



15<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Senator the Hon. Peter Cooke  
Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Cancer Inquiry  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Cooke

It is with great interest I heard about the inquiry into cancer and the many different treatment options.

My husband Mark died 17 months ago from bowel cancer at the age of 46. He had symptoms for 3- 4 weeks at which time we went to the doctor to investigate. In the space of a week we discovered that the cancer was in the bowel, had spread to the liver and into the bones in his spine and ribcage. He had been perfectly healthy with absolutely no indication on any illness

The first point I would like to make is that from the experiences I have heard of, this is common. I think the parameters for testing for cancer should be altered. The suggested guidelines are for having regular testing after the age of 50 but people my husband's age are dying because they didn't have any reason to be tested. I think with the lifestyle our society lives we should be encouraged and able to have free testing for bowel cancer and breast cancer from the age of 30 not 50.

After the initial trauma of the diagnosis and the prognosis given to us of 3-6 months we set about discovering what we could do to hopefully heal Mark or at the least prolong his life significantly.

Having heard about the Gawler Foundation years before, we approached them and went on to experience the 10 day Residential Program they offer for cancer patients. The experience was life changing. Apart from the chance to be with others in the same situation the Program taught us how to face the prospect of death while aiming to heal oneself through healthy diet, meditation and spirituality. It supports a

traditional medicine approach if that is what the patient wants. Most people there with us had come as a last resort because medicine had no answers and often the treatment was worse than the illness itself. It is a shame that organizations such as the Gawler Foundation have to constantly fight for enough funding and pursue fundraising activities because they are not really recognized as a viable and proven treatment.

My husband lived for 13 months after the initial diagnosis and most of that time he was in remarkably good health for a terminally ill man. I attribute this solely to our time with the Gawler Foundation and the changes it brought to our lives, which I would have considered to be healthy anyway. We managed to spend a lot of time together and because of our "Gawler" experience talked about the important aspects of a life ending which is too easy to avoid if you have never been counseled about how to deal with them. As the surviving partner I feel I have been able to deal with my current life and my grief because the Gawler Foundation taught me to confront and deal with the worst time of my life.

Thank you for reading this letter. I can only urge you to investigate the many alternative supports to the traditional medical treatment available in this country. Medicine is not winning the battle and people like Ian Gawler are achieving quite remarkable outcomes.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Trish Bates