

My Journey Part 2 – Bulletin No 7 (26 August 2020)

The Past Three Months



Hi folks time for another Bulletin. You have not heard from me since 20 May and in that time I have recovered from the effects of my last head and neck treatment campaign which ended on the 17 May. This time around I was surprised by the fact that after 6 weeks of chemotherapy and 30 sessions of radiotherapy my body coped in a far more friendly manner to the frenzied attack of the program. There were no radiation burns to my neck, only a slight loss of taste and a moderate dry mouth at night. I resumed my normal diet quite quickly and got on being Neil Raward once again with a minimum amount of fuss.

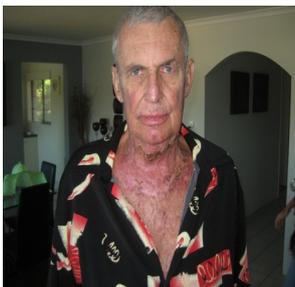
Admittedly the dosage of radiotherapy this time around was lower as there were less tumours to fight and the technology had advanced during the past four years since my last dose.

During the past three months my regular lifestyle had returned to a degree with the opening of clubs and restaurants, the reopening of the bridge club and the resumption of our monthly retired police meetings. Although our bi monthly Head and Neck Cancer Support Group meetings are still on hold, as the Qld Cancer Council premises in Southport have not yet been cleared to hold meeting.

My mother always told me that if I ate my crusts I would get curly hair, what she did not tell me if you suffer hair loss from a 6 week program of chemotherapy you will get curly hair and this is what happened to me this time around. I am very proud of my curly locks as they have given me a new lease on life, wow curly hair after 77 years.

D Day

D Days can mean a lot of things, for me Tuesday 25 August was Decision Day, the day of reckoning as I had an appointment with Dr Eric Khoo my GCUH radio oncologist to ascertain the success or otherwise of my treatment program after recent PET scans.



I vividly recall this day in August 2016 after my first treatment program for neck cancer when I met with my ENT specialist and my radio oncologist. In the three month waiting period I got on with life the best I could as I had lost 18kgs during my treatment, had 3rd degree radiation burns to my face, neck and chest and I was being fed through a stomach tube for three months during and after the treatment. (Photo taken May 2016). At the end of that gruelling day I got the best possible news, my body had defeated the ravages of cancer which had invaded my body. It is hard to describe the wonderful news, tears of joy and the overwhelming thought that I was a winner and could once again could resume my normal life.

After nearly four years in remission here I am to face the moment of truth once again what will the outcome be. This time around thoughts of the outcome were far removed from my mind as I was confident I could be a winner once again and I just get on with my life.

The Outcome

I had hoped for a better outcome, the PET scan showed that the primary tumour is still in the lymph node on the left side of my neck. I would appear when it resurfaced it knew that the first plan of attack was to be radiotherapy and it developed an immunity to it. My chemo and radio oncologists together with my ENT specialist will be meeting in the near future to discuss another plan of attack. I will be meeting with them within two weeks.

The Future

My GP of many years Dr Clive (retired) after each yearly blood test he would never give me the results, just saying *Neil keeping living the life style you have been living*. That is what I plan to do as I await for the new battle plan. I feel and look on top of the world and look forward to overcoming the next speed bump in my life. Watch this space.

Always Look on the Bright Side of Life

Neil Raward

P S I am looking forward to celebrating my 78th birthday on 7 September with family and friends

“Always Look on the Bright Side of Life” – Please click on