



Parkinson's Queensland Inc

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Young Parkinson's Disease Sufferers Highlight Critical Need for Improved Support as World Parkinson's Day Approaches

Brisbane, 6 April 2010 - With World Parkinson's Day recognised internationally this Sunday, the urgent need for a comprehensive support system for young onset Parkinson's disease sufferers has been brought to the attention of politicians in Canberra.

Three young Parkinson's disease sufferers met with Federal Secretary for Health Mark Butler to share their plights and emphasise that Australia is lagging behind the United Kingdom and the United States and needs to emulate their comprehensive resource networks.

Local Queensland MPs are also being encouraged to actively show their support by initiating a plan of action concerning the identified issues, given that fact that young onset Parkinson's disease have differing requirements in the areas of information, advocacy and community support needs distinct from people diagnosed in their elder years.

A recently released report titled "*Living with Young Onset Parkinson's Disease*" identifies the important need for a national resource centre to help support the specific needs of the young Parkinson's community, particularly to provide peer support, service development and research about supporting people's lifestyles.

"About 20 per cent of the population of people with Parkinson's are diagnosed when they're working age... but most people think Parkinson's is about the older age group – retired people with grown up kids," said Dr Chris Fyffe, report co-author.

Sufferers such as Brisbane resident Mary-Louise Lloyd knows first hand what it is like to experience the life readjustment a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease at an early age can cause.

Ms Lloyd was at the prime of her life establishing a successful career and actively laying the foundations for the future when she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at the age of 34.

Although Ms Lloyd was fortunate enough to have an understanding employer who supported her decision to take time off work and to travel extensively before the disease impacted too heavily upon her physical abilities, she recognises that not all young onset Parkinson's disease are that lucky.

For Ms Lloyd, the key to coping with the difficult life journey she faces is ensuring that she lives for the moment and that includes pursuing her passion for photography before the tremor affects her too much.

Currently there is no known cause or cure for Parkinson's disease, a degenerative neurological condition typically presenting with symptoms such as slowness of movement, muscle rigidity, instability and tremor which affects up to 80,000 Australians.

World Parkinson's Day is commemorated each year on 11th April and aims to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease and how this debilitating disease impacts affected individuals, families and the wider community.

Newly appointed Chief Executive Officer Patrick Bulman says World Parkinson's Day provides the perfect opportunity for Queenslanders to show their support for those affected and to boost awareness surrounding common misconceptions.

Parkinson's Queensland Inc. is currently fundraising to expand its services to provide members with access to counsellors and Parkinson's disease specialist nurses, donations can be made online at www.parkinsons-qld.org.au.

Parkinson's Queensland Inc. is a state-wide not-for-profit community organisation supporting the needs of people with Parkinson's disease and their families, friends and carers. Parkinson's Queensland Inc. also provides information, support and education to allied health professionals.

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