

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

New Big Red Kidney Bus Launches in Victoria

Kidney Health Australia, Monash Health and the Rotary Club of Croydon are delighted to have united for the launch of a new, upgraded Big Red Kidney Bus, at Croydon, Victoria, on 26 June 2018.

Councillor Kylie Spears of Maroondah City Council attended the event, which served to acknowledge the roles of the partnering organisations and founding consumer group, who together, celebrated the positive impact of the bus for dialysis patients travelling across Victoria.

The Big Red Kidney Bus is one of two state-of-the-art mobile dialysis units that travel to popular holiday destinations across Victoria and NSW. The program allows people living with kidney disease to go on holiday and meet up with the buses to continue their life-saving treatment, at no cost to patients.

Kidney Health Australia's Interim CEO, Dr Lisa Murphy, said she is thrilled with the bus program. "Dialysis is a debilitating and restrictive regime and it can be extremely difficult for those with end-stage kidney disease to take a holiday," she said.

Under the expert care of the Monash Health dialysis team, the Victorian Big Red Kidney Bus is fitted with three chairs capable of providing up to 1,500 treatments a year. "On average, dialysis patients need to have treatment for up to five hours at a time, three days a week, and holiday dialysis chair availability is very limited around Australia," said Dr Murphy.

The new and improved bus is named '2SUZI' in memory of Suzi Picken. Suzi Picken, along with Vince Tripodi, were founding members of the group who developed the mobile dialysis unit concept, enabling patients to travel beyond their local hospital and in turn, improve their overall health and wellbeing.

"In the very beginning, we thought the bus was a pipe dream," Vince's daughter, Daniella Baxter remembers. Sadly, Vince Tripodi passed away in 2012. Daniella says although Vince never got to use the bus service, he worked hard to achieve it for the benefit of others.

Vince and Suzi joined Bruce Bremner, Peter Maxwell and Margaret Blanck to form the Mobile Kidney Dialysis Group, banding together to transform their ambitious idea into reality. Vince's daughter, Daniella remembers the group receiving enormous community support to help get the bus project off the ground. "I truly believe that the project gained momentum in those early days because of who each of them were, or are – wonderful, determined, hardworking members of our community."

Daniella hopes that dialysis patients using the Big Red Kidney Bus service know that the award-winning program was founded by a group of people just like them. "It's amazing to see the difference the bus is making. It's exactly what Dad wanted – to restore people's ability to break free of their regular dialysis routine. Now, people on dialysis can have a change of scenery."

The Big Red Kidney Bus wouldn't be possible without the continued generosity Kidney Health Australia receives from individuals and organisations in the community, who support the ongoing program and running costs of the bus.

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Kidney Health Australia urges people living with kidney disease, and their loved ones, to book holiday dialysis, a familiarisation visit, or request more information about the bus. Phone 1800 454 363, email bigredkidneybus@kidney.org.au or visit www.kidney.org.au/bus.

Kidney Health Australia is a national health care charity with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of people living in Australia affected by kidney disease'.

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