

# BreaCan

Year in Review  
2014/15



# The Chorus of Women

## 10 years of friendship

Ten years ago, 11 women (Anita, Ann, Cheryl, Florence, Keiko, Leola, Liz, Marcelle, Noelene, Pat and Sandra) met with music therapist Emma O'Brien. Our goal was to use words to express our pain, grief, loss, fear and hope about our cancer experiences.



Chorus of Women participants celebrate their five-year anniversary in 2010

Emma put our words to music, and at the end of this process we sang our songs together.

Emma suggested we should have two concerts to share our songs with our family and friends. The show was called 'The Chorus of Women' – which we quickly shortened to COW girls!

'The Chorus of Women' was full of laughter and tears. We revisited some very dark places and shared our emotions with the audience through songs and words. We received a standing ovation – a real thrill. Later we took the show to Ballarat, which was well received by the local community.

We were all very sad when our new friend Keiko died shortly after our concerts. At her funeral we sang the song she had created. We formed a friendship group from the shared joy of performing, but also from our shared sadness.

Ten years on, the COW girls continue to meet regularly, but unfortunately ill health and ageing are now part of our group. We are grateful for the support we give each other and for our shared friendship over so many years. We especially thank Jean for bringing Pat to our get-togethers, and Jane for bringing Florence along when she can. Without their help we may have lost touch with our friends.

Thank you to BreaCan for bringing us together initially to work with Emma, and encouraging us to share our hopes and fears about our cancer experiences. We are a great example of the benefits that come from sharing experiences, both in happy and difficult times.

**SANDRA AND JEAN**

(on behalf of 'The Chorus of Women')

# Manager's message

**The past year has been jam-packed with great projects and programs, including new initiatives like information sessions in the community and our foray into the newfangled world of webinars. As a result of all this activity, our direct contacts with women have increased by more than 10 per cent.**



Our staff make sure that our programs are developed and delivered with the integrity we're known for. Our amazing volunteers continue to respond to the needs of the service and the women who use the service with the empathy and dedication we've come to expect, but not take for granted. Their commitment and generosity are heartwarming.

A donation from Treasure Chest Inc funded Bridge of Support this year, for which we are truly grateful. A grant from the Labour Union Co-operative Retirement Fund (LUCRF) Community Partnership Trust is allowing us to run Bridge of Support at Sunshine Hospital.

New funding has helped us extend our work in response to mounting evidence about the beneficial effects of exercise during and after cancer treatment. As well as our long-standing Feel Good exercise program, we have run programs in the western suburbs and contributed to a statewide pilot project. Pink Affair funds were used for exercise programs in Cairnlea and Sunshine and we hope

their success will lead to ongoing support. In partnership with Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) and Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre, we contributed to the Active and Well After Breast Cancer project. This project aims to identify successful strategies for healthy living after breast cancer and a final report will be available later in the year.

The rural needs analysis discussed last year is underway. This Department of Health & Human Services-funded project aims to identify a transferable and sustainable model for improving information and support for rural women affected by cancer. We have been working with Barwon South Western Regional Integrated Cancer Service and Grampians Integrated Cancer Service to consult with women and service providers in these two rural regions on developing and prioritising options. Following consultation with key stakeholders, a report will be provided to the Department later this year with recommendations for key actions.

The Department also gave us a one-off grant to undertake an independent evaluation of our own service this year. We will assess and identify areas for improvements so we can continue to provide a responsive and comprehensive service for women. The evaluation will also help us determine the best place to base our service in the future.

As always, our focus is on providing quality services based on women's needs. We look forward to working with you to achieve this.

**Lee Kennedy**  
BreaCan Manager

# Highlights 2014–15



Launch of the Connecting and Supporting Rural and Regional Women with Cancer project in Geelong, November 2014 L-R: BreaCan volunteer Frederika, Hon. Denis Napthine, BreaCan volunteer Lois, Barwon Health consumer advocate Marilyn

- The Connecting and Supporting Rural and Regional Women with Cancer project was launched in November 2014. We initiated the project in partnership with Barwon South Western Regional Integrated Cancer Service and Grampians Integrated Cancer Service to understand the information and support needs of women affected by cancer in rural and regional Victoria.
- In February 2015 we commenced a volunteer recruitment campaign to encourage more women with gynaecological or breast cancer to join our peer support team. We successfully recruited 14 new peer support volunteers.
- As part of our partnership with BCNA and Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre, we contributed to two very successful BCNA Active and Well forums in Flemington and Bendigo. As well as promoting our involvement in the Pink Moves program, the forums let us promote our services to women affected by breast cancer and also better understand some of the enablers and challenges to healthy living after treatment.
- Thanks to the generous support of Pink Affair, Sunshine Leisure Centre and Fernwood Gym Cairnlea, we were able



Consumer forum in Colac, June 2015

to offer two free six-week Stepping into Wellness – Gentle Exercise programs. These are programs for women with breast or gynaecological cancer who live or are having treatment in the western suburbs.

- Our outreach work continued this year with Bridge of Support at The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH), where our peer support volunteers are available to talk to women receiving treatment for breast cancer. Bridge of Support at RMH was made available this year thanks to the generosity of Treasure Chest Inc and the ongoing support of Professor Bruce Mann and the Breast Service team.
- Two external BreaCan information sessions were held in partnership with treatment centres: Eat Well at Sunshine Hospital and Your Immune System and Cancer at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre (ONJCWC).
- We participated in the first Greek community information day for women who have experienced breast cancer. The session was held at the new Greek Centre for Contemporary Culture in Lonsdale Street. It was very well attended and we provided a lot of information and support.
- We were very pleased to secure philanthropic funding from the LUCRF Community Partnership Trust to conduct outreach at Western Health's Sunshine Hospital for two years. Bridge of Support uses BreaCan peer support volunteers to give information, emotional and practical support to women in the western suburbs who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. The aim is to develop a relevant and sustainable model that will continue after the funding period.

# Margaret's story



Margaret, seated, with the rest of the Cairnlea Stepping Into Wellness program participants, Jun 2015

**I was diagnosed with stage 3 ovarian cancer in December 2014. I had surgery that month and completed chemotherapy in late April 2015. The diagnosis was a life-shattering experience. My body, mind and spirit have been sorely tested in that time.**

I am currently riding the waves of emotional stability and emotional vulnerability. I am never sure what each day will bring, but remain eternally grateful to be living the experience.

In the nine months since my diagnosis, I have reached out to friends and family and BreaCan. My friends and family have been a constant fixture in my life over the past 60 years, but BreaCan is a very welcomed new addition.

I found out about BreaCan through Ovarian Cancer Australia. There was information in Professor Quinn's waiting room about them and fortunately BreaCan and Ovarian Cancer Australia were holding a joint information forum on ovarian cancer. I attended the forum and collected the BreaCan pamphlets with the diary dates for the year. Since then, I have attended many sessions held by BreaCan.

I would have to say that the six-week Stepping into Wellness Gentle Exercise program has had the greatest impact on me. I started the program one week after my chemotherapy finished. I attended the classes each week with 11 other women. Bald, my body tired and broken and my confidence at its lowest ebb, I walked into the first session a shadow of a figure. By the sixth session I was revitalised and more confident. It was a very uplifting experience to be involved in the program. There was great camaraderie amongst the women. We talked and laughed and shared our experiences.

BreaCan has been a very supportive organisation and I am grateful that they have been around when I needed support. Staff and volunteers have been very professional and respectful, acknowledging and honouring my personal story whilst at the same time providing information and connecting me, through the sessions, with others in similar situations.

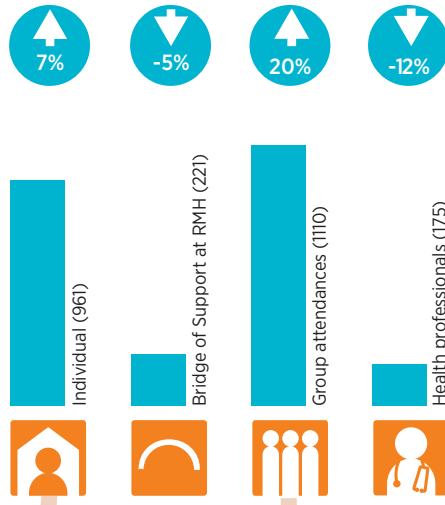
A cancer diagnosis is what it is. It can bring with it so much negativity: uncertainty, fear, and facing one's mortality, to name but a few.

And then amongst the negativity is the shining light. For me, it is my faith in God, in myself (sometimes!) and my faith in supportive people around me. BreaCan staff and volunteers are such people. Thank you BreaCan for being there for me.

# At a Glance 2014/2015

## How do people use our service?

Contacts by type 2014-15





The number of women visiting the Resource Centre increased by 18%.

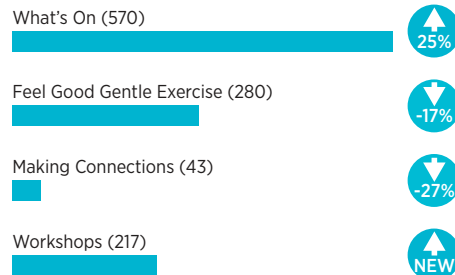
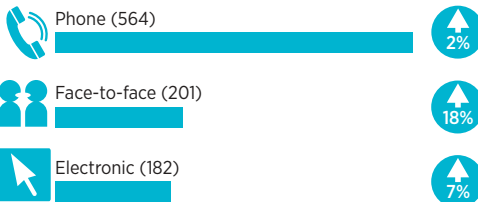
Attendance at our group sessions increased by 20%.

This year we held two sessions in community locations and ran four webinars.

More women living with advanced cancer came to What's On sessions this year.

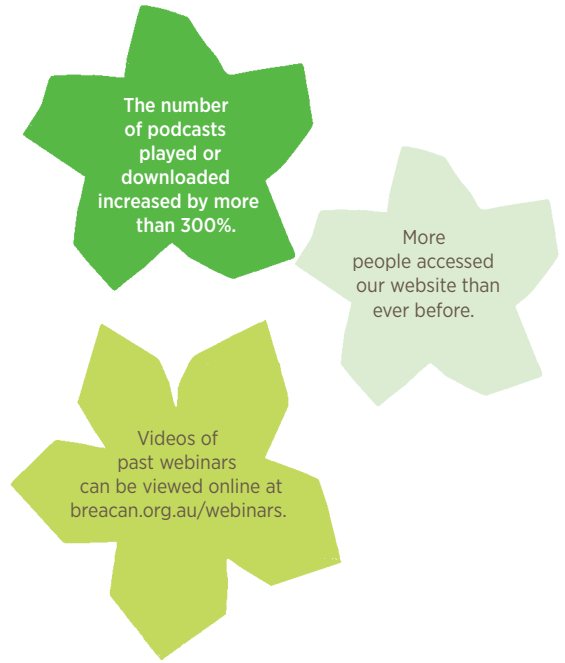
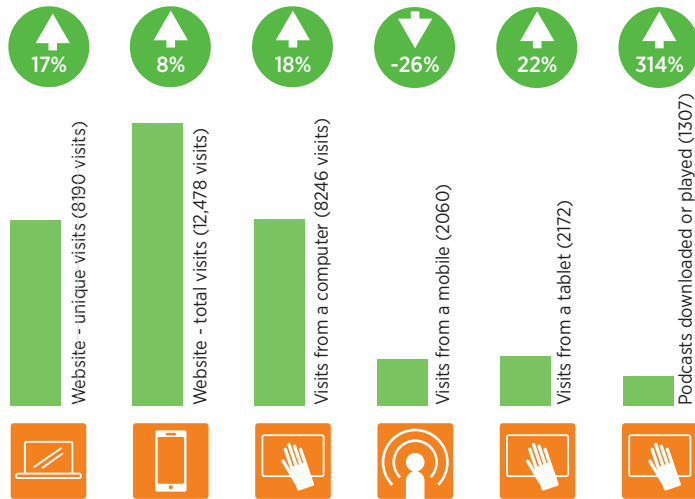
 Individual contacts through Resource Centre

 Group attendances breakdown



## How do people engage with us online?

Website usage 2014-15



## Who uses our service?



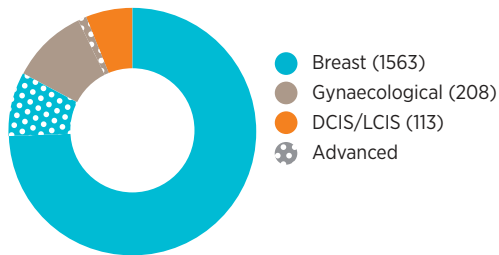
BreaCan users who were born in a non-main English speaking country.



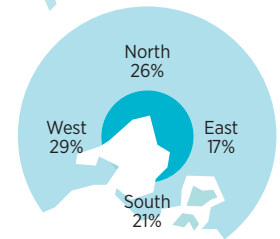
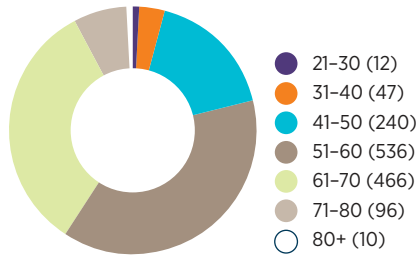
Victorians who were born in a non-main English speaking country.



Cancer type



Age group



Melbourne metro

# Strategic plan 2012–15

**Our strategic goal is to inform, support and empower women with cancer to live well. We aim to do this in many ways.**

**Grow and extend the reach of our information and support services for people affected by breast and gynaecological cancers throughout Victoria**

## Achievements in 2014–15:

- Recruitment of 14 new peer support volunteers
- DHHS funding for rural needs analysis
- Development of a Women's Health Victoria whole-of-organisation diversity strategy
- Development of a culturally sensitive service model and plan
- Treasure Chest Inc funding for Bridge of Support at RMH
- 11% increase in service use
- 17% increase in unique website visits
- 93% increase in engagement through Facebook
- 40% increase in engagement through Twitter

**Build the evidence base for our service model (peer support, volunteering, consumer participation, programs)**

## Achievements in 2014–15:

- Developed research briefs that aim to increase our understanding of the value of peer support
- Supported seven other research projects as partner with input by consumers
- Utilised Masters students for rural scoping work and research briefs
- Participation in Cancer Nurses Society of Australia conference 2014
- Participation in Survivorship conference 2015
- Participation in Victorian Integrated Cancer Services conference 2015

**Pursue opportunities to develop new programs for women with cancer**

## Achievements in 2014–15:

- Pink Affair funding for the Stepping into Wellness – Gentle Exercise program
- LUCRF Community Partnership Trust funding for Bridge of Support at Western Health
- Recruitment of a project worker for the rural needs analysis
- Rural consultations with community and health sector

**Influence cancer policy and practice to ensure women have access to best practice prevention, treatment, supportive and survivorship care**

## Achievements in 2014–15:

- Running our Consumer Reference Group, which meets four times a year
- Participation in:
  - Cancer Council Victoria clinical networks for breast, gynaecology and psycho-oncology groups
  - Chronic Illness Alliance Peer Support Network
  - Breast Service Survivorship Executive Committee and Working Group
  - Statewide Survivorship Program Steering Committee and Community of Practice
  - Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme Alliance
  - BCNA – partner in the Active and Well program
  - Endometrial Cancer Survivorship Program pilot project at the Royal Women's Hospital





# Information and support



## BreaCan Resource Centre

**So much happens in our Resource Centre. Volunteers connect with women in person and by phone. Women visit for support or to attend a What's On or Making Connections session.**

Our library of resources is available for people to browse through or borrow from. Watching our peer support volunteers greet a woman who has found her way to the Resource Centre for the very first time illustrates the value of our service. When she is welcomed by our volunteers, you might see tears or laughter or any emotion in-between. Most importantly, she always receives the information and support she is seeking.

The Resource Centre gives everyone connected with BreaCan – women with cancer, volunteers, staff and health professionals – a warm and welcoming space to share and connect. It is our home.

Above: BreaCan What's On information session on Your Immune System and Cancer, with Professor Jonathon Cebon. Jointly organised with ONJCWC, July 2014  
Above right: Participants at the Sashiko session, June 2015

## Information sessions and programs

The What's On program continues to present a holistic and diverse range of sessions. New topics this year included:

- Exercise During and After Cancer Treatment
- Exercise Following a Gynaecological Cancer
- All About Vitamin D
- Purpose and Meaning in Life.

Some sessions are so popular we repeat them every year. Others are updated to reflect changes in the cancer arena.

A new feature of the What's On program this year has been our partnerships with other organisations. Eat Well (No Matter Where in the World You Come From) and Your Immune System and Cancer were both provided in community locations. This broadens the reach of our service and is a fantastic opportunity to work with cancer health professionals.

Webinars are now an integral part of our What's On and Making Connections programs. Webinars are a great way for people across Victoria to participate in our sessions. Thank you to those of you who persevered through the teething problems we had with this exciting new technology. Thank you also to the women who have organised groups to get together, have a cuppa and join in a webinar. Webinar videos are now being made available through our website.

The What's New segment in each *What's On* newsletter provides links to research, support groups and information to further empower women to find the support and information they are looking for. Thank you to all our presenters for their unfailing support and dedication to supporting women with breast or a gynaecological cancer to live well. Thank you also to everyone in the cancer sector who promotes our activities to the women they treat.



Stepping into Wellness exercise session in Sunshine, June 2015



## Reflexology

The wonderful Bernadette continues to provide reflexology, mainly to women new to BreaCan and those who have been re-diagnosed. As women float out of their session with Bernadette, they often say how special this nurturing experience is. They can leave their responsibilities, fears and worries behind, even if only for a short time. Bernadette also offers tips for self-care that women can use in their daily lives.

## Exercise

**Exercise continues to be a strong focus for us. There is increasing evidence about the positive impact of exercise on people's ability to cope with treatment, the effect on risk of recurrence and its importance for general health following cancer.**

We have provided additional exercise programs where possible. Our volunteers, Judy, Meril and Lois, ran 23 Feel Good sessions this year and we thank them for their continued dedication. Feel Good continues to be a safe and fun way for women to reconnect with their bodies following cancer treatment.

We have also provided two six-week Stepping into Wellness – Gentle Exercise programs in the western suburbs of Melbourne. More than 30 women participated in these programs, which were funded by Pink Affair and generously supported by Sunshine Leisure Centre and Cairnlea Fernwood Gym. The indefatigable Judy ran the sessions, supported by volunteers Coralie and Naideen. A number of fitness professionals also participated in the program to develop a greater understanding of the issues and needs of women with cancer when exercising. We thank Dawn, Sandra and Tatiana for their enthusiasm and commitment.

## Bridge of Support

BreaCan staff and peer support volunteers visit The Royal Melbourne Hospital every week for our Bridge of Support program, which has been running for six years. Each week we see, on average, five women, many of whom are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Women are referred to us by the Breast Care Nurses, Kerry Shanahan, Sue Thomas and Monique Baldacchino, or by the staff of the Day Oncology Ward. Many of the women we see are having chemotherapy treatment; others have recently had surgery, reconstructions, or are experiencing difficult side effects. The nurses are very familiar with the Bridge of Support program and are very supportive. They see the positive difference it makes for women to talk to someone who has also had a cancer diagnosis and undergone treatment and is now providing a message of hope through their happy and healthy presence.

Hospitals are not the perfect place for a private chat, but we are very sensitive to the needs and concerns of the women we're talking to. Often we'll organise for the woman to get a call from one of our volunteers after she goes home. We also talk to their partners, family and friends. Without the dedication and commitment of the peer support volunteers, we would not be able to deliver this valuable program.



## Advanced cancer programs

**We continue to provide support to women living with advanced cancer through individual support and groups attending events as part of our Making Connections program.**

Some highlights of the program this year have been sessions on Treatment Options for Advanced Breast Cancer; What is the Best Way to Manage Cancer Pain?; Creative Ways to Acknowledge Grief; Early Phase Drug Trials and Molecular Profiling; and Coffee, Cupcakes and Reflexology.

We know that physical ill health and the demands of work and family can make it difficult for women living with advanced cancer to come to our Resource Centre. We hope that our new webinars will give these women much easier access to our information sessions. Our very first webinar was a Making Connections session.

We meet many women who have been diagnosed with advanced breast cancer through our Bridge of Support program. We are able to build strong relationships with these women as they attend the hospital for regular treatment.

We acknowledge the specific issues that living with advanced cancer can have for women and are always happy to hear how our service can best provide information and support.

## Resources

**We continue to build our unique collection of quality, evidence-based information resources specifically tailored to women who have had a diagnosis of gynaecological or breast cancer.**

We are very responsive to the needs of our service users, who are directly involved in the selection of resources.

Our partnership with Healthdirect has positioned us alongside other providers of trusted, quality Australian health information, as well as providing an additional point of access for the public.

Women from all over Victoria can access information through our online resources. These include the popular Navigator app, podcasts and webinars as well as our improved online library catalogue.

With the help of our library volunteers, we have added a range of new resources to the collection. Popular topics include cervical cancer, ductal carcinoma in-situ, genetic cancers, triple-negative breast cancer and complementary therapies. We also have free pamphlets from reputable service providers. Our experienced peer support volunteers make selections appropriate to the needs of individual service users. These resources can also be browsed and requested online or by email or phone to the Resource Centre. They are posted out to women across Victoria, free of charge.

# Volunteering at BreaCan

**Our wonderful team of volunteers are the heart of BreaCan. The time they give and their commitment to the women who use our service, either directly through peer support or indirectly through supporting our programs, sustains us.**



BreaCan Volunteer Reference Group meeting, September 2014

This year our volunteer team has grown from strength to strength. The creation of a new volunteer role to assist with podcasts led us to recruit and train two new volunteers. As our library catalogue became available online, and our most experienced library volunteer was taking a well-earned break, we welcomed four new library volunteers.

Our expansion continued with the recruitment of 14 women with diverse experiences to our seventh intake of peer support volunteers. They have completed the formal part of their training and are being mentored by our experienced volunteers as they begin work in the Resource Centre.

Peer support is the cornerstone of our service. It validates the immeasurable value and power of shared experience in making a positive difference to people's lives and their capacity to deal with the impact of cancer. The volunteers, who have themselves faced breast or gynaecological cancer – sometimes both – can normalise people's experiences, listen to their fears and uncertainties and discuss ways to cope and adjust to living with the disease. They speak

to these women from a very different perspective to the health profession. Just by being themselves, they are role models for many of the women using our services.



# New peer support volunteers

**“I now have an understanding of how to gauge where women are with their emotional grief and therefore a better idea of what support to offer.”**



**“I strengthened my understanding of the role of a peer support volunteer, what qualities are required and what resources are available.”**

**“I have more confidence talking with people with a different cancer and also lots more information. I have realised saying ‘I don’t know, but I will find out’ is actually fine.”**

**Participants reflect on the 2015 peer support volunteer training**



**“Wow! My first day as a volunteer in the Resource Centre was amazing. I met Siegfried Gutbrod from the Gawler Cancer Foundation, who held a Laughter and the Inner Child workshop at BreaCan as part of the What’s On program. What a colourful and cheerful way to start my work with BreaCan!!”**

**Elizabeth, peer support volunteer (pictured with staff member Linda and presenter Siegfried)**



**New volunteers Greta and Grace made their first foray into representing BreaCan at the Breast Cancer Network Australia National Summit, July 2015**

## Somboon's story

**My name is Somboon. I was diagnosed with breast cancer on 24 February 2015. I'm a country patient who is currently having my treatment at The Royal Melbourne Hospital. I was introduced to BreaCan when I was first diagnosed, by the Breast Care Nurse. Talking with BreaCan helped me to deal with my denial and confusion at that time. And from then on my life-changing journey began.**



I meet Wendy and the BreaCan volunteers regularly at the hospital. They are so friendly, kind and sincere. They provide support and share their experiences and find reliable information for me regarding my disease. I feel I have met new good friends who really care for my wellbeing.

I've really appreciated your time and efforts of meeting me at the hospital when I'm having chemo. Thank you so much.

Cancer treatments are long and physically hard for me. It's so nice to receive a phone call from

the volunteers to follow up after my hospital appointments. I don't feel alone. They are there to listen.

BreaCan reminds me that there is hope, and the peer support volunteers mean a lot to me. They are real women who have survived. To see them looking well and healthy inspires me. I feel I have sisters taking my hand and walking through this journey with me. They help to calm my fears.

# BreaCan Advisory Group



## Message from the Chair

BreaCan's leadership in anticipating, representing and responding to the needs of Victorian women with breast or gynaecological cancer has continued in 2014-15. New programs, projects and partnerships have been initiated in priority areas, and the vital core work of the service has been sustained. Here are a few highlights from this year.

Ensuring access for women who need its information and support services and programs has been a priority goal for BreaCan since it started. The service has had a greater presence outside the metropolitan area this year through its Connecting and Supporting Rural and Regional Women with Cancer project, which is funded by the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services and run in partnership with Barwon South Western Regional Integrated Cancer Service and Grampians Integrated Cancer Service. Insights emerging from this project will take us several steps closer to ensuring that we know how to deliver resources and models of information and support that are effectively tailored and targeted and have local ownership by women.

With survivorship becoming an increasing focus, BreaCan's partnerships with BCNA, Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre and other organisations continue to grow. These collaborations are welcome and important, because they promote reach, relevance and impact and make the most of each organisation's particular experience and resources.

As part of the overall process for developing Women Health Victoria's (WHV) 2015-18 strategic plan, a strategic planning workshop was held early in 2015. This useful event allowed for open discussions about the past, present and future of BreaCan with contributions by BreaCan volunteers, Advisory Group members and WHV Board members.

Keeping up to date with clinical treatments in cancer, best and emerging practice in supportive care, volunteerism,

social media innovations and health service changes in Victoria are critical to the daily work and sustainability of BreaCan. The behind-the-scenes work this year of BreaCan's manager and staff to stay in touch has continued to position BreaCan as a 'quiet achiever' in the field of supportive care.

As well as contributions to knowledge about how information and support services can best work, BreaCan has much to contribute to international learning in this field. As one means to share and learn, BreaCan joined the World Health Organization-affiliated International Network of Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services this year, providing new opportunities for collaboration and research.

Overall, it has been a busy year for BreaCan. Most importantly, it has hopefully been a year in which women who have used BreaCan services have found a 'supportive friend'.

As a Board Member of Women's Health Victoria since 2007, I have watched BreaCan go from strength to strength. This is my final year as a Board Member, and thus as Chair of the BreaCan Advisory Group. I wish to applaud the commitment and efforts of BreaCan volunteers, Lee Kennedy, staff and Advisory Group members to protect and realise BreaCan's original aspirations and seek out new opportunities. It has been an honour to serve in the capacity of Chair, and I have enjoyed the collegiality (and early mornings) of our meetings in the wonderful space in Queen Victoria Women's Centre. To BreaCan – and all those working so hard to make wellness possible for women who have been diagnosed with cancer, particularly those with breast or gynaecological cancers – I wish you well and will continue to cheer you on.

**Sally Fawkes**  
Chair, BreaCan Advisory Group

# Our People

## Staff

### LEE KENNEDY

Manager

### FIONA McRAE

Team Leader BreaCan Programs

### KELLIE HOLLAND

Volunteer Coordinator

### WENDY PULLAN

Programs Coordinator

### LINDA REHILL

Programs and Resources Coordinator  
(from May 2015)

### CATHERINE WATTS

Communications Coordinator

### KATHERINE BRADSTREET

Administration Officer

### REBECCA STEELE

BreaCan's Connecting and Supporting Rural and  
Regional Women with Cancer Project Worker  
(Employed by Barwon Health)

## Farewells

### MARY MACHERAS-MAGIAS

Programs and Training Officer  
(until Sep 2014)

### SIMONE NELSON

Project and Programs Officer (until Jan 2015)

### HELEN MERTIN

Peer Support Volunteer Trainer  
(Mar-Jun 2015)

### STEPHANIE ZAGAMI

Masters of Public Health Student Placement



BreaCan staff team  
Not pictured: Catherine Watts, Rebecca Steele

## The BreaCan Advisory Group

Sally Fawkes, Chair

Lyn Allison

Monique Baldacchino (from Mar 2015)

Helen Coleman

Christine Evely

Bronwyn Flanagan (until Dec 2014)

Jane Fletcher (until Dec 2014)

Frederika Laurie

Jane McNeilage (until Dec 2014)

Alison Murphy (from Dec 2014)

Penny Sanderson

Beth Wilson

Katy Weare

Rita Butera (Women's Health Victoria  
Executive Director)

Lee Kennedy (BreaCan Manager)



## BreaCan Consumer Reference Group

Carmel Blight

Ilka Carapina

Tracey Carpenter

Bernadette Hayman

Pham Ho

Jill Holmes (until Sep 2014)

Carmel McCarthy





## Our volunteers

It is our pleasure to welcome all our new volunteers to the BreaCan team. We thank the 57 women who have worked with us as program support volunteers and peer support volunteers in 2014–15. Their generous contributions and ongoing commitment to BreaCan and the work we do allows us to support women with cancer.

We also remember with great fondness our program support volunteer, Sue Ewin, who died in 2014.



2015 peer support volunteer intake

### PEER SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Aaltje  
Annette  
Bridget  
Chris  
Coralie  
Frederika  
Heather  
Helen  
Janice  
Janine  
Jewels  
Jill  
Joan  
Joy  
Khim  
Kirsten  
Lianne  
Lois M  
Naideen  
Nikki  
Pam  
Pauline  
Rhonda  
Rita  
Sandra T  
Sue G  
Sue S  
Teresa  
Wendy

### A big welcome to the 14 new peer support volunteers:

Elizabeth  
Gillian  
Grace  
Greta  
Irene  
Jannet  
Jenny  
Kerry  
Maureen  
May  
Nadia  
Trish  
Vivien  
Yvonne

### PROGRAM SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

**Library:**  
Jules  
Gwen  
Christine  
Vivien  
Jewels  
Fiona  
(until Jan 2015)

**Mailout:**  
Christine  
Danni  
Elaine  
Jan  
Jennifer  
Mariae  
Maryse  
Patricia  
Vivien

**Feel Good:**  
Judy  
Meril  
Lois S

**Podcast:**  
Jan  
Mariae

# Looking forward



**We are preparing ourselves for an enormous year ahead. The results of our evaluation will help us identify the most effective elements of our service so that we can build on these in the future. We are hoping this process will also make our accommodation needs clearer, so that we can find the best possible new home for our service.**

We will also be looking at a new name for our service that better reflects the range of work that we do. We will be increasing our efforts to find new sponsors and donors while continuing to work in partnership with other organisations on a range of initiatives that benefit our service users.

While we welcome these exciting changes in our future, our aim is always to retain the essence of BreaCan – to be a safe and welcoming place where we focus on helping women affected by cancer to live well.

## **2015–16 activities include:**

- running our usual service from temporary accommodation on another floor in the Queen Victoria Women’s Centre
- running outreach sessions in partnership with other services
- responding to the results of the rural needs analysis project
- continuing to explore ways of diversifying the Bridge of Support program and extending its reach
- recruiting and training more peer support and program support volunteers
- running another forum for women with advanced cancer
- exploring opportunities for more exercise programs
- continuing to run webinars.

We offer women living with cancer a holistic, community-based service that works in tandem with their medical treatment and existing support systems. At the heart of our service is our peer support volunteers, who have themselves experienced cancer. These women are ‘living well’, and they send a strong message of hope to women with cancer and their families.

You can help our well-respected, consumer-focused service ‘for women by women’ to grow and reach more Victorians diagnosed with a gynaecological or breast cancer by making a donation at [breacan.org.au](http://breacan.org.au).

# Our supporters

We would like to thank the following people, companies and organisations that supported us in a variety of ways this year. We are extremely grateful.

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Donations were received in memory of Paula Drum and in celebration of Carolyn Van Dort's birthday.

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*There were also donors who wished to remain anonymous.*

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Treasure Chest

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#### POSTAL ADDRESS

GPO Box 1066  
Melbourne VIC 3001

#### BreaCan Resource Centre

Queen Victoria Women's Centre  
210 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

#### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday 10am – 2pm  
Wednesday 10am – 2pm  
Thursday 10am – 2pm  
(Closed public holidays)

**Bridge of Support at The Royal Melbourne Hospital** operates on alternate Tuesdays (11am – 3pm) and Thursdays (10am – 2pm)

October 2015

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