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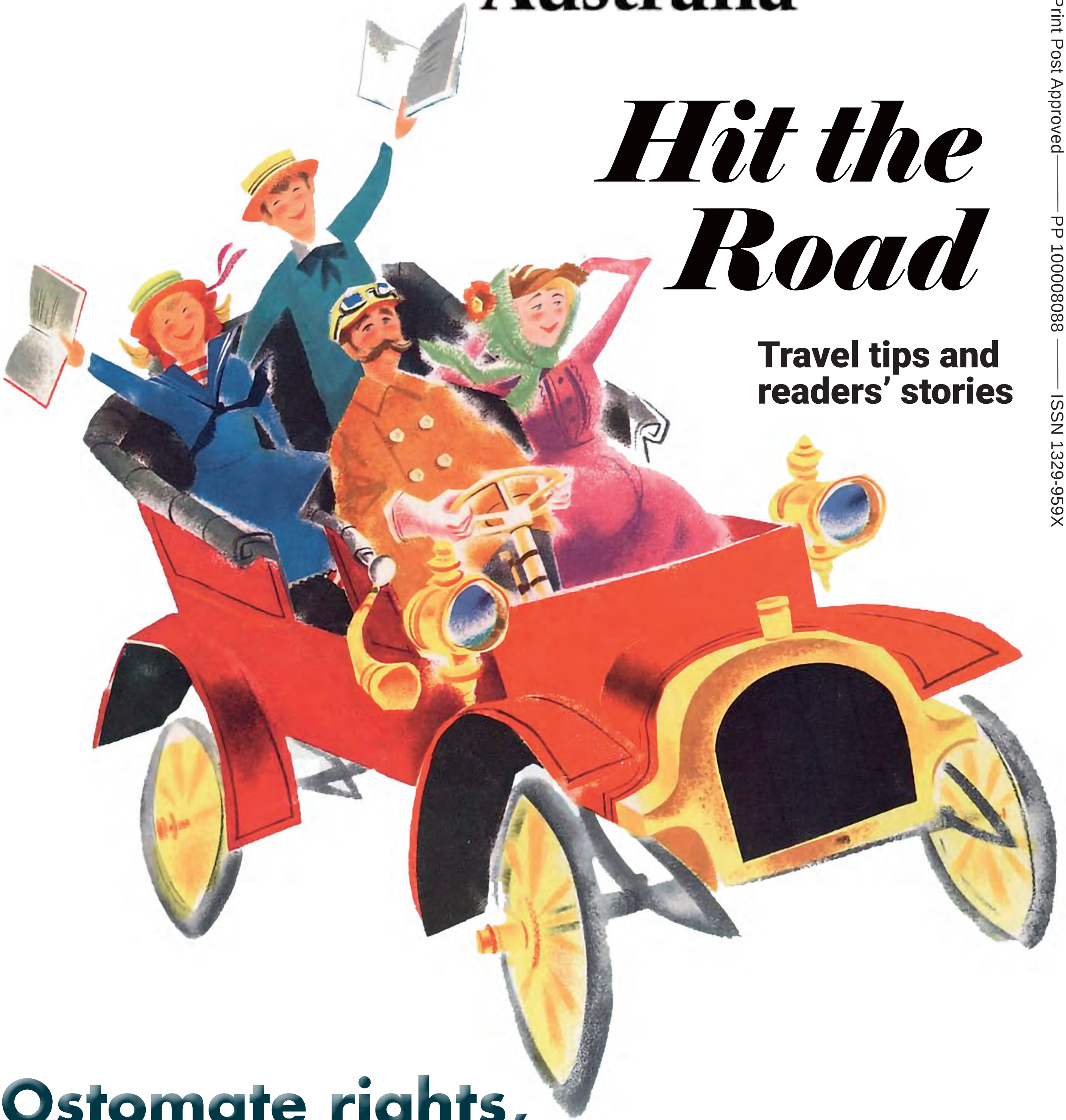

Hit the Road

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Connecting the Ostomy Community
Ostomy
Australia

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COMPLAINTS: Consumers who are concerned about the way in which stoma appliances are advertised are entitled to lodge a complaint with the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Such complaints should be addressed to the TGA Complaints Resolution Panel, PO Box 764, North Sydney, NSW 2059.

Ostomy Australia was established in 1992 through the inaugural sponsorship of ConvaTec Australia and is published three times per year. It is available free to every member of an Australian Ostomy association.

New patron for ACSA

THE Australian Council of Stoma Associations (ACSA) is pleased to announce that the Governor-General has accepted an invitation from the council to be its new patron.

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC (pictured above) was sworn-in on July 1.

The Governor-General of Australia is His Majesty the King's representative and Australia's Head of State, with a range of constitutional and ceremonial duties.

Perhaps the most important role of the Governor-General is their work in the Australian community, which includes serving as patron to national organisations that contribute to society.

As patrons they take an active role by promoting organisations, celebrating staff, supporters and volunteers, attending events and hosting groups at Government House.

In this issue of Ostomy Australia

SA stars of the screen

SKIN cancer screening clinics are vital in the early detection and prevention of skin cancer.

The Ileostomy Association of South Australia, in conjunction with the Lions Medical Research Foundation, recently conducted free screenings for about 50 members and partners.

The Lions Skin Cancer Screening has run a very effective screening campaign for several years, providing a much-needed and crucial service to members of the regional and rural communities of SA and the Northern Territory by detecting and referring at-risk skin cancer patients to their GPs for further investigation.

Two accredited volunteer screeners performed the screening while other volunteers ensured the efficient recording of members attending.

The association received very positive feedback from those who attended, expressing their gratitude for making this service available.

The primary objectives of the screening were to identify skin cancer early when it is most treatable, raise awareness about the risks of skin cancer and the importance of regular skin checks, educate members on how to perform self-examinations and recognise suspicious skin changes, and provide resources and support to individuals diagnosed with skin cancer.

The skin cancer screening clinic is just one of several initiatives the Ileostomy Association of SA freely offers to its members.

Association treasurer Don Pritchard said they were pleased to make a significant donation to the Lions Medical Research Foundation, thanks to the generous member donations.

Check up: Skin cancer screeners, Carol and Dean (standing) and Lions members Yvonne and Gillian at the Ileostomy Association of South Australia.

Day of education for all at Wagga Wagga

THE United Ostomy Society of NSW will hold a stomal therapy education day in Wagga Wagga on Friday, August 15.

Anyone with a colostomy, ileostomy, urostomy or other external pouch procedure will benefit from attending, as well as family, friends and health professionals.

Meet and chat with supplier company representatives, and listen to talks by health professionals on hernias, types of stomas, and choosing accessories.

A light lunch will be provided, and attendees must regoster by August 8 by emailing manager@ostomynsw.org.au

The event will be held at the Wagga RSL on the corner of Kincaid and Dobbs streets, from 10am to 3.30pm.

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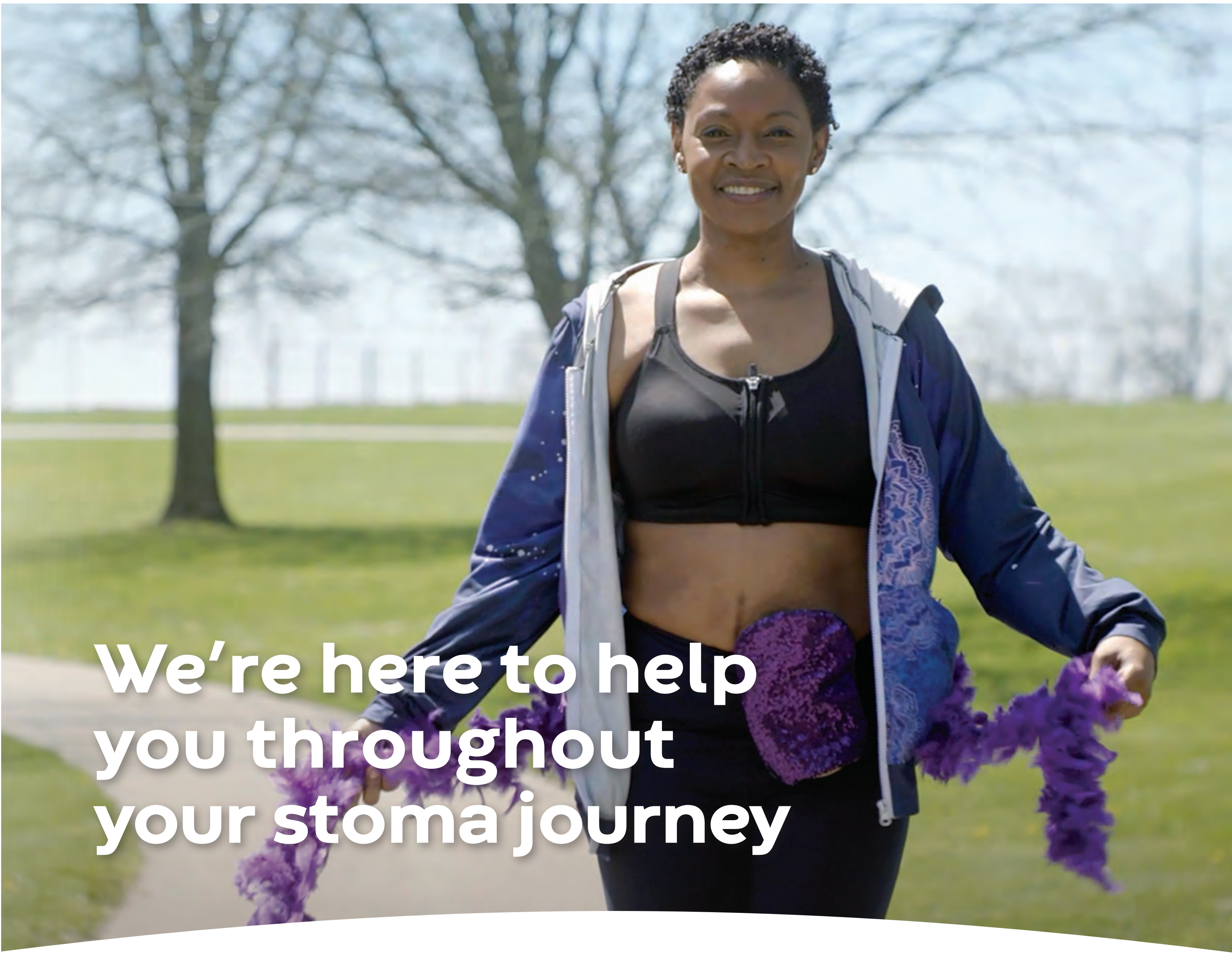

We're here to help you throughout your stoma journey

In the early days after stoma surgery, there's a lot to come to terms with. Everyone is different and recovers differently. **The me+® recovery program** is an evidence-based program designed by rehabilitation experts to provide you with tips on movement and activities to get you started.

Find support on every step of your ostomy journey with the me+® program.
To find out more or to request samples, please contact our customer care team:
Call **1800 335 276** or email **connection.au@convatec.com**

Disclaimer: Speak with your doctor, physiotherapist, or nurse before doing these exercises, and ask them to show you how to do the movements correctly. If you've had a very complex surgery, have an unstable hernia, or other complication, please check with your doctor or ask for a referral to a clinical physiotherapist.

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

*Not intended to provide medical advice. Individuals have received modest compensation for their participation and/or expression of their views.

Ask Wendy

By **Wendy Pearson**
Clinical nurse consultant

Smart travel with a stoma

I THOUGHT I would write about an area that I get asked questions about quite often in my clinical role – travelling with a stoma.

There is more to cover than I put down on paper but here are some main pointers to help you go on your holiday.

Travelling with a faecal or urinary stoma can be a rewarding experience with the right preparation.

Whether you're heading off for a weekend getaway or an overseas adventure, a few thoughtful strategies can help you feel confident and comfortable on the move.

Start by ensuring that you have declared to your travel insurance company that you have a stoma.

Your stoma is regarded as a pre-existing condition – if you don't declare your stoma, and particularly if you are flying overseas or going on a cruise, your travel insurance may not cover you if you have any issues with your gut, stoma output or the stoma itself.

The Stoma Appliance Scheme allows you to access extra supplies in advance from your association when travelling.

Depending on how many extra months' supplies you are looking to obtain, your association may ask for proof of travel to approve this.

They will also need you to give them as much notice as possible as they may have to do a special order for you.

Pack more supplies than you think you'll need as you may not be able to access supplies easily.

I always advise to carry all your pouches and accessories in your hand luggage (if you are flying) in case your baggage gets lost.

You may want to take them out of their boxes so that they take up less space.

If you're travelling with someone, consider sharing the load across both carry-on bags.

It's also wise to carry a list of your products (brand, size, type) and the contact details of your brand's contact details overseas in case you need replacements abroad.

Be mindful that not all products are available in all countries.

You can ask your stoma nurse for a travel certificate but be aware that this won't exempt you from going through the security screening process.

This document explains your condition and equipment, helping to smooth interactions at airport security.

You can also wear a Sunflower lanyard – the Sunflower is a tool to share that you have a hidden disability (more information is available at https://hdsunflower.com/au/).

Keep a little toiletry pouch close to you while you are in transit with everything you need in case you need to attend to your stoma.

An aisle seat is also a good idea so you can have ready access to the toilet if you need it.

If you are flying, make sure that you have a few pouches pre-cut and ready to use, as scissors aren't permitted in hand luggage.

If you have a urostomy, you can purchase a leg bag from your ostomy sssociation when you are in transit.

These are usually 500ml capacity so add that bit extrain addition to your pouch and they are discreet under trousers or a skirt.

Unfortunately, these aren't on the scheme but are not expensive to buy.

Depending on which pouching system you use, you may need your adaptor to connect to the leg bag.

Heat and humidity can affect how your pouch will stick.

Roll on anti-perspirant on to your tummy under your baseplate as this can help with stopping your appliance from lifting due to sweating.

Store supplies in a cool, dry place, and apply sunscreen only after securing your pouch.

Food and water safety is also important. – stick to bottled water if you are unsure of the water quality.

Be mindful that if you can't drink the tap water, make sure you use bottled water to clean your stoma and don't take your appliance off in the shower or bath.

If you have a colostomy, take some drainable pouches in case of loose output.

If you experience a high output from your ileostomy or colostomy make sure to focus on low-fibre and thickening foods and drink a 'hypertonic' (so more concentrated) oral rehydration solution instead of water or isotonic drinks.

Top tip: When travelling by plane, carry your ostomy supplies in your hand luggage in case your baggage goes missing.

Easy recipe for oral rehydration solution

To one litre of water, add:
Six teaspoons of glucose powder (or sugar if you can't find it)
One teaspoon of salt
Half a teaspoon of bicarb soda

It tastes better cold, and you can add a dash of cordial. Remember the signs and symptoms of dehydration and if these don't resolve fairly quickly with the above strategies, seek medical advice.

Above all, remember that your stoma doesn't define your journey—it simply travels with you.

With a little planning and a dash of flexibility, you can explore the world with confidence, comfort, and peace of mind.

Do you have a stoma/ostomy question that has been on your mind? Ask Wendy! Send an email to journal@australianstoma.com.au


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Your say

Letters to the editor

We welcome letters to the editor from all readers, on all subjects. Tell us what you think! Letters must be accompanied with your name and address – this is not for publication but is required. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial staff or publishers of *Ostomy Australia.* Email correspondence to journal@australianstoma.com.au

Powerful example

I JUST had to write and thank you for volume 34 of *Ostomy Australia*.

The gorgeous physique and disarming smile of the handsome young man on the front cover, piqued my interest immediately.

What a fabulous story of determination, courage and true grit. To say I was impressed just doesn't cut it; he's a hero.

He is a powerful example for the many brave young people I have read about in this publication over the past year.

I can't wait for completion of his next adventure; his parents must be inordinately proud of him.

I must congratulate you on this extremely interesting journal; I have enjoyed each issue so far received.

Betty, NSW

Appreciation

I WANTED to tell you how much we enjoyed the April issue of *Ostomy Australia*.

As an ostomate (colostomy) I look forward to reading each issue when it arrives with my supplies from the ostomy society.

I always enjoy reading about stoma news from other countries in your *News of the World* section – it just goes to show you how well off we are here in Australia with our free access to supplies and our excellent level of heathcare.

My husband (who is not an ostomate) reads the magazine as soon as I am finishesd with it – he says he finds it helpful to know all about the needs of ostomates, and he very much enjoys reading all the inspiring stories (and I do too).

Keep up the good work, it is much appreciated.

Narelle, WA

The key to life

I WAS diagnosed with a 45mm tumour in my lower bowel in 2006 at the age of 51.

In June that year, a permanent colostomy was performed.

With a positive outlook on life, I was able to return to prosthetics, my profession.

It was difficult at first, mainly due to the reason that I was still having chemo for about 36 weeks.

But, being a prosthetist, I saw patients on a daily basis far worse off than myself.

It didn't seem that long after my operation that I returned to my greatest love in life, playing music again, and gigging with my band.

I also resumed playing golf, something I never thought I'd be able to do.

I moved to Central Victoria eight years ago, and retired from work about four years ago.

I still enjoy social golf and playing music to this day .

In closing, I believe by being active, that is the key to life.

Doug Jeffrys, email

Try a sample

I WONDER if people know that they can get samples of stoma products from the companies who make them?

Perhaps this was explained to me by my stoma nurse when I was in hospital but honestly, so much information flies around your head in these situations that it is hard to remember - and my colostomy operation was more than a decade ago so I am afraid I am an unreliable witness in this matter.

Having some trouble with my until-then very reliable brand of baseplate, I was pleased when a friend who is much better on the computer than me, showed me some websites with all the different products available in Australia on them.

Not only that, but you can request a sample of these to try at home, either through the website or by ringing them on the telephone.

If you like the product, you can order it in your next lot of supplies from your octomy society.

I would just like to say, I found each company extremely helpful when I rang ro enquire about what baseplates might suit me.

They asked all about my situation and I got some great advice.

It just goes to show, it doesn't matter how old you are, you can still try new things!

Leonard R., NSW

Remembering Lilian

I WAS sad to read in the April magazine that Lilian Leonard had passed away.

My story started in 1979 when I was diagnosed with cancer in the rectum.

My long-standing 'friend' who has joined me in my busy life since then is named Little Toot.

Lilian was mostly on night duty during my three-week stay at Cabrini Hospital.

She was so encouraging and supportive when I nearly drowned her with tears and kept saying to her: "I can't face the world with this thing, how am I going to cope?"

My husband and our three boys came to see me as often as they could.

The youngest (aged nine at the time) brought me autumn leaves from the park near the hospital and Sister Dot Hindell stuck them on the mirror in my room.

Forty-seven years on, I now live in a retirement village which features autumn leaves at this time of the year.

When the ostomy association was formed I was secretary for eight years, then vice-president for three years and a volunteer in the distribution centre for 38 years.

My husband and I have been on five cruises and moved house seven times.

One of our grandsons married earlier this year and we are currently attending 90th birthday celebrations of our friends.

Thank you Lilian for encouraging me not to give up.

Name supplied, VIC

Emergency planning

WITH the deterioration of world affairs, particularly now present in our region, I am very concerned about the ability of our suppliers and associations to provide a consistent and safe delivery of stoma products necessary to our wellbeing.

Does our national association have, in place, supply lines that will ensure that our needs for product can be met in the event of a prolonged military confrontation and disruption to shipping lanes and air services?

I understand from my conversation with a major supplier that they only have six months' supplies, in store, at this time.

Inez Woods, VIC

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Seminar activates health

SINCE being featured on the cover of the April edition of *Ostomy Australia*, athlete Owen Lancelot has stepped up his fitness journey and wants to help fellow ostomates stay active and healthy.

After publication of the article about how Owen went from a hospital bed to running ultra-marathons, he said he had heard from many people who were interested in improving their health and fitness.

"[The article] was a special moment for me to see my journey come to life and connect with people in such a positive way," he said.

"To build on the interest, I am hosting a free online webinar designed to help fellow ostomates feel more confident about becoming active again, which can often feel daunting."

The webinar, titled Living Active With a Stoma, will be active on the internet on September 24 at 7.30pm (eastern time zone).

"During the webinar, I will share an honest introduction to my journey from my time in the hospital with an ileostomy to completing races like the Ultra-Trail Australia 100km race and running trail marathons in the French Alps," Owen said.

"I'll discuss topics such as training with a stoma, selecting the right gear, hydration, mental resilience, and how to start moving again, regardless of where you currently are in your fitness journey.

"I know that fitness can be a significant challenge for many people living with a stoma, and I believe this webinar could be a small yet impactful way to help."

The webinar is suitable for anyone living with a stoma, recently diagnosed, or supporting someone with IBD, Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, or other bowel conditions.

In the longer term, Owen plan to run free in-person training sessions for ostomates in Melbourne.

For more information and to register for the September webinar, scan the Q-code on this page with your mobile phone's camera or the Google lens app.

Free Registration

Fitness goals: Owen Lancelot will lead a web seminar on ostomate fitness. Registration is via the Q-code (inset).

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[1] T.G. Eakin Laboratory Testing Summary report, skinsmart hydrocolloid 2020 (Data on file)

Ostomate rights are human rights

AFTER one too many humiliating experiences with airport security at Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport, ostomate Viv Parry had had enough.

An incident in April where a security officer made the regular air traveller lift her shirt in public to expose her stoma pouch prompted Viv to take a stand.

Despite having corresponded over the past years with the Department of Home Affairs, which is responsible for the rules and regulations for airport security, and having her complaints taken very seriously, Viv felt she was "back to square one."

Determined that those with a hidden medical disability be treated with far greater respect, she wrote a complaint submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission asking for representation to address the situation at Tullamarine airport for those with a hidden medical disability, outlining "the inconsistency of treatment we endure at the airport security screening process, the humiliation we feel and the need for informed training, respect and understanding."

Many *Ostomy Australia* readers had written responses to Viv's letters to the magazine detailing their own bad experiences at airports, and armed with these she was able to speak to the commission on behalf of all Australian ostomates.

The result of tthe commission's investigation is outlined here in an open letter written by Viv for *Ostomy Australia*.

" **Dear fellow ostomates,**

"I wanted to let you know about the changes that have been brought about to the airport security screening process at Tullamarine airport, after the lengthy meeting the Australian Human Rights Commission facilitated between myself and those responsible for maintaining the security arrangements at Melbourne airport.

"You will be pleased to learn I was given ample opportunity to provide insight into not only the challenges ostomates face in their everyday lives, but also details of my own experience passing through the security screening process (your letters of support and personal experience were included in my presentation).

"As a result of the discussion the following procedural enhancements to improve the passenger experience and ensure a more inclusive screening process [will be implemented].

"Based upon the observations and requests the updates will include a private room [for screening], the location of which will be pointed out to passengers; confirmation that a passenger can bring a support person with them into the room; allowing passengers to bring their scanned personal belongings with them; and an explanation of the screening procedure, including whether the passenger's body or appliance will be touched and if they will need to remove clothing.

"To support procedural enhancements Melbourne Airport has rolled out comprehensive training initiatives aimed at strengthening their workforce awareness and approach to handling passengers with unique needs.

"Melbourne Airport has collaborated with all key stakeholders in the development of a suite of videos promoting disability inclusion within the airport environment.

"These videos will serve as an educational resource for both airport personnel and the broader community reinforcing Melbourne Airports commitment to inclusivity.

"For their part Melbourne Airport security screening management has expressed their commitment to continuous improvement as well as their gratitude for the decision to come forward in a positive way to provide the opportunity to strengthen their process for those with a hidden medical disability.

"For our part, I feel we must accept that changes to existing training programs, given the substantial security screening workforce involved, will take time to be fully implemented.

"The important point is that real and positive action has been taken.

"Personally, I am very grateful for the serious, creative and considered way ostomates' concerns for respectful treatment at Melbourne Airports security screening points has been addressed.

"I am grateful to the Australian Human Rights Commission for accepting our complaint; to Melbourne Airport management for their commitment to continuous improvement and to you, my fellow ostomates, for your support in helping to create positive change for not just us but all those with a hidden medical disability."

- Viv Parry, VIC.

Marathon effort has an

by **Jacklyn Osborn**

HAVE you ever experienced a range of strong emotions within moments of each other?

Emotions moving quickly from extreme pain and discomfort to an adrenalin rush – forgetting all the pain, feeling elated and relief and finally exhaustion combined with a dizzy, satisfying joy.

I – yes, me, a double ostomate – experienced this when I completed my first 100-kilometre trail run on the Victorian coast in September last year.

My leg was hurting so much for the last 16km but I was determined to finish and the final kilometres kept ticking over at a reasonable rate.

I turned the corner, and I hear a spectator yell: “Come on, you’ve only got 200 metres to go.”

Something clicked, my mind and body switched gear, and I morphed into Phar Lap – racing toward the finish line – what sore leg, my mind was focussed on one thing, getting to that finish line.

Then after crossing the finish line all I felt was joy, elation, and of course relief.

I had made it, I could finally sit down, and I had completed something I never in my wildest dreams thought was possible for me, even before my cancer diagnosis and subsequent surgery.

It is so strange to think I am talking about myself, it’s hard to believe that I did that, that I could run that far, or that I even contemplated the thought of competing in such an event.

But I did it – who would have ever thought!

Particularly in recent times after I became the recipient of two stomas.

I became a double ostomate in 2016 because of cervical cancer and a subsequent pelvic exenteration.

I wasn’t particularly sporty as a child although I did enjoy competing in team sports and tennis, but running and athletics were not on my radar as I always struggled with weight and that type of activity didn’t really interest me.

I loved walking and often went through bouts of walking regularly “to get fit and lose weight.”

I always thought how good running looked and I always imagined it would be a great feeling to go out for a run.

My fitness journey really commenced when I embarked on a fitness regime; my son was about four years old and I wanted to be an example for my him, to show him that you nurture your body, you exercise it to make it strong and you fill your body with nutritious food (most of the time) and that’s the way you live your life.

Recovering from my surgery was long and arduous.

My son was six at the time and it was difficult for him to understand that I would get better.

On a walk one day he said, “I wish you didn’t have that operation, and I wish you were still the manager of my football team.”

I explained to him that I would get better and that the doctors had to cut something out of my body that was going to make me really sick.

My son replied, “So you may even be better than you were before?”

I had a lightbulb moment and said, “Yes, that’s right, I will be better than before.”

At that moment I made it my goal to become stronger, fitter and healthier than I was before.

Each day I worked toward that goal and I worked hard to ensure that me having two stomas would not negatively impact my life.

Ultra effort: Jacklyn Osborn is even more active in the outdoors after her ostomy operations.

I’ve worked hard every day to find better, more effective ways to cope with the everyday logistics of having two stomas and a hefty fitness regime and a full life.

There are so many things I have done since I got my stomas, things I just hadn’t gotten around to doing before or didn’t make a priority.

I’ve travelled more in the past eight years than I ever have in all my life.

Having the attitude that I didn’t want my life restricted or impacted in any way due to the stomas, when the opportunity to participate in the Surf Coast Century Event with my running group presented itself, I automatically said yes.

After registering for the event my logical mind started thinking about the what-ifs – how am I going to run 100km and not get dehydrated, are there toilets all over the course, what if I am running with a friend and I keep having to go to the toilet – what are they going to think, what if I need to change a bag along the course ...

ultra-satisfying result

I guess what comes with being an ostomate is you must plan for everything – every possible contingency – as it alleviates the stress, and that's what I did.

I told my running friend about my stomas and she was equally understanding and impressed.

I researched where the toilets where on the course, I packed the necessary equipment in my running pack and my packs at the checkpoint and I put my faith in God that all would be okay, and it absolutely was.

I'm not saying it was a breeze by any stretch, there was a certain amount of anxiety a couple of times, however, I got through it. My goal every time I do one of these types of events is just to finish, however there is a competitive side to me that is pleased when I do a slightly better time.

I can look at my times and think, "If I didn't have to go to the toilet so much, I would have placed better," but that's par for the course.

I'm still incredibly proud of myself.

It's not easy being an ostomate and competing in ultra marathons; there is a whole lot of emotional, physical and mental preparation and a good dose of faith, but in the end, it's ultra-satisfying to finish.

> " I've worked hard to find more effective ways to cope with all the logistics of having two stomas.

Through listening to people living with a stoma, Confidence BE *go*™ addresses your unmet needs. For the first time Confidence BE *go*™ gives you the option of a 'naked bag' and a collection of reusable, washable covers in a choice of six colours.

The product is designed to support you with your well-being and quality of life, helping you to feel confident and get back to normality. With the flexibility and freedom to suit any outfit, activity, or mood, you will be able to truly express yourself and live life to the full.

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3

1. **ATTACH THE NAKED BAG** securely to the body
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Closed and drainable bags are available with flat and soft convex wafers and a choice of six different covers.

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email: **ostomy@ainscorp.com.au** or visit: **www.saltshealthcare.com**
Follow us: Ainscorp @ainscorpmedical

Reference: 1. *Confidence BE go™ Focus Group 2024, Australia, Nurses and Patient.* v.0

Heat, spicy food, no t

“But what a great experience.”

by **David Kiernan**

Helping out: A forced retirement due to medical conditions, including an ileostomy, was just the start of a new life for David Kiernan (left) and has led to new and rewarding experiences.

I AM writing my story to hopefully show that there can be a full life to be had with the debilitating diseases of ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s.

Young people, don’t despair!

Who knows what caused my colitis as a 13-year-old?

What I do know is that I was under stress at a new high school, being bullied, and my mother was undergoing major surgery at the time.

A diagnosis of severe ulcerative colitis in 1967 with limited treatments available meant I was prescribed a sulphur salazine drug, at a dose of two tablets six times a day.

The medication had only limited success, however I did manage to get through high school with only a couple of accidents but frequently needed to leave class for urgent bathroom stops.

Dietary contradictions at different times had me on a no-fibre diet, a high-fibre diet, a dairy-free diet – none really helped. What I did find was that certain foods were tolerated and others created a major flare-up.

I loved my sport and was able to captain the school cricket and hockey teams in spite of my condition and after leaving school continued playing cricket, where I reached the rep team for our local association, of which I was also the secretary.

Like everyone who suffers with these illnesses, there have been some really embarrasing moments.

I think my worst was when I was godfather to my nephew and as a vulnerable 15-year-old, I needed an urgent toilet stop during the minister’s sermon.

I had to ask the priest where the toilet was and everyone thought it was a great joke.

I just wanted to die right there and then.

If I wasn’t the godfather I would never have re-entered the church, through sheer embarrassment.

Another was on my first day of work: after a two-hour train trip from home to Sydney, I got caught short and needed an urgent toilet stop at Central Station.

In those days you needed to put a coin in a slot on the toilet door; alas, I didn’t have the correct coin. You can probably guess the rest.

I always suffered severe migraines that about 40 years later were found to be caused by an allergy to the sulphur tablets.

I only discovered this when I discontinued the tablets and started the merry-go-round of all the other treatments.

I did go into a remission period of about five years after I was married but relapsed when I started a new job in a new city that naturally required relocating.

I have had a full and rewarding life in spite of always needing to know where public toilets are and planning routes around them.

I have travelled the world and some experiences of finding toilets have been daunting.

I was always employed, however, at age 53, I was diagnosed with a pituitary adenoma in the brain which fortunately was non-malignant but does cause me some problems.

At that time, I immediately retired from work reasoning that, had the adenoma been malignant, I would have pretty much been forced to retire.

So after retirement, my ulcerative colitis became Crohn’s and my condition became worse.

I was tried on all of the different meds and infusions and of course the high doses of corticosteroids.

Most sufferers go on the medication merry-go-round and generally, after time, the end result is major surgery.

I certainly did not let my condition stop me and some of life’s most rewarding experiences came during this time.

Over a six-year period I travelled to central Thailand about 15 times teaching English in the temple schools around the Sing Buri area, about three hours north-west of Bangkok.

Hot weather, spicy foods, lack of toilets and dehydration didn’t always see things running smoothly.

But what a great experience – memories and friends that remain forever, and I am still in contact with many teachers and students.

My condition worsened and there was discussion regarding a total colectomy which I had rejected for many years, always stating that I would jump off a bridge before considering that option.

However, during a colonoscopy, a ruptured bowel was discovered and suddenly there I was having an emergency surgery and waking up with an ileostomy.

Yes, I had become one of the many in the ostomate family.

I luckily seemed to sail through the operation.

The following day I was dressed and shaving in front of the mirror when the stoma nurse entered my private room.

She said she was looking for the patient who had the colecto-

toilets, dehydration ...

Aid: David volunteers for an organisation which donates food to the community living in the Suwati recycling tip.

my the previous day.

When I told her that was me, she was in disbelief that I was up and about.

Anyway, it was Christmas Eve and the nurses convinced the doctors to let me home on a day pass to spend Christmas Day with family, which I did.

With no hospital instructions, I ate the regular feast of lobster, prawns and Moreton Bay bugs as well as all the trimmings – yummo!

Yes, you guessed it, a major blockage occurred as soon as I returned to the hospital.

The young female registrar was able to unblock me through my new, swollen stoma.

She was a good sport and after she placed her finger in my stoma, I asked whether we were now engaged.

All I can say is how lucky I have been with my ileostomy, as I have had no more blockages.

I have never seen my stoma nurse since the operation six years ago and have had only two minor leaks, when I was wearing a support garment.

I really hate the fact that I can no longer tuck my shirt into my trousers when dressing up but I suppose that is a small price to pay.

I still travel the world and yes, going through airport security can be a nightmare but is getting better now.

I travel to Bali regularly to help the local people.

I support a couple of cancer charities in Sanur which are a type of McDonald’s House run by a volunteer organisation called Helping Handa Across the Sands, where nobody takes a wage.

There are some adults but it is mainly children in the houses and quite a lot have colostomy bags.

The government is not as forthcoming as it is in Australia so obtaining the necessary supplies is a major challenge for the organisation; you can only imagine how the patients are coping with makeshift ways of collecting their waste.

I also visit jungle villages in Karangasam and Kintamani, where a $30 food pack of rice, noodles, cooking oil and eggs will last a family one month.

There are often cancer patients sent home to their villages after a total colectomy with only the colostomy bag they are fitted with, very little instruction and a three-hour drive to the nearest hospital. The situation breaks my heart.

In one of the high mountain villages where I distribute food hampers, I met a man of 103 years old. We instantly became friends.

On my next trip, I took him some clothes and scuffs which included a red track top because he feels the cold.

I was subsequently told by his son that his dad thinks it is too good to wear, so uses it as his pillow.

On my last visit, the old man presented me with two bottles of lemon tea which he purchased after my previous visit; he placed a note on them stating they were to be saved for when Pappa Dave returned to the village as I would be thirsty.

Another community I am involved with is set up on the Suwati recycling tip.

This is also run by the volunteer organistion Helping Hands and a weekly food run, distributing 330 meals of nasi goreng and 250 bottles of water, happens every Friday.

You can only begin to imagine the conditions under which they live.

I am also supportive of a rescue house where I sponsor a student through high school – these kids have been removed from their families for a variety of reasons.

There is also a volunteer-run school for the street kids of Kuta who have fallen through the cracks of Balinese education due to the families relocating for work.

The point of this story is to show that there is life after chronic illness; I have also been diagnosed with heaps of other problems including prostate cancer, polymyositis, kidney failure and heaps more.

When people ask how I am, I say I’m just fine.

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Creative talent shines bright on stage

by **Mathew Boyd-Skinner**

MY name is Mat and I have suffered with tummy problems since the age of eight.

In 2014 my life changed for the worse; I felt a lump on my left bottom check which turned out to be a fistula.

Living with fistulas was the hardest thing I have ever had to deal with in my whole life as I didn't really have a life at all.

My work place didn't understand what was wrong with me so the care factor was very little.

Working while being sick isn't easy; actually, to be honest living while being sick isn't easy.

My mental health was in such a bad spot for so many years, I remember calling my parents one day and telling them that I just wanted to die.

I hardly left the house because I was so ashamed of who I was because of what was wrong with me.

It look a long time to actually find out what was wrong me.

I was informed that I had Crohn's disease and when I heard these two words my heart broke into two.

I knew from that day my life would never be the same again.

For the next six years my second home was hospitals.

I have had 40 operations in total; most of the operations were for fistulas as I needed Seaton bands put into my bottom as new tracks would open all the time.

I agreed with the doctors to try a new treatment plan; having to learn to self-inject was a very big thing for me and it wasn't easy but after a few weeks I was getting pretty good at it.

On this treatment plan I got a lot of infections and this was due to not being able to wait to use a clean toilet at my own house.

The treatment stopped working for me after a while which really sucked because I wanted my life back and I missed people and most of all I missed performing in musicals.

It was time to try something else, so I sat down with a new doctor and I went onto infusions at Royal North Shore hospital in Sydney.

To be honest, treatment day was my favourite day as the nurses were always so kind and so caring towards to me.

Nurses work so hard and to me they are super heroes without a cape.

Whilst on the infusions I got to go on a trip of a lifetime, to New York City.

Wow! I always had dreams of going there when I was a kid and for that dream to come true while I was sick meant a lot to me and I'll never forget going to Broadway and the NFL.

I spent 10 days in New York with a great friend, we went to Central Park for a whole day.

We were there on September 11 which felt pretty special to be there on this day when people remember what happened all those years ago.

Walking through the 9/11 memorial was very moving and I felt something that I have never felt before.

After all this time had passed I still had fistulas and I was walking around with a 20x22 sized pad in my underwear every day and this got to me because I could always smell the pus.

So I made the decision to change surgeons and that was the best thing I did.

I had an appointment with the surgeon and I told him that I wanted a bag. I wanted my life back after all these years of suffering.

I think some people think I'm crazy but guess what? I don't care because I knew deep down if my life didn't change, I wouldn't be here today.

November 11 in 2021 was the day Homer the stoma was born and changed my life for the better.

• **Continued page 21**

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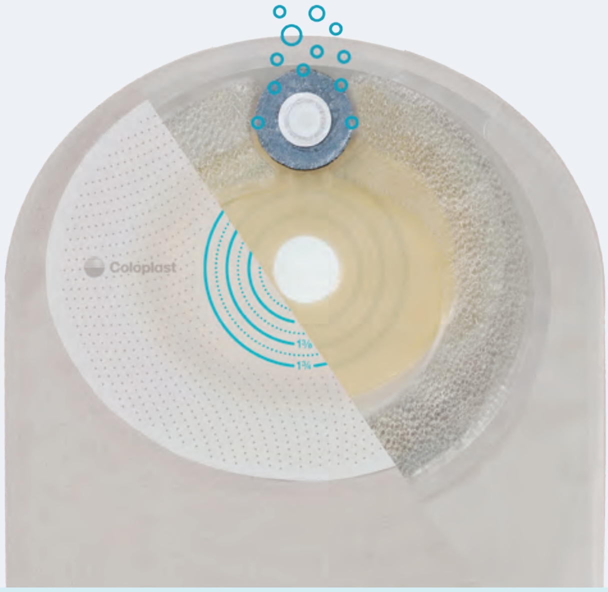

Receive a free Ostomy Travel Bag and Brava® Lubricating Deodorant sachets (masks odour) with any SenSura® Mio samples! Scan the QR code to request samples or call 1800 531 823 or visit www.coloplast.to/unpleasant-odour

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1. Virgin-Elliston T, Nonboe P, Boisen EB, et al. Evaluating the Performance and Perception of a Stoma Bag Full-Circle Filter in People with a Colostomy or an Ileostomy - Two Randomized Crossover Trials. Healthcare. 2023;11:369.
2. Based on laboratory test. Coloplast, Data-on-file (04/2023)

ⓘ Always read the label and follow the directions for use. Prior to use, be sure to read the Instructions for Use for Information regarding Intended Use, Contraindications, Warnings, Precautions, and Instructions.

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Creative talent on stage

from previous page

Recovery was rough but I was out of hospital within a week of having the life-saving surgery. Getting use to having Homer wasn't easy but I knew deep down that I just needed time to come to terms with having a stoma again.

I think when you know what it's going to be like is actually harder to start off with.

Once I was recovered I went back to musicals, which at the end of the day is the biggest love in my life (people who know me will laugh reading that line).

October in 2022 was one of the best months in my whole life as I realised a dream I had had since I was a little boy: to direct a musical.

I directed *Joseph*, for Berowra Musical Society.

I'm so proud of this show and how much hard work went into the show.

The whole production team worked so hard for the show and so did the cast.

Opening came and I have never felt so nervous in my life.

Every show was that was performed was amazing and I had a lot happy tears every show because my childhood dream was coming true right in front of my eyes.

Since having Homer my life has changed for the better and I need to help others who could be going through the same thing.

All I ask is please help me stop the stigma around stomas; it's not the end of the world at all and we can all live a happy life with a stoma.

Tell people your story because they will listen and then I could share your story with someone else.

I think it's very important that we do this together because if we don't people won't understand what we go through and I think this is so important.

Lastly I would like to thanks all the doctors and nurses who have looked after me over the years.

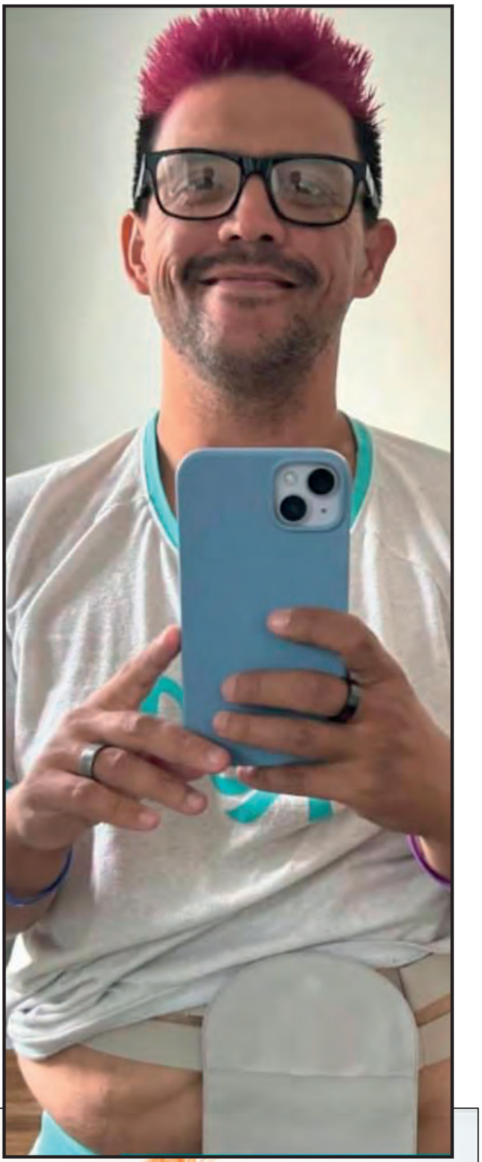
A very special mention to ward 8D at Royal North Shore: Jackie, you and your staff are absolutely amazing and I want to thank you all from the bottom of heart.

The care level on this ward is world class and you should all be so proud.

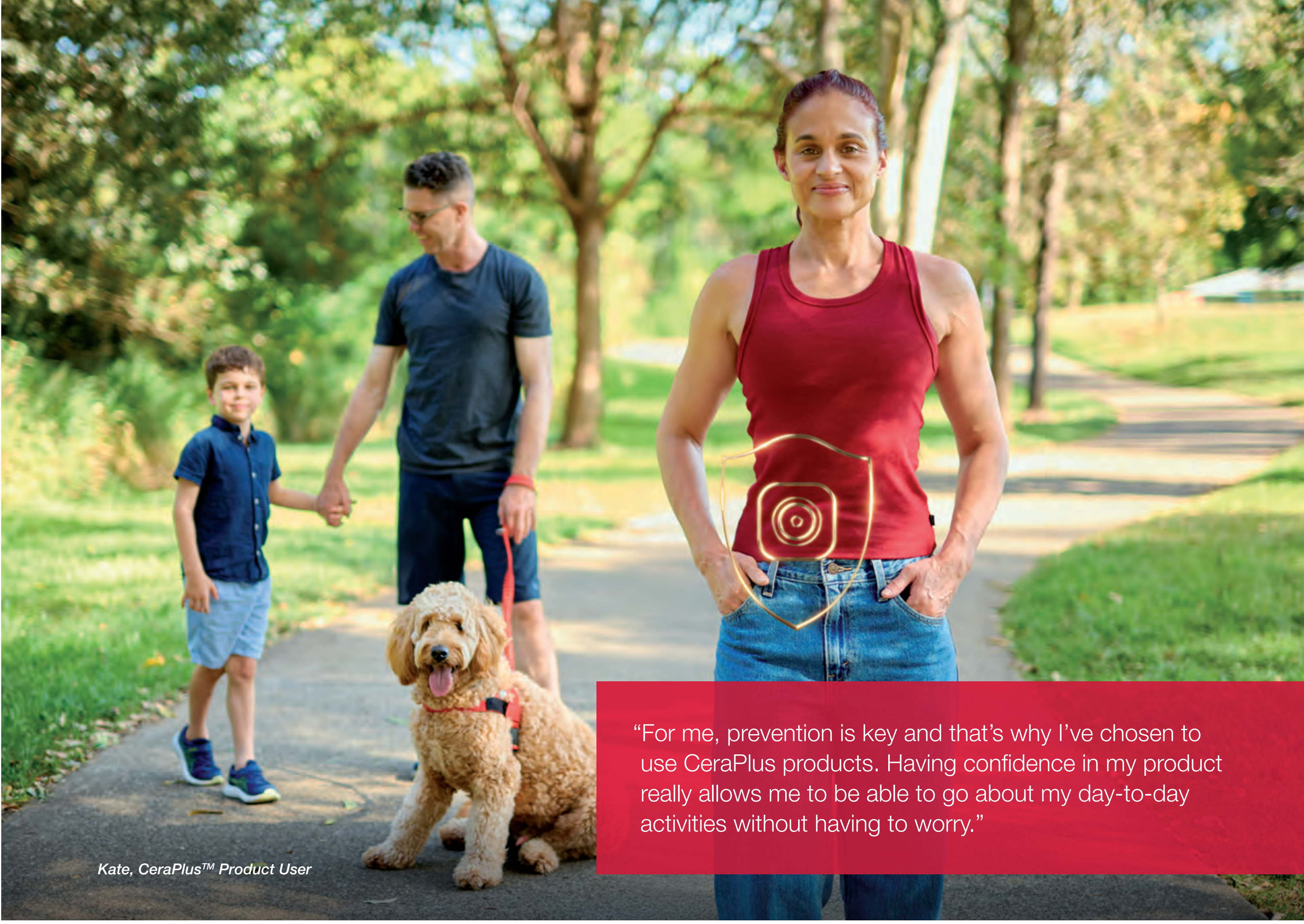
Rachel, my stoma nurse, you are a legend and I feel like you are a friend as well.

Thank you so much for all your support over the years.

Mum, Dad, and all my friends who have always been by my side throughout the very rough years of my life – I love you all very much.



My story: Mathew Boyd-Skinner (above), and with his production colleagues.



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Trials, tribulations and triumphs to hit the trail

by **Kaye Blackburn**

I WAS holidaying in Tasmania, cycling from Launceston to Hobart.

Three weeks into the trip I had some severe vaginal bleeding - as I had previously had all my 'girl bits' removed, my thoughts immediately went to: "Here we go with number three."

I'd already had breast cancer and a melanoma.

With my nursing background, my thoughts turned to bladder cancer.

Unfortunately, I was correct; within three months I had my bladder removed and an ileal conduit performed, resulting in a urostomy.

It's been three years now and I am, in the main, managing well living with a stoma.

There are a whole lot of threes going on here – let's move on to the three 'T's of trials, tribulations and triumphs.

Fun on wheels: After her urostomy operation, Kaye Blackburn opted for a motorhome as the most ostomate-friendly mode of travelling.

Trials

Three months after surgery I was ready to try some travel.

It was a real effort to leave the comfort of my own home and have to manage my urostomy in an unfamiliar space.

I first stayed with family and the pressure of packing enough 'gear' and clothes was challenging; instead of turning up with just an overnight bag, I had a suitcase.

I took ostomy gear, many changes of clothes and clean bed sheets, just in case.

As you all well know, having extra sheets is only part of the story, you need mattress protectors too.

Each trip to a new household resulted in a 'gifted' mattress protector.

These trips challenged my confidence about managing away from home. Mishaps did occur.

I now know there's a learning curve and that forgiving yourself, persistence, self belief and learning does make things better.

Tribulations

I did eventually venture further afield and went to visit friends in New Zealand.

And you guessed it - I had a leak, just as the plane was descending.

That meant I could not access the bathroom or even get out of my seat.

I attempted to explain to the cabin crew what was happening with the wetness as well as the urine smell that would be left on the seat.

However, I just had to sit there producing urine into my clothes and onto the plane seat.

And there is nothing wrong with my kidneys, so I do produce a quantity of urine. Those of you with urostomies, know how pungent urine smells. This experience was not only stressful but embarrassing. Thinking it through later I realised that this was almost certainly not the only discomforting experience that cabin crew might have but it's one they could be better trained to manage.

Following that episode, I decided my best mode of holiday travel was a motorhome.

That way I had my home available to me at all times, and if I needed a bag change it would be more comfortable.

My husband was happy to give it a go.

We bought an ex-rental, fully self-contained motorhome - a Mercedes Benz, high roof, long wheelbase Sprinter.

We both loved the travel and opportunities the motorhome provided. However it's still not as easy as the previous sentence makes it sound.

I was driving along a busy highway when I got the familiar warm, wet feeling of a bag leak.

I found the first emergency pull-over stop and did my bag change there on the side of the highway.

It was great that I had everything ready to hand, with running water for cleaning up and a shower recess to throw my wet clothes into until we were in a better place to deal with them. Overall this turned out to be a useful experience and gave me greater confidence about travelling with home around me.

As my bag needs emptying every hour, I have learned to connect my night bag while we are driving.

It drains well as the seats are quite high off the floor in our Sprinter.

The only thing I have to remember is not to jump out of the vehicle without disconnecting.

If I don't connect my night bag we stop every hour so I can decant.

As it turns out this is a good thing as we swap drivers which ensures we are both fresh when driving.

continued on page 25

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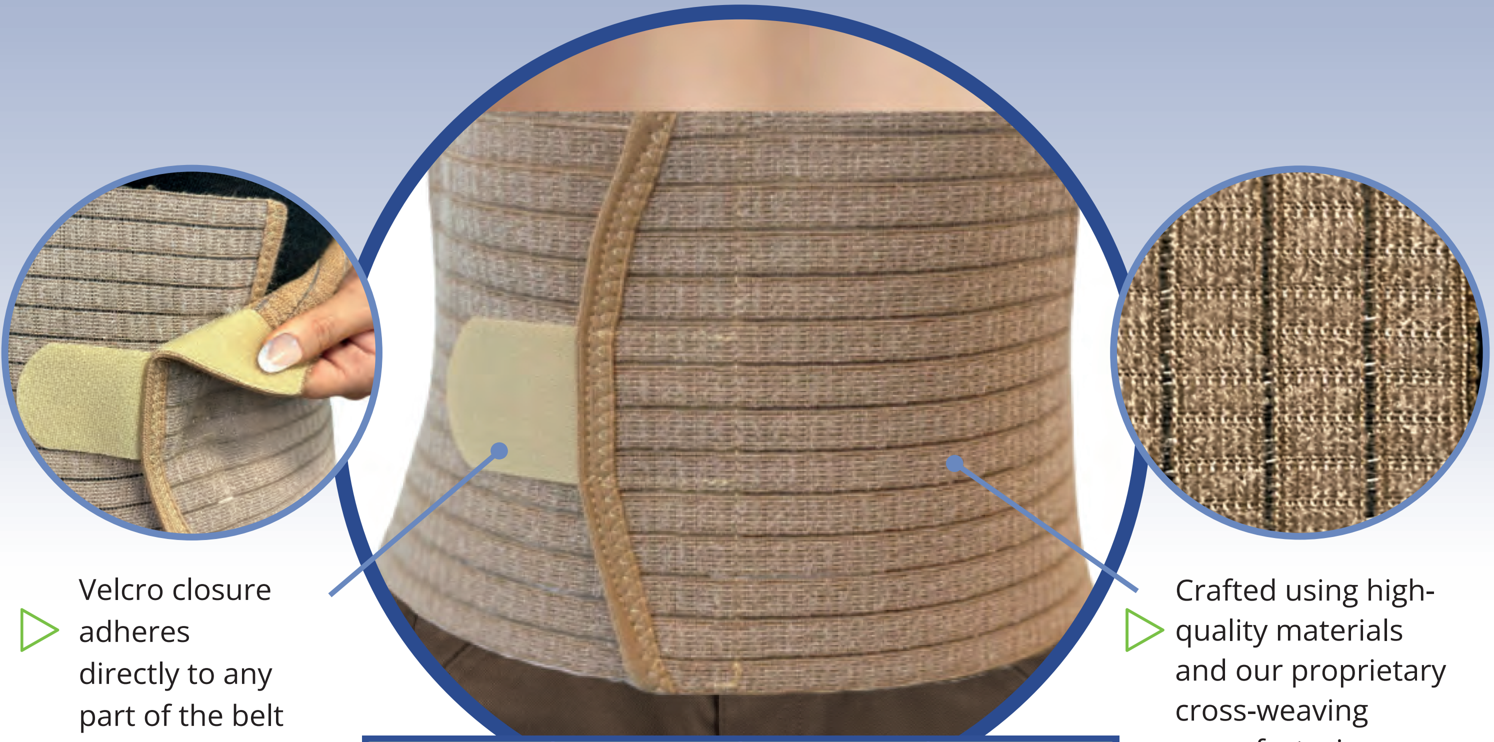

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Triumphs of the travel trail

From page 23

Triumphs

We love our motorhome travels so much that we upgraded to a new Sprinter 4x4 self-contained motorhome and have ventured onto longer trips away.

Of course, that comes with the challenges of both procuring and storing enough ostomy supplies for long trips.

A lot of planning goes into that.

Our first longer trip was to Western Australia's southwest.

And our next was even longer, back to Tasmania, a three-month trip.

We are about to head off again, this time for an even longer trip, through Queensland, into the Northern Territory, onto the Kimberleys and Dampier Peninsula in WA and then return.

The plan is that this will take us four months.

Why return you ask? Because four months is all the ostomy resources I have accumulated.

You might also ask, why have I written this article?

The answer is, I want to share with other ostomates what is possible when you have a urostomy, and to encourage them to get out and have fun.

I also want those who know nothing about people who have urostomies that we too can manage the challenges, so much so I have started a YouTube channel to record our sagas.

I've titled the channel Sprinter 4x4 Sagas; I'd love you to have a look and provide me with your thoughts.

Adventure time: Follow Kaye's travels in her motorhome on YouTube at www.youtube.com@StomaTravelsinaSprinter

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News of the World

Carnival of everything ostomy

HONG KONG: The Hong Kong Stoma Association has planned a celebratory carnival to mark World Ostomy Day on October 4.

The one-time mass event aims to draw public attention and publicity for HKSA and raise the awareness of ostomies and colorectal cancer prevention to the community.

About 1000 people are expected to attend the opening ceremony with speeches, talks on cancer prevention, and performance by the volunteer choir of the nursing association and local kindergartens.

- Source: www.stoma.org.hk

Cautionary tale for drug abusers

ENGLAND: The use of one illicit substance in Liverpool has become so bad that young children are ending up with colostomy bags, according to a Merseyside drug and alcohol support service.

Kelly Smith from Change Grow Live (CGL) said the service was seeing more users of new synthetic opioids which were often mixed with illicit tablets bought online.

“Ketamine is a massive problem and increasingly common,” she said. “We’ve got young people now using ketamine and it’s got so bad that young children are ending up with ostomy bags, because it does cause serious bladder issues.”

The dangers of the misuse of ketamine were also highlighted in a Cheshire court after a Scots couple travelled 300 miles from their homes to smuggle a $3500 haul of the drug into a music festival.

Judge Patrick Thompson told Chester Crown Court the legal profession had seen record levels of ketamine abuse in the last two years and the consequences of its use were “most people’s worst nightmare.”

Erin Gallacher, 23, and Keir Lyons, 24, both from Dundee, narrowly avoided jail after they were caught with 46 wraps of the Class B narcotic.

The pair told the court the drug was for their own use.

But Judge Thompson retorted: “What planet do people think judges are on? If they had taken 46 wraps over the weekend they would probably both be using colostomy bags now.”

The judge said people did not realise the damage done by ketamine to the bladder and bowels.

“It is most people’s worst nightmare to have a colostomy bag,” he said. “More and more people have them because that is what ketamine does to your insides.

“It puts a strain on the National Health Service for various bladder and bowel operations that they have to do.”

Gallacher and Lyons both admitted possession of ketamine with intent to supply; Gallacher was sentenced her to four months in jail, suspended for 18 months, along with 200 hours of unpaid work and Lyons was sentenced to a year in prison, suspended for 12 months, along with 300 hours of unpaid work.

- Source: www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/www.dailymail.co.uk

Colonoscopy now an equal right

GERMANY: Women and men are now treated equally in preventive medical examinations, following the implementation of colonoscopy screening for all from the age of 50.

Previously, men could have a colonoscopy starting at age 50, and women starting at age 55.

Recent scientific data analyses have shown that the risk of developing colon cancer is the same for men and women.

Previous data analyses had apparently indicated a higher risk for men.

In light of the current data, this assumption has proven outdated.

As an alternative to a colonoscopy, men and women over the age of 50 can have a stool test for hidden blood every two years.

If this results in suspicion, they are entitled to a prompt colonoscopy.

However, colonoscopy remains the most reliable method for early detection of colon cancer.

- Source: www.diezeit.de

Call for more pharmacy products

SWEDEN: The national ostomy society, ILCO, has met with representatives of the Minister for Health to raise awareness of the lack of ostomy products in the Scandinavian country.

During the meeting, three major issues were raised: the difficulty in getting ostomy products from pharmacies, subsidies for ostomate medications, and the need for more co-operation between the pharmaceutical benefits agency TLV and patient organisations.

An ILCO spokesperson said ostomy products should be available at pharmacies in Sweden and asked the government to quickly assign an authority to review how ostomy products and medications are delivered and ensure that pharmacies can always deliver what is needed.

The TLV is the authority that decides which medicines the state will pay for.

ILCO said TLV decisions had led to companies no longer selling medicines in certain forms because it was no longer profitable, a situation which particularly affected members with ileostomies and shortened small intestines, as they had difficulty absorbing medicines in certain forms.

The ostomy society called for more co-operation between TLV and patient organisations regarding decisions about changing medications that affect bowel function.

- Source: www.ilco.nu


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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT & DISTRICTS STOMA ASSOCIATION

W: actstoma.net.au
E: stoma@actstoma.net.au
T: (02) 5124 4888
A: Second floor, City Health Building, 1 Moore Street, Canberra ACT 2601
Open: Phone service Monday-Thursday 10am-1pm

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW STOMA LIMITED

W: NSWstoma.org.au
E: info@NSWstoma.org.au
T: 1300 ostomy or (02) 9565 4315
A: unit 5, 7-29 Bridge Road, Stanmore NSW 2018
Open: Monday to Thursday 8am to 4pm, Friday 8am to 2pm

OSTOMY NSW LTD

W: ostomyNSW.org.au
E: orders@ostomyNSW.org.au
T: (02) 9542 1300
F: (02) 9542 1400
A: Unit 3, 228-232 Taren Point Road, Caringbah, 2229.
Open: Monday-Thursday 9am to 2pm

NORTHERN TERRITORY

CANCER COUNCIL NORTHERN TERRITORY

W: nt.cancer.org.au
E: ostomy@cancernt.org.au
P: (08) 8944 1800
F: (08) 8927 4990
A: unit 2, 25 Vanderlin Drive, Casuarina NT 0811
Open: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 2pm

QUEENSLAND

GOLD COAST OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: goldcoastostomy.com.au
E: assoc@gcostomy.com.au
T: (07) 5594 7633
F: (07) 5571 7481
A: 8 Dunkirk Close, Arundel QLD 4214
Open:Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 2.30 pm

NORTH QUEENSLAND OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: nqostomy.org.au
E: admin@nqostomy.org.au
T: (07) 4775 2303
F: (07) 4725 9418
A: 13 Castlemaine Street, Kirwan, QLD 4817
Open: Monday and Thursday 9am to 4pm, Wednesday 9am to 12.30pm.

QUEENSLAND OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: qldostomy.org.au
E: admin@qldostomy.org.au
T: (07) 3848 7178
F: (07) 3848 0561
A: 22 Beaudesert Road, Moorooka QLD 4105
Open:Mondays 9am to 2pm, Tues and Thurs 9am to 3pm

QUEENSLAND STOMA ASSOCIATION

W: qldstoma.asn.au
E: admin@qldstoma.asn.au
T: (07) 3359 7570
F: (07) 3350 1882
A: unit 1, 10 Valente Close, Chermside QLD 4032
Open: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 2.30pm

TOOWOOMBA & SOUTH WEST OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

E: admin@tswoa.asn.au
M: jason 0438 554 064
T: (07) 4636 9701
A: Education Centre, 256 Stenner Street, Middle Ridge QLD 4350
Open: Tuesday 9am-3.30pm

WIDE BAY OSTOMATES ASSOCIATION

W: wboa.org.au
E: admin@wboa.org.au
T: (07) 4152 4715
F: (07) 4153 5460
A: 88a Crofton Street Bundaberg West QLD
Open: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8.30am to 3pm

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ILEOSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

W: ileosa.org.au
E: orders@ileosa.org.au
T: (08) 8234 2678
F: (08) 8234 2985
A: 73 Roebuck Street, Mile End SA 5031
Open: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am-2pm. Closed Thursdays.

OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

W: ostomysa.org.au
E: orders@colostomysa.org.au
T: (08) 8235 2727
F: (08) 8355 1073
A: 1 Keele Place, Kidman Park SA 5025
Open: Monday to Thursday 10am to 2.30pm

TASMANIA

OSTOMY TASMANIA

W: ostomytas.com.au
E: admin@ostomytas.com.au
T: (03) 6228 0799
F: (03) 6228 0744
A: Amenities Building, St. Johns Park, St. Johns Avenue, New Town TAS 7008
P: PO Box 280 Moonah Tasmania 7009
Open: Monday 9am to 3pm, Tuesday to Friday 9am-1pm

VICTORIA

BENDIGO AND DISTRICT OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: bendigo-ostomy.org.au
E: benost@bigpond.com
T: (03) 5441 7520
F: (03) 5442 9660
A: 43-45 Kinross Street Bendigo VIC 3550
P: PO Box 404 Golden Square VIC 3555

Open: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10am to 1pm. Closed first week of each month.

COLOSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

W: colovic.org.au
E: info@colovic.org.au
P: (03) 9650 1666
A: suite 221 level 2, Block Arcade, 98 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Open: weekdays 9am to 2pm, STN by appointment Monday, Wednesday and Friday

GEELONG OSTOMY

W: geelongostomy.com.au
E: goinc@geelongostomy.com.au
T: (03) 5243 3664
A: 6 Lewalan Street Grovedale, VIC 3216
Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am to 2.30pm

OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF MELBOURNE

W: oam.org.au
E: enquiries@oam.org.au
T: (03) 9888 8523
F: (03) 9888 8094
A: unit 14, 25-37 Huntingdale Road Burwood VIC 3125
Open: phone service Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. Collections available Tuesday to Friday 10am to 3.30pm

VICTORIAN CHILDREN'S OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: rch.org.au/edc
E: edc@rch.org.au
T: (03) 9345 5325
F: (03) 9345 9499
A: Equipment Distribution Centre, Royal Children's Hospital, basement 2 (green lifts), 50 Flemington Road Parkville VIC 3052

WARRNAMBOOL & DISTRICT OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

E: warrnamboolostomy@swh.net.au
T: (03) 5563 1446
F: (03) 5563 4353
A: 279 Koroit Street Warrnambool VIC 3280

Open: Friday 12pm to 4pm

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN OSTOMY ASSOCIATION

W: waostomy.org.au
E: info@waostomy.org.au
T: (08) 9272 1833
F: (08) 9271 4605
A: 15 Guildford Road Mount Lawley WA 6050
Open: Mon and Tues 9am-4pm, Wed 9-1pm, Thur 9am-4pm, Fri 9am-1pm. Fourth Saturday each month 9am to 1pm.

National Directory of Ostomy Support Groups

AUSTRALIA

Beat Bladder Cancer: The Australian national support group (online via Zoom) for bladder cancer patients/ carers from all across Australia. All welcome. Last Tuesday of every month 7.30-9pm AEST. Register at: www.beatbladdercanceraustralia.org.au

ACT

Canberra: ACT support group, 10am to noon, second Tuesday bi-monthly. Location: 2nd Floor, City Health Building, 1 Moore St, Canberra. Contact Geoff Rhodes on 0416 206 871 or email grhodes@homemail.com.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

Albury/Wodonga: 10am on the second Tuesday of the month. St David's Uniting Church, cnr Wilson and Olive St., Albury. Contact Alex Watson 0428 578 385.

Bankstown: 10am-noon on the first Wednesday every third month, next meeting November 1. Revesby Workers Club, 2B Brett St, Revesby (close to public transport and free parking). Please RSVP for catering purposes to your Bankstown Hospital STN or Mariam Elfoul on 0400 921 901, email: aumael@coloplast.com

Bathurst: First Tuesday of March, June, September and December at Daffodil Cottage. Contact: Louise (02) 6330 5676.

Bowral: Bowral stoma support group meets every three months. Dates for this year are Sptember 2 and December 2, at the Mittagong RSL Club, 148-150 Old Hume Highway, Mittagong, from 1-2.30pm. Contact Erin or Afin 0419 224 662 or Mathew 0417 026 107.

Campbelltown: Meets every two months. Dates for this year are August 21, October 16, and December 11. At the Campbelltown Catholic Club, 20 Camden Road, Campbelltown, 1.30-3pm. Contact Erin or Afin 0419 224 662 or Mathew 0417 026 107.

Central Coast: 1.30-3.30pm on third Wednesday in February, May, August and November. Different venues each meeting. Contact (02) 4320 3323.

Coffs Harbour: 2-3.30pm. Every second month at RSL Club, First Avenue, Sawtell. Contact Mandy Hawkins, stomal therapy nurse, on (02) 6656 7804.

Dubbo: Stoma Support Group meets on the last Friday of the month, 2-3pm. Dubbo Health Service Ian Locke, building Room 8. Contact 0408 769 873 or email: Thulisile.Moyo@health.nsw.gov.au

Goulburn: 10am-noon. Goulburn Workers Club, 1 McKell Place. Contact Clare Jacobs 0400 921 901 or aucldo@coloplast.com

Grafton/Clarence Valley: Meets on the second Tuesday bi-monthly. Aruma Community Health, 175 Queen St, Grafton. Contact Gary Tobin by email tobin18@bigpond.com.

Griffith district: Contact Barry (02) 6963 5267 or 0429 635 267 or email ann.bar@bigpond.com or Karan 0434 785 309.

Hastings Macleay: 10am-noon, third Wednesday in February, April, June, August, October and December. The Old Hospital. Contact Neil 0427 856 630 or Glennie 0410 637 060

Illawarra: Ostomy information group. April 9, June 11, August 13, October 8, December10 (Xmas lunch, venue to be advised). Education Room, Figtree Private Hospital, 1 Suttor Place, Figtree. Contact: Helen Richards CNC STN Wollongong Private Hospital 4286 1109 or richardsh@ramsayhealth.com.au; or Julia Kittscha CNC STN Wollongong Hospital 0414 421 021 or 4255 1594 or julia.kittscha@health. nsw.gov.au

Manning/Great Lakes: 10.30am, first Wednesday of every second month. Taree Group Three Leagues downstairs meeting room, 43 Cowper St. Contact Karla MacTaggart (02) 6592 6169, email karla.mactaggart@health.nsw.gov.au

Nepean: The Nepean Education Stoma Support Group meets at 2-3.30pm on September 8 and December 8. Medical School, outpatients department, 62 Derby Street, Kingswood. The building is opposite Nepean Hospital's Emergency Department. Contact Naomi Houston on 4734 1245 or NBMLHD-Stoma@health.nsw.gov.au

Newcastle district: 1.30pm. Last Saturday in February, May, August and November. Hamilton Wesley Fellowship Hall, 150 Beaumont St. Contact Geoff (02) 4981 1799, Lynda 0425 209 030, Maree (02) 4971 4351.

Orange and district: noon, March, June, September and December. Venue: 15 Olver St, Orange. Contact Louise (02) 6330 5676 or Joanne (02) 6362 6184.

Shoalhaven: August 30 Ulladulla Community Health Centre (cnr South St and Princes Hwy), November 29 Nowra Community Health Centre (12 Berry St). Time: 2pm. Register with STN CNC Brenda Christiansen (02) 4424 6300 or brenda.christiansen @health.nsw.gov.au

St George: 11am-1pm, third Tuesday quarterly. Ramsgate RSL Club, Ramsgate Road and Chuter Avenue, Sans Souci. Close to public transport and free parking. Please RSVP for catering purposes to your STN or Mariam Elfoul on 0400 921 901, email: aumael@coloplast.com

Sydney: Continent Urinary Diversion Support Group meets on the last Saturday afternoon of the month in February, June and October in Sydney CBD. We all have had internal urinary pouches formed using bowel and usually using an Indiana Pouch. We meet at the Bowlers' Club in Sydney or at 99 On York. Contact Sandra Burgess (02) 9913 3287

Sydney – Penrith: 2-3.30pm, 29 April, 24 June, 26 August and 4 November. 63 Derby St, Penrith (University of Sydney Medical School). Contact Naomi Houston on (02) 4734 1245. The building is opposite Nepean Hospital's Emergency Department. Enter via the side path to the outpatient waiting room.

Sydney – Northern: 10-11.30am, first Wednesday of the month in the Jacaranda Lodge, Sydney Adventist Hospital, 185 Fox Valley Rd. Wahroonga. Contact: San Cancer Support Centre (02) 9487 9061

South West Sydney and Liverpool: 1.30-3.30pm, Oct 19 and Dec 7. Campbelltown Catholic Club, 20/22 Camden Rd. Contact Erin 0419 224 662 or Lu 0417 026 109 for catering purposes.

Tweed-Byron: noon to 2pm, second Tuesday of March, June, September, December at the South Tweed Sports Club, 4 Minjungbal Dr., Tweed Heads South. Contact Lisa Clare stoma therapy nurse (07) 5506 7540 or Kate Rycroft 0432 251 703.

Wagga and district: 10-11am on first Wednesday of each month. The Men's Shed, 11 Ashmont Ave, Wagga Wagga. Contact David (02) 6971 3346 or 0428 116 084 or Baz (02) 6922 4132.

QUEENSLAND

Bowen: 10am on the first Wednesday of every month. Bowen Hospital. Contact natasha.leaver@health.qld.gov.au

Brisbane: The Brisbane Ostomate Support Group meets from 10am-12pm on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Chermside Bowls Club, 468 Rode Road, Chermside. Contact ilonalanyi@hotmail.com or QSA (07) 3359 7570.

Cairns: Cairns RSL Club, 10am – 12pm. Contact Clare Jacobs aucldo@coloplast.com

Gladstone: Philip Street Communities Precinct, Maxine Brushe Community Meeting Place, 9.30 -11.30am. Contact Clare Jacobs aucldo@coloplast.com

Gold Coast: Southport Sharks Club 10am-12pm. Contact Clare Jacobs aucldo@coloplast.com

Ipswich: Brothers Leagues Club 1.30-3.30pm. Contact Clare Jacobs aucldo@coloplast.com

Logan: May 30 at 9.30-11am, July 10 at 4.30-6pm, September 5 at 9.30-11am, November 13 at 5-6.30pm, December 15 at 2.30-5pm. All meetings are held at the Logan Hospital in the auditorium. Contact Leeanne Johnson on (07) 3299 9107 or leeanne.johnson@ health.qld.gov.au

Mackay: 2pm, fourth Friday of January, March, May, July, September and November. St. Ambrose Anglican Church Hall, Glenpark Street, North Mackay. Contact Graham Stabler on 0428 776 258 or email grahamstabler@bigpond.com

St Andrews Stoma Support Group: 280 North Street, Toowoomba. Meets on the first Wednesday of every month (except December and January) 12-1pm in the conference room. Lunch provided, education talks and friendly conversation by stomal therapy nurse and ostomates. Contact Emily Day: daye@sath.org.au or 4646 3029.

South Burnett: 10am, second Tuesday of each month. Venue: Nanango Community Health Centre, Brisbane St. Nanango. Contact: Anne Davoren Phone: (07) 4171 6750.

Sunshine Coast: 10am on the second Monday of every month in the Keith Payne Room, Maroochy RSL Veteran Hub, Memorial Avenue, Maroochydore. Contact Laurie Grimwade 0419717889, email sid.and.laurie@gmail.com;Janelle Robinson 0409762457, email candjrobinson@bigpond.com;or Kathy Himstedt (07) 54459270, email greg.cath@bigpond.com

Toowoomba: Insideout. Contact Margaret Brabrook (07) 4635 1697, emby1936@gmail. com; Leanne Wilshire (07) 4630 0629, leanne.wilshire@bigpond.com; emby1936@gmail.com; Laurel Czynski, 0413 805 809.

Wide Bay: Bundy Osto Mates is up and running again on a quarterly basis. Times and dates to be advised on Facebook or contact Wide Bay Ostomates (07) 4152 4715.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide Hills: 10am-noon on the second Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at Nairne Soldiers Hall, Main Road, Nairne. Contact Alicia 0403 663 837 or Betty 0428 373 770.

Barossa: Either 12-2pm or 7-9pm on the third Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December at Vine Inn, Hoopman Room 14-22 Murray Street, Nuriootpa. Contact Barb 0417 068 177.

Central: 1-3pm on the third Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Hilton RSL, 147 Sir Donald Bradman Drive. Contact IASA 8234 2678 between 10am and 2pm

Clare: 2-4pm on the third Monday of Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov. Clare Uniting Church Hall, 18 Victoria Road, Clare. Contact Nadja 0434 497 011.

Eyre Peninsula: 11am-12.30pm third Friday of February, May, August and November. Port Lincoln RSL, 14 Hallett Place Contact Helen 0429 882 833.

Fleurieu: 11am-12.15pm on first Monday of March, June, September and December at Grosvenor Hotel Victor Harbor. Contact Phillip 0408 831 774.

Kangaroo Island: 10am-12pm on the second Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October and December. Commercial St, Kingscote. Contact Cindy 0418 837 378.

Murraylands: 10am-12pm first Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December. Murray Bridge RSL, 2 Ross Rd. Contact Sandrina 0428 104 439 or Steven 0427 978 699.

Northern: Elizabeth Playford Lions Club, Hilcott Street, Elizabeth North. Fourth Tuesday of the month 2-4pm. Febuary, April, June, August and October Contact Mel 0401 447 740, Jo-Ann 0421 118 962 or Pam 0452 192 344.

Port Augusta: Port Augusta RSL, 17 Fulham Road. Meetings 1-2.30pm on the fourth Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Contact Terry Smith 0488 069 943.

Port Pirie: 1-2.30pm on third Tuesday of each month at Pt Pirie Lions Club Hall, cnr Federation Rd and Hallam St, Port Pirie. Contact Jenni Edwards 08 8638 4536 or 0481 484 347.

Riverland: 10am-12pm, first Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Renmark RSL, 91 Fifteenth St. Contact Neville 0419 835 589.

Southern: 2pm on first Wednesday of February, April, June, August and October at Elizabeth House, 112 Elizabeth Road, Christie Downs. Contact Sharmaine 0438 853 082.

South East: 10.30am-12.30pm on second Thursday each month, Mount Gambier Library, 6 Watson Terrace, Mt Gambier. Contact David 0431 191 425 or Paula 0418 930 553.

Whyalla: 1-2.30pm on the last Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Bethel Family Church, 50 Viscount Slim Avenue, Whyalla Norrie. Contact Katrina 0466 819 603.

Yorke Peninsula: 2.30pm on third Wednesday of February, April, June, August, October at the Joyce Olsen Room, Wontama Homes, East Terrace, Kadina. Contact Helen Colliver on 0419 839 869.

TASMANIA

All Cancer Support Group: Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, 2-4pm at 15 Princes Street, Sandy Bay. Contact Support Services 6169 1900 to register interest or Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20.

Tasmania support groups: Meet March, June and September. Contact Adrian Kok 0498 196 059 for dates. South: District Nurses' Centre 10am-noon, 2 Birdwood Ave, Moonah. North: Legacy House, 10am-noon, 59 York Street, Launceston. North West: Apex House 10am-noon, 3 Gollan Street, Ulverstone.

VICTORIA

Bairnsdale and district: Available for people to talk to and for home visits in the local area. Contacts: Janine 0418 854 562, Derelle 0448 458 997. Email: bdosg@hotmail.com

Ballarat Bag Buddies: 2pm, second Wednesday each month at BRICCC (Ballarat Base Hospital). Contact Graeme on 0400 979 742 or grarob44@gmail.com or David on 0400 393 897 or david.nestor2@bigpond.com

Benalla/Wangaratta: April 7 at Masonic Hall, Appin Street, Wangaratta at 2pm (Elise Byrne, Braun); June 16 at Masonic Hall, cnr Walker St and Benalla Street, Benalla, at 2pm (Anjanette Costall, Salts); August 18 at Masonic Hall, Appin Street, Wangaratta 2pm (Gus Italia, Omnigon); October 13 at Benalla Masonic Hall, cnr Walker St and Benalla Street, Benalla, 2pm; November 8, Masonic Hall, Appin Street, Wangaratta, 10am to 1.30pm.

Bendigo and district: Stomal support group offering support to ostomates and/or their partners. Meets last Monday of each month. Contact Pam on 0419 585 951 or email p.sorrell@bigpond.com

Colostomy Association of Victoria: Stomal support group. Offers support to all clients. We offer 30-minute consultations with a qualified stoma therapy nurse, by appointment, three days a week. Phone 9650 1666 or email info@colovic.org.au

Geelong: Second Thursday of each month except December. Geelong Ostomy, 6 Lewalan St, Grovedale. Contact (03) 5243 3664 or contactus@geelongostomy.com.au

Latrobe Valley: Coffee Bags support group meets in Moe on the first Wednesday of each month for a cuppa, chat and information sharing. Ostomates are encouraged to attend, bringing their support person with them. Contact Sue Graham 0415 751145.

Mildura: Meet every second month at the Gateway Tavern, on the corner of 15th Street and San Mateo Avenue, Mildura. Contact Norma 0409 252 545, stomal nurse Vicky 0437 099 129 or Dianne 0419 516 455 .

South Gippsland: Meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 2pm. Contact Helen Lugettho on 0499 624 999.

Sunraysia/Riverland: Venue: Sunraysia Cancer Centre. Enquiries: Norma Murphy 0409 252 545.

Warrnambool and district: Meets on the second Friday of each month from Feb to November at 10.30am. Venue: Cafe Lava, Lava St, Warrnambool, for coffee and a meet and greet. Contact Anne on 0417 319 146.

YOU (Young Ostomates United): search for us on Facebook. Website: www.you.org.au. Secretary Helen Ebzery helshae@hotmail.com. Postal address: YOU Inc., PO Box51, Drouin, Victoria, 3818.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Albany: 1.30pm first Friday of each quarter. Free Reformed Church Meeting Room North Road, Albany. Contact: Gerry 0498 666 525.

Bunbury: Third Friday of the month. Bunbury Geographe Seniors Community Centre. Contact Maria 0408 165 959.

Esperance: Last Tuesday of every month at 10am. Aurelia's Ice Creamery and Cafe (if closed go to Breakaway Cafe). Contact Len (08) 9075 9099.

Geraldton: Fourth Tuesday of the month, 1-3pm. Regional library (occasionally at CWA). Contact Rhonda 0418 231 007.

Kalgoorlie and Kununurra: Contact WA Ostomy Association on (08) 9272 1833 or info@waostomy.org.au

Mandurah: 5-6.30pm first Wednesday of every month. Greenfields Family and Community Centre, 2 Waldron Boulevard, Greenfields (cnr Murdoch Drive).

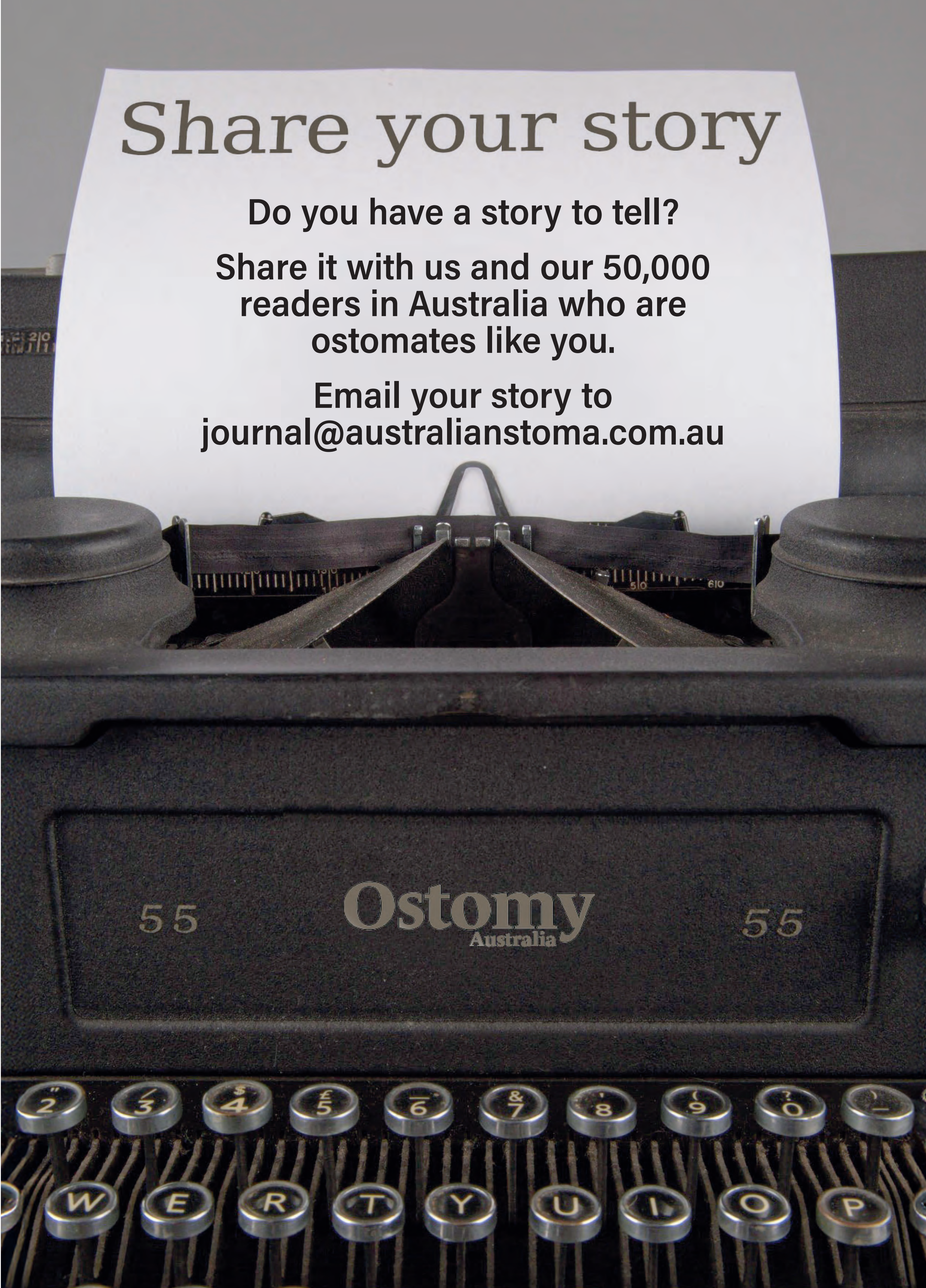
Narrogin: First Wednsday quarterly. 12-1.30pm, Senior Citizen's Centre. Contact Lorraine 0429 812 552.

Northam: Second Saturday of every month. 10am-noon, venue TBA. Contact WA Ostomy Association (08) 9272 1833.

Perth: New members' support group: noon-1.30pm, fourth Saturday of every month at WA Ostomy Association, 15 Guildford Road, Mount Lawley.

Perth Young Ostomates: Request to join on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/365461825146299.

West Ossie Gutsy Kids: Babies to 15-year-olds with stomas and their parents. Request to join via Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/381866953308120.



Share your story

Do you have a story to tell?

Share it with us and our 50,000 readers in Australia who are ostomates like you.

Email your story to journal@australianstoma.com.au