



MINUTES OF MEETING FOR Cairns COUCH Ltd
(COMMITTEE FOR THE ONCOLOGY UNIT AT CAIRNS HOSPITAL)

Quality Hotel Sheridan Plaza
Tuesday 8th January 2008
1830

Attendees

Charles and Pip Woodward	Bob McGill	Max Plummer
Mary-Jane Ursu	Sally Gazzard	Carolyn Unwin
Michael Blair	Anne Naylor	Mike Bulling
Glenys Duncombe	Bill and Maureen Luck	Charlie McKillop
Michael Nelson	Mary Calvert	Andrew and Ann Kerr
Desley Boyle	Ken Knight	Niki Biro
Peter Harvey	Poul Neilsen	Marie Maher
Chris and Keith Vincent	Margaret Shearer	Donna Rankin
Sigrid Patterson	Colin and Deirdre Ford	Jenny Glaze
Jim Wallace	Dusty Prickett	Olive
Ron Rypma		

Apologies

Lloyd and Jill Smith	Ken Chapman	Tony Franz
Helga Biro	Angela Beckett	Andrew Shearer
Jim Turnour	Steven Wettenhall	Peter Goulding
Carol Leary	Jim Hope	Mary Gayler
Lyn Rogers	Liz Plummer	Jenny Coates

Bob McGill opened the meeting at 6:40 pm and welcomed everyone. Bob mentioned that this was the fourth Public Meeting for COUCH however the first since the launch meeting held on 17th July, 2007. Bob thanked Desley Boyle, Member for Cairns for her presence. A special mention was made to Mr Jim Hope a great supporter of COUCH but unfortunately could not attend tonight's meeting due to a chemotherapy treatment he had recently undergone.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous Public Meeting was MOVED by Dusty Prickett and
SECONDED by Deidre Ford. CARRIED

Progress to Date

Bob McGill informed everyone that numerous fund raising events had taken place particularly the Cancer Crusade Charity Walk along the Esplanade where almost 4,000 people participated. This event raised the awareness of COUCH. Bob McGill then invited Charles Woodward, Chairman of COUCH to address the meeting.



Charles advised the meeting that COUCH had been going for approximately 15 months. Our number one objective is to get Radiotherapy in this region. The support is truly gratifying from all areas of the community.

The initial objective was to get a Mixing Hood but there was a study complete and I attached a letter received from Alison Faigniez, Asst. General Manager, Northern Area Health Service dated 6 December 2007. COUCH are happy to go along with the letter. Some people were giving money to COUCH and specifically requested that it was to go towards the Mixing Hood. We are open in what we do and we want what is best for Cairns.

Charles asked Margaret Shearer, Project Manager, Cairns Base Hospital (in attendance) if she had any comments to add. Margaret said the Base Hospital oncology staff were also in agreement with the content of the letter.

Charles said the main push is how we can achieve Radiotherapy in Cairns.

Charles had a meeting with Riverina Cancer Care Group in Wagga Wagga and also with Queensland Health. Charles, Pip and Bob met with The Hon Stephen Robertson, MP Minister for Health on December 07.

Charles advised the meeting that COUCH was not a Lobby Group but a solutions group. COUCH wants to be part of the solution.

Fund Raising and Public Relations

Bob mentioned that Lloyd Smith who was the Treasurer of COUCH was moving to Coffs Harbour. Bob introduced to the meeting Max Plummer who has taken on the Treasury role.

Max spoke and offered apologies from Liz who could not attend the meeting tonight. Max advised that Cairns Penny Savings and Far North Queensland Health Foundation hold the money on behalf of COUCH. Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation is necessary in order to issue Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) receipts to people who require receipts for taxation purposes. At the moment we have just under \$250,000. In the short time period we have been established this is a very significant amount.

Charles also mentioned that at the Cancer Crusade Charity Walk in September 2007, Warren Entsch made an announcement that the Federal Government at that time had committed \$8.3m. This commitment was confirmed by Mr Jim Turnour and Nicola Roxon who is now the Federal Minister for Health. The funds raised by the community are a show of solidarity and it is gratifying how funds keep coming in. We now want to see what the Queensland State government will come up with.

A Complete Cancer Care Precinct

Charles advised that COUCH has formed an excellent relationship with Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation. He also mentioned that he has had meetings with BDO Kendall (honorary auditors for COUCH) and MacDonnells Law (honorary solicitors for COUCH) to discuss COUCH obtaining DGR status and also what is the best legal structure for the future.



The proposed Precinct will be for everyone as it is not only for private patients. We all understand the present hospital is very short of space. This does not mean that everything needs to move to the new proposed premises. COUCH will support any provision of cancer care in the region. Charles advised the meeting that the current land owned by the Woodward family on 100-114 Reservoir Road, Manoora is worth approximately \$2m. In the slide that was presented Charles stated that the area in green is going to be conserved land and will be untouched.

COUCH met with Nicola Roxon, MP, prior to the federal election and now Minister for Health and Ageing and the proposed Medical Centre could come under the GP Super Clinic. This will be a commercial operation. The proposed Super Clinic will helptake the pressure off the Base Hospital.

We still need to fund raise but we will also have a commercial operation to draw money from.

Riverina Cancer Care Centre at Wagga Wagga will be the body that will operate the proposed premises and also look after the necessary staffing requirements. The Riverina Cancer Care Centre will lease some of the equipment. Dr Tony Noun, Group Managing Director is keen to be involved.

A question was raised from the floor. "You keep mentioning the Riverina Cancer Care Centre". Can you please explain more about their involvement?

Charles responded with ... They will be running the proposed new centre here in Cairns. Dr Tony Noun is a consultant for the Riverina Cancer Care Group. He works world wide and Wagga Wagga was the first model to be built and it was a successful model. It would not be call the Riverina Cancer Care Centre but would have a different name but we would use their expertise.

Carolyn Unwin queried that private patients would be treated in preference to public patients and that there would be a cost. She queried if the Woodward family would donate for a public facility.

Charles advised the meeting "I would be willing to donate the land if say the facility was built in a shorter rather than longer time period". It must also be built to a high standard.

Charles quoted from the submission.

"Often people get confused with Public v Private patients for Radiotherapy and the cost involved. For Radiotherapy it's really quite simple. There is no such thing as a private patient as Radiotherapy is an outpatient service covered by Medicare and not private health fund related. The only true public patient is one who is an inpatient in the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and we have contract with the Area Health Service for these patients. This group attributes only about 1% of the patients on treatment at any one time.

Charles said that chemotherapy is being administered at the Cairns Base Hospital and they are doing an excellent job. The facilities at Cairns Base would not need to move.



Glenys Duncombe spoke and said the cost that a patient pays to go to either Townsville or Brisbane far outweighs the cost to having it in Cairns.

Charles said that the NSW Government spent approximately \$40m in building the Port Macquarie facility.

Charles went through the PowerPoint presentation and spoke about the Permits and Licenses required to build the facility. He felt that the Riverina Cancer Care Group is an accredited operator and it was envisaged that there would be no difficulty in obtaining the permits and licenses.

Michael Blair asked the question "Charles you mentioned research....have you spoken to James Cook University about any research?" Charles said he would be very keen to talk to James Cook University.

If COUCH can come up with a solution to look after public and private patients then it takes the pressure off the hospital. If COUCH can take one problem area away then this must be helpful. We don't want to be a problem for the State Government we want to be a solution.

Deidre Ford spoke. At the July launch this room was full of people and it is commendable just how far COUCH has come in such a short period of time. Deidre Ford wished to be put on record to say that Anne and John and yourself Charles (the Woodward family) have gathered together to make the donation for the City and people of Cairns and the region as you have done with other donations to the city in the past. Your entire family should be commended. I would like to call on the meeting to acknowledge the generosity that the Woodward family has made in donating this land to COUCH. Charles thanked Deidre for these kind words. This land is the last piece of land remaining from the cane farms that were owned by my parents. We have the opportunity to have a world class facility to be built in Cairns and this was our ambition and we will be working closely with Cairns City Council to obtain the approvals.

The Way Forward

Charles asked Desley Boyle, Member for Cairns to speak.

There are a lot more people with us in spirit than those here in the room tonight. The numbers in the room do not reflect the support for COUCH. You have come very far since the first meeting. Desley was told by the Federal Government way back then it would be \$40m. Desley was advised that Cairns would get Radiotherapy Oncology but it would not be for almost 10 years. I remain a very strong supporter of COUCH. We will have a Radiotherapy Oncology for public and private patients as soon as possible and as soon as possible is going to be closer than 7-10 years. We have come a long way. \$250,000 from the community within a short period of time is excellent. COUCH will have the capacity to raise additional \$3-4m. Why is the State Government not coming up with \$8.3? No money has been put aside in the State's current budget to give money for Radiotherapy Oncology in Cairns. At that time we were thinking \$40m and at Cairns base Hospital. We all know the problems at the hospital.

Right now we want to expand the Oncology services at the Base Hospital, in particular mapping facilities not radiotherapy but there is no room to do this right now.



There are two problems firstly where are we going in the longer term? Secondly we are going to need another hospital in the southern centre in 10-12 years. We also need a plan of action about the current hospital.

The down side is Queensland Health does not have a good track record of setting up public and private. I was in favour of moving the hospital. The Minister for Health did have a meeting with COUCH as Charles mentioned. The proposal is very attractive in bringing it forward ahead of time. The downfall is in the detail. Standards must be clear. Detailed contracts must be spelt out. The doctors are concerned on how much oncology will go from the Hospital to the new site. There is lots of talking to be worked out and further discussions must be forthcoming until details are worked out. Standards of service and costs for public and private patients. You have made it plain that the people in this region want this to happen. How exactly do we go forward from here, etc.

I spoke to Jim Turnour who is unfortunately held up in Townsville due to the weather to make sure the \$8.3 is safe. Jim assures me that it is and has been set aside for capital works in the current federal budget.

Desley mentioned the huge contribution made by the Woodward family and the executives of COUCH in setting up such a group. Desley said she would work with everyone to get the details sorted out. If this does not work out it does not take away my support to have radiotherapy facilities in Cairns.

Charles responded by thanking Desley and to say that COUCH wanted to work closely with Queensland Health on this. We know there is a lot more work involved and we are going to push ahead quickly. The budget is in June 2008 and hopefully this facility will be budgeted for and we can complete the planning this year and build and open in 2009.

Chris Vincent from McDonalds Family Restaurants addressed the meeting. Chris said that McDonalds were proud to be supporting such a great cause for Cairns. What the Vincent family has done as a group operator in the region is to organise signage for Helping Hands. This is a promotion from 12-20 of January called Helping Hands will be in the stores in Cairns, Innisfail and Atherton and the money raised will be donated to COUCH. Channel 7 is also a major sponsor.

David Clarke from Tully asked the question about the previous site at Holloways Beach. Charles responded by advising the meeting that this site was in the flight path and was not a suitable site.

Carolyn Unwin asked the question "if this does not work out where would the funds raised go?" Bob McGill responded by saying that the funds were raised for cancer facilities and will go where they are needed. Bob advised that there was no hidden agenda from the COUCH committee.

Poul Neilson spoke and said that \$2m land that was given by the Woodward family and the story in the newspapers really touched his heart.

A wellbeing centre is going to be a very important aspect. One of the best things in Townsville was to have a bbq get together on the Thursday or Friday nights was one



of the most positive things and you need to know you are amongst other people. I was there in 2006 and people were very supportive and rallying around each other.

Mr Ken Knight, Cairns Trinity Bay Lions Club said perhaps when you get to the units you can approach the Service Clubs and they would get behind building a unit.

Donna Rankin asked how many units were planned? Charles advised that the picture was merely a concept. We will need to do a study and determine how many were required. Charles said there were 8 units in a unit block.

Bob McGill closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and quoted the following phrase by renowned humanitarian Mother Teresa which is on the wall of Shishu Bhavan Children's Home in Calcutta.

"If you do good, people will criticize and accuse you of selfish ulterior motives, DO GOOD ANYWAY".

The meeting closed at 20:10.