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Rugby League legend tells Australians to “look out for the signs of stroke and live”

John “Bomber” Peard was working out at the gym when he noticed that the room started to move around him in circles. “I tried to focus on the posters around the wall, but the notice boards were all blurred,” John Peard remembers. “I thought something was wrong, but I ignored it and went out for a few beers with my mates. I didn’t tell my mates how I was feeling. I should have said something and they would have taken me to hospital. I ignored the signs until it was too late.”

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.

John Peard ignored his signs until the next day, “I went to bed that night and got up that morning and had difficulty dressing myself. When I bent over to do my shoes up, my shoes were on the wrong feet and I fell over. I then got in the car and drove to work. I had no vision out of my left eye and I hit some sign posts and a truck on the way to work. I wrote my ute off. When I got to work, someone saw that I was in trouble and rang an ambulance. His father had a stroke and he recognised some similar signs in me.” John Peard suffered a major stroke in June 2002 and was in hospital for four and a half months. John’s recovery was frustrating and slow, “I am still struggling with my left hand but my legs are good. I put my recovery down to my cast iron determination and my sense of humor. I also keep fit and still go to the gym everyday. It really made me realise what I could have missed out on in life.”

John 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 20 September 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

John Peard is a Rugby League legend and a very brave Australian. Credited with perfecting the 'bomb' which was previously known as an 'up and under' while playing with Easts in the mid 70s and later again with Parramatta.

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