



### **Blokes get it to.....so be aware!**

I am a bloke. For most of my very active years I played all the 'Blokey' sports including Footy, cricket, boxing, basketball, hockey and even tried my hand at fencing. Health and fitness were not issues for me. I was also a copper in WA for over 44 years. I finally retired in 2016.

In 2014 I became gradually concerned with some changes in my voice and ability to eat some foods. The diagnosis of cancer followed a referral to an ENT specialist in Bunbury after suffering unexplained bleeding from my mouth one Saturday night.

About one week prior to admission to Royal Perth Hospital my wife and I attended the ENT clinic of RPH where I first met those that would oversee my treatment regime. I also met Lisa -the Cancer Coordinator.

***Whenever I had a concern or issue or was unsure of what was happening a call to Lisa would put me back on the right track. These people are 'gold'***

I went to the operation theatre for the biopsy to be completed. I emerged from OT with a proper diagnosis (Cancer- T4 base of the tongue) and a trachea tube that remained with me for the following 12 months (I later had a stomach peg inserted to assist in feeding).

***I underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatment in Bunbury as a regional country patient. During the course of treatment and recovery I became a pawn in health politics. But thanks to my wife, Doctors, nurses, Cancer support groups, fellow patients, Hayley (the Regional Cancer Support Coordinator) and the Cancer Council, we fought together through it all.***

The treatment and recovery were tough on us all. I consider myself very fortunate that my wife and work mates were by my side, especially during my darkest times.

By the end of 2015 I felt I was ready to take steps to return to duty. I had received great support from the WA Police membership. A gentle 'Return to Work' program was designed and put in place for me as I had some limitations due to the trachea tube.

It was not long before I got embroiled in the day to day operations of work and the limitations seemed to have disappeared. An uncontrolled bushfire that burnt the town of Yarloop, saw me working 18-hour days for around 10 days. I did not have time to feel sorry for myself and I often ponder that having cancer recovery put out of my mind, may have accelerated my recovery. I became fully operational.

Then a State Government initiative gave Commissioned Officers in WA Police the opportunity of a redundancy. I had nothing left to prove; my wife and I had a life to enjoy. I retired in May 2016 and returned to the city. I continue to have regular checks and so far, I have remained clear.

We are eternally grateful for the support through the whole process from those already mentioned. I have been given a second chance and hope not to waste it.

**Kim Hutchinson, Perth**