

For release 19 September 2004



## New public health campaign could save 110,000 Australians from death and disability over the next 10 years

48,000 Australians have a stroke every year. This number will rise to a staggering 74,000 by the year 2017 if nothing is done. Stroke is Australia's third largest killer and is relatively unknown compared with heart and cancer. The solution to this escalating public health issue is **strokesafe™**, a major public health awareness program being launched today targeting the Australian community.

The launch of **strokesafe™** coincides with National Stroke Week, from 20 September and being extended through until 31 October through a nationwide TV, radio and print campaign.

Developed by the National Stroke Foundation, **strokesafe™** aims to save 110,000 Australians from death and disability over the next 10 years. **strokesafe™** is a major public health program targeting the Australian community to ensure that the advances in research are relayed.

"**strokesafe™** is a positive health message. It is designed to show people that there are steps each of us can take to make ourselves **safe** from **stroke**, said National Stroke Foundation CEO Dr Erin Lalor. "**strokesafe™** is planned to become similar in magnitude to other major public health campaigns such as SunSmart and Quit," Dr Erin Lalor said.

**strokesafe™** is about protecting Australians from stroke through:

- Increased awareness of stroke.
- Increased awareness of ways to reduce the risks.
- Ensuring that treatments and services that reflect current scientific evidence are available.

Dr Erin Lalor said "Many stroke survivors can look back and see that there were some early signs of stroke. The problem is that many Australians do not know what the signs of stroke are and if they did they may have been able to avoid a stroke or achieve a better recovery."

**strokesafe™** is being funded by government, corporate partners, industry partners and private trusts for the initial four year phase. "The initial four-year phase of **strokesafe™** will improve people's understanding of stroke and teach the signs of stroke. Once the signs are understood, an educational program of risk reduction will be implemented. **strokesafe™** also aims to fill in the gaps in treatment and aftercare amongst health care professionals," she said.

In its inaugural year, the theme to **strokesafe™** is "look out for the signs of stroke and live" The TV commercial features three real live stroke survivors:  
 Hannora – who was only 25 years old when she suffered a stroke one night whilst she was out partying with friends.  
 Judith – who took six years to learn to speak again after a major stroke.  
 Peter – who has had five strokes in the last six years and still has difficulty walking

Each of these stroke survivors can look back and see that there were some early signs of stroke. In the campaign Hannora, Judith and Peter teach us to "look out for the signs of stroke and live". Currently many Australians do not know what the signs of stroke are and if they did they may have been able to avoid a stroke or achieve a better recovery.

- ends-

### About the National Stroke Foundation

The National Stroke Foundation is a charity that has achieved an international reputation for excellence and its subsidiary, the National Stroke Research Institute, is acknowledged as one of the world's leading centres for research into stroke.

For more information about the exciting **strokesafe™** campaign - CEO of the National Stroke Foundation: Dr Erin Lalor

For the latest in stroke research - Medical Director: Dr Chris Levi

### Stroke survivors available for interview

There are many stroke survivors with inspirational stories available for interviews in each state, including the three survivors featured in the TV commercial.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW CALL JO BURROWS, NATIONAL MARKETING MANAGER, NATIONAL STROKE FOUNDATION 03 9670 1000 OR 0411 730 138.**  
[www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)