

# Prostate Cancer Support Group - Northern Beaches

Affiliated with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

Proudly sponsored by Hammond Care, Health and Hospitals Limited  
*A program of support serving men of all ages, their families, carers and friends  
before, during and after diagnosis*

**Newsletter No. 154 - March 2016**

**Our next meeting will be held on**

**Tuesday, 5 April**

**Our guest speaker will be Assoc Professor Andrew Kneebone**

**Radiation Oncologist at RNSH**

Everyone is welcome, bring your partners along

---

## What's in this issue

- March Meeting report - page 1
- Big Aussie BBQ 2016 - page 2
- The Long Ride - page 2
- DNA Repair Drug - page 2
- Future Meetings - page 3
- Norma's Quiz - page 3
- Contact Information - page 4

---

## Monthly meetings

All people are welcome to attend our regular monthly meetings. No notice is required - simply come along and introduce yourself, or contact us via the website.

### When:

Meetings of our support group are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month except in January.

### Usual Location:

The Cottage, Mona Vale Hospital, Coronation Street, Mona Vale.

Time: 6:30pm till 8:30pm

---

## March

Our speaker for April is A/Professor Andrew Kneebone has nearly 20 years experience as a prostate cancer specialist. For more than 10 years he has been an integral member of the national Radiation Oncology Genitourinary executive and has been an author on multiple guidelines for definitive and post prostatectomy radiotherapy. We look forward to his visit.

---

## March Meeting Report

Dr Raji Koonan, Urological Surgeon at St Vincent's Hospital, was our guest speaker in March and talked about the number of recent advances in minimally invasive prostate surgery. New technologies and new alternative treatments for prostatic diseases and conditions have resulted in fewer side effects, reduced morbidity and improved patient outcomes.

He told us about Robot Assisted Radical Prostatectomy (RARP). Since its inception in 2000, RARP has seen a number of technical advancements.

The Da Vinci, one of the latest systems, offers stereoscopic 10x magnification and dexterity exceeding that of the human hand. These qualities facilitate precise dissection and nerve sparing techniques and have advanced to the point where the approach can be tailored to the patient's specific disease process, achieving optimal outcomes.

The current operative time is one hour and forty minutes. The median length of stay is 2 days with patients active and mobile on discharge.

Dr Koonan spoke about the multi disciplinary teams who look at each patient's prognosis and treatment options. Each patient is assessed and treatment depends on age, health, stage of disease, patient's personal preference and life

expectancy. If a patient has other health problems these need to be taken into consideration. Dr Koonan's talk was quite inclusive and we thank him for taking the time to talk to us.

---

### **Big Aussie BBQ 2016**

We have had meetings to get this event underway and already have had much support from the community.

Thank you to all those who have offered to help, but we are still looking for extra input.

Please phone me on 0409 909 356 or talk to me at the next meeting if you are interested in joining in this exciting event.

*Mary Jones*

---

### **The Long Ride 2016, 7th to 16th April.**

The Long Ride founder, Chris Dunne, says that The Long Ride is designed to encourage you to do something totally different in your life. It is about life on the road, meeting new people, and exploring yourself as you do something you love to do - ride your motorcycle.

This year's event, raising awareness of prostate cancer, will travel through rural Australia from all States and Territories and across the Nullarbor. The riders will travel past iconic towns and places most of us read about in school. To be able to visit such places as Broken Hill, Port Augusta, Ceduna, Nundroo, Nullarbor, Eucla and Border Village, Caiguna, Cocklebidy and Madura, Balladonia just to name a few before stopping at Norseman and Albany before riding off to Margaret River is a dream. These towns are just across the Nullarbor so how many other towns will you visit on the Long Ride 2016? Across the Nullarbor there are plenty of roadhouses for refreshment and fuel and all within 200Ks of each other.

#### **Background**

The first Long Ride was introduced in 2007 in support of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Australia. This event raised \$50,000.00 and had approximately 300 riders involved at any one stage.

The Long Ride 2008 travelled to Perth, WA, in support of Prostate Cancer and over the length of the event, approximately 270 riders were involved throughout the ride which managed to raise \$20,000.00 for a core of 33 riders who rode all the way.

In 2010, the Long Ride became the biggest event of its type in the Southern Hemisphere. This time there were 277 registered riders with an estimated

60 additional riders riding all the way to Darwin. With approx. 347 riders in the Long Ride 2010, they raised over \$209,000.00 As the Long Ride regrouped at Coolalinga for the entry into Darwin, there were over 450 motorcycles lined up to ride into history.

The Long Ride 2011 raised over \$180,000 and the number of registered riders was 237 people from across Australia with an additional 67 riders who did not register until nearly the end.

In 2014 they rode to Uluru from all parts of Australia and some riders from Germany, USA and Hong Kong.

Up to 2014 the Long Ride, through the help of all riders, has raised over \$1.2m. Well done to all riders and groups involved.

---

### **DNA-repair drug granted 'breakthrough' status by the FDA**

PCFA 9 February 2016

By Dr Wendy Winnall - PCFA Research Team

There is good news for prostate cancer patients in a recent announcement. The US Food and Drug Administration has granted "breakthrough therapy designation" to a drug being tested for metastatic prostate cancer. The drug, known as Olaparib or Lynparza™, is already being used to treat ovarian cancer patients. The breakthrough designation means that its assessment as a prostate cancer therapy will be fast-tracked through the FDA system. This designation has been granted due to the very promising results from phase II clinical trials of Olaparib in prostate cancer patients.

Men with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) are unfortunately faced with limited treatment options. They are often prescribed drugs such as abiraterone or enzalutamide, but many patients develop resistance to them. New drugs for these patients are desperately needed. Olaparib, a drug used by ovarian cancer patients, targets cancer cells that have defective DNA-repair genes. Since many metastatic prostate cancers also have the same DNA-repair problems, Olaparib may be a good treatment for these men.

The DNA in our cells is constantly being damaged during cell division and by the environment. To fix this damage, there is a continual process of DNA-repair going on inside each cell. A team of proteins scans the DNA, looking for damage and fixing it. It's common for this process to be faulty in cancerous cells. Defects in the DNA-repair process allows DNA damage to increase, which helps the cancer to change and evolve. This isn't

helpful at all, it means the cancer can spread and become resistant to drugs.

The way by which Olaparib kills cells with defective DNA-repair is oddly counterintuitive. Olaparib inhibits the action of a protein called PARP. PARP actually repairs DNA defects. It scans the DNA double helix for mistakes, seen in the picture above. So why would we want to stop that process? It turns out that if you stop PARP working, you get so many breaks in the DNA that the cell cannot repair them and it dies. This only works in cells that already have DNA-repair defects, so the normal, non-cancerous cells are not badly affected. It's an ingenious and elegant way to target cancer cells whilst protecting normal cells.

A 2015 phase II clinical trial, called TOPARP-A, showed that many mCRPC patients who became resistant to the other drugs, responded to Olaparib. The drug clearly worked best in men whose cancers had defective DNA-repair genes. 88% of these men responded to Olaparib. Unfortunately all the men in the trial succumbed to their cancer, but those with defective DNA-repair genes that took Olaparib (after developing resistance to the other drugs) lived for an average of 14 months. Those who took Olaparib but did not have defective DNA-repair only lived for 7.5 months. Olaparib is a targeted therapy; it will only help those whose cancers have defective DNA-repair genes. In the TOPARP-A trial, this was 33% of the men who took part.

Olaparib will need to be tested in phase III clinical trials. These are large-scale trials on thousands of patients at multiple sites. This process is lengthy, but the breakthrough status is designed to make it faster. We are all hoping that Olaparib is as effective for prostate cancer as it is for ovarian cancer.

---

### Norma's Quiz for March

1. Which famous outlaw was killed by Robert Ford in 1882?
2. In which Australian state is the Denmark River?
3. What was the first bird out of the ark?
4. In the nursery rhyme Polly put the kettle on but who took it off again?
5. Which singer's real name was Gerry Dorsey?
6. Was Bacchus, God of wine, a Roman or a Greek?
7. In the poem where did the owl and the pussycat go?
8. How many times was Elizabeth Taylor married, 5, 7, or 8?
9. Which opera singer also won the New South

March 2016 – Newsletter of the Prostate Cancer Support Group – Northern Beaches

Wales golf championship three times?

10. Who was the first Australian born governor-general?

---

### Answers to Norma's Quiz for February

1. In 1812 why were the armies of France told to sew brass buttons on the sleeves of their uniforms? *So they could not wipe their noses on the sleeves*
2. Which famous late night TV host does this saying spell out NERD AMID LATE TV? *David Letterman.*
3. If you suffer from triskaidekaphobia what have you got? *A fear of the number 13.*
4. In 1938 who was named Man of the Year by Time Magazine? *Adolph Hitler*
5. Which Australian tennis legend won The Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open all in the same year, twice in his career? *Rod Laver 1962 and 1969*
6. As a member of Parliament Sir Isaac Newton spoke only once in public did he say "apples are very important to science" OR "science is a critical science and should be taken seriously" Or "Please will someone open a window"? *Please will someone open a window?*




---

### 2016 Information

A sincere thankyou to all who have responded to our request for information update. Forms were included in last month's newsletter and we would appreciate receiving everyone's form, even if no changes are necessary. We like to keep our data up to date.

*Thank you – ed*

## Men United March

Check out [www.MenUnitedMarch.org](http://www.MenUnitedMarch.org) for UK Sports reporter, Jeff Stelling's, 10 marathons in 10 days. He's promoting awareness of and raising funds for prostate cancer, visiting as many Football Clubs along the way as he can and finishing at Wembley,

---

## Future Meetings

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May Zaklina Kovacevic, Researcher  
 Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June Representative from New Northern Beaches Hospital  
 Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July Pam Noble, Pharmacologist

---

## Publicity

One of the main aims of the NB Prostate Cancer Support Group is to reach out to men and their families and provide information and emotional support for those diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. PCFA Ambassador Programme we may be able to reach more men's groups and clubs and spread the word about the importance of regular testing for prostate cancer.

This year, we are hoping that with the support of the PCFA Ambassador Programme we may be able to reach more men's groups and clubs and spread the word about the importance of regular testing for prostate cancer.

If you know of any organisations that may benefit from having one of the Ambassador speakers visit them please let a committee member know.

We are always seeking ways to reach the public and articles about our Group have appeared in Pittwater Online News and the 'What's on Pittwater' website provides information about our meetings.

---

## Disclaimer

From time to time in our newsletters we provide information about developments in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer, research articles, documents, presentations and other interesting materials. However, the Group's Executive and the editor of this newsletter do not have the medical expertise required to make an informed evaluation of the conclusions and recommendations presented in such materials, and we have not verified such conclusions and recommendations through appropriately qualified medical professionals. The information presented in this newsletter must not be interpreted as being endorsed or recommended by the Executive or the editor.

Any recommendations made in such materials may not be applicable in your particular case. Before implementing any recommendations made in the materials that are reported, it is essential that you obtain advice from appropriately qualified medical

professionals. The view of the Group's Executive is that no two prostate cancer cases are alike and that no single treatment option is better than any other in all cases. While the information in this newsletter should be of interest, there is no substitute for getting informed medical advice from your own GP, specialists and other medical professionals.

---

## Contact Us

### *Postal address*

Northern Beaches Prostate Cancer Support Group  
 PO Box 324, Mona Vale, NSW 1660

### **Web site**

Our web site provides details about the activities of the group, meetings, contact persons and lots of other useful information:

[www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org](http://www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org)

### *Personal support*

If you would like support, advice or assistance contact any of the committee:

Treasurer - Alan Taylor Phone: 02 9981 2616

Library - Ron Jones Phone: 02 9997 2709

Programme Organiser -

Denise Taylor Phone: 02 9981 2616

Catering - Jo-Ann Steeves Phone: 02 9918 6575

Eleanor Swansbra Phone: 02 9918 6428

Norma Norman Phone: 02 9918 4929

Committee member, newsletter editor and web site manager:

Mary Jones Phone: 0409 909 356

Email: [info@prostate-cancer-support-nb.org](mailto:info@prostate-cancer-support-nb.org)

### Useful websites:

[www.pcfa.org.au](http://www.pcfa.org.au) Telephone: 02 9438 7000

See PCFA Newsletters online at:

[www.pcfa.org.au/articleLive/pages/PCFA-Newsletters.html](http://www.pcfa.org.au/articleLive/pages/PCFA-Newsletters.html)

Other useful links-

[www.prostatehealth.org.au](http://www.prostatehealth.org.au)

[www.cancercouncil.com.au](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au)

[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)

[www.acf.com.au](http://www.acf.com.au)

[www.prostate-cancer-support-act.net](http://www.prostate-cancer-support-act.net)

[www.prostate-cancer-support-sydneynorth.org](http://www.prostate-cancer-support-sydneynorth.org)

If you are aware of news, products, publications, web sites, services or events that may be of interest to members of the group I'd be happy to be informed of them. If you have received this newsletter indirectly and would like to be emailed a copy directly please send me an email. I'm happy to also add any of your friends to the email list.

Past issues of our newsletters can be viewed on our website: [www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org](http://www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org)