



Dear Supporter,

When John Haberecht started work as a nurse, palliative care was not a part of his plan.

John had always thought he wanted to work in oncology. He was still striving for that goal when he started work on Ward 4B, the Respiratory Oncology Ward at The Prince Charles Hospital.

Ward 4B happened to have a palliative care philosophy. For the first time, John saw how palliative care could support patients and families. His time on the ward helped John realise that palliative care was the field he wanted to work in.

“I saw the difference it made to patients and families when we interacted with them not as medical professionals, but as authentic human beings. This is the essence of palliative care,” John explained.

Ward 4B was only the beginning of John’s journey with palliative care. In the early 1990s, his Charge Nurse on the ward, Margaret Gulley, invited him to a community meeting for a new palliative care service. It would be the first of its kind in Brisbane: a home care service based on Buddhist principles.

Following that first meeting, a small steering committee formed. Their goal was to build a hospice service that could meet a previously unmet need in the community. A service that could provide compassion and dignity to terminally ill people and their families, in their own homes. Together, they would become the first team of Karuna Hospice Services.

In addition to John, the team included Margaret Gulley as nurse coordinator, Hilary Clark in administration, and Pende Hawter as Karuna’s first director. Pende, a Buddhist monk, had been encouraged to work with the dying by one of his mentors, Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

“When we started Karuna, we had no funding and were working from a private house in Wilston,” Pende recalled. “We were flying a bit by the seat of our pants. But we had a great deal of faith in what we were doing because we had the blessing of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other great teachers.”

Buddhist principles around death and dying have always been integral to Karuna care. Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s early encouragement to Pende centred around the goal of helping people to have the best possible state of mind when they died. “To facilitate this, we needed to create a peaceful, calm, and positive environment for the dying person,” Pende said.



Ven. Pende Hawter



Lama Zopa Rinpoche (centre)
visiting the Karuna team in 1994

John agrees with Pende's sentiment, noting that in palliative care the "patient" is not just the person with a terminal illness. The "patient" is also their friends and family, who take on caregiving roles. These roles can be emotionally, mentally, and physically taxing. And following the death of their loved one, it is vital that support continues to be available for carers.

"There is ample evidence to show that family members and close friends may grieve intensely after the death of a loved one," John said.

"We have a responsibility to care for the survivors in the same way we cared for the original patient. I believe that bereavement care should always be offered alongside palliative care."

Today, John has worked in palliative care for over three decades. He continues to share his experiences and insights from the industry with numerous organisations. And he has remained a dedicated advocate for Karuna throughout his career.

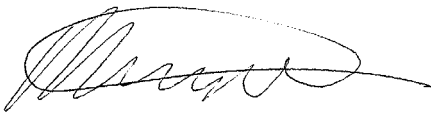
As Karuna's newest Chief Executive Officer, the ability to reflect on our beginnings with a long-term supporter like John is an immense privilege. While our service has grown significantly from the small team John remembers, our motivations are unchanged.

The team I lead today shares the same passion for palliative care and helping others. We still have the goal of supporting our community to live well and die peacefully, in their place of choice. And spiritual care remains at the core of our service.

One of the most important results of the passion shared by Karuna teams past and present, is the way our community has always given back to the service and its vision. It is the countless and generous donations of time, money, and resources that have allowed Karuna care to grow. And not just to grow, but to thrive. **It is people like you who have kept Karuna caring for over thirty years.**

And we still need people like you. If you are able, please consider making a donation to Karuna today. Your gift will continue our legacy of compassionate care. It will enable us to keep our essential service free for those who need it. And you will help position Karuna in a place where it can continue to grow, for many years to come.

Warm regards,



Sophie Shrapnel
Chief Executive Officer
Karuna Hospice Services



Karuna CEO, Sophie, and John

"Thirty years ago, when we started talking about the possibility of Karuna, we knew what a difference palliative care could make in the lives of people with a terminal diagnosis. We wanted to make that care available to as many people as possible.

My observation today would be that those original goals have not changed. Providing compassionate care to the dying and their loved ones remains the goal for every family that enters Karuna care."

- John Haberecht