

**THE THINK PINK CUP RACE DAY  
REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY  
PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
ELWICK RACECOURSE SUNDAY 24 JULY 2016**

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the 2016 Think Pink Cup race day. It is wonderful to see so many of you here today to participate in this important fundraiser for combating cancer.

I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge Elders – past and present.

I'm advised that this luncheon event has attracted approximately 3500 local, inter- and intrastate luncheon diners since its inception. The event proudly supports the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Now in its 8th year and having raised over \$220,000 net profit for the charity, this annual thoroughbred racing event not only aids the research cause, but also supports the thoroughbred racing industry here in Tasmania as the Think Pink Cup heralds and celebrates the Tasmanian racing season in winter.<sup>1</sup>

So well done everyone for coming along to support such a good cause.

We are all acutely aware of the prevalence of breast cancer: that one in 8 women and 1% of the male population in Australia will be diagnosed with breast cancer each year. Thanks to programs such as free breast screening via BreastScreen Tasmania for woman aged 40-74, better outcomes for those diagnosed exist and this in turn is supported by improved treatments and post-treatment programs.

But finding answers that will lead to the unlocking of a cure requires research, and research is costly. There is currently no government funding provided solely to breast cancer research; the charity relies heavily upon the community being educated, aware and engaged to support the research it funds.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Judi Adams Race Day Coordinator Hobart Volunteer Committee National Breast Cancer Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Judi Adams op cit

As many of you who have supported this event over the years will know, the National Breast Cancer Foundation is the leading community-funded organisation in Australia raising money for research into the prevention and cure of breast cancer.

In 2016 I am informed that the Foundation has committed over \$12 million to fund more than 30 research projects that will contribute towards the goal of zero deaths from breast cancer by 2030.

Their projects include investigating new avenues for treatment, and new applications for existing treatments to improve outcomes for breast cancer patients.

The Foundation has also launched the Leadership Fellowship, a five-year grant which allows a senior researcher to address some of the big questions in breast cancer.

In total, since 1994, the Foundation has awarded more than \$127 million to around 430 Australian-based research projects to improve the health and wellbeing of those affected by breast cancer.<sup>3</sup>

So despite the fact that more cases of breast cancer are being diagnosed each year and the incidence rate has increased, as a result of early diagnosis and improved treatments the mortality rate has reduced and the five-year survival rate has increased from 72% in the period 1983 to 1987 to 90% in the period 2008 to 2012.<sup>4</sup>

When contemplating these statistics, my brilliant and inspiring friend and colleague Julia, comes immediately to mind. It was five years ago, on 8 July 2011, that Julia was diagnosed with breast cancer. She has survived 5 years which I am celebrating today. Julia lives in Adelaide but we have two Australian Research Council grants together and so are in regular touch. At first she was anticipating a mastectomy but then came the news on 27<sup>th</sup> July that the cancer had spread to her liver. On 5<sup>th</sup> August, she emailed me, which I will read to you:

Dearest Kate,

Great work on the article! ... The weird thing is that I am walking around

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<sup>3</sup> <http://nbcf.org.au/about-national-breast-cancer-foundation/about-us/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-types/breast-cancer/breast-cancer-statistics>

looking the same as ever, with copious amounts of cleavage on display and no plans for surgery, yet I am telling everyone that I have breast cancer!! I feel like a bit of a fraud, but the irony of my situation is that the worse the news is, the less likely surgery is. We have it so ingrained that breast cancer = mastectomy, that it is hard to get it clear in the mind. What a waste of front opening pyjamas!! So, we live with uncertainty, cleavage, and other odd things!

I am doing the best I can, not to turn either into a doom-ridden misery or into a "cancer saint" but to be as normal and ordinary as possible. I am swearing a lot and looking on the bright side and making the most of life. We are about to head off for a drive into the hills, which will be lovely.

In another message she said:

I am adopting the philosophy of enjoying what is good and dealing with what is bad.

Treatment and life went on. Julia has just had a scan which shows the cancer tumours are still there but have not spread.

With fortnightly IV Herceptin treatment, Julia has survived five years. We have just published another article on our project and we are planning a book. At the end of last year Julia imported a gorgeous little retro Japanese car, a Nissan Figaro. It is my hope that while doctors have told her that survival is not a matter of 'if but of when', that the research we are supporting today at this fundraising event will let Julia finish the book and enjoy her Figaro for many years.

So in closing I encourage you all to donate generously to this excellent cause and really enjoy the day as Dick and I plan to do.

Thank you.