

## Media statement

4 April 2019

### Restoring hope for Parkinson's Disease sufferers

It's estimated more than 11,000 Australians are diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease each year and 80,000 Australians are currently living with this neurodegenerative disease.

Parkinson's Disease is a chronic, progressive disorder of the central nervous system which results in the loss of coordinated function of the body's muscles and movement.

**April is Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month**, and the Maleny Movement Disorder Clinic, located at Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital, is working hard to restore hope and quality of life for Parkinson's Disease patients.

The clinic is run by Dr Tony Tampiyappa, the Clinical Director of Stroke, Neurology, Geriatric and Rehabilitation services at Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service.

Dr Tampiyappa says the unique specialist lead multidisciplinary team provides a one-stop service for the assessment and treatment of Parkinson's disease, as well as access to available community services.

"Patients see the specialist as well as the full allied health team including, nurses, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech pathologist, dietician and social worker depending on their need. When a patient leaves the clinic, they have a complete care plan, including education and follow-up, packaged for them," Dr Tampiyappa said.

Ken Millgate, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease at just 46 years of age, said he was shocked by his diagnoses.

"I was only in my mid-40's. I now know 18% of people affected are of working age. When I was diagnosed I was determined to find a way to retain my quality of life, I was far too young to be on the scrap heap," he said.

"After trying various treatments my health was being impacted in other ways, such as severe stomach issues. I felt like I was running out of options.

"We moved closer to Brisbane for treatment, not long after I was referred to Dr Tampiyappa and the Movement Disorder Clinic. I've been having treatment there for the past 18 months. Through consultation with the clinic, I was fitted with a Duodopa pump," Ken said.

The pump slowly administers a gel-like dual medication, to treat the effects of Parkinson's Disease. For some patients, this medication is proving very successful in combination with the treatment of the full allied health team.

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“I’ve had a significant improvement in my quality of life since attending the clinic. At my worst I was confined to my bed for six to eight hours a day and had trouble feeding myself. Now I am back playing golf, basketball and coaching the local footy team,” Ken said.

“Working with the team at the clinic, I also put a strong emphasis on looking after my diet and keeping my mind active. Challenging my friends to a game of darts is just one of the ways I do this.

“Now my health is so much better we have been able to return to Goondiwindi. We were nervous about moving back to the bush but we have felt so supported by the clinic it has been an easy process.

“I visit them face-to-face every six months, we have consultations over the telephone regularly and I know the team is an email or phone call away if I need them.”

Pelican Waters resident John Wisker was diagnosed with Parkinsons Disease around nine years ago. The disease had progressed to the point it had severely affected his mobility and day to day life.

Two years ago, he started attending the Maleny Movement Disorder Clinic and was also fitted with a Duodopa pump. John has had a very good response to the treatment and says his condition is much more stable.

“I can walk around now and it allows you to get on with life. I’m back driving the car and I can do more gardening and things like that. My shaking has reduced so much you can’t really tell I have Parkinson’s Disease.”

“Being under the care of the Maleny Disorder Clinic has allowed me to be able to plan things in advance and even travel back to England to visit friends and family recently.”

John says he is grateful to have such a specialist service like the Movements Disorder Clinic so close to home.

“It’s brilliant, the doctors and nurses are very knowledgeable and good at what they do, the hospital itself is a calming and pleasant place to visit and from my first appointment I started to improve.”

It is estimated that by 2034 there will be 123,781 people living with Parkinson’s in Australia.

**ENDS**

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# Sunshine Coast

## Hospital and Health Service

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#### Media Opportunity

Meet with Dr Tony Tampiyappa and clinic patient John Wisker for interviews and photographs.

**When:** Tues 9 April, midday

**Where:** Maleny Soldiers Hospital, meet at main entrance

Ken Millgate is available for phone interviews on request.

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