



## *Stronger Together*

*"We couldn't have done it without Karuna."*

**It's often the little things that make life special.**

Things like spending time around the people and places we love, sharing special memories and finding quiet moments to reflect on what matters most. What matters most is something our Karuna families think about a lot.

For Tania and Donna, caring for their mum Gail at home with Karuna's support allowed them to spend precious time together.

Gail was diagnosed with emphysema around twenty years ago. In the early days the disease was manageable.

"When mum said she had emphysema, we didn't know what that looked like. We didn't know what quality of life she would have. She was still physically walking up and down the stairs, playing tennis, so things were still ok," Gail's eldest daughter Tania said.

Gail's condition eventually deteriorated, and she began feeling the effects of the illness on her everyday quality of life. At a regular specialist appointment, palliative care was discussed.

Gail knew she wanted to die at home surrounded by her loved ones, continuing with the activities she enjoyed as and when she could. When the time came and palliative care services were needed, the family contacted Karuna.

"I had heard of Karuna in the past. A friend's mother had passed away at home using Karuna and they spoke very highly of the service. We asked the specialist if we could be referred to Karuna and that's what happened," said younger daughter Donna.

Once the referral had been organised, Karuna visited Gail and the family at home.

"The nurse came in with so much knowledge, compassion, and empathy. She just held us together as a family. We knew at that point that we had made the right decision, and that not only was mum going to be in good hands, but the whole family was too. The way she held us through that meeting, I knew this was going to be the right thing for mum," said Donna.

Karuna's home visits were organised around Gail's needs. As her health declined, our team increased their support for her and the family to daily visits.

Tania said that one of the most important things to the family was reassurance regarding the variations in Gail's condition and that the care the family were providing their mum was right.

Caring for someone with a terminal illness can be stressful. Part of our role is to communicate with our patients and families, offering reassurance.

"Having someone tell us what's happening was normal and that what we were doing was perfect, was a huge relief. I was surprised by how much time they spent with us. Everyday looked different because mum's condition or medication may have changed. Karuna spent a lot of time with us, so we could support mum," said Tania

Gail wanted her family to be able to come and go, knowing her family had their own busy families to tend to. Gail's consideration for everyone around her was enabled because Karuna could care for her at home.

"It was important having mum at home because the grandkids were also comfortable in the house instead of a hospital setting. They could be around their grandma in a setting that they have grown up in," said Tania.

As Gail's condition changed, she was able to remain comfortably at home. Karuna provided extra support to her and the family as it was needed, at any time. With our guidance, Donna, Tania, their brother David and their father John were able to ensure Gail's last days and nights were peaceful and manageable.

"Knowing the family could call a Karuna nurse for 24-hour support whenever we needed it was a huge comfort. Some nights you could call at 11pm and the nurse would step you through what was needed," said Donna.

In October 2023, Gail passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her loved ones, including her beloved dog Rosie.

"Our family would like to thank Karuna for their dedicated support in fulfilling mum's end of life wishes. To have mum's wishes fulfilled as the final thing that we could do for her was absolutely beautiful. We couldn't have done it without Karuna. The support Karuna provides to the community is priceless," said Donna.

Karuna CEO, Tracey Porst said, "It's a privilege to have been trusted by Gail and the whole family to honor her wishes, and to support and reassure them in their journey together."

# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Hello and Happy New Year Karuna Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to read our Autumn Newsletter.

As many of you may know, a holistic model of care is unique in its commitment to addressing the broad range of human needs and the challenging terrain of terminal illness. Holistic care focuses on the whole person with special attention given to the emotional and spiritual needs of the individual. Karuna's model of care is designed around this approach, to care for the patient and their families at a time when uncertainty prevails.

With this in mind, I would like to thank Tania, Donna and their family for allowing us to share their personal story with you. Supporting them in caring for Gail was our privilege. The role of families and caregivers when supporting a loved one at end-of-life cannot be understated and Gail's family are a testament to her.

You can read more of Gail's story on our website, by scanning the QR code at the end of this section.

Over the summer we welcomed new team members to the organisation. Theresa, Michelle, Shannley and Dylan have joined us in our work to offer support for patients and families.

Activities planned for 2024 include workshops, community fundraising events and working alongside our professional networks and peers in ways that we envisage will encourage a broader awareness of our work. All in support of our mission to provide choice, independence and peace at end-of-life.



As always, I am very grateful for the support all of you give to Karuna and want to assure you that it all makes a very real, tangible difference to our ability to deliver services to people who seek our support.

With my sincere appreciation,

*Tracey Porst*

Tracey Porst  
Chief Executive Officer | Managing Director  
Karuna Hospice Services

Read more of Gail's story on our website



SCAN ME



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

*Karuna acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians.*

*We recognise their cultures, histories and diversity and their deep connection to the lands, waters and seas of Queensland and the Torres Strait.*

*We acknowledge the Jagera people and the Turrbal people as the Traditional Custodians of Meanjin (Brisbane), the lands on which our office is located and where we meet, work and learn.*

*We pay our respects to Jagera and Turrbal Elders past, present and emerging.*



## YOUR FEEDBACK

"We cannot speak highly enough of the support provided by Karuna, who were a Godsend to us in Mum's final stages. We could not have kept Mum at home without these amazing ladies, so that she was able to pass gently in her own bed. Their professionalism, skill and compassion were second to none."

- Lyndell



## Message from the *Community Services Manager*

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the Community Services Manager with Karuna. As a registered nurse with a background in public health and innovative community service model design for major organisations, I am honoured to join Karuna and contribute to the exceptional in-home, compassionate care that enables our community to live well and die peacefully.

The first thing I noticed as a newcomer to Karuna was their unique ability to truly practice “person-centred care” for the people and families we care for. In other words, treating each person respectfully as an individual human being, and not just as a medical condition. Research shows that this approach to palliative care is the “gold standard” but it is rare to see evidence of it being successfully implemented.

It is the unique variety of experts that make up Karuna’s Community Services team that is the key to being able to offer person-centred care. Our team of nurses, a doctor, social workers, and a spiritual care practitioner allows us to facilitate truly holistic, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being, for the people we care for. I am confident that I speak for the whole of Karuna in saying that being able to create an opportunity for people to make sense of self, purpose and meaning in the context of a life limiting illness is a privilege, and we look forward to your ongoing support to continue this into 2024 and beyond.



Sophie Shrapnel,  
Community Services Manager

## The value of *engaging with our spirituality*

Spirituality can mean a different thing to each one of us. For some it means a religious belief and practice. For others it is about relationships and connection. This might be with people, the environment, with animals or an experience. For others, engaging with our spirit or our spirituality may open our heart and mind to seeing a different perspective that is more open and spacious, allowing us to respond to life’s difficulties with kindness, generosity of spirit, and patience.

However you might define it, all these things assist us to broaden our spiritual and emotional awareness. To recognise the importance of understanding our interconnectedness and interdependence. That we are always a part of a whole and we do not live or function independently.

It encourages us to live our life in a way that is not so self-centred but brings a focus to sharing a warm heartedness towards others, in the understanding we are all just the same, wanting happiness and not wanting suffering.



Ven. Tsultrim,  
Spiritual Program Co-ordinator  
and Counsellor

## How we *make a difference*



### Community Volunteer Programs

Hospice has a rich history of community engagement.



### Compassionate + Responsive

When time is of the essence, hospice is available around the clock.



### Connecting community

Building resources around supporting patients in regional and remote areas.



### Spiritual Care

Care of the mind is an essential element of holistic care.

We offer support to people of all denominations and faiths.



### Choice + Dignity

End of life clinical and family support care at home or in patient services.



### Experience

Collectively, many years of experience. Compassionate care and support when needed.

# Events at Karuna

## HOW TO BE KIND WORKSHOP

Our Spiritual Care Practitioner, Venerable Tsultrim, hosted her first 'How to Be Kind in an Unkind World' workshop at Karuna House in January.

Participants learnt about ways to respond, which encourages us to use patience, compassion and wisdom towards people and situations we may find disheartening and distressing. Tsultrim also provided participants with simple mindfulness and meditation techniques.

We look forward to hosting similar sessions in the near future. To keep up to date with workshop information, ensure you are subscribed to our newsletter (<https://karuna.org.au/news-media/newsletters/>) and following us on social media @karunahospice.



## REGULAR MEDITATION IS BACK!

Are you interested in learning introductory meditation techniques for use in your daily life?

We would love to have you join us for regular meditation sessions, led by Ven. Tsultrim, at Karuna House.

The sessions are held on Wednesday afternoons at 4pm and will cover a range of meditation techniques and practices. Everyone is welcome - no prior experience necessary!

We kindly request a gold coin donation upon entry.



## Karuna in the community

### QUILTING QUEENS MOTHER'S DAY STALL



The Quilting Queens are hosting a stall to fundraise for Karuna on **Saturday 27 April, 8am - 1pm** at Brookside Shopping Centre.

Come down and grab something beautiful - just in time for Mother's Day!

### KARUNA AT PENINSULA FAIR




Karuna staff will be at Peninsula Fair Shopping Centre on **Friday 15 & Saturday 16 March, 9am - 5pm**.

If you're in the area, please stop by and say hi. We love to see our community at these events!

### FOLLOW KARUNA ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 [www.facebook.com/karunahospice](https://www.facebook.com/karunahospice)

 @karunahospice

 [www.karuna.org.au/](http://www.karuna.org.au/)

 <http://karuna.org.au/resources/podcast/>

## HOST YOUR OWN KARUNA FUNDRAISER!

*Do you have a birthday or special occasion coming up?*

*Want to make a difference and raise funds for Karuna?*

We deeply appreciate the support of our community fundraisers.

If you would like information on hosting your own event or having a personalised donation page set up, please reach out to our Community Fundraiser Sabrina by calling **0447 038 979** or emailing [community@karuna.org.au](mailto:community@karuna.org.au).



## The Joy of Giving

We are grateful to those who ask for donations to Karuna in lieu of flowers when they lose a loved one. We now have special memorial packs available with resources that you can use at a funeral or memorial service.

The packs include "The Joy of Giving" envelopes and a poster with a QR Code for direct donations. These packs can be sent directly to funeral homes or are available for collection from Karuna House.

Please contact our team on [community@karuna.org.au](mailto:community@karuna.org.au) for more information or to organise collection.

