



COMMUNITY ACTION

GUNNEDAH'S Jenny Barlow is leading a crusade for the acceptance of microwave therapy, developed by Perth oncologist Dr John Holt, as a front-line tool in the fight against cancer. In February she led a rally of 700 people in Wolseley Park, calling on the NSW and Australian governments to establish a clinic on the eastern coast to assess the potential of microwave therapy as a treatment pathway. Today the NVI tells the story, in his own words, of cancer survivor Dr John Steinke, retired Dean of Commerce at Wollongong University.

Living proof

IN early 1985 I was an unusually fit man of 54 – a dedicated bushwalker and a regular player of competitive sports – when I was diagnosed as having a high-grade 2 tumour in my bladder.

Although probably a successful person by community standards, I was somewhat depressed that what had once seemed an endlessly promising career seemed to have reached a permanent plateau.

This state of depression, I believe, increased my vulnerability to cancer, although I had occasionally been troubled by bladder problems throughout my life.

Fortunately, my cancer was diagnosed very early in the course of the disease, enabling me to maintain a reasonably good standard of fitness throughout the coming months of treatment.

My initial treatment was completely orthodox – repeat surgery, chemotherapy (two massive doses of cis-platinum) and 6000 rads of radiotherapy. My doctors were the best available in Wollongong and Sydney, with my Wollongong urologist particularly impressive.

Nonetheless, they were unable to destroy my cancer, which gradually

became increasingly aggressive. In late 1985 I was advised that the whole of the lining of my bladder was becoming unstable – and that removal of the bladder was the only course of action with a reasonable prospect of saving my life.

For a number of reasons, however, I was reluctant to accept this advice. I was aware that removal of the bladder would probably terminate my active way of life – that it would certainly and immediately make me sexually impotent – and that at that time the five-year survival rate after the operation was only 50 per cent.

So I embarked on an intensive and extensive programme of reading about cancer and its causes. As a result of this, I became aware that those who take an active role in their own treatment tend to fare better than those who don't.

Realising that I was now down to the last roll of the dice, I decided to take an active role in the decision-making on my future treatment, rather than simply following the medical advice I was receiving.

Fortunately, I was aware of Dr John Holt and his microwave therapy. Dr Holt



had successfully treated my secretary's husband for a very large, inoperable tumour in the upper thigh – although the patient had been previously advised that removal of the entire leg would be necessary to preserve his life.

Being aware of this case, and of the fact that the patient had not experienced any relapse after several years and was still walking on two legs, I decided to contact Dr Holt and seek his advice.

Dr Holt did not give me any false hope. After being made aware of the details of my cancer, and of my previous treatment, he told me that in previous similar cases his success rate had been approximately 50 per cent.

As that was the same survival rate as the one associated with bladder removal, and as successful treatment by Dr. Holt would leave me physically intact, I instantly decided to arrange treatment by Dr. Holt.

My urologist agreed, at my request, to refer me to Dr. Holt. Although it was clear to me that he didn't agree with my decision, he didn't attempt to dissuade me, possibly because he realised that my mind was already made up and possibly out of respect for the right of an adult of sound mind to take their own life-and-death decisions.

The only medical person I spoke to who supported my decision was my local GP. Prominent members of the medical profession, in both Wollongong and Sydney, contacted me, however, and made strenuous efforts to persuade me to change my mind. A senior AMA figure was particularly vehement, effectively denouncing Dr Holt as a charlatan.

My treatment by Dr Holt was twice daily, five days a week, for three weeks. Treatment consisted of injection with a glucose blocking agent followed by two applications of microwave radiation for periods of perhaps five minutes, at intervals of 20 minutes.

The treatment caused me no pain, although my skin would start to smart by the end of a period of exposure. I suffered no noticeable side-effects from the treatment.

After conclusion of Dr Holt's treatment, I returned to Wollongong and after around a month, was examined internally by my urologist. When I awoke, still

groggy from my anaesthetic, he said: "I don't know what your man in Perth has, but he certainly has something. When you went away you had a thriving tumour – now where the tumour was, there is nothing but an abscess."

After a couple of months he examined me again and said "where the tumour was is now just a white scar."

It is now more than 20 years since Dr Holt's treatment and, although I have examinations every two years, there has never been any sign of cancer.

I attribute my recovery from cancer to Dr Holt. Recovery is one thing, however, and remaining clear another. In an effort to ensure there would be no recurrence, I made many changes in lifestyle, based on my readings about cancer and its causes.

- Prolonged emotional depression lowers resistance to cancer, so my advice is to live positively, avoiding situations that give no satisfaction or cause negative feelings. I immediately resigned from several government advisory boards and, on recovery, applied for the newly-created position of Dean of Commerce. I was appointed and served seven very satisfying and, I believe, successful years until my retirement.

- There are some correlations between diet and cancer – in the case of bladder cancer correlations with beer, coffee and fat consumption. I immediately and permanently gave up drinking coffee and beer and greatly reduced my fat consumption.

- Regular meditation can sometimes be effective in fighting cancer. I immediately learned to meditate and have continued to do so regularly since – initially for an hour a day, after returning to work for 30 minutes per day.

- Consumption of megadoses of vitamin C assists some cancer victims, particularly those suffering from bladder cancer. I immediately began taking 10 grams of vitamin C per day, in liquid form, and continue to do so.

Aside from the niggling ailments of old age, I am in good health. I might still die of cancer but, should I do so, it won't be the same one. And, be assured, should I again contract cancer – I will immediately be off for treatment by Dr Holt!

JOHN STEINKE