

A Purple Night in Store

March is International Epilepsy Awareness Month and the York Town Night Markets are going purple to end the stigma.

What do radio and TV presenter Ben Fordham, rugby legend Wally Lewis and water polo champion Luke Quinlivan have in common? They have epilepsy. And like many other Australians living with epilepsy they kept it hidden because of the associated stigma.

March is International Epilepsy Awareness Month and throughout the month these celebrity epilepsy ambassadors are urging us to end the stigma of epilepsy and **'GO PURPLE'** - the international colour for 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.

The World Health Organisation describes epilepsy as “arguably the world’s most stigmatised, misunderstood and under-resourced of all health conditions.”

Epilepsy Tasmania Executive Officer Mr Phil Baker believes there is low community awareness and understanding about epilepsy.

“Research suggests the social stigma and misconceptions that surround epilepsy result in many people not disclosing their condition and missing out on the support they need,” he said.

International Epilepsy Awareness Month aims to encourage people to talk about epilepsy and remind those who live with seizures that they are not alone.

“We are asking Tasmanians to end the stigma of epilepsy by hosting a purple fundraising event at their school or work, purchasing merchandise from our online shop, making a donation, or participating in our social media competition by posting a purple-themed photograph with the hashtags **#purplepose** AND **#epilepsytasmania**. We will be giving away prizes for the most shared photo, creative pose, purple costume, creative location and purple prop,” said Mr Baker.

Epilepsy Tasmania will be at the York Town Night Market in Launceston on Thursday from 5 to 9pm with purple glowsticks.

-ENDS-

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

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Twitter: @epilepsytas
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EpilepsyTasmania/>
Hashtags: #purplepose #epilepsytasmania

SPOKESPEOPLE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- People living with epilepsy are available to interview upon request.
- Purple Glow Sticks during the night market.
- Epilepsy Tasmania Executive Officer Mr Phil Baker.

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.