



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

Brothers Leagues Club
Thursday 12th June 2008
1840

Attendees:

Charles Woodward
Sandy Astill
Andrew Shearer
John Mackenzie
Dr Peter Boyd
Scott Brown
Jim Hope
Tony Franz
Mary Low
Alex Blair
Hugh Martens
Diane Low
Alan and Lesley Neven
Jim Wallace
Jennifer Martens
Carol Leary
Julie Henry
Marie Maher
Phyllis Lemura
Sally Rubenach
Mark Alexander
Carolyn Unwin

Pip Woodward
Liz Plummer
Helga Biro
Roxanne Ramsey
Amanda Farinola
Sam Lemura
Ken Knight
Bea Burger
Monica Stapleton
Kathryn Borzi
Adrian Shea
Niki Johnston
Keith Prince
Jim Craig
Agnes Carswell
Mal Fraser
Michael Nelson
R. Norman
Denise Sweet
Peter Boyd
Glenn Keller
Bob Manning

Bob McGill
Max Plummer
MJ Ursu as Minute Taker
Angela Beckett
Sue Hadfield
D. Simpson
Alison Faigniez
Ken Chapman
V.A. Titmarsh
Michael Collins
Alison Alloway
Des Reppec
Glenys Duncombe
Sally Graham
Scott Pickard
Michael Au
Tyson Bitson
Julie Jensen
Mary Pregl
Marian Prince
Hayley Burford

Apologies

John-Paul Langbroek, MP
Jenny Coates
Lawrence Springborg, MP
Kevin Byrne

David Clarke
The Hon Desley Boyle
Paul Nielsen
The Hon Stephen
Robertson, Minister for
Health

Jim Turnour, MP
Steve Wettenhall, MP
Banny Falchetti
Dusty Prickett

1. Introduction and Welcome

John Mackenzie opened the meeting at 6:40 pm and welcomed everyone outlined the reason for meeting was to establish where COUCH is heading. Jim Turnour was unable to attend the meeting but asked that it be noted that the Rudd Government is fully committed to providing \$8.3 million towards a radiation oncology facility for the people of Cairns and the tropical North. Jim said he will continue to work with COUCH to ensure the Queensland Government delivers.



2. Apologies

All apologies received were recorded.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

MOVED by Max Plummer and SECONDED by Pip Woodward.

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

Caroline Unwin claimed that an alteration to the Minutes which she had requested had not been made.

4. Treasurer's Report

Charles Woodward presented a Treasurer's report. At the current time there is approximately \$325,749.54.

5. Upcoming Events and Fund Raising

Sandy Astill presented a list of Upcoming Events and Fund Raising events organised in the coming months with special emphasis on COUCH Potato Week culminating on the COUCH Charity Walk along the Esplanade on Sunday 3rd August 2008.

Sandy advised the meeting that compared to last year when there was only one event, there are numerous events being held with more being organised. If anyone would like to assist Sandy with these events please contact Sandy on email on astills@optusnet.com.au. Sandy would welcome any assistance, large or small.

COUCH potato week from 26 July to 3 August. Charity Walk on Sunday 3 August.

6. Charles Woodward presented the Chairman's Report

Charles made mention of the reason for setting up COUCH. A proposal was submitted to in December 2006 to The Hon Stephen Robertson, MP, Minister for Health to fast-track the establishment of radiation oncology services in Cairns. The KPMG report was received 16 weeks after COUCH submitted the proposal.

Charles read out the KPMG report's main points:

Key Findings:

- There is an immediate demand for additional cancer treatment in particular radiation oncology services in Cairns
- \$8.3 million federal funding is available
- Radiation Oncology service should be co-located with Cairns Base Hospital.



Recommendations:

1. Queensland Health should develop radiation oncology services in Cairns within 3 years
2. It should be co-located at Cairns Base Hospital site
3. There should be a tender process for private provider service development

Note: The Townsville Cancer Care Centre (TCCC) will remain the cancer tertiary hub in Northern Area Health Service.

Charles also read out the Cost to the Patient notice that Tony Noun had given him.

7. Questions and Answers from COUCH to Dr Tony Noun, Group Managing Director, Riverina Cancer Care Centre.

COUCH prepared a list of questions to Dr Tony Noun and received a response which was read out to the meeting.

8. Mr Peter Nelson, Cancer Patient

Unfortunately Mr Peter Nelson was unable to attend the meeting due to being unwell. His son Michael spoke on his father's behalf. He said his father was diagnosed with cancer in 2003 and is classified as a Category 2. Mr Peter Nelson decided to go private and obtain treatment in Brisbane.

John Mackenzie thanked Michael for his powerful presentation.

9. Mr Bob Norman, Chairman of the Health Task Force

Mr Norman spoke about the journey of the Cairns Base Hospital site and the debate that started in the mid 90s on the relocation of the hospital. Minimal community debate regarding the current site made it easy for the politicians to redevelop this site. A different situation occurred in Townsville where locals wanted to stay at current site but the Health Minister said no and developed a new site. There is a unanimous agreement that Townsville has a magnificent facility designed and built in 5 years for \$175m. Although costs have risen, Bob cannot believe that Cairns could not get a new hospital for the cost of the proposed \$450m makeover. More community, clinical services and the wider medical fraternity involvement is needed in this decision. A critique of the clinical services plan and its 23 point recommendations is needed. For example: revisit the decision by Queensland Health that Cairns Hospital won't be any higher than a level 3 classification. It should be at least Level 4 or tertiary Level 5.

Cairns will get the facility that it agitates for and demands by convincing the politicians. State and Federal politicians are not giving this matter the attention that it requires.



10. Queensland Health

Roxanne Ramsey, General Manager, Northern Area Health Service.

Dr Peter Boyd, Director of Medicine at CBH.

Angela Beckett, Regional Health, Cairns and Tablelands.

Roxanne stated that everyone wants the facilities– the debate is how it's achieved and that Queensland Health acknowledges that there is a need to improve services in Cairns. Cairns cannot wait for a new hospital. There is an immediate need to upgrade facilities now. The upgrade will allow Queensland Health to co-locate Radiation services on the CBH site within 3 - 4 years. The KMPG report said that this should be part of a private facility achieved in 3 years.

Roxanne believes that radiation facilities are achievable in 3 - 4 years, perhaps earlier if fast tracked. Some people will still have to travel to Townsville or Brisbane for specialist treatment.

11. Liz Plummer, Guest Speaker

Liz advised she had a real problem with the time frame and the delay that the upgrading of CBH facilities will cause in providing radiation facilities. Cairns is already years behind. She accepts the reasoning for co-location but related graphic examples of cancer sufferers whose treatment and well-being will be affected by the delay.

Charles stated that COUCH just wants the facilities in the shortest possible time. COUCH agrees to co-locating the radiotherapy facility at Cairns Base Hospital if the commitment to a short time frame is adhered to. He had received six months notice for a meeting of the committee that he has been invited to join. This lengthy time frame worries him.

Roxanne stated that progress must be balanced with proper planning to ensure the best facility is provided

Carolyn Unwin also stated that she wants the best for the CBH.

Bob Manning was pleased to hear Queensland Health mention public/private facilities and this would introduce more efficiency. He said it may not be the ultimate design but it will be 95% and it needs to be moving faster.

Roxanne responded that regarding urgency, there is a much better understanding of the cost of delays associated with public funding and more attention given. A time frame has been given for Design, Project Management and Quantity surveying to go to tender.

John MacKenzie asked the question - What will Cairns not have that Townsville will have?

Dr Peter Boyd responded that he leads an enthusiastic group. COUCH has brought radiation oncology forward by 3-5 years. Dr Collins stated that it won't have the specialized services that need to be concentrated.



Charles Woodward advised that at the first public meeting COUCH advised that the Riverina Health Care model was able to provide staffing. He supports the Co-location tender process.

Charles presented the Health Timetable.

Bob Manning asked when will Queensland Health release a programme of works and a list of what we will be getting?

Roxanne responded that the Services Plan should be ready by the end of June. The Building Master plan ready by end of July for the redevelopment of CBH. Roxanne will take the timetable away and put dates on it but if changes occur, eg The Services Plan, then dates will alter.

Bob McGill asked Roxanne regarding private/public facilities. Philanthropists are ready to help immediately on the COUCH site and why isn't this grasped.

Roxanne responded that the original COUCH proposal was very good, but there are down sides. \$8.3 million from Federal Government isn't enough and \$350,000 from COUCH is not enough, but a public/private facility could be considered.

Dr Peter Boyd responded that the issue of location, he and other clinicians think that having separate locations is not a good idea – split sites result in duplication and logistical difficulties.

Carolyn Unwin advised the meeting that she believes that the facility should go to the hospital. She asked the question if the Reservoir Land is swampy it would be a heavy building.

Charles responded that COUCH all along has wanted to get radiation facilities in the shortest possible time. The Reservoir Road site was available if required but this was not locked in. The land offered will revert to the family if not required for a radiation facility. Co-location at CBH will meet community needs and COUCH urges the shortest time frame possible. He was happy that COUCH has been instrumental in bringing this decision forward. COUCH will continue to raise funds, and to maintain a close relationship with the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation. Funding raised will go to the radiation facility or associated cancer care requirements.

COUCH will continue to pressure politicians to ensure that the deadlines are met.

Liz Plummer thanked the Queensland Health Representatives.

John Mackenzie concluded with "Thanks for the insight, and thank you Dr Boyd for noting the impact that COUCH has made. Thank you all for attending this evening."

The meeting closed at approximately 2100.