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Media Statement

MANDURAH WOMAN URGES OTHERS TO HELP BREAST CANCER TRIAL

Mandurah resident Margaret Sheehan is urging WA women with a family history of breast cancer to step forward for the last chance to become part of a pioneering research trial that could help prevent the disease.

Motivated by both her mother and her daughter's battles with breast cancer, Mrs Sheehan joined the International Breast Cancer Intervention Study (IBIS II) and has now been taking part for over a year.

"Sadly, a few years ago my daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer, which followed my mother's passing from the disease at the age of 94," she said.

"It has been an extremely difficult time for my daughter, as well as for our family, but she is doing well and is now in her third year of remission.

"I wanted to get involved with the IBIS II trial so I could help other families and women avoid having to go through the same difficulty we've faced, research like this is so important if there's going to be better treatments or even a cure in future.

"Being on the trial has been an easy thing to do – I have my own health monitored and just remember to take a tablet each day, so I'd encourage anyone who can, to join in and help out."

Margaret has also donated two patchwork quilts to the institute to help fundraise for breast cancer research.

Breast cancer is the most common invasive cancer among Australian women.*

The IBIS II study is making a final plea for volunteers for research that aims to find out whether a drug widely used to treat breast cancer – anastrozole – can also be used as prevention.

Cancer Council Professor of Clinical Research and Director of Clinical Trials Michael Millward said the IBIS II study would monitor 6,000 women across the globe over the next five years.

"Previous research on anastrozole as a treatment for early stage breast cancer has revealed that it may prevent up to 80 per cent of hormone-receptor positive tumours in women at high risk of breast cancer," he said.

"This trial is looking into the potential of the drug to be used as a preventative measure for women at risk of breast cancer, which could help save thousands of lives, but in order to complete the study we need more volunteers.

"We're asking all post-menopausal women aged between 40 and 70 who have a family history of breast cancer to contact us at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) in Nedlands, where our WA recruitment arm is based.

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“West Australian women have proven themselves to be very generous when it comes to donating their time for medical research and so far we’ve recruited more than 70 per cent of the number needed for the trial, but we’re putting out a final call to gather those crucial remaining volunteers.”

Participants are required to take a daily tablet for five years and visit the QEII Medical Centre for a health check twice during the first year and once in the following years.

For more information or to sign-up for the IBIS II trial, please call 1800 640 709.

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*Source – National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre -
<http://www.nbcc.org.au/bestpractice/statistics/>

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