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Look out for the signs of stroke, says former TV reporter, Jane Phelan

Jane Phelan was a successful media and television reporter leading up to her stroke 10 years ago. Jane was working alongside Laurie Oakes and was a producer on Steve Vizard's Tonight Live. Then a stroke hit Jane and it was years before Jane could talk and even longer before she felt comfortable doing it publicly.

Jane suffered a massive cerebral haemorrhage and she remembers the night leading up to it, "I was going to a concert with my family. I had stabbing pains in my head and I walked up and down outside to see if the night air would help ease the pain. I went into the concert to join my family and the last thing I remember was Elton John singing Don't Let the Sun Go Down."

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.

Stroke is Australia's third largest killer with 48,000 Australians having a stroke each year. Stroke can happen at any age and the majority of Australians know little about this devastating condition. The good news is that it is largely preventable. Because of this, the National Stroke Foundation has developed **strokesafe™**. **strokesafe™** will become one of Australia's most significant public health campaigns and aims to educate all Australians about the signs of stroke and how to be safe from stroke.

Jane has spent over a decade recovering from stroke. Her long journey and personal achievements are remarkable. In the early days Jane was not sure about what life held in store for her. Now Jane is an advocate for stroke survivors and sits as a consumer representative on four boards in the health care sector.

Jane Phelan is teaming up with many stroke survivors around Australia in order to teach us all to "look out for the signs of stroke and live". The early signs of stroke include:

WEAKNESS or NUMBNESS: or paralysis of the face, arm or leg on either or both sides of the body.

DIFFICULTY SPEAKING or understanding.

DIZZINESS, loss of balance or unexplained fall.

LOSS OF VISION: sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes.

HEADACHE: usually severe and of abrupt onset or unexplained change in the pattern of headaches.

DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING.

The signs of stroke may occur alone or in combination. They can last a few seconds or up to 24 hours and then disappear. In its inaugural year, the theme to **strokesafe™** is "look out for the signs of stroke and live". If you experience any one of the signs, get medical attention immediately.

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strokesafe™ for life

strokesafe™ for life is an important health education program that aims to save 110,000 Australians from death and disability over the next 10 years. **strokesafe™** launches nationally on 19 September at Federation Square (Atrium) at 11am to coincide with National Stroke Week. The public will learn about **strokesafe™** through a significant TV, Radio and Print campaign from 20 September through until 31 October.

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.

Stroke survivors available for interview

Jane Phelan is available for interview during Stroke Week 19 – 29 September 2004. Dr Chris Levi – Medical Director is also available.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL JO BURROWS, NATIONAL MARKETING MANAGER,
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