

Year in Review
2018-2019



COUNTER  PART
Women supporting women with cancer

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Counterpart service principles

Acknowledge difference – We recognise that every woman's experience of cancer is different and must be seen in the broader context of their lives.

No advice – We share experiences and give support. We do not give medical, legal or financial advice.

Welcoming environment – We provide a welcoming, accessible and safe environment.

Encourage participation – We actively encourage people to participate in the development and operation of the service.

Empower people – We are committed to enhancing people's skills and capacity to make informed choices.

Respect privacy – We respect the privacy of people using the service.

Non-judgemental – We provide support and information in a non-judgemental way.

High standards – We maintain high standards in all aspects of the service and regularly evaluate the service's relevance to consumers, its sustainability and effectiveness.

Cover artwork credits

Artworks submitted to the Counterpart Makes It end of year exhibition.

Ghost Follicle 2018 by Rachelle Austen, Headwear by Margaret Cope, Cone Biopsy 2018 by Rachelle Austen, Quilt by Elizabeth Brown, African dikdik by Margaret Barbara, Dollhouse miniatures by Chris Oxley, Delicious... red and green by Nikki Davis, Stripped away/Shredded by Nicole Mallalieu, canvas by Mithila Babbar, We stand together by Granddaughter Bella and Grandma Theresa Neal, Bud and Flourish by Juliette Kent.

I am honoured to be writing this message for the Counterpart *Year in Review* as the incoming CEO of Women's Health Victoria.

Women's Health Victoria is a statewide, not-for-profit organisation working to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorian women. With a new five-year strategic plan released in 2018, Women's Health Victoria has the vision of **Women living well – healthy, empowered, equal.**

As a service of Women's Health Victoria, Counterpart is key to achieving our strategic priority to inform, support and empower women. This year has seen Counterpart providing more services closer to where women live, particularly through two projects, the Rural and Regional Project and our Area-based Project in Melbourne's south-east, funded by the Victorian Government. Through these projects Counterpart has worked with health professionals to provide information and activities to women across Victoria.

This has resulted in increased numbers of women using our peer support program, connecting through conversation with other women who have had cancer, for emotional and practical support. These highly-trained women volunteer their time to support other women, their friends and family, through diagnosis, treatment and beyond. The stories throughout

our *Year in Review* reflect the value and importance of peer support to women with cancer.

Our volunteers support the Counterpart program in many ways. The Resource Library relies on volunteers to keep the collection in good order, respond to requests for information and mail out resources to women across Victoria – all free of charge. Volunteers also speak at outreach sessions, attend promotional activities, support exercise programs and so much more. To all the Counterpart volunteers, I thank you for your dedication and commitment to improving the lives of Victorian women with cancer.

So many of the activities of Counterpart are only achieved through partnerships. Some of these partnerships provide funding for us to provide more services to women with cancer. Organisations such as Pink Affair, who support the Stepping into Wellness exercise programs, or LUCRF Super Community Program, who have funded better telehealth facilities to provide improved webinars, are vital to providing programs outside of the core Counterpart program. Other partnerships are with health services and health professionals where we work together, to provide information and support to women with cancer in locations across Victoria. Again, you will see where and how these partnerships have been achieved throughout our *Year in Review*. We thank all our partners, wherever they are and however they touch our service, for improving support for women with cancer.

Finally, I would like to talk about the future. Counterpart provides a range of services to women with breast or a gynaecological cancer. We know that many women with other cancer types can find it difficult to receive peer support, access information and connect with other women with cancer. Counterpart is ideally placed to focus on the commonality of women's cancer experience and extend our services to all Victorian women with cancer. By working in partnership with existing organisations to understand where gaps in service provision occur and how best to reach women with other types of cancer, we believe Counterpart, with 16 years of experience in connecting, supporting and informing women with cancer, can be an important and valuable resource for all Victorian women with cancer.

Thank you to the Counterpart staff team, volunteers, session presenters and all the other people and organisations who support the work of Counterpart. I look forward to an exciting year ahead and remain committed to Counterpart services being available to Victorian women with cancer, wherever they live.

Dianne Hill
CEO, Women's Health Victoria



It has again been my pleasure to chair the Counterpart Advisory Group. As this is my last year on the Board of Women's Health Victoria, it provides a great opportunity to reflect on the many changes and improvements that have embedded the work of Counterpart in the cancer sector over the last few years.

During my time there have been many changes but one of the most significant was renaming BreaCan to Counterpart, a more inclusive name that demonstrates the focus Counterpart has always had on extending the reach of the service and making it more accessible. I was also fortunate to be involved during Counterpart's 15th birthday, where we celebrated the legacy of all the volunteers who have provided many hours of support, and created a safe and caring space for thousands of women. This year we have continued to grow and expand our service, particularly in rural and regional areas, increasing peer support and supporting women who may be isolated or have limited resources in their communities.

I want to thank all the members of the Advisory Group over the years for their passion and commitment to Counterpart and the ideas and expertise they have shared to support Counterpart to reach more women with breast or a gynaecological cancer across Victoria. It is important for service growth, that different voices contribute to developing Counterpart in ways that connect, support and inform women to live their lives well.

On behalf of the Advisory Group, I would like to thank the volunteers, staff, health professionals and program partners who take the services of Counterpart to Victorian women with breast or a gynaecological cancer. I look forward to seeing how Counterpart evolves into the future and wish the service all the best.

Helen Coleman
Chair, Counterpart Advisory Group
Women's Health Victoria Board Member



For 25 years, Women's Health Victoria has been dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorian women. Through providing services, influencing and shaping policy, developing resources and sharing evidence, Women's Health Victoria has been committed to achieving gender equity and improving the social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of Victorian women.

In partnership with like-minded organisations, Women's Health Victoria achieved significant change in the decriminalisation of abortion in 2008, to make Victoria a safer place for women to live. Innovations such as the Labia Library and the Women's Health Atlas have been recognised as influential in the provision of health and wellbeing information, not just for Victorian women but women everywhere.

With experience in the following priority areas:

- Sexual & reproductive health
- Prevention of violence against women
- Women and cancer
- Mental health and body image
- Women's equality

and with the ongoing support of the Victorian government, Women's Health Victoria is well on the way to achieving its vision:

Women living well – healthy, empowered, equal.

For more information about Women's Health Victoria please go to: whv.org.au



Teresa's story

'I've been involved as a volunteer at Counterpart, in various capacities: including providing support over the phone or face to face through the peer support program at the Resource Centre; visiting women as they wait for their appointment in hospitals; assisting and participating in the exercise program; lending a hand with outreach activities and on stalls at conventions; giving speeches, and helping with recruitment and training of new volunteers (particularly on the topic of diversity).

During my role as a Peer Support Volunteer I've seen women expressing a feeling of hope and being in better control of their situation. This is as a result of receiving information and emotional support from Peer Support Volunteers. Many women have shared feeling isolated following their cancer diagnosis.

I will never forget one woman I was specifically asked to call as we share the same cultural background. Her medical team were concerned that language, cultural and religious beliefs may have affected her decision-making in relation to her treatment. This experience taught me that, despite everyone's best intentions, ultimately, the decision lies in the patient, which we must acknowledge and respect even if it goes against our own beliefs.

To me, volunteering at Counterpart is totally personal! It's my way of 'paying forward' the same care and kindness I received throughout my own cancer journey. If I can make a difference to even just one woman as she goes through her cancer journey, then it's all worth it.'

Volunteering at Counterpart

This year we have seen excellent growth in the numbers of volunteers supporting the work of Counterpart. All our volunteers are women who have had their own cancer experience and are dedicated to ensuring that other women with cancer get support, wherever they live across Victoria.

Peer Support Volunteers are highly trained and provide a listening ear to support other women with cancer through:

- sharing women's feelings and experiences and providing practical and emotional support
- assisting women to locate reliable and useful resources
- directing women to other services.

Program Support Volunteers are women who support Counterpart programs through:

- running exercise programs
- assisting with mail-outs
- maintaining the Resource Library.

During the year, 59 volunteers, a mix of both program and peer support, have provided an amazing array of services. They have:

- travelled to metropolitan and rural venues to promote Counterpart and talk about peer support
- spoken at events about their own cancer experience
- assisted at trade displays and events
- sent library resources out across Victoria and maintained the library catalogue
- helped recruit, train and mentor new Peer Support Volunteers
- talked about their experiences of volunteering in videos for the Counterpart website
- provided support to women as they undergo treatment via the Bridge of Support program
- participated in projects and committees to improve cancer support for others.

Library

Our library contains a range of books, CDs, and DVDs, across many topics. Women can borrow these items directly from the Counterpart website or by visiting the library, at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. We post resources free of charge, anywhere in Victoria.

In 2018, the Counterpart library continued to expand through:

- new purchases, often based on recommendations received from women with cancer
- the generosity of two Counterpart volunteers (Glenda and Viv) and a substantial donation of books from Jo Lovelock, McGrath Breast Care Nurse at The Bays Hospital Mornington.

Counterpart volunteers keep the library running efficiently and this year we have been delighted to welcome six new library volunteers: Mika, Fe, Tia, Susan, Diana and Marg. They join the existing team of Jan and Jules who have been the backbone of Counterpart's library management for many years.

Translated resource

Thanks to the generosity of the Besen Family Foundation, Counterpart has been able to produce culturally sensitive and relevant translations of the Counterpart brochure in seven community languages: Arabic, Greek, Italian, Somali, Traditional Chinese, Turkish and Vietnamese. The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health provided feedback on how best to communicate Counterpart services to each of the different cultural groups to improve understanding and awareness in the native languages. Polaron assisted with translations by providing a rigorous and accredited translating service. Women with cancer provided input into the design and content of the brochure.



These brochures are particularly useful in our work with women through the Bridge of Support programs and at outreach events. They allow women from non-English speaking communities to gain an understanding of the work and services of Counterpart in a culturally appropriate way.

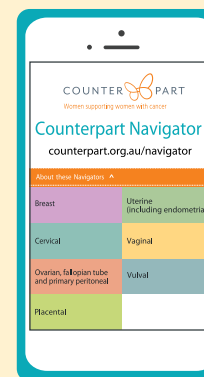


L-R
Kellie Holland, Team Leader Operations/Volunteer Coordinator and Program Volunteer, Jan, providing library volunteer training to Marg, Tia, Diana and Susan.

Navigator

The Counterpart Navigator provides access to reliable, up-to-date information from a computer, tablet or phone. Expanded in 2018 with funding from the Victorian Government, there are now seven navigators: early breast, cervical, ovarian, placental, uterine, vaginal and vulval cancers. The navigators are reviewed by qualified Australian health professionals and women who have experienced breast or a gynaecological cancer.

Ongoing enhancements to the app have been made this year resulting in a better user experience. An evaluation is currently underway, in partnership with Deakin University. This will give us greater insight into how we can improve this resource for women with cancer.



The app is available to download online at counterpart.org.au/navigator or from your favourite app store.



Area-based events

African drumming Djulz – African Drumming

Art therapy session Emma Rose, Art Therapist

Belly dancing Charni, Belly Dancing Instructor – Happy Hips Belly Dancing

Creative exploration with clay Jackie Burden, Art Therapist

End of year morning tea/Counterpart makes it Counterpart volunteers and women affected by breast or a gynaecological cancer

Feldenkrais Thalia Castles, Feldenkrais Practitioner

Meditation Matt Young – Melbourne Meditation Centre

Mindful slow stitching Lea O'Sullivan – Kimono House

Mrs P's adventures: chemo inspired comedy! Jenny Packham, Comedian

Sashiko Lea O'Sullivan – Kimono House

Tea, nurturing and mindfulness Sarah Cowell – Teasense

Writing workshop Adele Hulse, Writer

Yoga Sarasvati Sally Dawson, Yoga and Meditation Practitioner

Webinars

Cancer fatigue – what does the evidence say?* Dr Elizabeth Pearson – University of Melbourne and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Fertility preservation Dr Genia Rozen, Consultant Gynaecologist – Melbourne IVF

Guidelines for a healthy diet* Dr Maree Brinkman, Accredited Practising Dietitian – Nutritional Biomed

Gynaecological cancer treatment and trials* A/Prof Linda Mileskin, Medical Oncologist

Long term side effects* Dr Mary Dwyer, Radiation Oncologist – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Natalie Goroncy, Long Term Follow Up/Late Effects Nurse Consultant – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Lymphoedema information session and morning tea* Helen Eason, Physiotherapist – Helen Eason Physiotherapy

Meaningful ageing* A/Prof Rosalie Hudson, Consultant/Educator in aged care – Age Concern

Medical cannabis* A/Prof Brian Le, Director Palliative Care – Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre

Menopause after cancer* Faith Rees, Nurse Coordinator, Menopause Symptoms After Cancer Clinic – The Royal Women's Hospital.

Older fitter stronger* Libby Oldfield, Specialist Continence and Women's Health Physiotherapist – Fitwise Physiotherapy

Peripheral neuropathy Dr Shirley Wong, Consultant Medical Oncologist

Sleeping soundly Justine Diggins, Clinical Psychologist – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

**Webinar took place with live audience in our Resource Centre in Melbourne.*

Outreach

Bendigo young women's breakfast
In partnership with Bendigo Health

Cancer fatigue: what does the evidence say? – hosted webinar
Dr Elizabeth Pearson – University of Melbourne and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
In partnership with Goulburn Valley Health

Cancer and wellbeing – Altona
Loretta Leigh, Yoga Instructor and Reflexologist
Lucy Liga, Yoga and Meditation Instructor
Sally Low – Salamander Centre for Feldenkrais and Creative Dance
Judy Sammut, Exercise Instructor
Rita Sullivan – Celestial Tai Chi

Cancer and wellbeing – Ringwood East Kathy Jerin, Meditation Instructor – Body Mind and You
Michelle Taylor, Exercise Instructor
Catriona Wells, Tai Chi Instructor
Nancy Wu Wong, Feldenkrais Instructor – Wantirna Health Oncology Rehab Program
In partnership with Eastern Health

Immune therapies and cancer
Dr Belinda Yeo, Medical Oncologist, Clinical Scientist – Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute
In partnership with Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness and Research Centre

Let's talk about sexual health: when cancer impacts our sexual wellbeing Dr Vicki Windholz, Medical Practitioner and Psychotherapist – Monash Health, The Royal Women's Hospital and in private practice in Camberwell
In partnership with Moorabbin Hospital

Lymphoedema information session – hosted webinar and morning tea
Helen Eason, Physiotherapist – Helen Eason Physiotherapy
In partnership with Eastern Health

Medical cannabis – hosted webinar
A/Prof Brian Le, Director Palliative Care – Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre
In partnership with Andrew Love Cancer Centre, Geelong

Medical cannabis – hosted webinar
A/Prof Brian Le, Director Palliative Care – Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre
In partnership with Bendigo Cancer Centre

Meditation and yoga in the east
Sarasvati Sally Dawson, Yoga and Meditation Practitioner
In partnership with Yarra Ranges Health

Menopause after cancer – hosted webinar Faith Rees, Nurse Coordinator, Menopause Symptoms After Cancer Clinic – The Royal Women's Hospital.
In partnership with Warrnambool Community Health

Peripheral neuropathy – hosted webinar Dr Shirley Wong, Consultant Medical Oncologist
In partnership with Andrew Love Cancer Centre, Geelong

Peripheral neuropathy – hosted webinar Dr Shirley Wong, Consultant Medical Oncologist
In partnership with Bendigo Cancer Centre

Sleeping Soundly – hosted webinar
Justine Diggins, Clinical Psychologist – Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
In partnership with Eastern Health

Tai Chi Catriona Wells – Celestial Tai Chi
In partnership with St John of God Berwick

Yoga and mindfulness in the south-east Swami Karunananda, Yoga Instructor
In partnership with St John of God Berwick

Making Connections sessions 2018–19

Coffee, cupcakes and reflexology too
Loretta Leigh, Reflexologist

Living with metastatic breast cancer
Dr Sophie Lewis, Senior Research Fellow and Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow Centre for Social Research in Health

Recognising grief and loss – Mornington
Andrea Murphy, Counsellor
In partnership with McGrath Breast Care Nurses Jenny Macindoe

Trials, treatments and understanding options for metastatic breast cancer – Blackburn
Dr Bianca Devitt, Medical Oncologist, Eastern Health
In partnership with Thursday Girls

Volunteers May and Denise during the Sashiko session held in the Counterpart Resource Centre, July 2018.

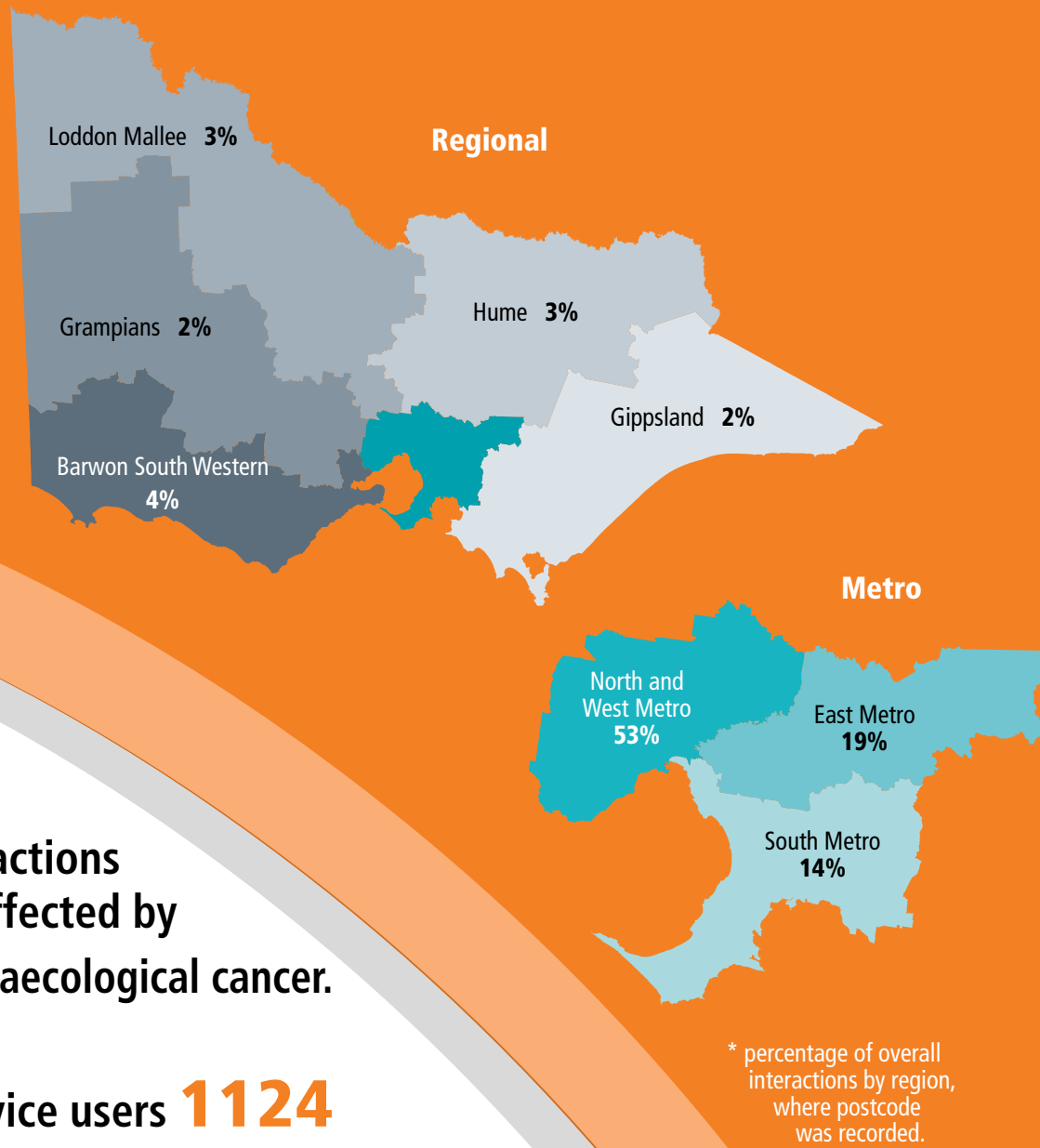


Massiny's story

'When I was first diagnosed with breast cancer, I felt very alone and scared. One day I was sitting in my surgeon's office and saw the Counterpart brochure. I didn't really understand what Counterpart does. I was looking for an exercise program and couldn't find one that I was eligible for. Doing the six-week program with Counterpart was the start of me feeling less isolated in my cancer experience. Meeting other women who also had cancer made me feel less scared, as I realised I was not the only person in this situation. Even in my own community, I am a very quiet person. At Counterpart I felt it was OK to be quiet and I could talk to the Peer Support Volunteers my way. For me, knowledge is really important as I felt like I didn't understand what was happening to me. The exercise program gave me understanding about how my body had changed and how to help get moving again. Then I went to the What's On sessions at the Counterpart Resource Centre; that gave me more information about cancer and, most importantly, some of the things I can do to assist with my recovery. I hope that by telling my story, other women will know they are not alone.'



Interactions by region*



2941 interactions with people affected by breast or a gynaecological cancer.

Individual service users **1124**

Number of interactions



Resource Centre
1378
17% increase from last year



Bridge of Support
458
16% increase from last year



Group sessions
1105
28% increase from last year

Diversity

37% * of interactions were with people born in a non-main English speaking country (where country of birth is recorded)

* compared with 22% of the Victorian population in the 2016 census.

Diagnosis



Contacts by cancer type*

- Breast cancer **82%**
- Gynaecological cancers **10%**
- DCIS **5%**
- Other **3%**

Other includes unknown cancer diagnosis, not stated and other tumor streams.

Contacts by cancer stage 11% contacts with women living with metastatic cancer*
*of those contacts where disease stage is recorded.

Group sessions



- 96** sessions held
- 33** What's On
- 4** Making Connections (events for women living with metastatic cancer)
- 59** exercise (Feel Good and Stepping into Wellness)

52 locations

12 webinars

Volunteers



2471 hours volunteered

2179

hours by Peer Support Volunteers (Resource Centre, Bridge of Support, other outreach)

292

hours by Program Volunteers (library, mail-outs, Feel Good exercise program)

Online information



3082 Counterpart Navigator app visits



Live webinar participation is up **137.5%** with **209** live views. **1246** webinar videos watched



View from regional Victoria

Rosie Gillies McGrath Breast Care Nurse, St John of God, Bendigo

'One of the lovely aspects of my role is the ability to promote Counterpart because women benefit so much from the support and connection and resources it can provide. I always like to say to our families that even though Counterpart are in Melbourne there is a team of beautiful people who are passionate about women with breast cancer feeling supported and informed and are a click or phone call away. I like to discuss the webinars and the fact that you can access them if you miss them live.

The peer support program is of benefit particularly for our rural families who return to small communities where there may be little health support or survivorship programs. I have found with some ladies that connecting through the peer support program (with someone who understands) is empowering and can ease fear and isolation rural living and breast cancer diagnosis can bring. As a health professional it is so great to have another resource beyond the hospital system, a team of caring, dedicated and committed people who promote wellbeing and connectedness. Thanks Counterpart.'



Rural and Regional Project

Counterpart has been able to reach more women where they live, as a result of continuing to strengthen relationships with service providers in rural and regional Victoria. Through this project, funded by the Victorian Government, we have run several events including hosted webinars in areas such as Geelong, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Ballarat, Ararat and Shepparton. Counterpart supports hosted webinars with content, promotional materials and registration processes. As a result of hosting webinars with Counterpart, Bendigo and Geelong are now regularly offering viewings of Counterpart webinars as part of their supportive care services.

Hosted webinars benefit service providers by bringing high quality presentations to regional areas, often with the opportunity to ask questions directly to the presenter. These events also provide a space for women to connect with other women from their local area and share their cancer experiences. Women found the hosted webinars to be a helpful way of accessing information and reported that they would feel more confident to watch webinars at home after having done so with a group.

Staff and volunteers also visit rural and regional areas to meet women, provide peer support and promote the services of Counterpart.

These efforts have resulted in an increase in the use of Counterpart services from women across Victoria. We thank the women and health professionals who have encouraged, supported and participated in these events.

Attendees at the live screening of the Menopause after cancer webinar at South West Healthcare Warrnambool, July 2018.



Area-based Project

Funding from the Victorian Government enabled us to provide dedicated resources and Counterpart services to specific areas of Melbourne in an intensive and coordinated manner. Through a variety of activities, new partnerships were forged and existing ones strengthened. By talking to and working with health professionals working in cancer across the Eastern and Southern regions of Melbourne, our project coordinator was able to develop an interesting program based on the needs of women with breast or a gynaecological cancer, delivered in a range of locations.

These events have included a Cancer and Wellbeing Day in Ringwood, where the women attending had the opportunity to learn about or try activities such as Feldenkrais, exercise, yoga, meditation and tai chi. Wellbeing events were also held in Altona, Lilydale and Berwick. Feedback from women who attended these events has been overwhelmingly positive, with many women noting they could participate because the events took place in their local communities.

A number of hosted webinars were also run in Blackburn, Bentleigh East and Ringwood East as a result of new partnerships with health professionals. Thank you to all the health professionals who have partnered and supported Counterpart activities closer to where women live. This gives women opportunities to connect with others, be supported and to gain information in their own communities.



"I am grateful for the support provided by the caring people who make up Counterpart; it has eased my journey, thank you."

Joanne's story

'I found Counterpart online when I was searching for support just after receiving my diagnosis: cancer of the cervix in September 2018.

My gynaecology surgeon said that it was going to be the hardest year of my life, but I had a great chance of being cured. In a state of shock, I rang Counterpart to book in to the Mrs P's adventures: chemo inspired comedy! session.

Finding a welcome there and the opportunity to spend time with a volunteer who had already travelled a journey similar to mine was really helpful. I was able to ask questions and share my thoughts in a real way without having to worry about how my feelings and reactions might affect my family and friends and have a laugh too.

Participating in the Wellbeing Days helped me nurture myself and exercise in ways that were practical for my health and ability. It was fantastic to be energised by the positive attitudes of the women in the group, the generous presenters and volunteers.

Being able to attend events close to home or via webinar has made access easy, as using public transport during treatment and early recovery can be difficult, especially when symptoms are hard to manage. Not having to drive in peak hour traffic when I was feeling unwell was great too.'





Aya's story

'I was diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago. While I was having chemotherapy, which, was the hardest time for me, the Bridge of Support Coordinator Louise introduced me to Counterpart volunteer Chris, who went through a similar breast cancer journey years ago. She answered the questions that I was worried about nicely and explained her story. Her words sounded so right to me, giving me a chance to talk to survivors like her encouraged me deeply.

Last year I attended the free exercise program called Stepping into Wellness by Counterpart. It was an amazing experience for me and highly recommended. The trainer Judy was also a cancer survivor so she knew exactly what we could do and what we needed to do. It was so much fun! I have also developed friendships with peers over there. Everyone had different stories, but everyone tried to move on. It was very inspirational. I just cannot thank everyone enough at Counterpart for the unforgettable experience.'



Bridge of Support

Counterpart continues to fund two Bridge of Support programs – taking the services of Counterpart directly to women as they are undergoing treatment at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and Sunshine Hospital. By being available for women at these difficult times, Counterpart is also able to connect women into other services that may be appropriate. The Bridge of Support program provides a range of pathways to supportive care for women. Pathways include connecting a woman to a Peer Support Volunteer during treatment and linking her to an exercise program in her area after treatment. Women are often overwhelmed as they move from diagnosis through to treatment, so seeing and talking with a Peer Support Volunteer, another woman who has had cancer, provides hope and encouragement, as well as emotional and practical support.

We thank all the health professionals we work with at The Royal Melbourne Hospital, The Royal Women's, Hospital, Sunshine Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, who collaborate with Counterpart to provide the Bridge of Support program by referring women, liaising with the Counterpart team and promoting the services of Counterpart.

Exercise continues to be an important component of the activities of Counterpart, as evidence continues to mount about the importance of exercise both during and after cancer treatment. Counterpart provides two introductory exercise programs, open to women who are at least eight weeks post-surgery and who have received approval from their treating team to participate. These free programs, conducted by women who are certified fitness instructors, create a safe and friendly space where women, regardless of their fitness level, can exercise and connect with other women who have had cancer.

Feel Good

Run by the inimitable Judy, this fortnightly exercise program, held at the Genesis gym in central Melbourne, continues to support women to exercise. Women can join this program at any time to encourage movement and flexibility and importantly, to have fun.

Stepping into Wellness

Now in its fifth year, this program, provided through the generosity of Pink Affair, continues to be highly successful. Seventy-eight women have participated in one of the six programs held in Heidelberg (twice), Chirnside Park, Cairnlea, Nunawading and Cranbourne this year. The six-week programs aim to motivate women to increase their level of physical activity and connect them to ongoing exercise programs in their local areas.

Feedback from participants of the Stepping into Wellness exercise program has been very positive. Many women have let us know that the strongest reasons for attending the program are that they are free of charge, held in a group environment where they feel safe, and facilitated by instructors who understand their experience of cancer and wellbeing.

Rural Programs Coordinator, Tammy Boatman, at Cancer Survivorship 2019, Sydney, March 2019.

Participants of our Stepping Into Wellness exercise program, Nunawading, November 2018.



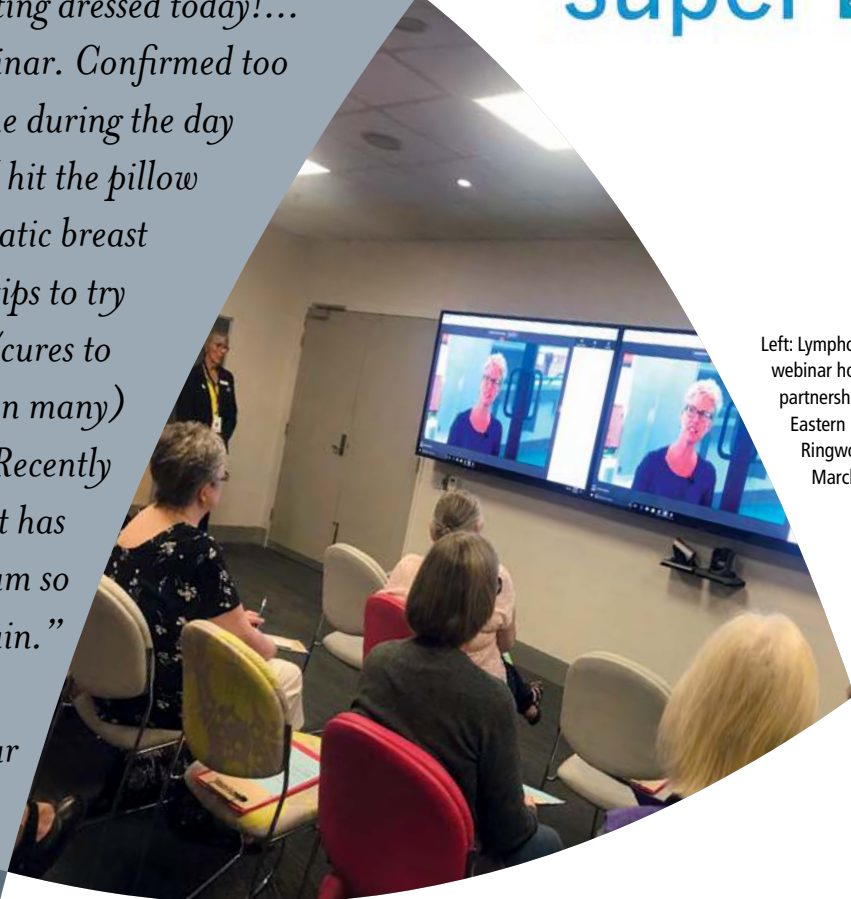
Susan's story

'I was so grateful for being able to take part in the Stepping into Wellness exercise program. These free sessions offered a variety of movements that I could easily adapt into an everyday routine, from the stretching exercises, the resistance training and the tai chi. I was given a booklet to follow at home between sessions and after the six week program ended. This helped me gain confidence in doing the exercises on my own.

I was treated with respect when the exercises became too difficult and there was a modification that the instructor offered me. Talking with the other ladies about our different needs was very encouraging to me. I also met with some ladies from my area that I can keep in contact with so we can encourage each other with continuing to exercise.'



“I watched in my PJs because I didn’t feel like getting dressed today!... Thank you – great webinar. Confirmed too that others are like me, fine during the day and evening but as soon as I hit the pillow the worries about my metastatic breast cancer flood in. Lots of new tips to try tonight but my past attempts/cures to sleep well (and there have been many) only last for a night or two. Recently I returned to work and that has helped greatly because I am so exhausted. Thanks again.”
 – Julie, Sleeping soundly webinar



Left: Lymphoedema webinar hosted in partnership with Eastern Health, Ringwood East, March 2019.

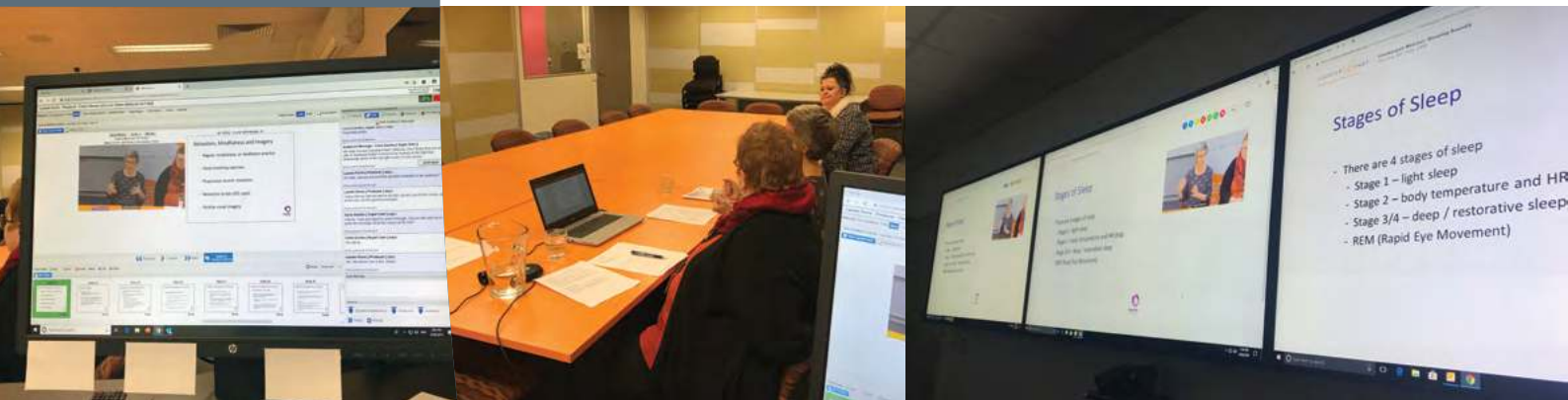


Telehealth

With thanks to LUCRF Super Community Program, our Telehealth Project was established in August 2018. This funding enabled us to install new, modern telehealth facilities at Women’s Health Victoria so we can expand our program to more women. During the year we have hosted several high quality webinars and teleconferences with partners and service users around Victoria, thanks to this technology. We have also partnered with six hospitals in rural and regional Victoria to host live webinar events enabling us to reach even more women. We thank our regional partners for supporting Counterpart to increase access to information for women with cancer. In the past year 209 people participated in our live webinars and hundreds more visited our website to watch recorded webinars. Our surveys showed that 100 per cent of webinar attendees found Counterpart webinars to be informative.

Excitingly, other areas of Women’s Health Victoria have also utilised the telehealth facilities to deliver programs to women across Victoria.

Below: Sleeping Soundly webinar with presenter Justine Diggins, June 2019. L-R: the main control panel for the webinar; the presenter at Women’s Health Victoria; the presentation being broadcast at the Maroondah Breast and Cancer Centre, Ringwood East.



Our volunteers

We thank everyone who has volunteered for Counterpart this year. Your enthusiasm, willingness to help others and dedication allows women with cancer across Victoria to be connected, supported and informed.



Right: The 2018 intake of Peer Support Volunteers with Counterpart staff at the completion of their training, August 2018.

Peer Support Volunteers

- Aaltje
- Amanda
- Annette
- Branka
- Bridget
- Chris G
- Chris O
- Cindy
- Coralie
- Danni
- Denise
- Elizabeth
- Glenda
- Grace
- Greta
- Helen B
- Helen C
- Isabella
- Jan
- Janice
- Jenny
- Jo
- Joan
- Lea
- Lianne
- Liz
- Lois M
- Lyn
- Marcia
- Marg
- Margaret
- Marie
- May
- Meri
- Mika
- Nadia
- Pam
- Penny
- Rhonda
- Sue F
- Sue G
- Sue S
- Teresa
- Trish F
- Trish M
- Vivien
- Vivienne
- Wendy
- Yvonne

We remember with fondness Peer Support Volunteer Lianne, who died in September 2019, as this publication was being prepared.

Program Volunteers

- Adikari
- Ailsa
- Damien
- Diana
- Fe
- Gwen
- Jan
- Jaya
- Jennifer
- Jules
- Kene
- Lucy
- Marg
- Maryse
- Mika
- Susan
- Tia
- Vivien

Exercise Support Volunteers

- Judy
- Lois S
- Meril

Retiring Volunteers

- Aaltje (10 years)
- Helen C (7 years)
- Jules (11 years)
- Nikki (8 years)

NAB volunteers
 We would also like to thank volunteers from the National Australia Bank for assisting us with mail-outs:

- Anthony
- Asmeet
- Carolyn
- Cheong
- Cindy
- Dana Mae
- Gaithri
- Georgia
- Glenn
- Hamish
- Jillian
- Jingnan
- Johann
- Kanchan
- Kathy
- Katie
- Larry
- Lydia
- Matilda
- Norman
- Sharmane
- Trang
- Yasmin
- Yen



*Congratulations
Fiona McRae, Wendy Pullan
and Katherine Bradstreet on
achieving 10 years service
at Counterpart.*

Back L-R: Wendy Pullan, Louise Knell, Tammy Boatman,
Linda Rehill Front L-R: Kellie Holland, Dianne Hill,
Rebecca Harraghy, Fiona McRae.

Staff

Dianne Hill
Manager Support Services

Fiona McRae
Assistant Manager and Team
Leader Strategy and Development

Kellie Holland
Team Leader Operations
and Volunteer Coordinator

Tammy Boatman
Rural Programs Coordinator and
Stepping into Wellness Coordinator

Katherine Bradstreet
Communications Coordinator

Lauren Ferris
Digital Resources Coordinator

Rebecca Harraghy
Administration Officer

Louise Knell
Bridge of Support Western Health
Coordinator

Mary Macheras-Magias
Area-based Coordinator

Wendy Pullan
Program Coordinator and Bridge
of Support VCCC Coordinator

Linda Rehill
Program and Resources
Coordinator

Helen Mertin
Volunteer Training Coordinator

Lieve De Clercq
Casual Program Coordinator

Julie Keys
Casual Program Coordinator

Counterpart Advisory Group

Helen Coleman (chair)
Monique Baldacchino
Danielle Carpenter
Liz Dax (from November 2018)
Christine Evely
Carmel McCarthy (from February 2019)
Alison Murphy
Bernadette Zappa (from March 2019)
Greta (from January 2019, Counterpart Volunteer)
Janice (Counterpart Volunteer)
Dianne Hill (Manager Support Services)

Farewells

Lyn Allison (until December 2018)
Kate Broun (until October 2018)
Rita Butera (CEO until May 2019)
Judy Hacker (until October 2018)
Pam (until December 2018, Counterpart Volunteer)

Donors:

After Breast Cancer Exercise Group
Susanne Burgess
Coburg Basketball Association
Jan Collier
Leo Connelly
Lois Goodwin
Lynette Hunter
Massiny Ng
Oanh Nguyen
Judy Margolis
Betty Myers
Nancy O'Toole
Meri Rametta
Nuni Sim
Sister of Passionist Fathers
(Joan Smith)
AL Steele
Sandra Topp
Judith Weston

In-kind donations:

Aqualink Nunawading
Belinda Astl
Libby Blackley
Casey RACE
Wendy Dawson
Bianca Devitt
Dr Mary Dwyer
Natalie Goroncy
Prof Michael Green
Rosetta Hart
Sara Jorgensen
A/Prof Brian Le
Dr Sophie Lewis
Paul Magias
Libby Oldfield
Amanda Piper
Jane Power
Faith Rees
Fernwood Fitness—
Chirnside Park and Cairnlea
Emma Rose
Dr Genia Rozen
Michelle White
Dr Vicki Windholz
Shirley Wong

Friends of Counterpart:

Belinda Astl
African Drumming
Arena Printing

Attractor Solutions
Community Data Solutions
Kaye Elias
Genesis Fitness
Jo Gniel
Melissa Grenville
IT Strategic
Loretta Leigh
Mezzo
NAB
Olympic Leisure Banyule
Judy Sammut
Michelle Taylor
Vicki White

Presenters:

Belinda Astl
Dr Maree Brinkman
Libby Blackley
Jackie Burden
Thalia Castles
Charni
Wesa Chau
Sarah Cowell
Sarasvati Sally Dawson
Wendy Dawson
Dr Bianca Devitt
Justine Diggins
Djulz
Dr Mary Dwyer
Helen Eason
Jane Fletcher
Natalie Goroncy
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A/Prof Rosalie Hudson
Adele Hulse
Kathy Jerin
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Swami Karunananda
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Dr Sophie Lewis
Lucy Liga
Sally Low
A/Prof Linda Mileskin
Andrea Murphy
Libby Oldfield
Lea O'Sullivan
Jenny Packham
Dr Elizabeth Pearson
Amanda Piper

*Thank you to all the people
and organisations who have
supported us in many different
ways in 2018-19. Your
support makes it possible
for us to continue to
connect, support
and inform women
with breast or a
gynaecological
cancer across
Victoria to
live well.*

Jane Power
Faith Rees
Emma Rose
Dr Genia Rozen
Judy Sammut
Rita Sullivan
Michelle Taylor
Catriona Wells
Michelle White
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Dr Shirley Wong
Nancy Wu Wong
Beng Yan
Dr Belinda Yeo
Matt Young

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Counterpart Resource Centre



Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Level 5, 210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000



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Monday 10am–5pm

Wednesday 10am–5pm

Thursday 10am–5pm

Peer support offered from 10am–2pm
on these days (closed public holidays)

Postal address

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Women's Health Victoria acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land, the peoples of the Kulin Nation. As a statewide organisation, we also acknowledge the traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Victoria. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that we are beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 200 years ago and continues today.

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COUNTER PART

Women supporting women with cancer



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