The Renal Society had the opportunity to sponsor the inaugural Renal Supportive Care Masterclass at St Vincent’s hospital Melbourne.

After the traditional welcome to country the CEO opened the day. She identified that St Vincent’s is rated as one of the top ten hospitals in the world. Part of the reason for this is the outstanding palliative care service.

The first presentation made by Mark Brown, described Renal Supportive Care as providing the right care for the right person at the right time. Mark identified that supportive care is not a cost saving approach and not second-rate care. He advised the group that the whole of NSW now has renal supportive care included in their service model.

After a delicious morning tea where Monique and I met many RSA members and promoted RSA membership to many others, we had the pleasure of listening to a nephrologist and palliative care physician discuss advanced symptom management. Fatigue was identified as one of the key symptoms that is multi factorial and led to poorer outcomes. Also discussed was an exercise program for CKD patients. A recent Cochrane review showed improvement in fatigue in patients through utilisation of structured exercise.

In-depth exploration of causes of itch and mostly around mast cell innervation with 10 histamine mediated and 90 non histamine receptors. Triggered by heat, acidosis and capsaicin.

There was also a fantastic group discussion around difficult decisions and use of MD team approach. After which followed a great lunch and more networking and meeting of fellow RSA members.

As usual Frank Brennan didn’t disappoint and provided an insightful and informative presentation about GI symptoms and caring for the dying patient. Where dignity, care and presence were the key points. Following this 6 different professionals spoke about their models. Of note none of these models covered rural and remote patients. This definitely is an area that needs to be improved upon especially providing culturally appropriate supportive care of the aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people.

All in all, a great program and was a fabulous opportunity to meet like-minded health professionals and promote the RSA.