

MEDIA RELEASE 1 MAY 2021

“You’ve Got Guts”

- **May is Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month**
- **People living with Crohn’s and colitis urged to speak out and #FlushTheStigma**
- **By 2022 it’s expected more than 100,000 people in Australia will be living with Crohn’s and colitis**

By 2022, it’s expected that more than 100,000 people will be living with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis in Australia. As the rate of these inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) continue to rise, Crohn’s & Colitis Australia (CCA) is urging people to share what it’s like to live with these life-long illnesses as part of **Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month** this May.

It takes guts to live with Crohn’s and colitis – and to speak about it.

Known as “invisible illnesses”, a person may look completely well on the outside, but can be suffering from abdominal pain, cramping, bleeding, diarrhoea, inability to eat, or severe urgency to find a toilet. These diseases affect every aspect of a person’s life, such as career or study plans or choices about when to start a family. For every person diagnosed, not only is their life changed forever, but so too are the lives of their family and friends.

Leanne Raven, Chief Executive of CCA, the peak support body for people living with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, is encouraging people with inflammatory bowel disease to reach out for support and share their experiences, particularly during Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month.

“Too often, people with an inflammatory bowel disease won’t share their problems or experiences with others or ask for help when they need it because of the stigma surrounding the diseases. At CCA, we create safe places, such as our Support Groups, so that people will no longer have to face these diseases alone.

“Many well-known diseases are understood with just a single word, but most Australians are still not familiar with the terms inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn’s disease or ulcerative colitis. The burden of explaining these diseases repeatedly to people who may not understand should be a problem of the past,” she said.

Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month offers an opportunity for people living with Crohn’s or ulcerative colitis to courageously speak up and share the obstacles they overcome daily to increase the wider public’s understanding of the diseases. Those living with the diseases can get involved in CCA’s ‘You’ve Got Guts’ campaign and share their brave stories and comments on social platforms.



“We are so fortunate to have our Ambassadors, including Justan Singh, Jacinta Parsons and Flic Manning, sharing their own stories during the Awareness Month. We hope their courage will inspire others with the confidence to share their own experiences with Crohn’s or colitis, even if it is just with one trusted person or an online post and be their own IBD Champion!

“CCA encourages people living with an inflammatory bowel disease to build a strong support network of health professionals, friends, family and work mates around them, to talk to when some extra support is needed. We hope that the more people living with these illnesses feel supported to share their experiences, the greater awareness we can raise,” Ms Raven said.

Anyone diagnosed with Crohn’s or colitis can join CCA, a community that understands. To learn more or to donate to support CCA’s outreach programs, visit <https://www.crohnsandcolitis.com.au/awareness-month-2021/> or call 1800 138 029.

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For media enquiries

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ABOUT CROHN’S & COLITIS AUSTRALIA

Crohn’s & Colitis Australia (CCA) has been working with people living with Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, healthcare professionals, governments and the public to minimise the impact that these conditions have on the community since 1985. For 36 years, CCA has been the only Australian organisation working with and for patients and their families, the doctors that treat them, and the policymakers who can bring about change. CCA provides high quality information, supports life-changing research and campaigns vigorously – for more knowledge, better services and more support for people affected by inflammatory bowel disease.

CCA acknowledges and thanks our generous sponsors, Janssen, Dr Falk, Takeda and Sandoz for supporting Crohn’s and Colitis Awareness Month 2021.

For more information, visit: <https://www.crohnsandcolitis.com.au/>