

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Reclaim Your Curves E-Newsletter - November 2016

[View this email in your browser](#)

the inside story



## Welcome to our November E-Newsletter

We are coming to the end of the year and wow, what a year it has been. We are not quite finished with our events yet but we are looking forward to some well earned down time during January.

### In the news:

One significant recent development that reinforces the work of Reclaim Your Curves is the **Cancer Australia Statement "Influencing best practice in breast cancer"**. Launched on Pink Ribbon Day, the [Influencing Best Practice in Breast Cancer](#) statement identifies 12 key appropriate and inappropriate practices, including Practice 11/ **Not appropriate** to perform a mastectomy without first discussing with the patient the options of immediate or delayed breast reconstruction. This is a step in the right direction and we hope that it encourages doctors across Australia raise the bar in

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

## Our achievements:

in the last 12 months we have:

- held 3 Breast Reconstruction Awareness Events
- attended 9 BCNA Information Forums
- spoken at 6 breast cancer or breast reconstruction seminars
- welcomed 861 new members into our networks
- distributed 3000 Postcards across Australia
- given out 150 health professional packs
- created our Medical Advisory Group
- created patient information sheets through feedback from our community
- hosted more than 20 Peer Support lunches across Australia
- written several media stories
- interviewed key health professionals for our Conversations
- had 40,000 website page views

## Volunteers:

This amazing achievement is the **work of volunteers** who are committed to informing and supporting women about their choices. These ladies work tirelessly around their paid work and other commitments to ensure women are welcomed and connected and ultimately empowered to participate in their decision making.

## Sponsors:

To achieve some of our work we are generously supported by organisations who believe what we do is important.



We hope to continue these valuable partnerships and **develop new partnerships in 2017** to continue to develop our resources and drive our cause to empower women with information and to provide support during difficult times.

## Donations:

Thank you also to our many **individual supporters** who have donated in support of our work. A small donation goes a long way in Reclaim Your Curves, you can [donate here](#) to give us a boost. 100% of dollars received go directly toward putting information into the hands of consumers.

If you are currently undergoing procedures, we wish you all the best, from the Reclaim Your Curves Team XX

*Enjoy reading more about our work below...*

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Like our public [Facebook page](#) or Share our [website](#)

Health Professionals - we have a conveniently sized Postcard Invitation you can order to give to your patients during a consultation or to display in your waiting room.

[Order FREE postcards online](#)



*Reclaim Your Curves*  
Breast Reconstruction  
INFORMATION and SUPPORT

Promoting *choice* for women

Breast reconstruction can be an extraordinarily difficult time for many women. With so many decisions to make, it's easy to become overwhelmed and frightened.

This is your invitation to join us at *Reclaim Your Curves*,<sup>usa</sup> a comprehensive online resource to help you understand your options for breast reconstruction. It is a place to meet women on a similar journey, view realistic images and learn what to expect during and after surgery.

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

member group of 

## NEW - Breast Reconstruction Gallery



One of the most important decision tools for breast reconstruction is to view images from women. This can help you to have a realistic expectation about what you can expect. This new website feature has been created using images generously donated from our community.

After many requests it is finally here and we will continue to add more images in the future.

Subscribe

Share ▼

Past Issues

Translate ▼

outcome based on many factors.

Go to the the [member area](#) or [subscribe](#) to view

## Latest news and Conversations

### Cancer Australia Statement: “Influencing best practice in breast cancer”

Launched on Pink Ribbon Day, the [Influencing Best Practice in Breast Cancer](#) statement identifies 12 key appropriate and inappropriate practices, from diagnosis to palliative care. The Statement includes discussing breast reconstruction options with a woman before she undergoes a mastectomy.

[Link to the 12 practces](#)

[Link to Practice 11: "Not appropriate to perform a mastectomy without first discussing with the patient the options of immediate or delayed breast reconstruction"](#)

[Watch the video here](#)

### They're not "just boobs"

In response to a recent 60 Minutes episode featuring a young mum who had been recently diagnosed with breast cancer, it is shocking to our community of women who have faced mastectomy, that the reporter referred to this young women's breasts as "just boobs".



[Subscribe](#)[Share](#) ▼[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

## daughter

This morning one of our wonderful members Bronwyn Davidson from the Central Coast NSW and her daughter Erin from Mt Isa QLD spoke with Scott Levi [ABC Central Coast](#) about their experiences with breast cancer and breast reconstruction. Erin was speaking before being wheeled in for exchange to implant surgery. This is the final step in her two stage reconstruction process. Later today we heard Erin is out of surgery and doing well.



## Events



## Reclaim Your Curves Peer Support Lunches

RYC Lunches are where women meet to connect and share with each other about their breast reconstruction experiences. Conversation covers many topics as you would expect whenever

[Subscribe](#)[Share](#) ▼[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

Central Coast lunch guest Carol Campbell animating her positive wellness thoughts for us. Carol represents a local Encore program and Feather Touch Massage an Wellness Centre.



Another Central Coast guest Cosmetic Tattooist Jan Livingstone. Jan chatted to us about how she contributes to the final touches of a womans reconstruction. You can find her service [here](#).

[Subscribe](#)[Share](#) ▼[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

Another big turn out in Perth at the August lunch. Lead by the amazing Leone, this group has guest speakers regularly.

### *No lunch event in your area?*

If you would like to become an RYC Ambassador and host Peer Support social events in your area, please [get in touch with us](#)

## Introducing Yvonne

This lovely lady is a new RYC Ambassador in Victoria in the Wangaratta area. Yvonne is a nurse and is keen to connect, support and help to inform local women about their breast reconstruction options. If you are in this area look out for lunch dates commencing in 2017.



## Breast Reconstruction Awareness Events

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Breast Reconstruction Awareness Events are held in rural locations. To date we have had 3 very successful events in regional NSW. We have several more in the planning stages for 2017. Our events are funded by AirXpanders who generously provide the means for Reclaim Your Curves to reach out to regional and rural women while engaging the local health professionals.



Learn more about our past event here [Breast Reconstruction Awareness Events](#)

Reclaim Your Curves also attends the majority of Breast Cancer Network Australia rural Information Forums as an exhibitor. At these events we are privileged to speak with many women who are considering breast reconstruction. RYC provides information and resources at these events.



## Breast Reconstruction Awareness Event Orange NSW October 2016

On the evening of Monday 31st October the Breast Reconstruction Awareness Event took place in Orange NSW. This region is well supported by health professionals who value to needs of their patients when it comes to their surgical choices post mastectomy.

Presenters on the night included Dr James French, Head of Breast Surgery at the Westmead Breast Cancer Institute, Dr Peter Fox, Medical Oncologist, Daffodil Cottage Chemotherapy Unit, Bathurst, Dr Rohit Kumar, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, Nepean Public

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

The evening was attended by almost 100 women and their support people as well as local health professionals keen to understand more about the process involved in breast reconstruction.

The audience heard from some very special ladies who shared their personal and very unique stories, sharing their decision making processes, the techniques they chose and the journey they travelled. Speakers included one woman who chose no reconstruction which is of course a valid choice to make.

The participants had the opportunity to chat with exhibitors including Encore, Dragons Abreast, the Wig Library, Look Good Feel Better, an exercise physiologist and lingerie specialist.

Feedback from the audience was positive and women felt more informed and empowered to make decisions that suit them in consultation with their health professional team.

We are looking forward to planning future events throughout 2017.



## Breast Reconstructon Awareness Event Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide November 2016

Nothing can beat person to person information sharing for breast reconstruction.

Reclaim Your Curves attended the 3rd annual Flinders Centre for Innovation BRA Event in Adelaide. It was a wonderful opportunity for women to connect with key surgeons and other health professionals to discuss options for breast reconstruction. Nurse Practitioner for Breast Reconstruction, Andrea Smallman, delivered the basics in short presentations and former patients shared their experiences with each other. Then participants could have one on one time with surgeons and former patients as well as the exhibitors.

After some years involved with women and breast reconstruction, I have seen my fair share of reconstructed breasts and its safe to say that after last night I have nipple envy. What an

It was also a wonderful bonus to meet RYC members in person, Tanya, pictured below, is a member of the RYC Facebook community and spoke to women about the benefits of being involved with such an amazingly supportive and informative group of women.



Services Directory - [SUBSCRIBE](#)



[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

NSW. We need many more, please let us know your contacts for this service.



### [Service Directory - Bra fitting, breast prosthesis and lingerie](#)

This is where you will find bra and prosthesis retailers from all over Australia. Including some retailers of beautiful lingerie made especially for the breast cancer survivor.



### [Service Directory - Physical health and well being](#)

There are some wonderfully supportive therapies and services for breast cancer survivors and to assist with the recovery from breast surgery. Find some here, if you know more we would love to know about them.

Get Connected



[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

support group, either face to face or online, is a great way to exchange stories and images. Some ladies like the opportunity to touch a “real fake” breast to judge for themselves how that might feel for them.

There are 3 ways to Get Connected

- Face to face
- Online
- On the Phone



## Ask an Expert

This feature is for you to use to contact a health professional to get some general advice about topics related to breast reconstruction.

Using this feature you are welcome to ask questions directly to the participating specialists. Responses will be general in nature and should not replace the medical advice of your own practitioner or health professional. These experts give their time in a voluntary capacity to support women seeking information.

*Remember....there are no silly questions.*

### How is this forum different?

This forum is especially helpful for support people. Until now our online communities have been strictly patients only. But this new forum is a place that family members can ask questions on behalf of their loved one. Perhaps mum is not tech savy and unable to participate online herself. This forum is a perfect place to ask questions on her behalf.

In this forum anyone can ask a general question and ask question directly to participating health professionals. Participation can be anonymous.

# Print resources

Download or order stock [here](#)

Reclaim Your Curves

## Choosing your surgeon

**TOP 10 TIPS FOR CHOOSING YOUR RECONSTRUCTIVE BREAST SURGEON**

- Member of the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) or is appropriately skilled in the procedure being performed** - This is important to ensure you have an appropriately qualified specialist plastic surgeon to undertake your procedure.
- Approachable** - It's great to have a surgeon who you feel comfortable asking questions of, where no question is a silly one, and who is happy to discuss your fears and concerns.
- Makes you feel like part of the decision making** - Being offered options is an important part of decision making however not everyone has this luxury due to their specific situation. A good surgeon asks you questions, listens and helps you to make informed decisions and gives you information and helps you see the different possibilities. They take the time to ensure everything gets covered rather than feeling rushed.
- Contactable** - One of the most valuable things you can have is a direct line to your surgeon, whether this is by phone or email. A surgeon who offers their email or mobile number understands you might have further questions or might need to be in touch during out of office periods over the months or years of your relationship.
- Considerate and respectful** - It's just so nice when your doctor remembers your name, either in their office or at the bedside. A good surgeon will listen to your concerns and attempt to allay fears while offering realistic outcomes. It's extra good if they consider the potential financial burden of procedures, but that they do not make assumptions about your ability or willingness to pay.
- Dedicated** - If most of these points are a yes, then your surgeon is committed to you as a patient. Many surgeons will visit you personally bedside post-surgery but this isn't always possible and often it's someone from their team.
- Sense of humour and smiles** - A surgeon who smiles and can have a laugh helps to keep things relaxed. Surgery and appointments can be emotional, so this trait can help to break that composed and formal atmosphere that can make you feel intimidated.
- Confident** - You want a surgeon who is confident and reassuring, especially if things stray from the plan. You need to be able to trust your surgeon that he or she as the capability to get things corrected and back on track.
- Skilled and experienced** - Your surgeon should be able to show you several pictures of their work. Ask to see images of their work and if they have any patients willing to speak to you about their surgery and outcomes.
- Works in a team and consults with colleagues** - Many surgeons work as part of a multi-disciplinary team where they discuss cases to make the best judgement in consultation with colleagues.



For more information go to [www.reclaimyourcurves.org.au](http://www.reclaimyourcurves.org.au)

EMPOWER SUPPORT ADVOCATE

Reclaim Your Curves

## Invest in Yourself

### PREPARING FOR SURGERY

No one else needs to invest in your reconstruction surgery to the extent that you do. You are living with the outcome for the rest of your life, so it is important to bring what you want and need into the conversation. Not everyone is comfortable having these conversations and even the strongest of us can feel intimidated when in the surgeon's office getting caught up in the flurry of jargon, drawings and measurements. It's common to just agree with the surgeon so that you can get out the door and back to some sense of control. A good way to overcome this anxiety is to go to your appointments well prepared with the materials and information you have gathered from reputable sources such as the Reclaim Your Curves. Bring in a list of questions to ask and a pad and pen to jot things down. Some ladies have said it is empowering to go armed with information, even if you don't need it. Another good tip is to tell your surgeon that you are nervous and unsure, and this can sometimes slow the conversation down a bit and help the surgeon to understand where you are at.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SURGEON

One way to get the right answers for your situation is to understand the right questions to ask. Getting to know the language and terminology used in reconstruction will help you to make informed decisions and to get the responses you need. Members of the Reclaim Your Curves online community have shared the following hot tips to get the answers you need at your appointment.

#### PRE SURGERY QUESTIONS

- Am I a candidate for an immediate skin/hipple sparing breast reconstruction at the time of mastectomy?
- How quickly do I need to decide about my options? Do I have time to wait a little longer to be sure I have thought over my options?
- What factors impact on the timing of my breast reconstruction?
- I have had some lymphoedema - is this surgery likely to make it worse, or might it be improved?
- What are the specific steps in each stage of the procedure you have recommended for me? What are the risks related to each stage?
- What's the projected timeline for each stage? How flexible is this timeline?
- What are the options for my other breast? How and when is contralateral surgery recommended / done? What are the advantages/ disadvantages and risks?
- Am I able to keep my own nipples? If not, what are the options, and when do I need to make any decisions regarding this?
- If my nipples are saved, will I have sensation/feeling in them? What will they look like?
- How will reconstruction affect my skin sensation?
- Where will the incisions be made on my breasts and my tissue donor area?
- What do you recommend to manage scars post-surgery?



EMPOWER SUPPORT ADVOCATE

Reclaim Your Curves



## Better choices for women thinking about breast reconstruction.

EMPOWER SUPPORT ADVOCATE

Reclaim Your Curves

## Preparation & recovery

### PREPARING FOR SURGERY

Smoking increases the potential for serious risks. It is advised that you plan to give up smoking and any nicotine therapy at least 2 months before surgery.

- You may be advised to stop taking certain medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), aspirin, or other aspirin-like medications that may interfere with blood clotting for a brief period before your surgery. You may also be asked to stop taking naturalistic substances such as garlic, ginkgo, ginseng and St John's Wort, as they may affect clotting and anaesthesia. Be sure to tell your surgeon and anaesthetist everything you are taking and take their advice before stopping any medication.
- Avoid excessive alcohol prior to surgery.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, including plenty of foods rich in vitamin C, which may help promote tissue healing.
- Exercise regularly to build energy, improve fitness and maintain strength.
- Ready your home, including preparing food and rearranging furniture if necessary.
- If necessary, arrange for someone to take care of your children while you are in the hospital.
- Make sure a relative or friend will drive you to and from the hospital. You will not be able to drive for a few weeks and should only consider doing so when you have healed sufficiently.
- You should not be alone for at least 24 hours after you arrive home.
- Arrange for help with shopping, housework and caring for any small children as you will be unable to do any heavy lifting or strenuous activity for several weeks.

### RECOVERY TIPS & ADVICE

Your surgeon will provide you with advice on caring for your new breast, when you can shower or bathe, as well as how to look after any drains that are still in place. Drainage tubes remove fluids that collect in the surgical site. The drainage tubes remain in place until the amount of fluid draining substantially decreases.

If you have had a tissue expander inserted, you will need to see your doctor regularly over several weeks or months to allow the expander filled until the desired shape and size have been achieved for the implant. A support bra may be worn to help reduce swelling and support the reconstructed breast.

You may be prescribed painkillers, antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs when you are first discharged from hospital. It is vital to use these as prescribed to successfully manage any pain and to reduce the risk of infection.

Post-operative recovery can take longer if complications occur, so it is important to get adequate rest, make sure you follow your surgeon's directions and exercise within the limits of comfort - if you feel any pain or pulling, especially around the wound sites, stop. It is normal to feel tired and sore after your surgery. Generally it is advised not to swim, play sports, exercise or do any heavy lifting for at least two weeks after your surgery. There is no set rule when it comes to your recovery time. Your Specialist Plastic Surgeon will prepare detailed instructions on post-operative care - make sure you follow these carefully.

It can take up to twelve months to completely heal and for scars to fade and for you to get a good indication of how your new breast will settle into your body. You might feel further surgery to refine the shape of your new breast mound.



EMPOWER SUPPORT ADVOCATE

## WHAT DOES RECLAIM YOUR CURVES DO?

[Subscribe](#)[Share](#) ▼[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

we work to help inform and support women undergoing these life-changing surgeries.

Our current activities include:

- Facilitation of the BCNA Breast Reconstruction Online Group
- Online community managing Reclaim Your Curves closed Facebook group: *We have 2 online communities with 5 volunteers/facilitators working every day to connect new people and to help members find the information they need.*
- Developing and facilitating face to face support groups around Australia. *Currently we have groups in Perth WA, Melbourne VIC, Brisbane QLD, Central Coast NSW, and Sydney NSW..*
- Our Ambassadors actively promote Reclaim Your Curves to health professionals and breast cancer support organisations through one on one meetings and presentations. We encourage health professionals to participate in the Postcard Invitation Program which assists women to find our information website and the support of others.
- Development of the clinical online information and fact sheets
- Research daily for current news and information relevant for Australian women, this information is brought to you through [Latest News](#) on our website and through our [Facebook PAGE](#)
- Facilitate educational sessions through rural Australia

## WHY IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP IMPORTANT?

One of the most influential aspects of Reclaim Your Curves is the number of members we have in our communities. This is our evidence that information and support for breast reconstruction is in demand by the women who need it. We are growing steadily everyday, our current membership includes:

# Current member registrations 2,140

(an increase of 861 in the last 12 months)

We are a fledgling organisation but with your membership we can all help make a difference to women reclaiming their curves after breast cancer.



Follow us

Visit us

 Share

 Forward

Copyright © Reclaim Your Curves 2015. All rights reserved.

### Contact us:

Reclaim Your Curves Ltd

ABN 84 605 296 197

[support@reclaimyourcurves.org.au](mailto:support@reclaimyourcurves.org.au)

[Subscribe](#)

[Share](#) ▼

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

---

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
reclaim your curves · 122 Ourimbah Creek Road · Ourimbah, Nsw 2058 · Australia

The MailChimp logo is centered within a light gray rounded rectangular box. The text "MailChimp" is written in a white, cursive script font.