

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 8th December, 2016

Support Tasmanians with epilepsy this Christmas.



In May this year Shaun Smith of Launceston lost his wife and the mother of his two young daughters - Harper aged four and Lily aged eight - to SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy).

33-year-old Tamieka was one of 20,000 Tasmanians who are diagnosed with epilepsy at some point in their life. The risk of any sudden expected death is low, however it is more likely to occur in someone with epilepsy than without. For adults with epilepsy the rate of SUDEP is one in 3,000 people over a one-year period.

"SUDEP might be rare," said Shaun. "But it does happen and it's devastating because it's so unexpected and no one knows why. There needs to be more research into it."

"Sadly, just two weeks after Tamieka passed away, her friend's brother also died of SUDEP, and the month prior another young Launceston mother lost her life," he revealed.

"At Tamieka's funeral we asked people to donate money rather than flowers and we raised over \$1,500 to help Epilepsy Tasmania support Tasmanians who live with or are affected by epilepsy."

Shaun's extended family raised a further \$1,000 for the cause by hosting a recent fundraiser at Dorset Field and Game near Bridport.

Epilepsy Tasmania CEO Wendy Groot said, "There is an urgent need for more research into epilepsy, better treatments and a cure. **We're asking people to support Tasmanians this Christmas by purchasing our digital e-cards to send to family and friends instead of traditional paper cards.**"

"We are also encouraging people with outdoor Christmas light displays to help raise awareness of epilepsy by including one of our free signs and fundraising tins."

Epilepsy Tasmania's e-cards are available to purchase on its website and are gifts that make a real difference by providing practical services to Tasmanians living with or affected by epilepsy.

-ENDS-

MORE INFO: Claire Burnet on 0448 585 947 and www.epilepsytasmania.org.au

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Twitter: @epilepsytas
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Hashtag: #epilepsytasmania #donatetothelavender

SPOKESPEOPLE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- Shaun Smith with his two young daughters.
- Robert Petty outside his home where he has Christmas lights up to raise awareness of epilepsy.
- Epilepsy Tasmania Chief Executive Officer, Ms Wendy Groot

ABOUT EPILEPSY TASMANIA:

We are a not-for-profit association improving the quality of life and community participation of Tasmanians living with or affected by epilepsy.

ABOUT EPILEPSY:

Epilepsy is a common brain disorder that takes the form of recurring seizures. It can develop at any age, regardless of gender or ethnicity. One in 10 people will experience a seizure, and one in 25 Australians (20,000 Tasmanians) will develop epilepsy at some point during their life.

ABOUT DONATE TO THE LAVENDER:

There are an increasing number of national charities collecting donations in Tasmania but in some cases not disclosing whether they provide any services here. As a proud Tasmanian charity, the Donate to the Lavender logo is our assurance that funds raised in Tasmania stay in Tasmania.

