



OUR NEW INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR LIVES HIS PASSION

My name is Tom Denny and in February 2011 I was appointed as the new Independent Director on the TROG Board. It was with great pleasure that I accepted this appointment, but I must say I was extremely humbled by the fact that my appointment was for my contribution to the business world and not as a former cancer sufferer.

Providing some background about myself, I am employed as a Procurement Specialist for Laing O'Rourke who is a 2nd tier major construction company with operations throughout Australasia, South East Asia, the Middle East and Europe. We build major Infrastructure Projects, Hospitals, Universities, Schools, Commercial and Residential Buildings etc.

"What is Procurement?" many people ask. The Encarta Dictionary defines it as follows:

1. "Acquire something
Transitive verb to obtain something, especially by effort
2. Provide prostitutes
Transitive and intransitive verb to provide somebody for prostitution"

It is strange that I have never looked it up before and quite a surprising result! No doubt you'll be glad to know that my job is category 1 above and not as a 'pimp' in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley

Being a Procurement Specialist seems a far 'cry' from the world of Oncologists and Radiotherapists, but when you think about it, it is really not so far, when if we were building a hospital I would be the guy 'acquiring' the Radiotherapy equipment for the Oncology unit.

My career spans over 40 years and has been predominantly in the construction industry occupying a variety of management positions in commercial and administration I also spent over 15 years in the 'Legal' fraternity as National Manager for support services to litigation/arbitrations, preparing for and supporting trials, hearings, tribunals and commissions.

"How did this guy get on the TROG board" you may ask? Well that's a very interesting story and believe that getting on the TROG Board was an act of fate

To explain further;

In 2004 I was diagnosed with throat cancer – I had surgery only (Supracricoid Laryngectomy) with no Chemotherapy or Radiotherapy. Seven months later I was diagnosed with neck cancer and again had surgery to remove the lymph nodes in my neck along with a few other things that were infected. This time I received radiation the TROG President's (Professor Bryan Burmeister) Oncology unit in the Princess Alexandra hospital in Brisbane. My fellow Board member, Assoc. Professor Sandro Proceddu just happened to be my Oncologist.

I am pleased to say that I have been cleared by my surgeon and oncologist to be free from cancer and I still have a good voice to prove it.

Combined with the surgery I believe that radiotherapy cured me of cancer

In carrying out my job I travel a lot and one day in 2009 I was in the queue at Brisbane airport waiting to go through security and Sandro just happened to be just a few people behind me. He looked at me and I could see a puzzled look in his face as he was thinking "I know that guy from somewhere"? We soon caught up and when we shook hands and he said "I know you but forgotten your name" He remembered who I was as soon as I told him my name. After passing 'pleasantries' we independently went on our ways

When I travel I usually try and get an aisle seat as close to the front of economy as possible so I can make a quick exit after landing. On this particular flight, for no apparent reason, I chose a window seat in row 23. When the stragglers had boarded the seat next to me was still empty and I was thinking that I may be lucky and have no one beside and could spread out during the journey. At about the same time as the doors were due to shut, guess who walked up the aisle? Yes you're right - Sandro! His seat was 23B next to me. How amazing is that?

We had a fantastic trip to Sydney and the time just 'flew' by (excuse the pun) by as we chatted constantly about our lives, work, families, TROG, etc. It did not take long for Sandro to realise how thankful I was to have recovered from cancer, and as a result how my life seemed to have changed for the better, by becoming a different person with more confidence, outgoing, being very passionate about my life and wanting to give something 'back' in gratitude.

We parted in Sydney airport agreeing to keep in touch and put some thoughts together on how I can give something 'back'

Some weeks later Sandro rang me and asked if I would be interested in joining the TROG Board to fill the vacant position as Independent Director as a token gesture of giving something 'back'. This came as a great surprise to me and my response was that I would be honoured to take such a position. Sandro said he would put his recommendation through the formal process

I was nominated for appointment and accepted as a Director and Board member a few months later.

I attended my first Board meeting in Adelaide in April 2011 which was a commendable experience. I met lots of great people, all very passionate about their work, just like me, giving something to a magnificent cause – CANCER RESEARCH!

I was also fortunate to attend the 23rd Annual Scientific Meeting at the same time and in met lots of more fantastic people, had some great food and wine at a superb venue.

Unfortunately, I missed the late night 'shenanigans' of some of the other members, but that's another story!! So watch this space.....?

Yes, as an act of fate, here I am living my passion by giving something 'back' as a TROG Board member.