



strokefoundation

Stop stroke. Save lives. End suffering.

Friends of the NSF Newsletter

Autumn Edition 2010

Dear All,

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Friends' Newsletter. The year has started with new staff and new programs. We would like to introduce Jacqui McKenzie, StrokeConnect Program Manager, who will be working with the online and phone peer support programs.

The NSF Team



Introducing Jacqui McKenzie

I recently started at the NSF as the StrokeConnect Program Manager and am excited about this opportunity to work

on a much needed program that aims to better connect the stroke survivor and carer communities to quality information, services and to each other.

Part of StrokeConnect includes the online forum and phone program. These new programs have already been received enthusiastically and it will be exciting to watch them develop. Before starting at the NSF, I worked with the Royal Flying Doctor Service for almost five years as a program manager and also in community health and hospitals. My interest in health is focused on prevention and health care system processes. I look forward to working with you to make StrokeConnect a supportive and vital program for all people affected by stroke.

StrokeConnect

Sharing, Supporting, Connecting

StrokeConnect Phone

The StrokeConnect phone program continues to put stroke survivors and carers in touch with others who have shared a similar experience. The program commenced last year with a group of enthusiastic volunteers who were trained to take calls from stroke survivors and carers needing support or advice.

Volunteer and stroke survivor, Alistair Baker, suggests that while some needs are met by health professionals, family and friends, there is nothing quite like being able to talk to someone else who has experienced a similar journey. The service is available for all stroke survivors and carers who would like to talk to someone about what they are experiencing.

To access the StrokeConnect phone program call StrokeLine on **1800 787 653** and ask to speak with a stroke survivor or carer.

StrokeConnect Online Forum Goes Live

The StrokeConnect online forum has been running since late last year, with Foundation Members trialing and testing the system prior to it going live. The forum now has over 140 members. Membership is free and it's easy to join. StrokeConnect online provides a safe place to build connections with others who have a similar experience, ask questions, find answers, stimulate new discussions, get information and share stories. It enables you to meet others affected by stroke without leaving home.





Inspired

Scott McPhee survived a stroke in 1989 and has relearned many tasks like using cutlery and tying his shoelaces. He says the online forum “does me good”. He joined StrokeConnect in July 2009 as a Foundation Member and believes that by sharing his stroke journey, he can encourage and inspire others.

What have you won in a competition?

I won a stereo in the Royal Melbourne Hospital Home Lottery.

What's your favourite food?

Pasta.

What's your worst?

Lamb chops (sorry Mum).

At the moment I'm reading...

The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens.

Listening to...

The radio in the kitchen.

The most interesting thing about you?

I'm an identical twin.

A reason to celebrate?

That I am still here today to write this.

From your experience of stroke, what's the best piece of advice you've received?

Don't give up, because dreams are still achievable.

One day, you will...

Work in a far more interesting job than what I am presently doing.



Scott McPhee

If you were stuck on a desert island which two people would you want with you?

My twin brother and Tom Hank's character from Castaway.

A daily item you can't do without...

My toothbrush.

I am a member of the NSF online forum because...

I believe I can encourage others by sharing my experiences, and it does me good to write about what I have been through.

Join Scott on the StrokeConnect forum by registering at:

www.strokefoundation.com.au/strokeconnect/



Stroke Support Group Updates

Bundaberg Stroke Support Group

Congratulations to the Bundaberg SSG who have won the strokesafe™ Award for a third year in a row! The group held numerous activities throughout National Stroke Week, promoting the FAST test. They ran a 'healthy snacks' morning and afternoon tea at the main entrance of the hospital, encouraged educational institutes to use the strokesafe™ seminar kit, spoke to a Lions Club, created two visual displays in the central business district of Bundaberg, and distributed FAST wallet cards and letters to their local community. Well done, it was a great job by all!



Bundaberg Stroke Support Group

Tasmanian Stroke Support Groups

After a break in January, TAS SSGs have been planning their annual schedule including educational, general interest and social based activities.

The Hobart SSG is involved with the NSF's project called Road to Recovery. The group are researching and developing a stroke support

and disability service directory for the greater Hobart region. This directory will be part of a welcome pack that will be given to new members. Once the service directory is complete the group will reward themselves with an outing.

All SSG's enjoyed their Christmas celebrations with talented members playing guitar, piano, tambourine and an impressive array of African drums at the Southern function. It was a delight to see everyone participating and it looks like there may be a stroke support musical group in the future.

The NSF has been awarded a government grant through the Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmanian Health and Wellbeing Grants program to start a Communication Support Group in the south of the state. For more information, please contact the Hobart office on [03 6231 4424](tel:0362314424).

Western Australia Stroke Support Groups

Most SSGs in WA took a break over Christmas and the New Year with the majority resuming their meetings in February. The NSF held a Christmas lunch for all SSG members at the end of last year which was well attended. Members enjoyed lunch along with a glass of Christmas bubbles. They also enjoyed their own end of year celebrations.

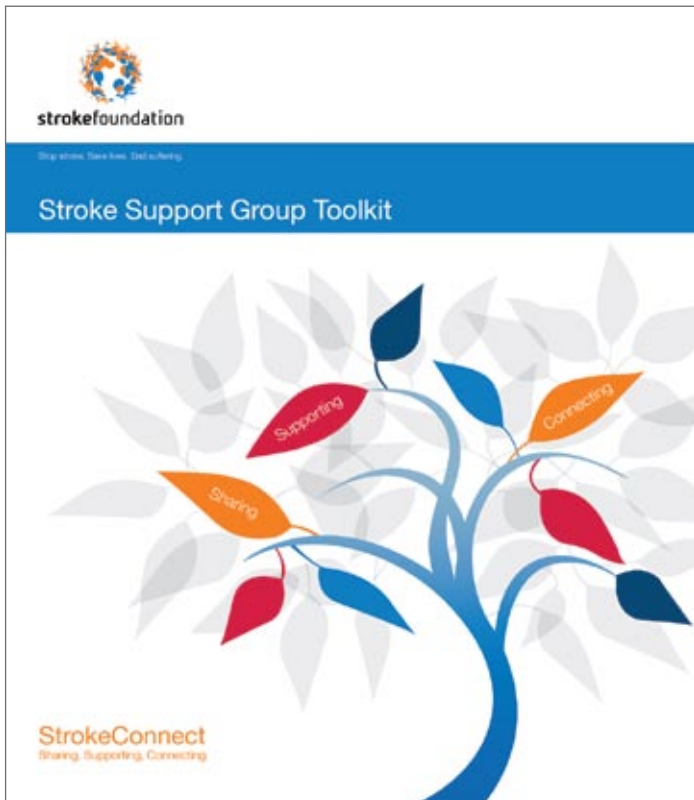
Groups have been planning a range of new activities for this year. Two groups in WA are participating in the Road to Recovery Project. In March the Northern Districts Group will be involved in an interactive session presented by a panel of speakers including representatives from their local Division of General Practice, Centrelink and a Social Worker.



The session will help group members to better navigate the health system and identify appropriate supports in the community post stroke. The Swan Districts SSG will participate in an interactive session facilitated by Peter Clissa from the State Head Injury Unit. The session will cover topics such as depression after stroke, changing relationships and emotional support.

New Stroke Support Group Toolkit Coming Soon!

The NSF is currently developing a valuable resource for support groups. Twelve Friends groups from across the country will be involved in the consultation process and provide comments and feedback. The finalised toolkit will be available mid year.



Stroke Support Group Toolkit

Stroke Week 2010

National Stroke Week 2010 will be held from 13-19 September.

Get involved and hold an activity or display in your community to support the national campaign. More information will be available on the NSF website in May.



Childhood Stroke Booklet

The NSF, Strokidz and Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne have developed a booklet about childhood stroke that provides advice and support to parents and families of children who have had a stroke. Strokidz are a group located in Melbourne, Australia that was formed to provide support for children and families affected by stroke. Strokidz offer peer support on a personal, informative and social level. "Being parents of children that have suffered a stroke we are well aware of the wide ranging effects and medical conditions these children inherit, along with the emotional roller coaster parents take in obtaining information about their child's diagnosis". If you would like a copy please contact the resource department on [03 9670 1000](tel:0396701000).



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Know your numbers 2010

The Know your numbers (KYN) blood pressure awareness program will run again in May this year in VIC and QLD, and for the first time will also be offered in the Newcastle region of NSW.

Free blood pressure checks will be offered at pressure stations in various public locations such as pharmacies and shopping centres from 17-23 May. The pressure stations will be run by our partners The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Rotary and YMCA.

In QLD a number of pharmacies are also offering free blood pressure checks year round.

Since the 2007 campaign, over 33,000 people have had their blood pressure tested with over 40% found to have high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke and there are often no symptoms, so it's important to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

To find out your nearest permanent pressure station in QLD you can visit:

www.strokefoundation.com.au/know-your-numbers

In April, you will be able to find details of the VIC, NSW and QLD week long pressure stations on our website.

For more information call StrokeLine on **1800 787 653** or email: knowyournumbers@strokefoundation.com.au

Do you know about the National Companion Card?

The National Companion Card enables eligible Australians with disabilities to attend sporting and cultural events without incurring cost of an extra ticket for their carer.

"People with disability have the same right to get out and enjoy a concert or a football game as the rest of the community, and this scheme removes one of the obstacles in their way," Parliamentary Secretary Shorten said.

More than 2,700 businesses support the Companion Card Scheme with a number of big name businesses recently joining including the AFL, Basketball Australia, Tennis Australia, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Reading Cinemas, Circus OZ, and Fitness First Australia.

For further information contact:

VIC Phone: 1800 650 611
www.companioncard.org.au

NSW Phone: 1800 893 044
www.nds.org.au/nsw/companioncard

WA Phone: 1800 617 337
www.wa.companioncard.org.au

QLD Phone: 13 13 04
[www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/
community/companion-card/contacts](http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/companion-card/contacts)

SA Phone: 1800 667 110
www.sa.companioncard.asn.au/contact

ACT Phone: 02 6207 1086
www.dhcs.act.gov.au/companion_card

TAS Phone: 1800 009 501
<http://companioncard.dpac.tas.gov.au>





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National Stroke Foundation social media groups

Social Media

Would you like to stay up-to-date with what we are doing to help raise awareness about stroke? Have you got some interesting discussion topics you would like to share with other people touched by stroke? Get online and check out our social media groups, where you can meet other supporters and receive regular updates.

Follow us on **Twitter**, become a member of our **Facebook** group and read our **blog**.

Simply visit:

www.strokefoundation.com.au

and click on the 'follow us everywhere' link in the quick links menu on the right side of the page.

Research projects

The University of Sydney is looking for volunteers for a project on sexual activities and physical impairments. Eligibility for this research includes:

- You must be over the age of 18
- Have a physical impairment that affects your sex life, which you have had to adapt to.

If you are interested in being interviewed about what works for you and your partner, then call Natalie Hamam. Interviews can be either online, face-to-face or by phone. All interviews are confidential.

To find out more, contact **Natalie Hamam at the University of Sydney:**

Phone: 02 9351 9641

natalie.hamam@sydney.edu.au



National Stroke Foundation

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