunity to host a Melanoma round within the local Rugby competition to raise awareness of melanoma and funds for HMF.

David and I started that ball rolling earlier this year and with the help of his friend and fellow NRURA committee member, Lisa Bartley, we planned the "Lace up for Melanoma" round which took place on 7th May.

Players were asked to purchase and wear pink HMF branded boot laces when they took to the field and the response was amazing with over 1700 pairs of laces sold and worn on the day.

Some Club's went the extra mile and organised donations, raffles and other activities for the day, and while we're still waiting on the final figures to be collated, we estimate funds raised to be around \$12,000.

Thank you to all of the clubs who participated, and special mention to the Referee's from the Central Coast competition who also "Laced Up" to honour David's memory.

Saturday the 7th of May is one of the few Saturday's this season where the sun has been shining, and we're pretty confident it was a reflection from the smile of David who would have been looking down on everyone who participated with pride and gratitude.





In the Community

HMF RACE DAY

We always receive great feedback from our Race Day guests and this year was no exception.

The week leading up to the day was filled with wet weather and cool days, but the weather Gods were shining down on us for Race Day and we enjoyed a beautiful 25 degree Autumn day.

The room was filled with colour and vibrancy, and our best dressed and best headwear awards were well picked by the wonderful Queen of Everything, Timberlina.

Our raffles and auctions were a big hit and contributed greatly to our fundraising total of \$30,000.

It was great to see all of our regular race goers and welcome some new faces.

Of course, the success of our Race day depends on the support of our community, including our amazing sponsors, and the tireless work of our volunteers. From all of us at HMF to all of you, a big THANK YOU for your support. We look forward to racing with you again next year.



Race Sponsors



Prize Sponsors



Community Education

BENGALLA COAL MINE

The education work we do in our community is often the most important and most rewarding. Every opportunity we get to deliver one of our programs is an opportunity to save a life through education about protection and early detection.

I was excited to be invited to morning tea with some of the staff at the Bengalla Coal Mine in Muswellbrook in May.

The staff were very welcoming and engaged and took the opportunity to have their photo taken using our "Observ" camera which shows sun damage to the skin under a UV light that isn't visible to the naked eye.

Some of the staff were not surprised to see the amount of damage to their skin having grown up in an era where there was no information or education about sun protection.....especially when they learned that the most damage is done to your skin before the age of 15.

It was great to have conversations around practicing a good skin care routine and changing behaviours around skin checks.



CUSTOM FLUID POWER

Another workplace visit we were thrilled to be involved in was at Custom Fluid Power.

Around 30 staff participated in a morning tea and learnt more about HMF and the work we do in the local community.

An informal chat about the importance of sun protection and early detection of melanoma was again well received with some of the staff alarmed at the statistics provided.

Once again, the Observ UV camera was a big hit and well received by staff.

Thanks to both businesses for having us.

If your workplace would like to participate in our education program's we'd love to hear from you.

Making a Difference



Dr Sai Krishnan

Leaving a gift to the Hunter Melanoma Foundation in your will is an extraordinary act of generosity. It ensures your legacy lives on and gives hope to the local community that we can work together to defeat melanoma.

In 2021, HMF were the recipients of a bequest for \$30,000 from a generous donor who requested to remain anonymous.

The gift was received with gratitude at a time when the HMF committee had received a request for funding from the Newcastle Melanoma Unit.

Director of Surgery, Dr Adeeb Majid, approached the foundation to co-fund a position for a Surgical Fellow which was created to not only provide a training opportunity for a specialist surgeon, but also to reduce waiting times for new melanoma patients for their initial surgical appointment.

The HMF committee were more than happy to approve the partial funding request knowing there was an immediate benefit to melanoma patients in our region as well as long term benefits of having more

surgeons trained in the melanoma field.

As the only melanoma unit outside of a capital city, which captures patients from the Central coast up to the QLD border, the NMU are in a unique position where they can offer this training with a view to increasing the number of surgeons who can manage melanoma outside of the Sydney metropolitan area.

The co-funding of this position by HMF was made possible thanks to the generous gift from our donor.

If you would like to discuss how you can leave a gift that will have a transformative impact on our ability to defeat melanoma through education, research and patient support services, please contact Claudia on 0412 955934 or send us an email at claudia@hmf.org.au.

Voluntary Assisted Dying

On 19th May 2022, NSW became the last State in Australia to finally pass Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) laws for people living with terminal illnesses.

This new VAD law in NSW has been over 20 years in the making. After many months of delays since the bill passed in the lower house, and a long debate in the upper house, those with a terminal illness will now soon be able to (if they so choose), have some control over when and what the end of their life shall look like.

Alex Greenwich - an Independent MP who has been a supporter of VAD and campaigned hard for Voluntary Assisted Dying, said the bill has allowed NSW to finally reach a threshold of "honesty and compassion". "Honesty that not all people die well, and compassion that people with advanced, painful and cruel terminal illnesses will now have the same end of life care options as those in every other state".

Essentially the passing of VAD laws in NSW will mean that within approximately 18 months, individuals living with terminal illnesses who meet the new VAD criteria, will be able to access it. VAD will be limited to individuals who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness who will die within 6 months, (or 12 months in the case of individuals with neurodegenerative conditions who are experiencing unacceptable suffering). The individual will also need to demonstrate competency and capacity to make the decision to end their life, and their application will need to be assessed by two different medical practitioners.

No matter which side of the Voluntary Assisted Dying fence you chose to "sit on", I personally believe at the end of our lives, compassion, and choice should always be available to us.

I have worked as a Registered Nurse for the last 23 years, a Paramedic for the last 11 years and an End of Life Doula

for the last 2 years. In 2003 my husband Scott Polglase was diagnosed with Melanoma, and in 2006 he died from Metastatic Melanoma. He was 28. Scott was surrounded with endless love and compassion, but a choice for safe and legal Voluntary Assisted Dying at home was not an option available to him. He wished it was and verbalised this as he knew he was approaching the end of his life.

I have been witness to many experiences of death and dying in my profession career and personal life. As Greenwich said, "not all people die well". Over the years I myself have come to realise dying "well" actually means very different things to different people.

My experiences bring me to the conclusion that the new VAD laws for NSW will give many people living with a terminal illness a choice to "die well" according to what is important to them. VAD will provide those who are dying and who chose to take the VAD pathway of transition, with a final sense of peace, calm and relief, knowing that as they approach the end of their terminal illness, they can feel safe and in control over the end of their suffering and how they will die. This is so important to an individual when terminal illness has already taken so much from them. For some, it's even their own very personal symbolic and actual version of their "last rite".

I have always believed that an individual's End of Life choices (regardless of values, beliefs, or faith) should be honoured by those of us who merely have the privilege of not knowing the personal sufferings of a terminal illness and all of its burdens, and those of us who are only able to bear witness to, care for, sit and hold space for those we love that are dying.

Kirrilley Moelker
Registered Nurse,
Paramedic & End of Life Doula
emergentlivingcoaching@outlook.com

Newcastle Melanoma Unit

There have been a few medical staff changes within the Newcastle Melanoma Unit since our last newsletter.

A Surgical Fellow position was created to provide a training opportunity for a recently graduated surgeon to gain more experience in melanoma and other surgeries.

Dr Sai Krishnan was the successful applicant for the 12-month fellowship which was partially funded by HMF.

The NMU also welcomed Dr Melanie Webb, Staff Specialist who performs melanoma and other specialist surgery.

Dr Neil MacPherson has joined the team as Dr Mike Reid's replacement. Neil is a Career Medical Officer in melanoma who performs excisions in the unit.

The staff changes and introduction of the surgical fellow position have already contributed to reduced waiting times for initial surgical appointments within the unit.



**NATIONAL
CARERS WEEK
GRANTS**

APPLY NOW!



HMF MEMBERSHIP *End of Financial Year*

As the end of financial year approaches, it is time to renew your HMF membership, or consider becoming a member.

Becoming a member means you are not only supporting our life saving education programs and research, but you're also helping us provide patient support services to people in the Hunter who are living with melanoma. You will receive our regular newsletter and have early access to purchase tickets to our fundraising events.

Membership is just \$11 per annum which is not Tax deductible. However, as a registered charity with DGR status, should you choose to make a donation in addition to your membership, the donation (over \$2) is tax deductible.

You can sign up or renew your membership and make a donation on our website or complete the form below and return it to us in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

1K FOR \$1K

1000 FOLLOWERS FOR A \$1000 DONATION.

Help My Money Sorted help us to defeat melanoma!

For every Facebook page like received, My Money Sorted is donating \$1 to the Hunter Melanoma Foundation - up to \$1000.

Coming Up

The "Knockers & Moles" Fundraising event was postponed in February and rescheduled for 10th September. There are still tickets available so make sure you get in quick, or you may miss out.

<https://crowdcatcher.co/e/knockers-and-moles-KMu3221x01>

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Hunter Melanoma Foundation

Hunter Melanoma Foundation Inc CFN 11111 ABN 75 185 968 305



New Membership Membership renewal Donation

I, _____

of, _____

hereby apply to become a member of the above named incorporated association. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the association for the time being in force.

Signature _____ Date _____

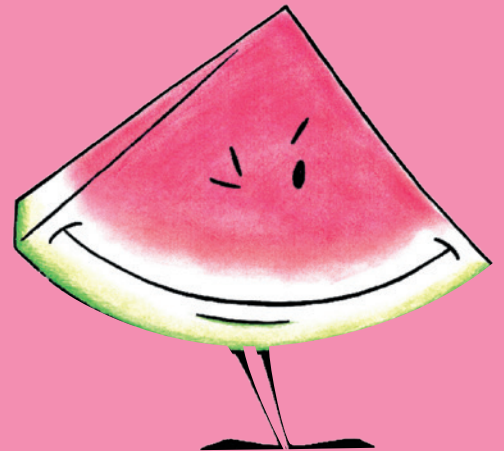
Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (m) _____

Email address _____

Occupation _____ Date of Birth _____

Membership fees are **\$11.00 per year** (including GST) payable on 1 July each year. Members receive a regular newsletter.

Thank you FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Lesley Bayliss
Barbara Bernasconi
Michael Boyd
Ronald Burgess
Christine Caputo
Veronica Corbett
Val Dunlop
Carol Hayes
June Howarth
Wayne Jackson
Welaine Lantry

Janice McKay
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Pamela Wellham



A special **THANK YOU** to PKF Accountants and Business Advisers for their support.

Payment Details

PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF FORM & RETURN TO ADDRESS BELOW OR IN REPLY PAID ENVELOPE

I enclose payment for \$11 membership I would also like to make a donation of \$ _____ Total amount: _____

A cheque made payable to Hunter Melanoma Foundation is enclosed OR please charge my Bankcard Visa Mastercard

Card Number Expiry Date /

Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you!

- Yes, I would like to receive regular copies of the HMF newsletter posted to the address overleaf Via Email
 Please send me information about leaving a bequest to the HMF please remove my details from the HMF mailing list
 Yes, I would like to find out more about becoming a HMF Volunteer. Please contact me.