

MEDIA RELEASE

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COVID-19 gives insight into the lives of those living with cystic fibrosis

While Australia is beginning to see the light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, life will continue to involve isolation, infection control and respiratory illness for people living with cystic fibrosis long after COVID-19 is over.

Cystic fibrosis is the most common, life-shortening genetic chronic illness in Australia. It attacks the lungs, airway passages and pancreas – slowly shutting down the organs. There is no cure.

Gold Coast woman Kate Rootsey said the horrible short-term impact that COVID-19 is having on the world is something that she has had to live with her whole life.

“I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at birth, and my parents were told I wouldn’t live past 10 years old,” Mrs Rootsey said.

“I’m pleased to say that I celebrated my 40th birthday earlier this year, but it hasn’t come without a fight.

“Having cystic fibrosis has meant that at its worst I struggle to breathe, I always have to be conscious of infection as I am highly susceptible to any contagious virus or disease, I’ve been unable to work at times, and my condition means that I sometimes have to miss out on seeing friends and family.

“The precautions that I have taken every day of my life are what everyone is being told to do prevent the spread of COVID-19, and when the pandemic is over and everything has gone back to normal, it’s what I’ll continue to do.

“Cold and flu season is generally an anxious time for those with cystic fibrosis due to the increased chance of infection but this year it really has been heightened by COVID-19.

Mrs Rootsey was told she would never be able to have children, however seven years ago she became the first woman in Queensland to have a baby after a double-lung transplant.

“I had a life-saving double lung transplant at 2, and the support of Cystic Fibrosis Queensland throughout that and over the course of my life has been invaluable.

Mrs Rootsey said she would not be alive today, and certainly wouldn’t have a child of her own if it weren’t for the medical research, which is only made possible by donations.

“The donations that have been made into medical research for cystic fibrosis over the course of my life has been what’s saved me, and if you are able, I want to encourage you to donate,

and keep donating where you can, because in doing so you are truly saving lives.”

Cystic Fibrosis Queensland CEO Petrina Fraccaro said people living with cystic fibrosis are constantly living as the rest of us have been during the COVID-19 crisis.

“I know that one day soon, these precautionary measures we’ve been taking to flatten the curve will be over for me, and my rules will relax, but that won’t be the case for people who live with this debilitating chronic illness,” Ms Fraccaro said.

“Things like constant hand washing, social distancing and wearing gloves and masks in public are the norm for people living with cystic fibrosis.

“While this pandemic is challenging for us all to manage, my hope is that it will at least provide the broader public with a better understanding as to what it is like to live each day with cystic fibrosis.”

Ms Fraccaro said the organisation is one of Queensland’s largest and oldest charities supporting people living with chronic illness.

“We advocate for the entire cystic fibrosis community and seek to raise much needed awareness of this debilitating condition.

“The fundraising we undertake accounts for 90 percent of our revenue needed to deliver these programs, so we rely heavily on support from the community.”

“With no designated Government funding, we know that the next few months will be tough, but you can help.”

65 Roses for Cystic Fibrosis is a national awareness and fundraising initiative that takes place each May.

“Despite the current restrictions, there are still plenty of ways you can get involved and take on the 65 Roses challenge fundraiser, such as a sponsored walk, run or cycle, a kids read-a-thon, a virtual dinner party, a ‘65-themed’ exercise challenge, a shave or crazy hair do, to name a few.”

If you would like to set up your own fundraising page, visit:
everydayhero.com.au/event/65RosesforCysticFibrosis2020

If you would like to donate to Cystic Fibrosis Queensland visit
<https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/qld/donate>



P: +61 7 3359 8000

FRECALL: 1800 670 990

E: services@cfqld.org.au

30 Sylvan Road, Toowong, QLD, 4066

PO Box 86, Toowong Business Hub QLD 4066

ABN 97 010 549 667 (DGR Endorsed)

About Cystic Fibrosis Queensland

Cystic Fibrosis Queensland is the peak community not for profit charity working with and for the increasing number of people living with cystic fibrosis who attend a Queensland Health Clinic for treatment. The charity funds research, advocates on the behalf of and delivers support and service programs to people and their families with cystic fibrosis. 90% of our income relies on fundraising.

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For further information contact:

Gina Calder
BBS Communications Group
0424 260 796