

STROKE TALK

MID YEAR REVIEW 2020



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Thank You

SAV would like to sincerely thank our dedicated volunteers who donate their time and skills to our centres. Without your help, our Stroke Support Centres would not be as successful as they are today.

We would also like to thank our longstanding partners who contribute in many ways to ensure the sustainability of our Centres.

















Chairman's Mid-Year Report

The first half of this year has seen many highs and lows for the Stroke Association of Victoria (SAV) community.

We are extremely proud to have established two new Stroke Support Centres in Newport (Melbourne Inner West) and Shepparton (North East Victoria) and have employed experienced Allied Health trained Coordinators in each location who have been working tirelessly to create connections and pathways to support their local stroke communities.

The Newport Stroke Support Centre opened in January with the support of Rotary, in particular Rotarian Therese McKenney OAM who facilitated the setup of our services in the Outlets Co-op Neighbourhood House. Local health professionals, stroke survivors, carers and community members attended the Newport information session to hear about the future of stroke support in their area and provide valuable feedback and suggestions. One-on-one support and phone calls have kept everyone connected and continuing with their recovery during the current restrictions.

With the enthusiastic support of Goulburn Valley Health (GV Health) we have been provided with accommodation for the new Shepparton Stroke Support Centre within their Corio Street Community Health facility initially for 12 months, and look forward to officially moving in once restrictions ease. We are reaching out to the various clinical stroke support teams so that we are positioned to actively support the needs of stroke survivors in the region once the Centre opens. Community consultations are currently taking place and the Coordinator is liaising with GV Health, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, Greater Shepparton City Council, Rotary and allied health clinics so that every stroke survivor is given the opportunity to continue their recovery programs after leaving clinical care.

Will2Walk is back again this year – promising to be bigger and better than ever. Adapting to the social distancing restrictions we are currently facing; we find ourselves for the majority it will be a virtual walk unless the restrictions have been lifted. It has allowed us to extend the event to the whole of Victoria so that anyone can participate, no matter where they live. The event will be held on Sunday 11 October and I encourage everyone to get out and challenge yourself to walk, ride, push or move further (if the rules in your area allow) than you ever have. Will2Walk is SAV's major annual fundraising event and we are asking you to start fundraising, get all your family and friends involved, and help us raise as much as possible to ensure that our services are ongoing.

As an update from my previous report, I am happy to announce that SAV has commenced a thorough risk assessment of all of our operations including Centre-based activities, health and safety risks, emergency procedures and the impact of Covid-19 on our Stroke survivors and their carers, our operations and finances.

At the Board level, we welcome four new Board members: Liz Kelly – Treasurer, Greg Nankin – Secretary, Heidi Victoria, and Julian Williams. We farewelled Dr Carli Roulston and thank her endlessly for the expertise and energy she gave to SAV. Sally Foreman was our Secretary for a brief period but due to increased workload at her legal practice has decided to step down.

With these arrivals sadly comes two departures. Carli Roulston who was on the SAV Board for almost three years, and James Harkness who has resigned after 2.5 years as treasurer. James introduced a new financial accounting system which complies with the ACNC new requirements. SAV would like to sincerely thank Carli and James for their contribution to our organisation.

We should all recognise and thank the Board for untiring work to improve the awareness of the difficulties all stroke survivors experience during their rehabilitation. Much of their work is not noticed.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our valued partners – AMP Foundation, Department of Health & Human Services, Rotary International District 9800 Clubs, Bank of Melbourne, Give Where You Live Foundation, Lions International and a number of community-based supporters and donors. Without their contribution, we would be unable to continue supporting the Victorian stroke community.

It has been inspiring to see so many members of our community unite in these challenging times. From group video calls and member food drops to sharing isolation activities on Facebook, so many have highlighted the positive things in an otherwise lonely and uncertain time.

On behalf of the SAV Board and staff, I hope that you are all staying safe and healthy, and I can't stress enough to please reach out to your local Coordinator if you need any support at all.

Colin Scott, Chairman, Stroke Association of Victoria

Will2Walk 2020

SAV is excited to announce that Will2Walk will be held on Sunday 11 October 2020. Due to current restrictions the event will be held virtually – that means you can gather your close friends and family, choose your own route and distance, and join hundreds of others across the country as we walk to raise money to support the services that our Stroke Support Centres provide.



Stroke Association of Victoria News

COVID-19 Update

After a great start to the year, SAV – like all of Australia – quickly adapted to restrictions and our 'new normal'.

Centre Coordinators have been regularly communicating with members via phone and email, providing support, links to services, and a virtual shoulder to lean on during these difficult times. A selection of our social groups has been continuing their catchups via video call and when restrictions had eased briefly in regional Victoria, small group and outdoor activities recommenced.

SAV will continue to adjust to the changing environment, and we encourage you to stay connected with us and reach out when you need some extra support. We can be reached via phone call, text, email, Facebook or for one-on-one catch ups (where permitted).

New Stroke Support Centres

SAV is excited to have opened two new Stroke Support Centres this year – our Newport Centre opened in January, and our Shepparton Centre opened in May. Whilst support services in these areas are currently only available via phone and email due to COVID-19 restrictions, we look forward to welcoming stroke survivors and their carers in both the Newport and Shepparton regions as soon as we can.

Read more about what is happening in these areas and meet the Centre Coordinators in the Newport and Shepparton news sections below.

Board Update

We are thrilled to welcome four new members to our Board; Liz Kelly, Greg Nankin, Heidi Victoria, and Julian Williams who each bring a wealth of knowledge and new ideas to the Association. Liz will join the Association as Treasurer, Greg as Secretary and Heidi and Julian as Board Members.

Liz Kelly (pictured right) is an experienced professional with demonstrated proficiency in financial management, human resource, and project management. Liz is currently working with the Australian

Services Union Vic/Tas Branch as their Financial Manager. She has achieved outstanding results in the following areas: financial reporting, cash flow modelling, budgeting, management reporting, audit and tax compliance, strategic planning overview and execution strategies, managing talent and succession planning, recruitment and retention activity and campaigns, and dealing with complex disciplinary/grievance issues.





Greg Nankin (pictured left) has spent most of his career as inhouse legal counsel and company secretary for large private and

public listed corporations involved in the mining and resources, telecommunications, food manufacturing, information technology, not-for-profit, financial services and

logistics industries. Greg's commercial experience is broad and includes commercial contract drafting negotiation and review, corporate advisory, mergers acquisitions, procurement, intellectual property, IT, corporate governance, dispute resolution, compliance, and risk management.

Heidi Victoria (pictured right) is a highly experienced stakeholder, communications and non-partisan government relations strategist with a deep commitment to achieving solid results effectively and efficiently. She is a former Victorian government Minister for the Arts, Women's Affairs and Consumer

Affairs, university-qualified photographer, and passionate social advocate. Heidi is a highly experienced communicator and media performer who can effectively articulate an organisation's aspirations to help them achieve beyond their goals. She also has experience in crisis management, managing public relations, protecting reputational risk, fundraising and solving challenging situations with a positive and respectful approach.





Julian Williams (pictured left) is a Chartered Professional Engineer and Senior Manager with 23 years' experience in the rail, telecommunications and construction sectors since graduating with a UK Masters Degree in Civil Engineering. He has over 15 years of Project Management experience including senior project engineering experience in positions of full

responsibility, as well as experience managing budgets, programs and risks in multi-stakeholder environments. Julian is a qualified Lead Auditor and Auditor of Quality Management Systems.

Bendigo Stroke Support Centre News

Bendigo Model Yacht Club Visit

The Bendigo 'Blokes with Strokes' members enjoyed the company of the Bendigo Model Yacht Club at Lake Weeroona in early March.

Members were able to try their skills in sailing their yachts across the waters and around the buoys of the competition course. The day ended with a three-lap race between the 'Yachties' and the 'Strokies' which saw the experience of the Yacht Club members shine through.

The members of the Bendigo Blokes with Strokes group wish to extend their thanks to the Model Yacht Club members for their hospitality, their patience in explaining and demonstrating how the yachts were operated, and making their craft available for our group to sail. Their enthusiasm and companionship ensured that everybody had a very enlightening and entertaining visit and introduced another passive recreation activity that could be pursued.







New Furniture for Bendigo

A new couch and two new chairs have been purchased for the Bendigo Centre thanks to donations from the Lions Club of Eaglehawk and another community supporter. These couches adhere to all the requirements that stroke survivors need – back height, seat height and firmness.



Bendigo members Marge and Ron Townrow and Shelly Crockford tried and tested the couches for suitability. SAV would like to thank Valentines Furniture in Bendigo for their fantastic service and generous discount.

Members are very happy with their new meeting area and everyone at the Centre looks forward to many cuppas, laughs and stories being shared on it in the future.

Bank of Melbourne Foundation

SAV would like to thank the Bank of Melbourne Foundation for their funding to help enhance the Bendigo Centre's services. With this funding, the Centre has had many successes and achievements including:

- Increase in membership numbers by 50 people this includes stroke survivors and carers
- Record monthly attendance of 127 visits in February
- Launched the Communications Group for members with aphasia
- Increased attendance at all activities including the Weeroona Walking Group, Chair Assisted Yoga, and Blokes with Strokes.
- Information sessions with guest speakers Robyn Soulsby, Outpatient Rehabilitation Service -Bendigo Health, and Debbie Kesper, Director of Rehabilitation Services - St John of God

Bendigo Christmas Party

The Bendigo Centre held its end of year/Christmas morning tea on Monday 16th December.







It was a great opportunity for staff, Centre members, family members and friends to get together and celebrate the Centre's first year and acknowledge how much has been achieved over the last 12 months. In attendance was the president of the Rotary Club of Eaglehawke, John Jones, and previous president Alison Bacon. Everyone had a wonderful morning, with Christmas music, a Christmas raffle and a variety of Christmas inspired food.

Communication Peer Support Group

Bendigo's first Communication Peer Support Group commenced in March for stroke survivors who experience communication difficulties such as aphasia, dysarthria and apraxia. These conditions are an impairment of the areas of the brain which control language and can have wide ranging effects on a person's communication skills. Aphasia is common after stroke affecting up to 38% of stroke survivors and can also occur due to Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

Research has shown the positive effects these groups can have on communication and social skills, giving members of the community a chance to meet others with a shared experience and practice communication skills within an understanding environment.

The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at 1:30pm (during non-COVID affected periods).

Bendigo Members Celebrated



Centre members Ron and Marge Townrow (pictured) were announced as the winners of the Stroke Foundation's 'Improving Life After Stroke' Award in May.

Ron and Marge ran a farm in a remote rural location when Ron had a stroke at the age of 44. Marge quickly became a full-time carer and the pair moved to Bendigo to be closer to medical

services. The Townrow's are active, valuable members of the Bendigo Stroke Support Centre and provide support to stroke survivors across the region.

Congratulations Ron and Marge! A very well-deserved award.

Barwon Stroke Support Centre News

Give Where You Live Foundation

SAV has been successful in attracting funding from Give Where You Live Foundation in Geelong for our 'Life After Stroke' program. Life After Stroke encompasses a stroke survivors' journey after they leave clinical care, with a particular focus on vocation activity including staying at work or returning to work after stroke, upskilling, career counselling and employer relations.

SAV is partnering with Rotary to deliver the program. Rotary will enlist the support of a number of trained members who will act as volunteer mentors for each of the participants and provide guidance to that they can achieve their employment goals.

With this funding, SAV will employ a Life After Stroke Coordinator to manage the program, provide career support and liaise with Rotary mentors.

Prestige Inhome Care Charity Golf Day

SAV was honoured to be the charity partner of the 2020 Lonsdale Golf Club Charity Day sponsored by



long-term partner Prestige Inhome Care which raised \$549.70 for the Barwon Stroke Support Centre.

The event was a huge success, with club members John and Nan (pictured) taking home the trophy.

Thanks to Amanda Fisher and Nathaniel Levett from Prestige for their continued support of our services, and to all the players and event organisers who contributed to the day.

Virtual Support Groups

Determined to stay connected and continue to support each other during COVID-19, the Barwon Centre has been facilitating online video calls for its social support groups.

The Drysdale Blokes Group and the Young Stroke Support Group (YSSG) have particularly enjoyed this unique catch-up and have been meeting regularly to keep connected.

Members who are no longer living in the Geelong area have been able to join the calls and catch up with old friends. Tash who has been a member of the YSSG since 2017 recently moved to NSW and has been unable to attend the Centre since late last year. Tash was able to join in on the video calls and catch up with some of the group during the isolation period.



Bunnings Supports Geelong

Barwon staff and volunteers were invited by Bunnings Waurn Ponds to set up a stand at their Community Day in March. It was a great pleasure to be able to present what we do as a Centre to the public and show how we support the Geelong stroke community. We were able to meet with members of the public, share information about stroke and discuss what the Centre has to offer, as well as meet other community groups to connect our current members with.

This was an added bonus on top of the current support and opportunities Bunnings provides us with as we raised over \$5,000 in 2019 from Bunnings BBQs and our help of our volunteers who have grilled nearly 2000 sausages. Thank you to Bunnings Waurn Ponds for their continued support over the past year and into the future.



Included in our incredible group of volunteers is Cathy (pictured with SAV staff members Sienna Posso and Hazy Connelly) from Awesome Foundation (Geelong Chapter). Cathy and the Awesome Foundation have been great supporters of the Centre providing much needed funds to help run our craft group and given time and money to help make our Christmas party possible.

Barwon Gets a Facelift

SAV would like to sincerely thank Bunnings Waurn Ponds and Bunnings Leopold for their help in painting the inside of the Centre. The teams donated the paint as well as their own time to help out on the brushes, giving the Centre's front room, offices and corridor a much-needed face lift to get it looking white and bright.

Thank you to everyone who helped to get the job finished before the Centre closed due to COVID-19. BSSC staff are looking forward to welcoming members into the refreshed space once restrictions are lifted.

Barwon Christmas Party

SAV would like to thank the Geelong City Cricket Club for providing their club room for the Centre's 2019 Christmas party, and the Geelong Awesome Foundation for their catering. It was a fantastic turnout, with 82 members, carers and supporters of the BSSC coming together as a collective community of young and old. The Stroke A Note Choir performed some carols and each guest generously brought a plate of food for everyone to share.

The day was a great success, and everyone went home feeling full and filled with Christmas cheer.









Newport Stroke Support Centre News

Meet the Coordinator - Hazy

Hazy-Mars Connelly was appointed Newport Stroke Support Centre Coordinator in March.

Hazy's professional background ranges from hospitality and event management, to nursing and business administration. Prior to joining the SAV team, Hazy spent two years volunteering with the Barwon Stroke Support Centre and represented SAV by receiving an award as a Volunteer Ambassador for his contribution to the team and dedication to stroke support.



Plans for Newport

The Newport Stroke Support Centre is located within the Outlets Co-op Neighbourhood House. We are creating pathways for stroke survivors to participate in existing Neighbourhood House workshops, as well as developing and delivering activities to meet the needs and interests of stroke survivors in our area. This will include cooking, craft, computer studies, art, use of the ableX interactive technology program, and appropriate exercise activities designed to achieve specific outcomes in mental and physical recovery. This will be coupled with a schedule of peer support groups including 'Blokes with Strokes', young stroke groups, women's groups and carers support groups.

Further plans for the Centre include upskilling and vocational training, assistance with regaining driver's licenses, assistance with becoming confident in using public transport, and rolling out the 'Life After Stroke' – a program for working-aged stroke survivors to re-enter the workplace and links to further vocational training.

Shepparton Stroke Support Centre News

Plans for Shepparton

Shepparton will soon have its own Stroke Support Centre to cater specifically to the needs of stroke survivors and their carers within the Victorian North East Region. Once established, the Centre will act as a vital community hub and a welcoming place creating opportunities of inclusion and growth towards a positive rehabilitation process after stroke.

The Centre will offer engaging and mindful programs, a network of social activities to be enjoyed, and simply a space where individuals experiencing similar circumstances can connect and help each other to heal and re-enter their lives.

Meet the Coordinator - Jess

Jessica Petreski was appointed Shepparton Stroke Support Centre Coordinator in May.

Jess has worked within the community and aged services sector for over a decade in various roles that have allowed her to engage with a large demographic of individuals providing essential support and care. Whilst completing university studies in exercise science and sports management, Jess developed a passion in working closely with the elderly and through this decided to undertake a diploma of nursing enabling her to continue to build on her skills and knowledge.



Stroke Support Groups

Stroke Support Groups offer a place for people affected by stroke to come together and learn from each other. Groups are always welcoming to new members and the Stroke Association of Victoria encourages those interested to participate in these community groups.

Group	Coordinator	Phone
Albury-Wodonga Stroke Recovery Club	Margaret Bashford	1300 650 594
Albury-Wodonga Stroke & Brain Injury Inc	Narelle Maloney	0429 785 192
Aphasia Victoria	Konrad Ermert	0411 869 852
Ballarat Stroke Support Group	Ron Hines	0408 313 659
Boroondara Stroke Support Group	Vivienne Harkness	03 8529 5307
Chinese Stroke Support Group (Box Hill)	Rufina Chan	03 9078 8320
Cranbourne Stroke Support Group	Sandy Harris	03 5995 2373
Croydon Stroke Support Group	Valerie Cadman	0400 581 750
Daylesford Stroke Support Group	Gary Tucek	03 5334 5480
Echuca Stroke Support Group	Davie Dowie	0475 388 986
Hamilton Stroke Support Group	Jenni Bowman	0409 987 613
Knox Stroke Support Group	Lister Sabin	03 9758 9109
Lilydale Stroke Support Group	Emily Renfrey	03 9738 8804
Macedon Stroke Support Group	Kim Courtney	0429 919 207
Monash Stroke Support Group	Graeme Hilson	03 9877 6945
Mornington Peninsula Stroke Support Group	Lindy Cooke	0421 414 461
Morwell Stroke Support Group	Marlene Austin	03 5668 1355
Shepparton Stroke Support Group	Ted Smilie	03 5826 0220
Strokidz (Royal Children's Hospital)	Andrew Price	03 9885 4477
Sunraysia Stroke Support Group (Mildura)	Donald McMaster	0419 510 190
Swan Hill Stroke Support Group	Joyce Wood	03 5033 1963
Wantirna Stroke Support Group	Sandie McEchern	03 9764 9070
Warrnambool Stroke Support Group	Patrick Groot	03 5564 4346
Westroke Peer Support Group	Melva Morrison	03 9317 7850
Wyndham Stroke Support Group	Bob Carey-Grieve	03 9742 8193
Young Victorian Stroke Support Group	Scott McPhee	03 9435 7857
(private Facebook group)		

Stroke Support Centre Activities

Aphasia/Communications Group

Communication groups are run to give members of the community a chance to meets others with a shared experience and practice communication skills within an understanding environment.

ableX

A computer-based exercise system designed to recover arm movement following stroke. Using a handheld controller, users are guided through a series of fun and challenging computer games designed to improve arm strength, dexterity and function. Exercises can be tailored to each individual and increase in difficulty as your ability improves with repeated use.

Upper Limb Training

Stroke survivors can practise their individual plans designed by their Occupational Therapists to help improve movement, strength and fine motor skills. By the centres providing the space to practise these tasks in a group setting we are tackling the issue of isolation that many stroke survivors face and help support peer encouragement.

Arts & Crafts

Come and share your joy of crafting with other stroke survivors whilst practicing your fine motor skills.

Technology

If you would like to make your device more accessible and easier to use, our technology assistance groups will be happy to help you out. There are also a range of applications and programs for many devices designed specifically to aid stroke recovery, focusing on developing skills like attention, memory, problem-solving, and typing.

Chair Yoga

Chair yoga is a gentle practice in which postures are performed while seated and/ or with the aid of a chair. Chair yoga classes typically target those with physical disabilities or aging men and women who find a typical yoga session too challenging.

Cards & Games

Board games can help recover skills like memory, attention, reasoning and decision-making, but hopefully you will be having too much fun to notice all that work going on!

Music & Choir

Singing in a group can also be emotionally uplifting and a great source of peer support. If you enjoy singing, whether you are more interested in communication, cognition or socialisation, joining the choir will be an enjoyable and beneficial way to continue your stroke rehab.

Independent Travel & Regaining Driver's License

Upon the advice of a doctor, stroke survivors could be required to hand over their license and stop driving for a period following a stroke. The centre holds sessions to discuss topics such as regaining travel independence & drivers licenses. We also run sessions on using public transport with the assistance from a trained OT to supervise.

Relearn Kitchen Skills

With help from an OT we run sessions on how to navigate yourself in a kitchen and some tips and tricks from other stroke survivors on what has worked for them.

Walking Group

Join others affected by stroke in a social walk around your local area.

Social Support Groups

A regular social support group with fellow stroke survivors in your peer group provides a lowpressure environment to help rebuild your social skills and provides information, emotional support and affirmation of your experiences.

- Blokes with Strokes
- Young Stroke Group
- Carer/Family support
- Women's Group

Visit our website to view each centre's monthly activity schedule.

How you can help

There are almost 120,000 people living with the effects of Stroke in Victoria. Many would face the long road to recovery alone without the local community support provided by the Stroke Association of Victoria. There are many ways that you can support SAV and the Stroke Support Centres:

Donate

Make a one-off donation or set up a regular monthly donation

Celebrate with us

Instead of presents, ask your family and friends to donate to SAV to support your local centre

Leave a gift in your will

Nominate SAV to receive a bequest as part of your will to leave a lasting legacy

Partner with us

Contact us to make your organisation an official partner of SAV

Attend an event

Keep an eye out on our events page for upcoming events – we would love to see you there!

Connect with us

Join our Facebook page (@StrokeAssociationVictoria) to see what is happening at SAV and your local centre

Give back while you work

Donate to SAV via pre-tax payroll deductions

Hold a fundraising event

Get your friends, family and local communities together for a BBQ, morning tea, sporting event or movie night to raise money for SAV

Volunteer with us

Contact your local Stroke Support Centre to volunteer your time and skills to help with the running of centre activities

SAV Board & Staff

Board Members

Colin Scott - Chairman

Anita Roper – Deputy Chair

Greg Nankin – Secretary

Liz Kelly - Treasurer

Brig Bob Slater, AM

Konrad Ermert

Dr Margaret Turner

Professor Mary Galea, AM

Justin Wibrow

Heidi Victoria

Julian Williams

Staff Members

Neville Taylor - Chief Operating Officer

James Garland – Executive Director

Zoe Jennings - Partnerships & Communications Manager

Sienna Posso – Regional Coordinator (Barwon South West)

Tamara Lalor - Regional Coordinator (Loddon Mallee)

Hazy Mars Connelly – Regional Coordinator (Inner West)

Jessica Petreski – Regional Coordinator (Shepparton)

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