RADIOTHERAPY AFTER SURGERY? IF AND WHEN.

BY DR MICHAEL IZARD

Surgery is regarded by many as the ‘gold standard’ of treatment for prostate cancer, although there is evidence of similar results with other treatments. Sadly though, despite the hope that surgery will ‘get everything’ sometimes this doesn’t happen, as can be seen in the pathology (laboratory) report at the time of surgery, or with a PSA rise months, or even years later. There are several possible reasons for this and, as a consequence, there are different options of how the disease process can be managed.

The implication of a rise in PSA following surgery is that there is residual prostate cancer present. Broadly speaking, this residual disease is either in the vicinity of the prostate, or has spread elsewhere (or both). If disease has spread, it is described as ‘metastatic’ and treatment will involve hormones for several years (and with radiotherapy if there is a need to control or avoid a symptom).

However, in some cases either the PSA hasn’t fallen satisfactorily or rises after surgery with no evidence of disease away from the prostate bed (the area below the bladder and in front of the rectum) on bone or CT scans. In this case, radiotherapy can be useful to regain control of the disease and re-establish the possibility of a cure.

If the laboratory results from the operation show certain features, we know that there is a significant possibility of the cancer progressing because there is residual cancer left behind. Examples include ‘positive margins’ where tumour is at the edge of the surgical sample; ‘extracapsular spread’ where the cancer has spread beyond the boundaries of the prostate; and less significantly ‘perineural infiltration’, ‘high grade’ and ‘bulky disease’. Perineural infiltration is where the cancer has spread down nerve tracts; high grade disease is when the Gleason score returns higher than anticipated from the original biopsy and now indicates a more aggressive tumour, whilst the bulk of cancer can sometimes be greater than was anticipated from the biopsy report. All of these may indicate greater likelihood of residual disease. With these features, a course of radiotherapy to the pelvis may increase the likelihood of the cancer being controlled.

Previously radiotherapy in this setting was troubled by significant complications to the bladder and bowel. With the introduction of new equipment, along with more powerful computers and software, this has markedly improved in the last two to three years. Radiotherapy can be applied to the prostate bed, but also up the pelvic side-walls. Techniques such as rotational delivery of radiotherapy (RapidArc or VMAT) mean that we can treat this area, but also identify, and more importantly spare, significant areas of bowel and bladder from high radiation doses and so markedly reduce the risk of damage. The radiotherapy dose is also constrained by the known radiation tolerances of the rectum to minimise the risk of long-term damage.
Dear friends,

After more than six and half years I have decided that is time to move on from PCFA. I have had the honour of being PCFA’s CEO since 2004, when we were a much smaller organisation operating out of a small shop in Lane Cove with just four part-time staff and an income of just over $1 million. That seems a long time ago when compared to our current status of the equivalent of 20 full time staff, offices in Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and income of just over $15 million per year. It has been an amazing journey.

PCFA growth has mirrored the growth of awareness of prostate cancer in the Australian community. When I joined PCFA there were just 48 support groups. Today there are more than 110 and the number continues to grow.

Importantly, awareness about prostate cancer among the general public has risen dramatically thanks to PCFA’s national campaigns starting with Be A Man in 2005 up to Surviving Prostate Cancer Could Happen to You in 2010. The launch of our BBQ Campaign in 2009, in partnership with the Commonwealth Bank, continues to grow and develop and will be even bigger in 2011. The work and commitment of our Ambassador speakers has been extraordinary in raising awareness across Australia. Perhaps most significantly PCFA now runs a world class research grant project that is the envy of many of our national and international collaborators.

We are particularly proud of PCFA’s partnership with the Movember Foundation. It is hard to reconcile the worldwide phenomenon that Movember is today with the rather bold hopes of the four initial Mo Bros to change the face of men’s health. They have succeeded beyond all measure and it is a credit to all the hundreds of thousands of Mo Bros and Mo Sistas who support Movember each year.

I can’t list all the people who have helped me in my journey at PCFA. But I would like to acknowledge my Chairman, Graeme Johnson and my Deputy Chair, David Sandoe OAM for their passion and commitment. I would also like to acknowledge all of my staff, both past and current, who have been fantastic and passionate believers in the mission of PCFA.

PCFA is a truly national organisation. One organisation – one PCFA – funding and co-ordinating research, support and awareness activities. One organisation balancing the needs of consumers with the needs of researchers, donors and corporate partners.

To all of PCFA’s wonderful supporters across Australia – and indeed across the world – thank you for your incredible support and commitment during my time as CEO. My sincere thanks and my very best wishes to you for the future.

Regards

ANDREW GILES
Dr David Malouf
MBBS FRACS (Urol)

Dr David Malouf graduated from the University of Sydney in 1990, followed by a fellowship year at London’s Hammersmith Hospital, specialising in surgical oncology and renal transplantation.

His special interests include uro-oncology, brachytherapy for prostate cancer, erectile dysfunction and the management of urinary tract calculi. He is a clinical teacher at the University of New South Wales Medical School and is a Visiting Medical Officer at St George Hospital, Hurstville Private Hospital and The Mater Private Hospital.

Dr Malouf serves on the Board of the Australasian Brachytherapy Group and the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand and represents the Urological Society on the International Relations Committee of the American Urological Association and the General Council of the Urological Association of Asia. He is also a Director of the British Journal of Urology International.

As past President of the Urological Society, Dr Malouf was instrumental in further developing the relationship between PCFA and the peak body representing urologists in Australia and New Zealand.

‘By working together closely, these two organisations can provide the greatest benefit to men concerned about prostate cancer,’ said Dr Malouf.

‘The Urological Society aims to provide the latest clinical information about prostate cancer to both our members and the wider community to ensure our population is educated about the best way to diagnose and treat this disease.

‘While there is ongoing debate about prostate cancer testing, I firmly believe men should have access to information and resources to allow them to make informed individual decisions regarding prostate cancer testing and subsequent treatment where necessary.’

CONTINUED FROM COVER

LABORATORY RESULTS AT THE TIME OF SURGERY

Following surgery, laboratory results (called histopathology) may suggest that cancer is still present. Radiotherapy is added (usually after a Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting) as an ‘adjuvant’ therapy, so-called because it is expected that more than just surgery is required to control the cancer. This can be recommended even before the surgery in certain scenarios where the disease has very aggressive features.

Here, radiotherapy is likely to be used three to six months after surgery, to allow time for healing and most importantly, the return of continence. There are studies currently looking at the timing of this treatment. Evidence suggests that a course of radiotherapy in these scenarios has a likelihood of controlling the cancer in about 50 to 60 per cent of men.

RISING PSA AND RADIOTHERAPY

When there is a rising PSA months or years after surgery, it is more difficult to know when to use and when not to use ‘salvage’ radiotherapy, especially when CT or bone scans show no evidence of spread of the cancer. It is called ‘salvage’ treatment as it is being used to try and re-establish the opportunity of long-term control or cure, which the first plan of approach (surgery on its own) has not achieved. If there is evidence of spread, there is little role for radiotherapy, but when these tests are clear, then we are uncertain if the recurrence is at the original site, in the prostate bed. Often the PSA rise is small and so the area of residual cancer is small and not visible by these or other tests. We must then consider where the cancer might be, to see if adding radiotherapy to the prostate bed is appropriate.

Along with the laboratory results from the surgery, a slow ‘grumbling’ rise in PSA with a doubling time of 12 or more months from a very low starting value is more suggestive of residual cancer in the pelvis, than a rapidly rising PSA with a doubling time of three to six months which suggests spread away from the pelvis. Features of the initial laboratory results can be used to assist with this decision process. A discussion prior to treatment should include these uncertainties, with the option of no radiotherapy being one option that needs discussion. Control can occur in about half the men treated.

Radiotherapy is not just a useful alternative treatment to surgery as a first choice in the management of prostate cancer; it can also be extremely useful when surgery hasn’t been as successful as hoped. It can be used as a planned ‘adjuvant’ therapy after the surgery, or in a ‘salvage’ setting, even several years after surgery.
PCFA BOWLED OVER BY CRICKET SUPPORT

PCFA was honoured to be selected as the beneficiary of the 2011 Prime Minister’s XI cricket match.

Rain didn’t dampen the competition at Manuka Oval on Monday 10 January 2011, when England continued its winning streak with a crushing seven-wicket win over the Prime Minister’s XI.

Volunteers from the ACT Region Support Group spent the day manning a stall, situated just inside the main entrance. Selling PCFA pins and handing out prostate cancer information brochures, the volunteers were thrilled to receive a VIP visitor.

“We were delighted that the Prime Minister apparently requested that her group come down to our stall to meet us. There were six of us there and she and Tim Mathieson made a point of speaking to each of us individually.

‘The Prime Minister wasn’t wearing a PCFA pin, having left hers at home. So we made sure she departed with one on her lapel,’ said Peter Daley from the Prostate Cancer Support Group – ACT Region Inc.

Each guest at the Prime Minister’s VIP lunch was also provided with a PCFA pin. As a result, many media images the following day featured the PCFA pin on some well-known lapels.

To view photos from the Prime Minister’s XI cricket match, visit the ACT Region Support Group website – http://prostate-cancer-support-act.net

PCFA would like to thank Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Tim Mathieson for recognising prostate cancer as an important men’s health issue and for supporting the work of the Foundation.

WORLD RECORD ALL TIED UP

The Tie-Up Prostate Cancer Challenge has been recognised with an entry into the Guinness Book of Records for the longest chain of neckties ever created. The challenge, held as part of the Bathurst 12-Hour motor racing event in February 2010, was the brainchild of local councillors Bobby Bourke and Ian North.

‘We both wanted to do something to raise awareness into men’s health… we wanted something every man would have and we didn’t want jocks, so it had to be a tie,’ said Cr Ian North.

The ties were collected over 12 months and were tied together by volunteers at the local charity shop.

On 11 February 2010, exactly 8,695 ties were wrapped around Mount Panorama by volunteers, who had only two-hours to complete the challenge.

Councillors Bourke and North thanked everyone involved in the world record attempt, particularly council event staff, volunteers and the community at large. PCFA’s NSW/ACT State Manager, Wendy Farrow assisted the effort and congratulated Councillors Bourke and North, council staff and the Bathurst community for their innovative approach to raising prostate cancer awareness.
In an Australian first, PCFA has joined six of the country’s leading cancer charities to form the Cancer Research Leadership Forum. The Leadership Forum was launched at PCFA and the National Breast Cancer Foundation’s Annual Research Update on World Cancer Day, 4 February at the Garvan Institute in Darlinghurst, Sydney.

PCFA and the National Breast Cancer Foundation’s Annual Research Update brought together some of the best and brightest from the research world to share their latest discoveries and developments in breast and prostate cancer research.

The formation of the Cancer Research Leadership Forum, comprising Bowel Cancer Australia, Cancer Council Australia, Cure Cancer Australia, Leukaemia Foundation, Melanoma Institute, National Breast Cancer Foundation and PCFA, is a significant step forward for the often fragmented Australian not-for-profit sector. The Cancer Research Leadership Forum aims to maximise efficiencies, collaboration and the sharing of resources between cancer charities.

With funding provided by the Macquarie Group Foundation, the Cancer Research Leadership Forum will work together to develop a national cancer research plan and consider opportunities for co-funded research amongst the group. The Cancer Research Leadership Forum will also advocate for increased research funding from the government and educate consumers about the importance of ongoing cancer research.

It is estimated that within the next 30 years, 27 million new cases of cancer will be diagnosed and 70 per cent of these will be in the developing world. This represents an enormous health burden and will also create huge economic challenges. The Cancer Research Leadership Forum has been formed in response to an urgent need to accelerate research that will deliver new knowledge on which to base future cancer control programs, in Australia and around the world.

Also at the Annual Research Update hosted by Julie McCrossin, delegates heard from Dr Andrew Redfern who has been studying the effects of proteins on breast cancer cells treated with anti-cancer drugs. His research ultimately aims to improve chemotherapy outcomes for breast cancer patients. Associate Professor Christine Giles from the National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre revealed a new program of follow-up care shared by general practitioners and specialists which is being trialled for women being treated for early breast cancer.

PCFA’s Research Program, made possible by the generosity of The Movember Foundation, was represented by Dr Jeff Holst who is studying the role of protein pumps that control the amount of nutrients taken into and out of prostate cancer cells. This research aims to design drugs specific to these pumps, in essence ‘starving the cancer’ by restricting nutrient uptake. Dr Kristen Radford presented the latest, exciting findings of her work aimed at developing a vaccine that directly stimulates immune cells to kill tumour cells in prostate cancer patients.

The Annual Research Update included a Panel and Audience Discussion on the topic ‘Prevention – What Does Success Look Like?’ This was a rare opportunity to hear from some of the leading minds in cancer research in Australia today on what is becoming a hotly debated topic within the global cancer community.
Corporate Australia’s support of PCFA has been extraordinary thanks to the leadership of Don Argus AO and members of our Corporate Working Party. Don is pictured here with Federal Treasurer Wayne Swan (left) and the Hon. Jim Lloyd (second on the right) at a KPMG Function in 2007.

PCFA has no greater corporate partner than the Commonwealth Bank. From its initial support in 2002 with PCFA’s Bio-resource, to its ongoing support of the PCFA September campaign The Difference is You!, the Commonwealth Bank and, in particular, CEO Ralph Norris (in blue apron, right), has been an outstanding partner.

The launch of PCFA’s Be A Man campaign in 2005 was a turning point for awareness of prostate cancer because, for the first time, we were about to undertake national TV and radio advertising. This picture was taken at the launch of the campaign in Adelaide with the leaders of our South Australian support groups.

One of my first meetings as CEO in August 2004 was with support group leaders. It has been fantastic in the years since to work with so many passionate and dedicated men and women in the support group network and help it grow from 48 groups to well over 100.
Prostate News asked Andrew Giles to nominate the highlights of his time at PCFA. These are his choices.

Without doubt a highlight of the past six years has been watching the development of Movember from a local event to a world wide experience. This picture was taken at the 2007 launch in Melbourne with the Chairman of beyondblue, the Hon. Jeff Kennett and two of the initial Mo Bro’s Luke Slattery (left) and Travis Garone (right).

PCFA’s two international conferences on the Gold Coast have been huge landmark events for PCFA. A highlight of the 2008 conference was the number of international speakers who attended. In this picture, from left to right, Jim Kiefert (Chairman US Too), Dr Stephen Strum, Tom Kirk (President US Too), Tom Hudson (Chairman Europa Uomo) and Virgil Simons (Chairman The Prostate Net).

Table 4 Ten has grown from a simple idea by Robbie Robertson, Darren Rudd and the committee into a national event that will continue to grow in the coming years. Thanks must go to our own master chef, Armando Percuoco, for his amazing support of PCFA (pictured at KPMG, 2009).

The launch of PCFA’s 2010 television campaign - Surviving Prostate Cancer Could Happen to You - led by leading Australian actor Les Hill - raised the profile of prostate cancer to its highest level, thanks to the support of more than 30 of Australia’s leading male celebrities.

A big thank you to my own family who have supported me over the past six years at all key events (as in this picture, holding our annual September BBQ). Particular thanks to my wife Silvana and the kids Siena and Raphael who have put up with my extensive travel over the past few years.
Active Surveillance, sometimes known as deferred therapy, is now recognised as a legitimate form of treatment for many low risk cancers. The tumour is closely monitored and definitive treatment is offered if there are signs that the tumour is growing. We know that up to 40 per cent of prostate cancers do not need early definitive treatment and Active Surveillance is one approach to minimise the over-treatment of these tumours.

However, many men feel anxious about waiting and opt to have the tumour removed before it is strictly necessary.

Last year the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand joined an international study utilising the PRIAS (Prostate Cancer Research International: Active Surveillance) model of active surveillance to monitor and treat the disease. By joining the PRIAS study, which defines clinical protocols for Active Surveillance of prostate cancer, we hope patients will be reassured about the management of their disease.

PRIAS is a program in which men with early prostate cancer are closely monitored using serum PSA levels, physical examinations and repeat prostate biopsies, the results of which are measured against previous tests and illustrated graphically for comparison.

This system allows doctors to add the latest PSA reading to each patient’s historical graph while sitting at the desk with their patient. That way they assess PSA trends to make informed decisions as to the next course of action.

With Active Surveillance, most patients’ quality of life is enhanced, as living with a slow moving tumour often has less of an impact than the side effects of treatment, which may include incontinence or impotence.

I am confident the data will continue to support regular prostate cancer testing to identify aggressive tumours which require treatment and the use of Active Surveillance protocols will ensure that low-risk tumours can be safely managed with observation alone.

Our overriding goal is to ensure the appropriate treatment of prostate cancer in each individual patient and to help our patients make informed decisions to achieve the best cancer outcomes whilst preserving quality of life considerations.
ROD LOWE RECOGNISED

In December 2010, Rod Lowe, a PCFA Community Speaker from NSW, was recognised for his great efforts in raising awareness about this disease. Rod was announced as the 2010 NSW Employee (Corporate) Volunteer of the Year. This prestigious award is for those sponsored by their employers and released from employment to carry out volunteer activities.

‘All at PCFA are so pleased that Rod has been recognised for his hard work. We are also appreciative of the support of his employer Alcoa, especially Anne Cherry, who made his awareness raising activities possible,’ said PCFA CEO Andrew Giles.

‘It is a great way for one of our many hard working and often unsung volunteers to have their great contribution in the fight against prostate cancer recognised. May we take this opportunity to offer a thank you to all of you who do so much for us each year.’

A DAM FINE EFFORT

When Allen Cornall came to PCFA with his plans to raise awareness and funds for prostate cancer, it was clear that he had a project that would prove to be daunting in every sense.

Allen is a remarkable young man with true passion for raising awareness for the fight against prostate cancer. His plan was to swim the Hume Dam at Albury. Adding to the difficulty of the task, Allen scoped the project when the dam was at an all-time low. By the time of the attempt, drought breaking rains had the dam at capacity, making it a third longer than his original plan.

On the day, Allen braved choppy, murky waters and after entering the waters at 4am, emerged triumphant and exhausted at 5.15pm – a truly magnificent effort by Allen and his support committee.

PCFA was represented by Ernie and Pam Mayne from Kerang Support Group, David Ryan from Albury Wodonga Support Group and Jimmy and Maggie Reid of Shepparton Support Group, who worked tirelessly throughout the day to support Allen and the committee’s work.

BE AN EVERYDAY HERO FOR PCFA

Allen Cornall stands as an inspiration, dedicating time and effort to raising funds and awareness for PCFA. Individuals and community groups are vital to our work and PCFA staff are keen to help support your fundraising efforts. If you are planning an event in 2011, please contact your PCFA State Office (Ph 1800 22 00 99) or visit the PCFA website www.prostate.org.au to download information and forms to register your event. A great way to involve your friends in your efforts is to register your event at Everyday Hero everydayhero.com.au. Contact us now with your ideas – your help is greatly valued.
Forty tinnies and more than 170 people took to the water in Mildura on Saturday 19 February for an 887 kilometre journey to Goolwa. The adventurers were all part of the sixth annual Moama Bowling Club Murray Charity Meander, raising funds for prostate cancer and breast cancer support services.

The event is organised by the Horizon Committee in Echuca and since 2006, many of the Murray Charity Meander participants have travelled the length of the river. For some, this year’s event was their second 2,500km trip from the alps to the sea.

The Black Hats team from Mildura again made the journey, as well as other participants from Sydney, the Hunter Valley, Albury/Wodonga, Echuca/Moama, Gisborne, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to all the teams who participated in this event and to the Horizon Committee for its ongoing vital support.

As reported in the last issue of Prostate News, PCFA is the beneficiary for the nissan/BRW Corporate Triathlon Series 2011. During February, events were held in Melbourne and Adelaide. However, there’s still a chance to register for upcoming events.

PERTH Sunday 13 March 2011
SYDNEY Sunday 3 April 2011
GOLD COAST Saturday 3 May 2011

For more information about events in your State, visit the Events page at www.supersprint.com.au.

Shepparton’s Big Blokes BBQ, held in September 2010, raised a staggering $108 thousand for PCFA’s work. At the cheque presentation, PCFA’s Victorian State Manager, David Rhodes thanked Chris McPherson of McPherson Media and his dedicated team for their hard work and generosity, and for recognising prostate cancer as an important men’s health issue, particularly in regional Australia.

In only its second year, the Shepparton BBQ has become the inspiration for other Big Blokes BBQs around regional Victoria. On 3 December 2010, Bendigo’s Big Blokes BBQ raised $50 thousand for PCFA. Another BBQ was held in Bairnsdale on 4 March 2011 and yet another is planned for Ballarat later in the year.

‘We know that men in rural and regional Australia have a 21 per cent higher prostate cancer mortality rate than men in capital cities. BBQs are traditionally an opportunity for families and friends to gather and enjoy each other’s company in the Australian outdoors. BBQ’s like these in regional Victoria offer an important additional benefit – for men and their loved ones to talk about prostate cancer. For that, we cannot thank Chris McPherson and his team enough,’ said David Rhodes.
The recent flood crisis continues to have a devastating impact on hundreds of thousands of Australians, including many PCFA support group members, volunteers and supporters. Many of those who work tirelessly to help PCFA now need our help.

Many support group members in Bundaberg, Maryborough, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Brisbane and Logan were affected to some degree by the flood. Areas of northern NSW, including Twin Towns and Alstonville also prepared to battle the rising waters.

As the flood crisis hit the Lockyer Valley, organisers and participants in the Clifton Carp for Cancer fundraising event lost stock, property and, in some cases, everything they owned. PCFA Queensland Manager Graeme Higgs visited the region in the aftermath of the floods and offered his thanks and support to those who have worked so hard over the years to support PCFA.

‘The catastrophic floods have impacted so many of PCFA’s friends and supporters. Many lives have been changed forever. So, I was overwhelmed to arrive at Clifton, only to be told by the organisers, the Kratzmann family that, despite their ongoing struggle to recover from the floods, they fully intend to continue plans for the 2012 Clifton Carp for Cancer challenge. The dedication and strength of these people is inspiring, humbling, and representative of so many of our supporters around the country,’ he said.

Many of the restaurants that participated in the inaugural Table4Ten event in Brisbane last year were also devastated by the flood. For example, Eagle Street Pier venues Jelly Fish and Cha Cha Char, both owned by John Kilroy, were ravaged by the torrents of water. However, as we go to print, Jelly Fish and Cha Cha Char had both re-opened in the Cha Cha Char venue, with the chefs working side by side.

‘That’s a perfect example of the determination and support of those impacted by this disaster. It’s going to be long road ahead, but hopefully people will soon be in a position to support their local businesses,’ said Graeme Higgs.

‘Thankfully, all the staff and their homes are safe, and the PCFA office in Brisbane was spared from severe damage. However, surrounding offices in Melbourne Street, Brisbane were not as lucky, so PCFA staff pitched in and helped our neighbours clean up, and get back on their feet.

‘The road ahead for PCFA and its supporters here will be difficult, but together, I am certain that we can re-build and grow.’
KIMBERLY-CLARK SOCIAL CLUB SUPPORTS PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH

Colleagues from the Kimberly-Clark Australia Millicent Social Club, who work at Kimberly-Clark’s south-east facility, presented PCFA’s SA representative, Karyn Foster, with a cheque for $14,000 in December 2010.

Beccy Field, the Social Club Secretary, was instrumental in getting Karyn to the Millicent Social Club and introducing her to the mainly male colleagues of her group. In fact, it was discovered that of the 600 workers at Kimberly-Clark, more than 90 per cent are male, with an average age of 46.

Karyn told the Kimberly-Clark team that research facilities based in Adelaide are ground breaking and that South Australians are proud leaders in this field. This donation will contribute to research that will have local and potentially global significance.

Karyn enjoyed the afternoon tea and received a giant cheque. ‘These cheques are actually legal tender, but I did wonder how was going to push it through the cashier’s window! Thankfully I departed with a normal cheque. We were absolutely thrilled to accept such wonderful generosity,’ she said. ‘We thank everyone concerned.’

DANCING AND DINING THE NIGHT AWAY

In the past year, Atul Garg, a tireless community fundraiser, has organised three Dinner Dances to raise funds for PCFA. These events included New Year’s Eve Dinner Dances in 2009 and 2010 and a Dinner Dance in September during Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, raising more than $8 thousand, with the support of Cinnamon Club and Ozind Golf Club. PCFA sincerely thanks Atul Garg for his generosity and tireless efforts in the fight against prostate cancer.

BP SUPPORTING PROSTATE CANCER

BP G10 project employees are raising funds for charity through their Work Safe Day Program and have chosen to support prostate and bowel cancer. Employees aim to raise $10 thousand over the course of the project, where all funds raised will be matched by their employer, BP. An initial cheque for $500 from the sale of pins was presented to both PCFA and Cancer Council WA to kick off fundraising efforts. This also gave workers an opportunity to learn more about the chosen charities.
Chairman of beyondblue: the national depression initiative, The Hon Jeff Kennett AC, says the inspiration for The Shed Online comes from the 400 Men’s Sheds which are thriving Australia-wide.

‘In those sheds, in towns across the country, men can get together, work on projects shoulder to shoulder, learn new skills and if they feel comfortable, they can talk to one another about light-hearted or more serious issues,’ said Jeff Kennett.

The Shed Online is a joint project of beyondblue and the Australian Men’s Shed Association (AMSA) and is funded by The Movember Foundation.

Movember co-founder Luke Slattery said, ‘It’s great to see the funds raised by Mo Bros and Mo Sistas being used on such an innovative project to improve men’s health and well-being. I love the idea of men sharing their skills and passing on knowledge that may otherwise be lost.’

The website features news, DIY tips and discussion forums for sharing ideas and thoughts on any topic – as well as health information that men might otherwise not come across.

Topics include home maintenance, computers and the internet, hobbies such as cooking, gardening, movies and sport – there are also puzzles (sudoku and crosswords).

Luke Slattery said, ‘Every man needs a shed, but not everyone has one, so we’re building Australia’s biggest shed and it’s online – the more men, the bigger the shed!’

Join up and join in at www.theshedonline.org.au.
In November 2010, PCFA collaborated with the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) to publically respond to the launch of a controversial new book Let Sleeping Dogs Lie? The book seeks to cast doubt on the benefits of tests which provide guidance to men about their risk of prostate cancer.

Both PCFA and USANZ carried out media campaigns on the day of the launch, receiving significant media coverage around the country and ensuring the book’s message about prostate cancer testing did not go unchallenged.

At the time of the book launch, PCFA CEO Andrew Giles, said there is unfortunately confusion in the community about the benefits of these tests and the position of various stakeholders about their appropriate use.

‘Based on the latest research, we currently recommend that men at 50 with no family history of prostate cancer, and men at 40 with a family history, should talk to their doctor about annual assessments in the form of a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test together with a Digital Rectal Examination (DRE). There is evidence that this approach will save lives in the future and we are keen to clarify these recommendations for Australian men.’

Andrew Giles emphasised that the latest international, randomised population-based research continued to suggest that testing could save lives. ‘A recent study from Sweden published this year in the *Lancet*¹ which included 20,000 men showed that death from prostate cancer was reduced almost by half over 14 years in the group that were encouraged to take PSA tests. Every 12 men diagnosed translated into the saving of one death from prostate cancer. This positive evidence is substantial and growing.

‘These tests are useful indicators of elevated risk and men are entitled to make informed decisions about the relevance of these tests for them on an individual basis. We are not talking about national, compulsory, publicly funded screening programs at a particular age. We are talking about individual Australian men making decisions – at an appropriate time and in consultation with their doctor – about whether it is time for them to have a test which helps indicate their risk of prostate cancer.

‘If the tests show elevated risk, then they can be guided by their doctor about whether a biopsy might shed further light on the issue. For most the test will be negative. But we know of many men who have made the personal decision to undergo PSA tests and for those tests to lead to the eventual discovery of an aggressive cancer in the prostate. Many of those Australian men are still enjoying life with their loved ones following successful treatment – a scenario which would have been almost impossible without the original decision to have a PSA.’

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Thank you for your support

PCFA UPCOMING EVENTS

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