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## May 2024 Newsletter

The Committee at Geelong Ostomy present your May Newsletter.

### **Stoma Access Fee Renewals**

Everyone should have now received their Stoma Access Fee renewal notice for the 2024/2025 financial year. The Committee wishes to thank those members who have paid their fees so promptly.

For those members yet to pay their fees please note it is a Government requirement that the Stoma Access Fee is paid **prior to 30 June 2024** to ensure continued supply of your Ostomy products.

### **New Sign and New Computers**

Some of the proceeds from the Christmas Raffle have been used to replace the aging sign on the front of the building at 6 Lewalan Street.

Three new computers have been purchased to replace some of the old computers at Geelong Ostomy. The remainder of the raffle funds have been kept in reserve to replace aging computers over the upcoming years.

### **Volunteering at Geelong Ostomy/ Our Volunteer Team**

In recent months we have farewelled dedicated volunteers from our line-up. After decades of service Rose and Lynne have retired. Some of our more recent volunteers have also reached retirement point – Elizabeth and Patricia. We thank them for their amazing contributions.

In addition, several of our most experienced volunteers are reaching retirement age.

As a result of these changes there are opportunities for new volunteers to join the team. Geelong Ostomy (GO) is now a fully volunteer dependent organisation. The members and volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation. GO is the only stoma supply service with a primary focus on our region.

We are friendly, flexible, and offer training to our volunteers. Our current volunteers come with a wide range of backgrounds – electrical and automotive trades, plumbing, property management, finance and accounting, retail, and public administration to name a few. If you would like to come and join the team at GO send an email to [contactus@geelongostomy.com.au](mailto:contactus@geelongostomy.com.au). Tell us about your experience or area of interest and how you feel we can bring out the best in you. All relevant training will be provided to prospective volunteers.

We recognise that for a range of reasons volunteering will not be an option for some members. Indeed, many support us with financial donations. We are truly grateful for their support.

## Uniquely You – 24-30 June

Work continues to increase the level of understanding in the broader community of stomas, ostomies and ostomates. National Stomal Therapy week is being held 24-30th June 2024. This year the focus will be on celebrating the diversity of ostomates and those that support them. These supporters include Families, Carers, Ostomy Associations, Appliance Suppliers, Educators, Stomal Therapy Nurses and other members of the health care team.



## Supplier Delays

GO is unfortunately continuing to experience extended delays from some suppliers for many products, this is outside our control and influence, and we appreciate your ongoing patience.

We encourage members to keep a **minimum** of 4 to 6 weeks of supplies on hand at all times.

Please **do not** wait until you are using the last of a product to place an order, a minimum of two weeks delivery should be allowed for all orders.

## Medicare Information

We are having a number of claims rejected by Medicare due to old/expired or lost/stolen Medicare cards. Please note, Medicare do not update your information with us; that is the **member's** responsibility. If details are not kept current further orders cannot be processed.

## Medical Certificates

Members are reminded that it is **their** responsibility to monitor the current status of their medical certificates, and to arrange follow up appointments with your STN. Medical certificates are issued for a six month period only.

It is **not** the responsibility of Geelong Ostomy to inform members when their Medical Certificates have expired.

## **Air Travel – Domestic or International**

Going through the airport security can be challenging or intimidating to some at times, but this should not stop you from travelling. The United Ostomy Association America website: <https://www.ostomy.org/ostomy-travel-and-tsa-communication-card/> has a wealth of information for travellers. The site includes a TSA sanctioned Travel Card that you can download, print out, and show to security staff prior to screening. Information is available that should prove useful; particularly for the North American Continent. There is also useful information applicable for non-English speaking countries.

When going through any airport security, domestic or international, the best strategy is always to be open and honest with the security staff, there is nothing to be embarrassed about having a stoma. Be proud you have survived whichever condition resulted in you receiving a stoma.

## **Fundraising**

As part of the fundraising at Geelong Ostomy, you will find a wide range of excellent quality novels available for a reasonable cost. Come and check them out when you pick up your supplies.

If you have any novels at home that you would like to donate for fundraising purposes, please bring them in, we would be most grateful.

All fundraising proceeds contribute to keeping your fees as low as possible.

## **Online Ordering**

Geelong Ostomy would like to encourage you to use the online ordering form on the website whenever possible. The site is functioning as required, sending an email confirmation of your order to your email address; including Gmail accounts, which were previously an issue.

Rob Clark  
Secretary