

NEWSLETTER

Patience and kindness given so generously

Research shows that between 60–70% of Australians would prefer to die at home, surrounded by loved ones and the peace that familiarity brings. At Karuna we are privileged to support the people who make this choice by providing compassionate and personalised holistic care to our Brisbane community.

As some of you may already know, Karuna was founded by Venerable Pende Hawter, a Buddhist monk who recognised a need in his community for person-centred end of life care. Pende's training in Buddhism introduced him to new ways of thinking about death, including the experience common in Eastern countries of dying in the comfort of your own home.

Our team has grown significantly from the small group who worked alongside Pende in 1992, into a dedicated group of nurses, counsellors, social workers and corporate staff. They support our patients and their families with kindness and compassion and strive to build meaningful relationships in our community.

We often see relationships brought to the forefront in palliative care. We see this in the way family members with no prior clinical knowledge step up to care for their loved ones.

We hear it in the open and honest dialogue we share with patients to lessen fear and anxiety about death. And we benefit from the generous support of our donors, whose kindness ensures Karuna remains available to those who need it most.

As a community and not-for-profit organisation, Karuna's clinical service comes at no cost for patients and their families.

Donations from our supporters allow our team to purchase essential medical equipment, such as a bladder scanner and new syringe drivers. Donations also provide Karuna families with ongoing access to important resources, such as counselling sessions and support for unskilled carers.

This was the experience of Melissa Josephson, whose mother Thea was cared for by Karuna in the final stages of her cancer treatment. With no medical background or palliative care experience, Melissa felt overwhelmed and nervous to be caring for her mother at home.

She recalls her first meeting with Karuna nurse Kate, who reassured Melissa and her family and gave them the space they needed to express their feelings. The ongoing support of the Karuna nurses allowed Thea's family to spend precious hours by her side as her disease progressed; time that Melissa remembers as "very special" for the entire family.

"Patience and kindness were given so generously. The support of Karuna's nurses empowered me to fully care for mum in her day-to-day life."

Sadly, although many Australians express a desire to die at home, it can be difficult finding the resources needed to make this possible. Here at Karuna we understand how important professional, specialist in-home palliative care services are to the people who make this choice.

Karuna is committed to being by the side of our patients night or day to support them and their family with kindness and compassion. Can you please donate today to help us meet the ever-growing demands of our service?



Karuna patient Thea

Message from the CEO

Tracey Porst CEO/Managing Director



Dear Karuna Friends,

Reflecting upon Karuna's 30-year legacy of kindness and compassion in the community throughout 2022 was a reminder about what a difference we all can make to someone suddenly finding themselves in a situation they weren't prepared for nor expected.

As 2023 begins to take shape, we are excited about the potential for our service.

Ven. Tsultrim has been busy over the summer working on the *What About Death!?* podcast to bring you another round of interesting perspectives on death and dying. Tsultrim has also relaunched the Monday meditation sessions this year and will also be leading some new workshops over the coming months.

As always we were busy over the holiday season and continue to accept new patients and their families into our service. It takes a village to deliver our model of care and we remain grateful to all of our community fundraisers.

Events like the Christmas market and everyone who has downloaded and used our Fundraising Kit all contribute to keeping the clinical team on the road, supporting families like Melissa's, who has generously shared her story in this newsletter.

We have recently joined the online Will making platform, Gathered Here, a social enterprise dedicated to making the task of writing a Will easier and quicker. As Joanne explains in her story, adding Karuna as beneficiary of her Will allowed her to give back for support and care given when caring for her mum.

I hope you enjoy reading our 2023 Autumn Newsletter.

Thanks again for your support,

Tracey Porst
Chief Executive Officer | Karuna Hospice Services



Fiona, Sharon, Tracey and Caroline

Welcome to the Team

I'm delighted to introduce you to our newest team members.

Sharon joins us as Community Services Manager and Caroline as Clinical Nurse Consultant. Fiona is our new Philanthropy Manager, taking over the reins of fundraising from Verena, who remains with us in her new role as Operations Coordinator.

All bring a new perspective along with their range of skills and experience to Karuna.

Meditation Reminder

Karuna is happy to announce that we have started our weekly meditation sessions.

They are suitable for beginners, open to anyone who would like to join in, and no meditation experience is necessary. Join Ven. Tsultrim each Monday afternoon at 4pm at Karuna House. Gold coin donation.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be a three week break from Monday 27/2 until Monday 13/3. Sessions will recommence Monday 20th March.

'An open heart is an open mind.'

From His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Karuna's Spiritual Patron



Joanne's gift to Karuna

Community giving is vital to the continuation of Karuna's service. People support us in many different ways and one of the easiest and most beneficial is leaving a bequest in your Will. This is the choice that Joanne Edgar made after experiencing Karuna's care first-hand.



Joanne's mum had lived with breast cancer for over 14 years before they were given the news that her illness was no longer treatable. While the family were devastated, they knew her mum was happiest in her home, surrounded by her family and friends, so Joanne moved in to care for her in those final months.

Despite wanting to be able to keep her mum at home, Joanne found full-time caregiving both physically and emotionally exhausting and was eventually referred by her GP to Karuna, where she found the personalised support both her and her mum needed.

Karuna nurses visited the house each morning to help Joanne administer medication, assist with showering, and provide care and companionship for her mum. While Karuna was only with Joanne during the last eight days of her mum's illness, Joanne could not have been more grateful for the support.

"I had never experienced such unconditional generosity and compassion before and this changed my life course in ways I never imagined."

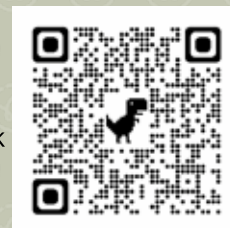
On learning that there would be no charge for the care Karuna provided, Joanne made a commitment to give back to Karuna by leaving a bequest in her Will so other families in similar circumstances could experience the same level of care.

"I hope my final gift will enable Karuna to continue helping people facing terminal illness long after I'm gone – with care, compassion and kindness to clients, carers and families. In a very small way I feel like I am a part of that."

Thank you Joanne, your kindness and generosity makes a world of difference.

Did you know that 70% of Australian adults don't have a legally binding Will? Karuna partners with top-rated Will writing platform Gathered Here to provide our supporters with free Wills.

The reasons people don't have a Will when they should are varied, but often it's because they think writing one is expensive and time-consuming. By partnering with Gathered Here, who offer free and legally-binding Wills in less than ten minutes, we hope to encourage our supporters to take this important step and create a Will. Having an up-to-date Will has many benefits, including legal protection for your loved ones and assets and the ability to outline exactly how you would like things handled in the event of your death.



Established in 2016, Gathered Here is Australia's largest end-of-life services website. Providing services to help people prepare for and manage end-of-life situations including Wills, Probate and Funerals, Gathered Here is supported by an in-house legal team of highly experienced Wills and estate lawyers. Their purpose is to redesign the death industry to be more approachable and more accessible, giving people the knowledge and tools they need to navigate everything relating to death with confidence and certainty.

Learn more about Gathered Here and create your free Will by scanning the QR code in the top right corner.

After you've provided for your loved ones, we would love you to consider leaving even a small percentage of your estate to Karuna. Whilst this is not a requirement, a bequest or a gift in your Will is a lasting and meaningful way to ensure that Karuna can continue providing compassionate care for generations to come.

What About Death!? Returns for Season 2

Karuna's podcast *What About Death!?* will premiere its second season on **Monday, March 20.**

We are excited to share a sneak peek of the first two episodes of Season 2, featuring Markus Zusak, award-winning Australian author of *The Book Thief* and *Bridge of Clay*, and Rachel Menzies, a Sydney-based psychologist specialising in treating fears of death, anxiety and depression.

Ep 1: Markus, why do you think it's important for people to read stories that have death as a prominent feature of them?

A: That's what novels do. It's just this idea of empathy. I think death, as much as other things when they're in novels, allows us to see things through other people's experience. And also to imagine death. [...]

If it appears in a novel or a movie or a poem or an artwork of any kind it makes us understand that it is awful, it is tough.. and it's also beautiful as well. And it gives a lot of meaning to how we live the rest of our lives.

Ep 2: Rachel, how has the "life-sustaining" sentiment common in Western society impacted death anxiety?

A: I think a lot of the fear around aging is strongly related to fears of death. We don't view death as something natural and inevitable: we view it as something that we should be fighting. Whether that's through vitamins, cosmetic surgery, skincare products, any of that... It's all really based on the fact that death and aging is something that we fear and that as a society we're not very good at normalising.



Thank you to our community fundraisers

We want to give our heartfelt thanks to some of our community supporters who raised funds for Karuna last December, our busiest time of year. Your support makes a huge difference to the patients and families we care for.

The annual Christmas markets for Karuna were hosted by our long-term supporters. They organised the evening and supplied beautiful homemade crafts and baked goods to sell on the night. The markets are always a wonderful community event and opportunity to share in the Christmas spirit.

We were also selected as the recipient of a Christmas raffle held by the Kingsford Terrace Retirement Village. We feel honoured to receive this gift from the Kingsford Terrace residents.



Can you help fundraise for Karuna?

Karuna has a **FUNDRAISING KIT** full of simple tips and tricks to help you plan your amazing fundraiser. We even have free, downloadable resources you can use to promote your fundraiser online and/or in person!

Download our fundraising kit online at <https://karuna.org.au/fundraise> to get started!

Right now, someone is being cared for by Karuna thanks to your generosity

🌐 [Karuna.org.au](https://karuna.org.au)

✉ karuna@karuna.org.au

📞 (07) 3632 8300

Whilst there is no charge to patients for Karuna's service, a high quality palliative care service comes at a cost. With limited government funding, it is only with the help of our generous donors that we are able to ensure our service can continue.



karuna
dedicated holistic support
compassionate care