

EX-SMOKER'S MESSAGE: GET OFF YOUR BUTT AND QUIT



LYNN CAMERON

PEOPLE are signing up to Quit Your Way in May as part of a new anti-smoking campaign.

And no one knows the devastating consequences of smoking more than Geoff Goodfellow.

The poet, 71, picked up his first cigarette at just five years old. By the age of 12, he was smoking two ounces (57g) of tobacco a week and by his 40s, it was 80-90 cigarettes.

His toddler daughter was a catalyst for change.

"I would take her outside ... in the mornings,

have a spit over the railing, a cigarette and a cup of coffee," Mr Goodfellow said. "One morning, she toddled over to the railing and started spitting. I thought, 'What am I doing? This can't be the way for a child to grow up'."

Mr Goodfellow threw his cigarette lighter in the bin in 1992. But a sudden bout of illness in 2007 brought his smoking back to the fore.

"I woke up one morning with a stiff neck and a lump in my throat," he said. With no improvement over the next week, Mr Goodfellow went to the

Queen Elizabeth Hospital where he was diagnosed with cancer of the vocal cords.

"They removed the cords, a 200g tumour and neck muscle," he said. "It left me only able to talk in a whisper. About nine months later, the doctor inserted a voice box."

Worse news was to come - Mr Goodfellow was told he had only one to five years to live.

"I thought, 'There's no way I'm going to die,' he said. "I have always been very determined, and here I am, more than 13 years later."

Mr Goodfellow, who lost his brother to smoking-related throat cancer in 2013, credits his recovery to a lifetime of keeping fit and staying off the cigarettes for more than 20 years.

After time away from exercise, he now swims in the ocean every morning.

Mr Goodfellow is a big supporter of Quit Your Way in May.

"Even if you've tried before and gone back to smoking, you're always one step closer to quitting if you keep having a go," he said.

See quityourwayinmay.com.au

Ex-smoker and keen swimmer Geoff Goodfellow is encouraging people to give up cigarettes. Picture: Mike Burton

Soldier's 'threats' to sue his wife

PERRY DUFFIN

BEN Roberts-Smith allegedly threatened his ex-wife, warning her that if she gave evidence against him at an upcoming defamation trial he'd sue her, a court has heard.

The former SAS soldier's lawyers say his children may now pay "too high a price" when their mother takes the stand and is called "a liar".

Mr Roberts-Smith is suing Nine Network's newspapers for defamation, saying they published reports alleging he'd committed war crimes in Afghanistan. Nine is defending the reports as true.

Just over one month from the trial, lawyers for Nine told the Federal Court yesterday they asked for an assurance from the former SAS soldier that he wouldn't use a confidentiality agreement against his former wife, Emma Roberts.

Instead, they claim, Mr Roberts-Smith, pictured, wrote a letter to Ms Roberts "threatening" she would be sued if she breached a gag order.

"(Mr Roberts-Smith) wrote to Ms Roberts, threatened her with an injunction, damages and would begin proceedings," Nine's barrister, Nicholas Owens SC, said.

Ms Roberts was expected to give evidence in favour of her husband when the case began but she is now expected to speak out against him.

Nine has published allega-

tions Mr Roberts-Smith buried a lunch box of USBs in his backyard containing pictures and files related to alleged war crimes. His legal team believes those allegations came from Ms Roberts and wanted to quiz her before the trial.

"The whole series of allegations about buried lunch boxes and other rubbish (aired) on 60 Minutes clearly came from Ms Roberts or via Ms Roberts," Mr Roberts-Smith's barrister, Bruce McClintock, said.

Mr Owens said it was "outrageous" that the court was put

in a position where Ms Roberts could be sued if she spoke to them and again asked for Mr Roberts-Smith to assure them he wouldn't sue.

His lawyers told the court they were unable to provide that assurance. "It wasn't a threat, it was simply a requirement she obey an agreement she entered into," Mr McClintock said.

"I'm going to have to put to her she's a liar; there are children involved in this case," he said.

"(Nine's lawyers) are putting me in that position. I wonder if they should rethink what they're doing. Sometimes you can pay too high a price to air a family's dirty linen."

Mr Owens said it was "scurrilous" to suggest they didn't care about the children caught up in the case.

Judge Anthony Besanko ordered Ms Roberts' evidence to be outlined in documents rather than in cross-examination.



WALK TO DEFEAT DISEASE

WALKERS will converge at Pinky Flat by the River Torrens on Sunday in the Walk to D'Feet - a fundraiser to fight Motor Neurone Disease, which has no cure.

Up to 1000 people are expected to join a 4.5km route in the SA Motor Neurone Disease Association's largest fundraising event, to mark the start of National MND Week.

This year's event comes as Masonic Charities Trust joins MND SA as a major supporter. It has provided a grant of \$228,000 to fund expansion of a purpose-fitted facility at Mile End, help with a custom

vehicle and upgrade IT services. Masonic Charities, the major philanthropic arm of Freemasonry in SA and NT, responded to a request for financial assistance to help ensure reliable and accessible services can continue for sufferers and their families.

MND SA does not receive any ongoing federal or state government funding for the majority of its services.

The association's chief executive Karen Percival said it relied on events such as Walk to D'Feet for funding to provide vital support services to people with MND.

TAX DOESN'T TAKE BISCUIT

THE Australian Taxation Office has sharpened its focus on work-related expenses, income from rental properties and investment gains on shares and cryptocurrencies as it aims to stop dodgy deductions and incorrect claims.

Two months from the end of financial year, ATO assistant commissioner Tim Loh says some confusion remains about what can be claimed by people working from home.

He said the ATO expected a significant fall in car, travel and laundry deductions this financial year, with 41 per cent of Australians still working

from home at least one day a week in February.

"One thing we do see people doing is claiming private expenses, things like biscuits, coffee and tea that maybe your employer supplies when you're in the office - if you incur the cost at home, it's not deductible," he said.

Rising sharemarkets and property prices, along with skyrocketing bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, are driving an increase in Australians' capital gains, which will be targeted, Mr Loh said.

Income from Airbnbs and rentals would also be targeted.

FESTIVAL NOMINATIONS

THE Lights of Lobethal committee will hold a meeting on May 12 to elect new executives, after the members quit over community pressure.

A special general meeting was called yesterday after it emerged the former committee had quit amid fierce criticism over its handling of the beloved Christmas event.

Positions now empty include chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer and minutes secretary - all of which need to be filled during next month's special meeting.

Interested parties will be able to nominate on the night

with general members of the public encouraged to attend.

In a letter published on the event's Facebook page, former committee vice-chairwoman Marianne Foristal said the decision to resign was made in the wake of "unwarranted stress and accusations", which included personal attacks via social media.

"We have endured months of aggressive meetings with intimidation and bullying," Ms Foristal said.

"Because of all this unwarranted stress and accusations we, the committee, are standing down."