World MS Day celebrated globally

30 May 2012

ON Wednesday 30May, more than two million people living with multiple sclerosis globally will commemorateWorld MS Day and share the challenges of living with an incurable disease likeMS.Everyyear, the MS movement comes together to provide the public with informationabout MS and how it affects the lives of more than two million people aroundthe world. World MS Day is the only global awareness raising campaign for MS.CEO of MS Australia QLD Lincoln Hopper, said Brisbane will be abuzz on World MS Day with King George Square, City Hall, QPAC, the TreasuryCasino, Kurilpa Bridge, Gateway Bridges, the Wheel of Brisbane and the newWintergarden all lighting up red for the MS cause."This year were focusing on living with MS to share andadvocate the challenges that people with MS face daily and the simple changesthat can help them live fulfilling lives after diagnosis, Mr Hopper said. The global theme for the past two years has focussed on theimportance of employment retention for people living with chronic illnesseslike multiple sclerosis. Due to anumber of reasons, up to 80% of people with MS have to give up work within 10years of diagnosis, when a greater understanding of the disease by them andtheir employer would have enabled them to stay in employment, Lincoln said. To highlight this fact the MS Society in Queensland launcheda viral YouTube campaign Employment and MS using three Queenslanders livingwith MS; Ipswich Lord Mayor Paul Pisasale, young mum Wenda Shurety and legalsupport officer Leiza Richmond. The videos have seen more than 7,000 views todate. The shortfilms are honest and emotive and depict three real employment scenarios of howemployment and MS works; working part-time, full time and returning to theworkforce after having children, Mr Hopper said. Sadly MS largely affects young adults aged between 20 and 40, particularly females, so raising awareness of the disease this WorldMS Day has never been more important to ensure early diagnosis, he said. In Australia alone, more than 21,000 people are living withMS, a chronic neurological disease which attacks the brain and spinal cord causingirreparable damage. There is no cure.World MS Day waslaunched in 2009 with over 200 events in 67 countries and has continued to growevery year. Around the world on Wednesday 30 May,over 75 countries will take part in World MS Day activities to support thoseliving with the disease. To help the Australian campaign and the lives of thoseliving with MS, visit www.kissgoodbyetoms.org orfollow the campaign on Twitter or Facebook www.facebook.com/KissgoodbyetoMS For more information please contact Melanie Mead, MS Queensland media and communications manager, on 0423 524 503 or 07 3840 0825 or melanie.mead@msqld.org.au

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