

'You've got to wonder if there's clustering here'

At least 24 people who have lived along a four kilometre stretch of Cabbage Tree Road have battled cancer in the last 15 years. Several more suffered the disease in the 1990s. Each cancer survivor - or a relative of the deceased - has agreed to supply their details to the Newcastle Herald. Several are calling for a formal investigation by authorities into what they believe could be a cancer cluster on the road. The area in question is in the heart of the contamination 'red zone', a plume of toxic poly- and per-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) chemicals that have spread from the Williamstown RAAF base. Some say they don't believe their cancer had anything to do with the contamination in the area. **COMPILED BY CARRIE FELLNER**

ERIC MOXEY

2004: died from pancreatic cancer at the age of 74

"My dad and I and my brothers were always in the water growing up,"
- Eric Moxey's son Neil



Eric Moxey was a farmer who lived and worked on Cabbage Tree Road in the 1970s. He is remembered by neighbours as a community-minded man who was at one stage the president of the Rotary Club. Mr Moxey's son Neil said his father moved away because of poor drainage that left the earth waterlogged and swampy. Mr Moxey passed away of pancreatic cancer in Parkwood in Queensland. His wife, Marea Moxey, died in April.
*Photo courtesy of the Raymond Terrace and District Historical Society

IRENE JORDAN

2013: diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 65

"Of course I wonder about it. Everybody wonders about it ... I am relieved I got out of there."

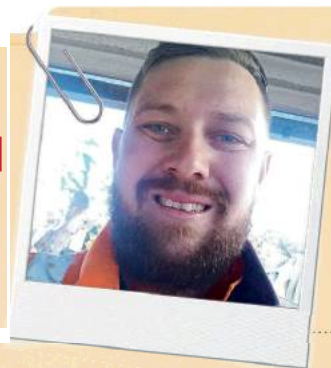


When Irene Jordan lived on Cabbage Tree Road for five years, she thought it strange how often her horses were struck down by illness. It was after she had relocated to Tanilba Bay in the early 2000s that Ms Jordan was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had to undergo a double mastectomy. Her son and her sister, who both stayed with her at the Williamstown property, have both developed cancer in the last four years.

LUKE JORDAN

2014: diagnosed with a rare type of cancerous tumour in his neck at the age of 33

"They couldn't tell what type of cancer it was ... even the specialist said it's a bit of a doozy."

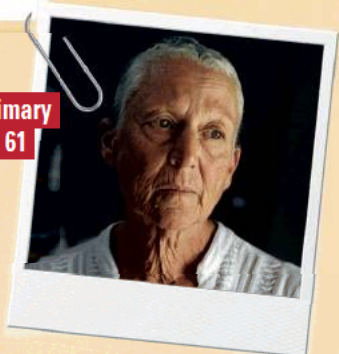


As a child, Luke Jordan lived at a property on Cabbage Tree Road for a period of about 12 months. He would spend holidays at the acreage for three or four years after that. He used to catch frogs in the contaminated drain that ran alongside the homestead and eat from his mother's vegetable patch. Three years ago, he discovered a cancerous tumour in his neck. He has recovered after multiple operations.

JENNY ROBINSON

2016: diagnosed with two primary breast cancers at the age of 61

"It's not just that we're having cancer, we're having cancer outside the norm."

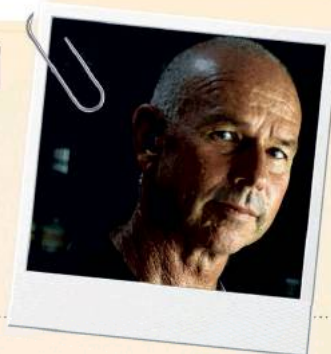


When doctors cut a tumour from Jenny Robinson's breast in 2016, they discovered another tumour underneath that hadn't been picked up. It was unusual, because one was oestrogen positive and one was oestrogen negative, suggesting they were different types of breast cancer. The neighbours on both sides of the Robinsons have passed away from cancer. Their horse "withered away" at the age of 15. Their vet believed it was suffering seizures because of tumours on its brain. The couple

TERRY ROBINSON

2002: diagnosed with melanoma at the age of 40

"Six months ago we were painting fences and we're watching the ground foam up in front of us ... that's not a natural occurrence."



In 2002 Terry Robinson had a melanoma that metastasized into his lungs. His doctors were surprised; usually shallow melanomas were caught before they had spread. They advised him to "get his affairs in order" because secondary cancers from melanoma did not respond well to chemotherapy. However the treatment worked and Mr Robinson went into remission. Mr Robinson initially did not believe his cancer could be linked to any environmental expo-

live in the heart of the contamination plume and tests have shown they have firefighting chemicals in their blood at many times the national average.

tures, until a report found firefighters exposed to toxic chemicals at Fiskville in Victoria had a higher chance of melanoma.

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