

# The second time around – P's story with cancer

## Past experience

My first occasion of having cancer was skin cancer on my face, for which I required radiation then Mohs Surgery named after Dr. Frederick Mohs. His surgical technique involves any surgically removed tissue being carefully mapped, colour-coded, and thoroughly examined microscopically by the surgeon on the **same day** of surgery.

I ended up with most of my nose removed and my cheek was grafted to my nose. This was better than having my forehead grafted to my nose, as I would not have been able to wear my glasses for some time and I can barely see without them and definitely not read or drive without them.

## How I found out.....

This is my second bout with cancer, but this time its thyroid cancer and who knows maybe my former radiation treatment may be the cause?

In 2015 I realised I was very tired and was struggling to live my life. Each day was a huge effort to do daily activities. I would go out with friends but was exhausted when I got home and could not do my chores. My life felt like it was out of control and I thought it was because I was doing too much and getting older. I travelled to Melbourne for a convention, and was unable to attend the whole convention. After getting home I had to prepare for an endoscopy and colonoscopy, and the results were good.



## 24 week challenge



I decided perhaps if I lost weight and increased my exercise, it would help, but instinctively I knew I was not well enough to do either.

So, I asked my Doctor, to help me take part in a 24 week programme. My doctor insisted that she make sure I was up to the challenge and had me do a battery of tests. All came back good: but I was still feeling awful but nothing had showed up from the tests.

I then started having nosebleeds that were becoming heavy and lasting longer than normal. Eventually it was decided that I needed to have a cauterisation, first one nostril then the other. My specialist however decided to only do one side, and leave well alone. It was felt the nose bleeds were related to my prior skin cancer treatment and the Mohs surgery.

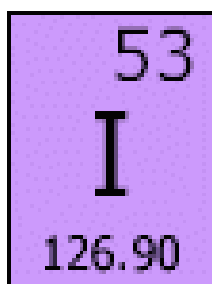
By the Thursday before Easter I had had every test necessary to ensure I was a safe candidate for the program I wanted to do to improve my energy level. I had had my last specialist test with my Gastroenterologist and he'd suggested one more blood test for which I was waiting on the results.

It was a very big effort to just get out of bed that day, I was now almost unable to do anything, and I had arranged to go and spend the Easter weekend with my family. I really wasn't sure if I had the energy to pack the car and drive to the Central Coast but decided I'd better. Just as I was slowly packing my car my doctor's surgery rang, he was away but my doctor's partner phoned me to tell me to come quickly as they need to change my medication as I had a serious thyroid problem. I then went to the surgery, got the new medication, and ended up going home to bed for the weekend.

[In a way ,I felt some relief.....](#)

At least now I had a reason for feeling so bad. It was definitely not my imagination. I made an appointment with my doctor for the next week, and I then began yet another round of tests, this time on my thyroid.

I knew it was something serious by the way the medical staff were looking at the scans. I got to see my specialist and then had my thyroid removed. The laboratory result was that the thyroid was cancerous.



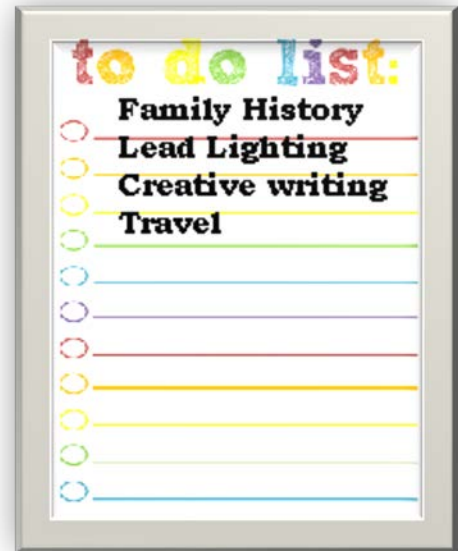
At the end of July 2015 I was admitted for Iodine Radio Therapy. I was placed in isolation for three days. Here I had to drink large amounts of water and saw very few people. Staff only spent very short periods of time in my room. Being in isolation allowed me time to consider my future, and I really thought about what I want to do, how I wanted to spend my future time?

### Going forward.....

I did not know how long I might have to live. But I was sure I was going to do some things I had not done before or had put on the backburner.

I decided I would return to my "Family History Project", start a "Creative Writing Course" and try "Lead Lighting".

I may take a cruise and do some travel on the Australian Train System. There are books I want to read and movies I have not seen, so one by one I will tick these off my to do list.



They are just things that bring pleasure enjoyment and enlightenment to my life, some of these things can help us be better people, wiser, more caring, or thoughtful, they may not be important books or movies. By restricting our lives we can become narrow minded, selfish and thoughtless.

The Wellness centre has brought new people into my life and I am enjoying taking part in the different activities, such as Meditation, which has helped me slow down and take time to focus on how my body feels and being aware that I am stressed or better yet not stressed.

I have enjoyed Tai Chi, but have a lot more to learn about this subject. Also I enjoyed Shared Stories and the activities that this involved and putting a Scrap Book together with writing this my story. The Wellness Centre is an important key to my future wellbeing, health and happiness and to be supportive of others who may just be starting on a similar journey.

I enjoy meeting others who are living positive, vibrant lives and continue to care for others even though they have huge problems and are much younger than me; I am inspired by these lovely motivated people.

Now I feel I just need to deal with each day as it comes, the good and the bad, and look for the pleasures in each day and savour them.