

Welcome to The Gawler Foundation - Leaders in Healing Cancer Retreats

“The Gawler Foundation provides a range of internationally renowned healing cancer retreats and programs that embrace an integrated approach to health, healing and wellbeing that includes the body, emotions, mind and spirit.

Our cancer retreats and healing programs work within an integrative medical framework to provide access to the best possible instruction and support for the implementation of self-help techniques for people experiencing cancer, Multiple Sclerosis and other serious illnesses, and those seeking a preventative approach to health and wellbeing.”

What is The Gawler Foundation?

The Gawler Foundation is a not for profit, registered charity that promotes the integrated management of cancer, MS and other serious illness.

Founded by Ian Gawler in 1981 as the Australian Cancer Patients Foundation they initially assisted people affected by cancer.

Since that time the Foundation has grown and now focuses on both healing and wellbeing.

The Gawler Foundation was Australia's first cancer support service and it also conducted the first active cancer support group in Australia. They have developed a broad network of Cancer Self Help Support Groups in Melbourne and throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Since 1983, the Foundation has helped thousands of Australians and people worldwide through its programs in cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS) management, disease prevention, stress management and counselling.

Anyone diagnosed with cancer will benefit from considering their lifestyle. Just as with heart disease and diabetes, cancer is affected by diet, exercise, stress, and a person's state of mind. For people with a good cancer prognosis, their treatment will be well-supported by The Gawler Foundation's lifestyle programs – increasing the possibility of full recovery, minimising side-effects and reliably leading to sustainable peace of mind.

The Foundation receives no government funding and relies totally on the generosity, shared vision and commitment of schools, volunteers, foundations, businesses and individuals.

Understanding the options

The statistics don't lie – over 90,000 Australians will be diagnosed with some form of cancer this year.

While conventional medicine still remains the first port of call for most people, it is important to take into consideration the options available when deciding how best to treat your cancer.

For the past 27 years The Gawler Foundation has provided one such option through their world-leading lifestyle programs.

And again, the statistics don't lie – since The Foundation began in 1983, over 15,000 people with cancer have attended its residential programs while another 75,000 worldwide have attended Gawler Foundation lectures and workshops.

So what is it that The Gawler Foundation does?

The premise is simple: meditate, eat well and surround yourself with loving support. They believe that there is a strong connection between the mind and body and that by tapping into that connection it is possible to activate the body's own mechanism for healing.

The Foundation offers a range of lifestyle programs based on Dr Ian Gawler's bestselling book, 'You can Conquer Cancer'; programs which teach people dealing with cancer and serious illness how to awaken the connection between mind and body.

From the ten day residential life and living program to the support groups available throughout Australia and New Zealand, The Gawler Foundation has helped make a real difference to the lives of many people dealing with cancer.

For more information, contact The Foundation on (03) 59671730 or visit www.gawler.org

Overview

The Gawler Foundation is best known for its innovative and integrated support for people affected by cancer and other illnesses since the early 1980s. In 2002 the Foundation introduced a program for people living with MS with Professor George Jelinek, author of “Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis”.

Based on the healing experience of Dr Ian Gawler, one of Australia’s best known cancer survivors, and the experiences and feedback of thousands of patients and their families, our lifestyle programs offer a combination of self help techniques and holistic approaches to healing that are second to none and unique in the world.

They are based on the philosophy that regaining balance in one’s life leads to healing.

History

1975

Therapeutic director Ian Gawler developed bone cancer and had his right leg amputated. Later that year the cancer returned, and Ian followed an effective self-help program with key principles – good food, positive attitudes, meditation and loving support. Ian completed a remarkable recovery in 1978.

1981

Based upon Ian’s momentous healing experience, Australia’s first active cancer support group was established. People can now learn how to increase their chances of survival from cancer and develop and sustain peace of mind.

1983

The Gawler Foundation was established as a non-profit, non-denominational organisation to further Ian Gawler’s work.

Today

Over the years, The Gawler Foundation has blossomed into a dynamic, thriving and leading life-force in health, healing and wellbeing.

About The Gawler Foundation's lifestyle programs

The Gawler Foundation's lifestyle programs can help people with cancer, MS or other serious illness to improve quality of life and increase their chances of survival. Since 1983, this world-leading not for profit organisation has helped thousands of people to activate the body's own mechanisms for healing.

"The Gawler Foundation presents a lifestyle program which focuses on how people can be helped to work with the medical treatments they are having to actively play a part in improving their quality of life," said The Foundation's CEO Karin Knoester.

"We believe that a lifestyle program is an essential part of best practice management of cancer and needs to be available and encouraged for everyone from the point of first diagnosis, just as in heart disease and type 2 diabetes."

It was important to distinguish and be very clear about the wide range of different programs and treatments available when making a decision about how to tackle serious illness.

"There are significant differences between what is on offer from conventional medicine, lifestyle programs, complementary and alternative medicine, and it is important to define and then differentiate these services in terms of what they offer, what validity they have and how they are regulated."

"One of the reasons The Gawler Foundation is very supportive of conventional medicine and its allied health professions is that they have a strong commitment to research and are well regulated by the medical board and other professions."

"We are also supportive of many of the practitioners of complementary medicine. Such practitioners commonly include doctors and Allied Health Professionals who are already registered by a recognised regulatory body.

"It is important that lifestyle programs offered by The Gawler Foundation be differentiated from the practice of complementary and alternative medicine. A lifestyle program focuses on what a person can do for themselves and includes the support of family and friends," said Therapeutic Director, Siegfried Gutbrod.

"A lifestyle program is self-empowering while complementary and alternative medicine requires outside help. The Gawler Foundation is fully committed to making its lifestyle program available to all people affected by cancer in Australia."

For further information please contact: Lindy Schneider, Media & Communications, The Gawler Foundation

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Why does The Gawler Foundation advocate Integrative Medicine?

Any serious illness has an enormous impact on the wellbeing of patients, their families, the healthcare system, and the wider community. As such, managing illnesses such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, requires a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach utilising evidence-based medicine, lifestyle advice and education, and complementary therapies.

This approach or 'social model of health' is best described as Integrative Medicine.

The Gawler Foundation is of the view that Integrative Medicine is the best paradigm for the treatment and management of cancer, MS and other serious illness. This approach aims to foster the best outcomes for patients, families and the community through informed decision-making and the provision of skills, resources and information.

The Foundation's programs teach patients how to get the best out of what they might be doing medically, as well as how to proactively use their own resources in the context of their daily life to manage their illnesses and wellbeing.

Integrative Medicine advocates a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach utilising evidence-based medical and surgical treatments, lifestyle advice and complementary therapies.

What kind of programs does The Gawler Foundation offer?

There are two program models, healing and wellbeing. Under these umbrellas, the Foundation offers the following programs:

- Life and Living 10 day program – our renowned cancer healing retreat
- Life and Living the Next Step - 5 day follow-up program
- Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis - 5 day retreat
- Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis Follow up - 5 day retreat
- Healing Meditation Retreat – weekend retreat
- Living in Balance - 5 day retreat
- Living in the Now - 5 day retreat
- Weekend Meditation Retreats
- Women's Retreats – weekend
- Cancer Self-Help Program over 12 week program
- Ongoing Cancer Support Groups
- Meditation Groups

For more details of these programs visit www.gawler.org

Over 15,000 people have attended the Foundation's residential programs in Victoria's Yarra Valley and more than 75,000 people have attended the non-residential programs conducted by Ian and his team of highly-trained therapists.

These programs are reinforced by a range of resources including counselling, massage, reflexology and its resource centre.

What is the Foundation's success rate and is there evidence that it works?

In 2005, The Gawler Foundation partnered with the Graduate School of Integrative Medicine, Swinburne University of Technology to undertake an independent research study to assess the benefits for patients who attended the Foundation's 10-day residential program.

The study found that patients who attended the program experienced scientifically measurable, beneficial effects on mood, mental adjustment to cancer, quality of life and salivary cortisol level (the level of stress, measured by saliva samples).

The preliminary results of the study were published in the International Journal of Psycho-Oncology. Based on direct feedback and in-house research, thousands of Australians have benefited from adopting the Gawler approach and many program participants have survived what was regarded as terminal or incurable cancer.

Does The Gawler Foundation require the discontinuation of 'traditional or conventional' treatments like chemotherapy or radiotherapy when they attend a program?

No. The Foundation does not advocate that participants stop currently prescribed medication or treatment.

They advocate an integrated medical approach, which is one that embraces what works and is in each individual person's best interest. The approach brings together many different treatments – conventional, medical treatments and other approaches – that the patient may manage themselves.

The Foundation believes every patient needs to be fully informed of the consequences and likely outcomes for various treatment options, so that they can make an informed choice about what treatment options and combinations will suit their own individual circumstances.

Definitions

Orthodox or Conventional Medicine:

Orthodox or conventional medicine generally describes medical interventions that are taught at medical schools, generally provided at hospitals, and meet the requirement of peer accepted mainstream medicine and standards of care. (source: Medical Benefits Schedule, Item Statistics report)

Complementary Medicine:

Complementary medicine refers to a medicine or therapy that is used in addition to, or complements conventional medicine. Complementary medicine is increasingly taught in medical schools and practiced in hospitals and is steadily gaining widespread support. More research is needed to better evaluate it. (source: Kotsirilos V. Aust Fam Physician 2005; 34:1-3)

Integrative Medicine:

The term Integrative Medicine refers to a style of medical practice which is holistic and integrates the best and safest of conventional medical care with lifestyle advice and evidence-based complementary medicines and/or therapies. It aims to use the most appropriate of all available modalities and to help each individual patient make informed choices.

Lifestyle Program:

Lifestyle factors are concerned with what a person can do for themselves in the context of their daily life. They are diverse, have a major impact upon health, and include physical, psychological, social and spiritual factors including diet, exercise, stress management, social support, leisure or work. Although they warrant being a core element in conventional medical care, many patients perceive, rightly or wrongly, that doctors do not take sufficient time or interest in lifestyle factors, hence, it is one of the main reasons for patients attending practitioners of complementary medicine.

Although cancer patients often seek help with lifestyle factors from complementary therapists and self-help programs as a part of their treatment, lifestyle factors benefit from being distinguished from complementary therapies for a range of reasons:

- a. They have a stronger evidence-base supporting their use.
- b. Their safety is high and has been more clearly defined.
- c. The 'side-effects' of appropriate lifestyle change tend to be beneficial.
- d. They should be seen as integral to conventional medical care rather than being a secondary option.

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History - The Gawler Foundation timeline

1975: Therapeutic Director, Dr Ian Gawler OAM, developed osteogenic sarcoma (bone cancer) and had his right leg amputated. Later that year, the cancer returned. Ian and his first wife Grace, start to utilise complementary therapies based on meditation, organic vegan diet and loving support.

1978: Ian is cancer-free and his remission is reported in the Medical Journal of Australia.

1981-83: Ian establishes Australia's first self-help cancer support group. Ian and Grace Gawler runs the early groups privately.

1983: The Australian Cancer Patients Foundation was formed, the first lifestyle-based cancer support service in Australia.

1983: The Foundation becomes a non-profit, non-denominational registered charity.

1995-1999: The Foundation convenes the 'Mind, Immunity & Health' Conferences. These are the first conferences in Australia addressing the learning needs of multi-disciplinary health professionals engaged in Integrative Medicine. The conference continues as 'The Holistic Health Conference' now convened by The Australasian Integrative Medical Association (AIMA).

2000: A South Australian survey shows that approximately 52% of the Australian population use complementary medicines and that 23% consulted practitioners of complementary medicine. This represents an estimated out-of-pocket spending of \$2.3 billion which is a 62% increase since 1993.

2001: Ian initiates lifestyle-based programs for people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS): in collaboration with Professor George Jelinek, MS survivor and Professor of Emergency Medicine in WA and author of 'Taking Control of MS'.

2004: The Foundation partners with Monash Medical School, Swinburne University and RMIT University to present the 'Wellness Conference' for doctors and health practitioners.

2005: The Foundation makes a submission to the Senate Inquiry into services and treatment options for persons with cancer.

2005: The Gawler Foundation partners with the Graduate School of Integrative Medicine, Swinburne University of Technology to undertake an independent research study to assess the benefits for patients who attended the Foundation's 10-day residential program.

The study found that patients who attended the program experienced scientifically measurable, beneficial effects on mood, mental adjustment to cancer, quality of life and salivary cortisol level (the level of stress, measured by saliva samples).

The preliminary results of the study were published in the International Journal of Psycho-Oncology.

2007: The Foundation's 25th anniversary and Ian celebrates being cancer-free for 30 years.

2009: Ian retires from his role as therapeutic director to spend a year in sabbatical, travelling to spiritual sites and teachers throughout the world and focusing on his writing.

2010: The Gawler Foundation's Hawthorn Centre opens providing an accessible city-based hub for our support groups, programs and meditation sessions.

Today: The Foundation is now a dynamic, thriving and leading life-force in health and healing. Over 15,000 people have attended its Residential programs in Victoria's Yarra Valley and more than 75,000 people have attended its non-residential programs in meditation and disease prevention conducted by a team of highly-trained therapists.

These programs are reinforced by a range of resources including counselling, massage, and resource centre.

Information

For more information contact Lindy Schneider, Media and Communications Manager, Tel 035967 1730 or on email media@gawler.org

Ms Karin Knoester, CEO The Gawler Foundation and Mr Siegfried Gutbrod, Therapeutic Director are available for interviews on request.