



Media Release (2 pages)
2 February 2011

CANCER SUPPORT SERVICES ARE REASON TO RIDE

On 27 February, a group of dedicated cyclists will set out to ride 1,000 kilometres in seven days to raise funds for SolarisCare, a not for profit organisation providing free complementary integrated therapies to Western Australians with cancer.

Tuart Hill resident Matt Gugiatti can vouch for the importance of the cause behind the Red Sky Ride as he has first-hand experience of the valuable support SolarisCare provides for people affected by cancer.

Matt's mother lost her battle with lung cancer in 2010 and he said that, through SolarisCare therapies, she had gained the strength, energy and sense of peace she needed to fight on and undergo treatment and significant surgery.

"Each time mum emerged from a therapy or counselling, I observed a tranquility and sense of peace emanating from her, not often seen during her difficult journey with lung cancer," he said.

"A unique and valuable aspect of the services offered by SolarisCare is that they are offered not only to cancer patients, but also to their families and carers, who need the support and care so they can 're-charge' and continue to care for loved ones with cancer."

Matt said that his mother's lung cancer diagnosis in 2009 was devastating and had a tremendous impact on her and the whole family.

"When my mother was first diagnosed I remember feeling that there was nowhere to turn, nobody to lean on and no answers. I am so thankful that SolarisCare exists and is able to be that somewhere to turn," he said.

"My sister and I attended a one-day Carer's Course offered by SolarisCare which proved invaluable; providing a range of information on caring for our mother, pain management and symptom control. The experience also provided a constructive venue to meet with other people who were also caring for loved ones and who were going through similar struggles."

"My sister and I recommended the services offered by SolarisCare to our mother and, during her journey, she accessed several complementary therapies and counselling, at both the Sir Charles Gardner Hospital and St John of God Hospital SolarisCare centres."

SolarisCare's complementary therapies for people with cancer are aimed at boosting wellbeing and quality of life, with treatments such as acupuncture, massage, kinesiology, reiki and creative art therapy, as well as support services for carers.

Matt said he became a 'meet and greet' volunteer at SolarisCare as he was compelled to give back and be part of a truly amazing and unique support services.

He describes the experience of volunteering at SolarisCare as thoroughly rewarding and said that he feels part of a unique community of like-minded people, all focused on helping people with cancer.

"Everyone at SolarisCare has their own story and reason for caring, which contributes to a wealth of knowledge and experience, which can be accessed by cancer patients, their families and carers," he said.

"Part of my role as a meet and greet volunteer is simply to be mindful and present when a patient enters the centre, imposing no timeframes, requirements or restrictions. Patients can simply relax and be."

Matt said that community support is essential for SolarisCare and that the Red Sky Ride is a way that people can contribute.

"Without generous community support, as well as compassionate volunteer therapists, 'meet and greeters' and fundraisers, SolarisCare would simply not be able to provide care and support for cancer patients, their families and carers," he said.

"Red Sky Ride is one of SolarisCare's major fundraising initiatives, which provides vital funds necessary to enable the continuing provision of free complementary services."

The event set out in 2008 to raise \$1,000,000 over five years for SolarisCare and is aiming to raise \$400,000 in 2011.

The 25 Red Sky Ride cyclists will put their physical and mental endurance to the test in recognition of the challenges cancer patients endure every day.

"A cancer diagnosis comes with many challenges. I observed my mother's strength and endurance as she fought her disease and struggled to survive," Matt said.

"It seems fitting that a group of dedicated riders endure the challenges of cycling 1000kms to raise much needed funds to provide supportive services for cancer patients, through SolarisCare."

<Ends>

Media Contact:

Tara Mulholland

e: tara.mulholland@claritycommunications.com.au

p: 0408 933 803