



---

# **The Biopsy Bugle**

---

## **Autumn 2015**

**The Australian Heart  
Lung Transplants  
Association Inc.**



## President's Message



Happy New Year one and all. We are off to a flying start already.

Firstly, I'd like to thank all that attended the AGM/ Christmas party. We had a blast bowling, although I've

realised I won't be a champion bowler in the future. Big shout out to Lisa Slater for organising.

Please see my president's report below to find out the plan for the association for this year. If you think you can help in any way please let us know. We are always looking for volunteers and fundraisers.

For this year, I wish everyone

good health and hope you get a chance to start knocking off bucket list items. I just did a big one in competing in my first ever Enticer Triathlon in Huskisson. A lot of fun and a lot of mental strength needed, I learnt a lot and will definitely go back for more. Yes, I'm a glutton for punishment.

For you the sky is the limit. Set goals and make them happen, aim high and go far. Enjoy life to the fullest.

If you've got a story to share please let us know. We'd love to hear from you and share it on our website.

Take care

*Kimberley*

Fortune Favours the Brave!

## President's Report from the AGM 2014

### THE Committee

We were joined this year by some bright new faces: Christine Griffith, Lisa Slater and Rita Dahah. This lovely group brought some new and great ideas to the table. We are so lucky to have them onboard, as well as the associations back bone in Lyn Kerslake, Jerry McNamara and

Jim Beverstock, in which the time they have given us has been invaluable

It isn't easy to give up some of the only free time you have to volunteer but this lovely group of people do it with no complaints. Together we make a pretty special team.

Some of the wonderful things that the committee has been involved with and achieved in 2014 include:

- Launching a new website. The new AHLTA website is bright, informative and educational. Easy to negotiate and simple to use.
- Amending the newsletter. Just given it a bit of a face-lift really.
- Start applying for grants. A hard and tedious job yet so beneficial if we are approved one.
- Improved communication through website and Facebook
- A successful tax appeal with three regular monthly donations. As you know our association relies on donations to survive, therefore, these regular monthly donations will help us to better support our members in the future.

## **Members**

The Association has 596 current members, 37 Associate members and 15 financial members.

We have seen a drop this year in new members, although transplants are on the increase. The association has a plan for this in the New Year; this will be discussed further down.

## **30th Anniversary**

As many of you know Heart Lung Transplantation turned 30 in 2014.

We happily celebrated, holding a thanksgiving service to over a hundred people and party afterwards, which included some very special guest speakers.

The association also made two healthy contributions to the research of heart and lung research. All of which helps to improve the treatment and outcomes of patients.

## **Stall Week**

During this time in February the Association also took to the foyer of St Vincent's with their stall to help raise awareness for the association and organ transplantation, in particular heart and lung. This week was fabulous and successful for the association but could not have been achieved without so many of our lovely members volunteering their time. These efforts help our association to go forward.

We could not do it without our great volunteers, thank you. Most notably these said volunteers give up so much of their time to help and I think this is something special, they are something special. In attendance were also our amazing Doll Ladies. They attended every stall that week, getting the bus and train from Gosford to Manly while carrying all their stock. Dedicated is an understatement.

This is also not forgetting to mention making jams, and selling at many of their own stalls between Gosford and Manly. This

wonderful group of women are truly amazing. We are so grateful to be involved with them and I'm sure if you know them you will feel honored to spend time with them as I do.

### **Financial Assistance Program**

This program was very successful in 2014 and I get no better satisfaction than being able to help someone in need. This is the main reason to our existence. This year we helped 8 people in need.

### **Clinic**

We continue to maintain the Noddy Cars in clinic, plus the Fish Tank and magazines for all to read during the long wait.

### **Plan of 2015**

Continue to help Clinic and we will be purchasing a couple of portable DVD players in the not to distant future for the many bored and lonely inpatients. We also intend to set up a roster of people to attend the support group. I think it is vital that AHLTA has a face around clinic, so people know who we are, how we can support them and know exactly what we do. You never know

there may actually be people who want to join the executive committee or just volunteer for us.

Constitution - This year will also see a minor facelift of the constitution, which will also include job descriptions of the executive committee. These will all be as per the legal requirements of a charity and all members will be informed of purposed changes.

Continue to raise our profile by encouraging people to fundraise. Speaking of which we have 2 Bunning's days this year. Watch this space for dates.

Ultimately, all I want for the association is to support our members, be known to people, help others and raise awareness of organ donation. This year I will strive to enlist more members, gain more community support and hopefully more member involvement.

I'm excited as to what 2015 will hold and look forward to many more wonderful AHLTA functions.

I wish you all good health and good luck.

## **Celebrating another AGM and Christmas party**

On Sunday 18th of January, we came together at Kingping Bowling (Darling Harbour) to have our AGM and to celebrate end of another successful year with our friends.

The formal part of the AGM was held in a beautiful harbour view room where our attendees could enjoy a very different view from third level.

The AGM was followed by two games of bowling and lunch. All attendees were randomly divided into different groups for two challenging games of bowling and lots of delicious food was served while everyone was busy improving

their rank in the game's table! This was the fun part of the day as there were lots happy faces.

We thank everybody who came along, and we look forward to celebrating another Christmas party with you in December this year.



## Bunnings's BBQ fundraiser for AHLTA

The main objective of this Bunnings's BBQ is to increase awareness of local communities about AHLTA and the great job that our organisation does.

It also helps us to raise much needed funds for our association. These funds will enable us to continue support our members in the future.

So, please come along and help us with this mission.

- Saturday, 23rd of May  
9AM to 4PM
- Bunnings Belrose  
Austlink Corp Park  
Niangala Close  
Belrose NSW 2085



We always need some help throughout the day. So, if you have some spare time and would like to help out, please let us know.

We would love to see you there!

## Donatelife remembrance service

Donatelife remembrance service is held in recognition of all those who have been part of the organ and tissue donation and transplant journey.

This service also provides a good opportunity for us to acknowledge and thank our donors and their families.

Please join your fellow heart and lung transplant in this emotional service.

- Saturday 30th May
- 2pm
- Wesley Centre  
220 Pitt Street Sydney NSW 2000



## Trivia Night

### **Save the date!**

Two experienced Trivia specialists and parents of a lung transplant recipient have offered to host a fundraiser for AHLTA .

The main objectives of this Trivia Night are to raise funds for our association in order to better support you and also to provide an opportunity for our members to get together and have a memorable night!

Christmas in July Trivia Night

- When      Sunday 5th of July
- Where     Lindfield, NSW
- Entry     \$20 per person

Lots of prizes to be won!

Please get together with a group of your friends or family and make up a table to enjoy a night of fun and games, or let us know if you would like to join a table!

Register your interest with Lyn Kerslake 0403 344 048 or [info@ahlta.com.au](mailto:info@ahlta.com.au)

More details will be available on our website soon!



## Story of my journey

Hi my name is Lucy Brack. I am 33 years old and I live in Sydney.

I was born with Cystic Fibrosis; I was a preemie baby with very low birth weight.



My Mother was told that I would not survive for very long, to hold me and give me so much love, yet did they know my little ears pricked up and from that moment I decided to fight and live.

I had annual "tune ups" at POWCH aka Sydney Children's hospital until I was 17, then moved to RPA, until I needed a Lung Transplant.

The "tune ups" became much more frequent, the length of admissions longer and my health started declining, my body was becoming weaker and everything started becoming difficult, just the basics of eating, sleeping, showering and breathing were exhausting.

My doctor at RPA, Dr Paul Torzillo

made the call, that I needed to be listed and it all happened very quickly, I was in disbelief, as was my family; we all questioned if the timing was right.

In January 2003 I was listed at St Vincent's Hospital for a lung transplant. By early November, I realised I am running out of time as I was thin to the bone and extremely ill.

I spoke with Melveta on Thursday, desperately wanting to live and clinging to life. When I left St Vincent's I was feeling broken, with no control over future! I was terrified and extremely emotional. I finally received the call on Saturday the 22nd November 2003. It was a very hard day. I felt I could no longer fight on. I was 38 kilos, on oxygen, on feeds, unable to eat, always felt bloated and couldn't breathe.

I started creating an artwork about fear. I was so desperate to get a call. I imagined the nurse called me and played out that situation in my mind, but I ended up in a blubbering mess. In matter of going to the bathroom, I missed a call. When I listened to the voicemail and it was a message from a nurse saying "we have your lungs".

I was elated, I was buzzing, I was scared, a million emotions as I

wanted the chance, I wanted to keep on living and achieving the life I dreamed of.

When I called the nurse back, she asked me to make my way in to emergency at 8pm. It was going to happen this time!

Later, Monique called me and said "we have lungs and they are a great match, they could almost be yours"

My mum was still overseas, but luckily my stepfather- Murray- had just returned to Australia.

I called him and he was very excited, he headed to collect me and we headed into hospital through Emergency. My great friends, Al and Clint, came in too.

It was a magical experience. The feeling in the air was very moody. I remember, it was the closing of the rugby world cup, Australia Vs England, at around midnight where England beat us by 1 goal, then bang off went fireworks. They lit up the sky right outside the window, next minute they were ready for me.

I always joke, that they must have kept the lungs on ice, so they could watch how the match played out.

For me the biggest thing was I didn't want to say goodbye or see you later, so I said "See you on the flip side".

The next thing I remember, I was waking up in ICU, with tubes it.

everywhere. Family by my side and I felt well. I looked at my fingers and toes and they were not blue anymore, my skin colour had returned and I cried happy tears.

I have been very fortunate with little complications, until January 2013 when I became violently unwell with my creatinine level in the 400s and my lung function slowly declining. I was now in chronic Renal Failure; I started getting chest infections every couple of months and it was very hard to eat. I only wanted to eat vegetables. I was very fearful of how this would impact on my lungs and life.

Mum had been working behind the scenes organising a trip to Paris in May, to keep my spirits up and encourage me to keep fighting. I was so unwell it took me 6 hours to pack my small bag and we just made the flight that morning, but we knew I may never do this again, at least not while I needed dialysis, so we went for



Luckily my mum is a registered nurse, so that also helped. It was the trip of a life time!

Dialysis was started in August 2013 and now I was on another transplant journey. Blood and tissue matching started soon after. Mum and my partner, James, were both a match and the doctors now would decide who would be the donor and they decided James!

I was unwell and surrendered again and next thing the renal team said "we have your transplant date", now I just had to stay well for 3 weeks.

James and I stayed well and made it to the hospital. It was so challenging to be on the other end of being concerned for your loved one. James was extremely nervous, I really felt for him and wanted to console him, but that made it worse. We were at hospital waiting together, then they separated us, then James called me and said he was being taken down and then it was my turn, Mum was there, as were Al and Clint and once again I was saying " See you on the flip side" , I was transplanted on 21st August 2014.

Everything went according to plan and the kidney is functioning so well, with creatinine levels of 58-71 and my lung function is still climbing. I am exercising again now and rebuilding muscle tone.

I have fulfilled many dreams in the

last 11.5 years, from having my first real employment, travelling the world, studying my masters of curating and cultural leadership, continuing my art practice, being healthy, active and vibrant, having fun with my fur baby, family and friends, running and breathing, the list could go on and on.

I am eternally grateful to my donor and donor family and to my partner.

Some amazing people exist and because of them, so do I.

I have gratitude every single day and continue to chase my dreams.

This year in August will be my kidneys 1st birthday, with my lungs celebrating 12 years "on the flip side". Life is wonderful!

For almost 12 years now my personal motto has been

Through trials and tribulations you will succeed.

I hope you have enjoyed reading my story and that it has inspired you to stay positive, grateful and keep living your dreams!

Never give up!

Lucy

## Health NEWS

Drinking a few cups of coffee a day may help people avoid clogged arteries - a known risk factor for heart disease - Korean researchers believe.

They studied more than 25,000 male and female employees who underwent routine health checks at their workplace.

Employees who drank a moderate amount of coffee - three to five cups a day - were less likely to have early signs of heart disease on their medical scans.

The findings reopen the debate about whether coffee is good for the heart.

### Heart effects

There is a lot of confusion when it comes to the effect of coffee on heart health.

Some studies have linked consumption to heart risk factors, such as raised cholesterol or blood pressure, while others suggest the beverage may offer some heart protection.

But there is no conclusive evidence either way, and the latest research from South Korea, which is published in the journal *Heart*, only adds to the discussion.

Source: abc news. Edwards, M  
4 March 2015

## Sand Safe Locker!

Sandsafe.com.au is an innovative business, runs by one of our members, Kerri and her family.

After her heart/double lung transplant last year Kerri's family wanted to give back to St Vincent's Heart/Lung Clinic.

Her dad invented the Sand Safe locker, the family have arranged to have 1000 lockers made and are now selling them to the public.

And, all proceeds made by SandSafe will be donated to the

Heart Lung Transplant Unit at St Vincent's Hospital.

Please tell you friends and family and head to their website [sandsafe.com.au](http://sandsafe.com.au) if you would like to purchase one.



## Australia-first double lung transplant using damaged lungs saves Sydney man's life

A REVOLUTIONARY double lung transplant which saved the life of Sydney man Michael Fattal has paved the way for more life-saving organ donations across Australia and the world.

The 27-year-old had battled cystic fibrosis since birth and became chronically ill with the disease over the past two years, until he was unable to walk a short distance without running out of breath.

"Prior to the transplant I couldn't walk more than 20m, I was always coughing, I was very sick, in and out of hospital all the time," Mr Fattal, said.

"I don't think I would've made it much longer."

Mr Fattal gave his doctors at St Vincent's Hospital's Heart and Lung Clinic, permission to do something unprecedented: transplanting a set of lungs which had been damaged before their deceased donor even arrived at hospital.

The team put the lungs through their new Organ Care System,

allowing the lungs to continue ventilating as they would inside a healthy human body for six hours after harvesting, instead of being put on ice.

The machine is supported by a blood-based solution that nourishes and oxygenates the lungs.



This gives doctors time to help the lungs recover from damage, which could have been sustained during a traumatic injury or even during CPR in the attempt to save the donor's life.

Doctors are also able to administer medication to the organs, including antibiotics, while they are inside the machine.

Mr Fattal's revolutionary transplant will now pave the way for up to 15 per cent more successful lung transplants at St Vincent's Hospital, which could close the gap on the 10 to 12 per cent of patients who die waiting for new lungs each year.

Mr Fattal said he hoped the new technology would also save the lives of his two younger brothers Joshua and Samuel, who also suffer from cystic fibrosis.

Source: The Daily Telegraph. Harris, L  
1 March 2015



## Donation Slip

Please help support AHLTA by making a donation!

### Donate now

Your donation will make a difference to AHLTA' current and future services for heart and lung patients, their families and carers. In return for your generous contribution, AHLTA will guarantee that your donation is applied to provide service to members in need.

All donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.  
CFN: 14158 ABN: 30 752 596 540.

YES, I would like to make a donation to AHLTA.

Your support will provide:

- \$25  
 \$50  
 \$75  
 \$100

I would prefer to give a regular gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ To be automatically charged to my credit card every:

month  quarter  six months  year.

### Donation Payment Details:

- I enclose a cheque / money order payable to AHLTA Inc.  
 Please debit my credit card.  VISA  Mastercard

Card No.

Expiry Date   •   Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us to save on future expenses by providing your email address.



Website [ahlta.com.au](http://ahlta.com.au)  
Email [info@ahlta.com.au](mailto:info@ahlta.com.au)  
Phone 02- 9797 5313  
Postal Address: PO Box 309  
Kings Cross NSW 1340