Opening of the
Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre

The sun shone down on Albury on Wednesday 16th November 2016 as our much waited for Regional Cancer Centre was officially opened by The Hon. Sussan Ley, MP and Member for Farrer. Together with 200 invited guests, the official function was attended by federal Health Minister Sussan Ley, her Victorian counterpart Jill Hennessy and MPs Greg Aplin (Albury), Cathy McGowan (Indi) and Bill Tilley (Benambra).
President of Brave Hearts on the Murray, and Board Member of the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Trust Fund, Jenny Black, spoke at the Official Opening on behalf of our community.

Thank you for this honour of representing our community at this official opening of our important Regional Cancer Centre and be able to recall how our community came on board and undoubtedly made a difference to the decisions surrounding the presence of this Centre. I am only standing here, as the man who should be making this address – Eric Turner – has health reasons preventing him doing what he does so well – that is, eloquently and passionately standing up for the people of this region.

It was the vision and brain storming of this gentleman who responded to a call from Craig Underhill after the initial excellent submission for the Regional Cancer Centre which pertinently proved the need for this Centre, failed to get Federal support. Craig suggested to Eric that we needed to get the community involved to have their say and show their angst and disbelief that we were unsuccessful. Eric then busily formed a committee which included myself; Breast Care Nurse - Jodie Hart, Mel McIntyre from Brave Hearts, Marianne Warren – Representative from submission steering group, Clive Faul, Mark Lidleywood and Charlie Leaney from our local Rotary, Apex and Lions clubs, and Lou Lieberman. And we met regularly at the 3 Monkeys on the Causeway to decide how we would give the community this opportunity.

With the help of very supportive media and hundreds of phone calls and emails, individuals of our region were then notified of our plans. It didn't take long for the bush telegraph to get out there and in an instant, the community came on board and showed that they were definitely not prepared to passively accept this decision and would do anything to challenge and hopefully change the political decision makers.

The first community rally was held at the Commercial club where over 500 people attended and showed their committed support to distribute petitions and gain signatures from as many people as possible. People power certainly came to the forefront with 17,000 signatures being obtained in the short time of 3 weeks – now this wasn't just from members of A/W – this also was from our surrounding towns – such as Corryong, Howlong, Wangaratta, Corowa, Deniliquin etc.

Then on the 16th June 2010 (can remember it so vividly) a busload of cancer support group members and community representatives including Di Thomas and a photographer from the Border Mail, travelled to Canberra. We were met by members of our local governments including Sussan Ley, Greg Aplin and Mayors and Councillors of both Albury and Wodonga and assembled on the lawns of Parliament, before 3 of us presented Warren Snowden (then Minister for Rural and Regional Health) with our signed petitions. He told us that there wasn't much chance of a decision change as there was no more money for future cancer centres but he would notify Parliament of the community actions and also visit our area.

But then to further compound matters the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, called for an early election, so any signs of interest in our campaign were naturally swamped.

This did not deter the passion of our cause however – we then went into Rally 2 mode. On the 19th of August on a cold bleak day, 1400 women, men and children, who represented the number of new patients diagnosed with cancer each year in our region, donned yellow ponchos and formed the shape of a heart on the Causeway. A photo taken from a helicopter then became an icon for our cause. It became the beating pulse of the heart of our region and was on the background of all communications to Ministers, being a persistent mosquito in their ears, conveying that we were not willing to give up.
The new ensuing government then changed Warren Snowden’s portfolio and placed Simon Crean in the position of Minister of Regional Development, which then necessitated the compilation of the coverage of the campaigns being sent to him and other Ministers once again.

Luckily Simon Crean, who had a strong interest in regional development and had an office in Albury at the time, became very cognisant of the needs of our community. He met with the working party that had prepared the excellent first submission and suggested a couple of changes that fitted into so-called political language.

This second submission was then put forward and we once again quietly hoped that we still had a chance. Then to everyone’s absolute delight, Simon Crean announced on the Q and A program that was being broadcast in Albury, that A/W had finally secured a Federal Grant of $65 million, to build this magnificent building we are officially opening. It was the most unbelievable result—a perfect university textbook example of a community working together for a proven need.

We are certainly so lucky to live in this region—we have an excellent multidisciplinary cancer treatment team and a passionate group of people willing to ensure we all receive the best treatment available, in now a state-of-the-art Cancer Centre.

Take a bow everyone— you all deserve it

Jenny Black
Brave Hearts Celebration Garden

The recent local floodings caused heartbreak to many families and organisations. We thought that our rose garden was doomed until Wodonga Council came to the rescue again and rejuvenated the entire area.

We are so thankful for their continued and unwavering support to ensure that our beautiful rose garden is enjoyed by members of our local community.

Thank you so much to the wonderful Wodonga Council gardeners

Flooding at Belvoir Park

After the gardening angels had waved their magic wands!

Sincere Apologies - Community Day Regatta promoted as Sunday 20th November

Sincere apologies to anyone who ventured down to Gateway Lake for our programmed Community Day Regatta on Sunday 20th November. Due to extensive flooding throughout the entire area it was impossible for us to hold our regatta on that day. The regatta will now take place on the weekend of 4th and 5th March, 2017. Our Community Day Regatta will be on Saturday 4th with the Sports Racing Regatta being held on Sunday 5th March.

Again... to those who were not notified of the postponement, we do humbly apologise.
Border Relay for Life - Saturday 22 and 23 October 2016

As quoted in the Border Mail:

“The Border Relay for Life is a remarkable event our community should be proud of. Our event is officially the biggest relay in Australia, recognition of the importance the community places of finding a cure for cancer. Participants at Wodonga’s Birallee Park on Sunday morning were told this year’s event had raised $407,000 – and counting. That, from a total population of about 110,000 – $4 for every woman, man and child on the Border. Almost 3,000 people registered for this year’s relay, many walking or running for loved ones, fighting their own personal battles against cancer, or remembering those family and friends having already been taken by the disease”.

This year, the Brave Hearts team raised well over $2,000. It was a beautiful weekend - weatherwise and people wise! It was so good to see so many young people take part and especially pleasing to see the local schools well represented. Well done everyone!
Brave Hearts Wig Library Update

With the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre now officially opened, it won’t be long before we move our wig library from its current location at the Murray Valley Hospital to the Wellness Centre within the cancer centre.

In readiness for our move, we’re busily organising a refit of our allocated room and we’re so excited about it! We’ll do everything to ensure that it becomes a welcoming, relaxing and beautiful space so that we can offer our clients the best service that they so deserve.

We’ll be looking for more volunteers to help us staff the library. If you think you can spare some time between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm on a Tuesday or Thursday, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Di Laundess (our coordinator) to find out how you can help.

Di can be contacted on 0421 173 545

Please note that the Wig Library will be closed for the Christmas break from Tuesday 20th December 2016 and will re-open at the Murray Valley Hospital on Tuesday 3rd January 2017

2016 Brave Hearts Silver Heart Award

In our January 2017 edition of Heart Beat we will be revealing our 2016 Brave Hearts Silver Heart Award recipient.

Nominations have been received and the recipient has been chosen!

Since the inception of Brave Hearts on the Murray, it has been the intention that nominated members would be formally recognised for the exceptional contribution they make to the organisation. The Brave Hearts Silver Heart award is a beautiful sterling silver heart-shaped pin with the word Brave inscribed on it. The 2016 Award will be presented to one very worthy member of our organisation at our annual Christmas get-together at the Manor House on Sunday 4th December.

How do we choose such a worthy recipient? Our members nominate who they believe to be a worthy recipient.

How is that person chosen? By addressing the following criteria:

Essential:
- Has been continuously with Brave Hearts for 5-10 years
- Has volunteered their services of help at fundraising functions
- Has displayed acts of kindness to fellow members
- Creates public awareness for our cause
- Has given outstanding service in any or all of Brave Hearts on the Murray projects

Desirable:
- Has held a position on a committee (either on BHMInc or BHDBC).

Who chooses that person?
The nominees are nominated by a current financial member and seconded by one other current financial member. Those nominations are then submitted to the Brave Hearts Murray Inc. committee and two external community members for consideration, when a decision is made.
Regatta News

Horsham Regatta 30th October

Fourteen paddlers and three volunteers made the long trip to Horsham for their inaugural regatta. Well done to the members who put their weekend aside to represent our Club at the Horsham Regatta. Thank you Frank for driving the bus, Sandy for taking on the role of Team Manager, Claire for volunteering and Chris for her role as Chief Official. To our Water Crew you have done us all proud.

Paddler Julie Bowater commented: “Was a great day of paddling. The wild wind in our hair, water spraying in our eyes, everyone pulling those paddles with all their strength going against the wind. Drummer Maxie yelling and our incredible sweeps trying to hold the boat straight. Go Brave Hearts……….and we did!!”

Julie Bowater proudly showing the spoils - 2nd place Masters Open 10s, 3rd place Masters Mixed 10s. The team also came 4th in the Women’s 10s.

Ballarat Regatta 27th October

Twenty one paddlers braved the cooler climate and took to the water at the Ballarat Regatta on Sunday 27th October. The team competed in eight races in total plus took part in the 2km Sweeps Race. Their rewards were fruitful – 3rd place in Masters Open 20s, Masters Mixed 20s and Masters Women’s 20s. What a wonderful effort. The gold plates you see in the photos came from Sovereign Hill.

Relatively new paddler Jane Atkinson commented “It was a real privilege to race with the Brave Hearts team yesterday. Members of longer standing provided an extraordinary example of focus, concentration, strength, grit and determination for newer members. Thanks to the whole team for your efforts and single mindedness including those who made all arrangements and provided support including Frank who spent long hours driving us to Ballarat and back home again. A very worthwhile endeavor”. Just about says it all really!

Those trophies will certainly take pride of place back at the Brave Hearts’ shed. The team was tired, sore but feeling very happy with their lot. P.S. - Yes, Frank drove the bus again - thank you Frank.
From our family of Brave Hearts
We wish you all a
Very Merry Christmas

Eric Turner - Albury Wodonga’s Champion

We couldn’t say goodbye to you all for the year without again mentioning a wonderful gentleman who has achieved so much for our region in our fight against cancer. Eric, as Chairman of the Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation, led the way in our goal to build a state-of-the-art regional cancer centre. As Jenny mentioned in her speech at the Official Opening......"I am only standing here, as the man who should be making this address – Eric Turner – has health reasons preventing him doing what he does so well – that is, eloquently and passionately standing up for the people of this region......"

Eric is an inspirational to us all - he never gave up and he always knew the power of the people would be the answer and the catalyst of our region achieving that dream of gaining our very own regional cancer centre. We applaud him ferociously, we love him dearly and we admire him immensely. We truly are grateful for all that he has achieved for our community and we thank him for his enduring friendship.