

## My Journey Part 2 – Bulletin No 8 (22 September 2020)

### The Past Four Weeks



I have been kept very busy getting on with my normal life, time just flies even in these very trying times of COVID – 19 restrictions. It was nice to get together with 18 retired police colleagues and partners at the Lone Star Tavern for a luncheon, attend our monthly retired police meeting at Currumbin RSL, together with my bridge commitments have helped to occupy my time. On 6 September I celebrated Father's Day with my family and on 7 September I had several friends around to celebrate my birthday. Photo of Carole and I at my 78<sup>th</sup> birthday party. I was originally going to have one party, however the limiting of only 10 people to gather in the house allowed me to have two parties. At least during these COVID times I lucky enough to have two parties, perhaps this is one upside of of these troubled times.

I also had a couple of GCUH appointments one for blood tests and the other a visit to the head and neck specialist radiologist for the taking of biopsies from the area of the tumour in my neck for pathology tests.

### Appointment with my Chemo Oncologist

On Monday 14 September I caught up with my chemo oncologist Dr Marcin Dzienis who has been with me throughout the past 4 years and hopefully he would be able to throw a bit of light on the next step in my ongoing battle. Unfortunately the report on the biopsies had not been received so we had a general discussion regarding my future treatment program. Regardless of the results of the biopsies Dr Marcin recommended that a program of immunotherapy should be considered.

Dr Marcin drew my attention to a clinical trial about to get underway at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) in Brisbane under the supervision of renown chemo oncologist Dr Rahul Ladwa. The trial is for recurrent HPV related head and neck cancer patients involving the combination of an immunotherapy agent administered with a promising new HPV cancer fighting agent. After reviewing the research paper on the project with family I will decide if this could be the new and exciting program for my eventual recovery from my ongoing cancer battle. Dr Marcin will contact me in the near future with the biopsy results and get my thoughts on participating in the proposed head and neck cancer trial.

Of recent times I have experienced continued tingling numbness in the left side of my upper scalp down the left side of my face to my left neck area. Dr Marcin advised that it could either be related to nerve damage from my recent radiotherapy or a side effect of the tumour in my left neck. Just another little tribulation which has to be overcome in my quest to get on with life.

### The Outcome

On 21 September Dr Marcin advised me that cancer cells were present in the biopsies and he further canvassed me regarding thoughts in the PAH cancer trial. I advised him that following discussions with my family I was only too happy to participate in the trial. He advised me that he would let Dr Rahul know of my interest of being involved.

### The Future

I now await a call from Dr Rahul in the hope I will be assessed as a suitable patient for the PAH cancer trial or the alternative to undergo a program of immunotherapy at the GCUH under the supervision of Dr Marcin. I look forward to my next step in my ongoing battle with optimism and the anticipation that the light at the end of the tunnel is not a train coming towards me.

*Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*

### Neil Raward

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