

# I haven't always had breast cancer

*Sometimes it seems like I have had breast cancer forever.*

I was diagnosed with early stage breast cancer in April 2000. I was 37, with two children aged five and seven and, of course, my wonderful husband Rob.

There were several challenges, but helping the kids through this was a priority. Probably the most poignant memory at the time was overhearing our five-year-old ask his Dad 'Is Mummy going to die?'.  
This made me feel even worse and sorry that the kids should have to cope with this at such a young age. They are now 13 and 15 and have grown into beautiful, confident teenagers. Our experiences as a family, living with my ongoing breast cancer, have given us all a different outlook on life. We have found strength and resilience we did not know we had. Our daughter Courtney (at the age of 14) was presented with the Young Citizen of the Year Award in our local shire. What a positive reflection on how she has matured beyond her years. In choosing subjects for her final two years at school, she stated her career goal was 'to find a cure for cancer'.

I sometimes wonder if our children have memories of before I had cancer. My roller-coaster ride through the many recurrences has become a part of the norm. My son, at the age of 12, had to take me to Emergency at our local hospital when I experienced stroke-like symptoms and was unable to talk



Julie Scott

coherently. The symptoms were caused by swelling in the brain from tumours that had increased in size since previous treatment.

My journey with breast cancer has included metastases in my lungs, ribs and brain. My brain mets have recurred three times, but fortunately are now controlled.

I feel I have experienced many miracles in my journey. I wish I knew what has kept me responding so well to treatment. There is some guilt when I see my chemo buddies not doing so well. I have been to way too many funerals!

Words alone are insufficient to express my appreciation for the

support I have experienced and continue to experience on my rocky journey. My family has given me more than enough reason to live and make the most of every day. As my daughter would say 'Carpe Diem' or 'Seize the Day'.

Involvement in the Bunbury Dragons Abreast team has also made a big difference to my life. The opportunity to be active and share experiences, all while having fun times with fellow survivors and supporters, has been inspirational.

Currently I am amazingly fit and well, and have even returned to part-time work.

I keep saying to people, 'I don't know why I've done so well, but whatever it is, I'll keep doing it!'.

Julie Scott  
Gelorup, Western Australia

## Finding support

We have information about groups around Australia specifically for women living with secondary breast cancer on our website, visit [www.bcna.org.au](http://www.bcna.org.au) > Secondary breast cancer > Support groups.

Two Australian websites offer online peer support for women with secondaries. The Aussie Breast Cancer Forum

([www.bcaus.org.au](http://www.bcaus.org.au)) has a 'noticeboard' where women can post questions and information to connect with other women. The NSW Cancer Institute's electronic mailing list M-Mail ([www.bci.org.au](http://www.bci.org.au) > Mailing Lists) allows women with secondaries to send and receive email messages, questions or comments to/from others on the list.

The **INSIDE STORY** is a supplement to Breast Cancer Network Australia's **The Beacon** magazine.

BCNA, 293 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124

Freecall 1 800 500 258, fax (03) 9805 2599, email [beacon@bcna.org.au](mailto:beacon@bcna.org.au), web [www.bcna.org.au](http://www.bcna.org.au)