



MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8 March 2019

Local epilepsy champion recognised

Epilepsy Queensland has recognised 13 outstanding Queenslanders and organisations for their achievements and for making a difference in the lives of people with epilepsy. Ingham local and CEO of Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre, Linda McClelland was the co-winner of the 2018 Role Model Award but was unable to attend the ceremony in Brisbane as she was holidaying in Kathmandu. Epilepsy Queensland Regional Project Coordinator, Dianne Rogers, was thrilled to present Linda with her award in Ingham this week.

The 2018 awards were presented in Brisbane by Epilepsy Queensland Patron and Australian football 'legend' Wally Lewis. Wally had a very public epileptic seizure while on television in 2006 and had successful surgery a year later. He has since written a book about his experiences and has been a strong advocate for others with the disorder.

Epilepsy Queensland CEO Helen Whitehead spoke about the award: "Linda is an inspiration to others living with epilepsy. When she was diagnosed with epilepsy, she lost her licence. This was devastating for Linda as a CEO of a community organisation, living in a community where public transport was not an option. With the help of medication and changes Linda made to her life including, diet, exercise, reducing stress and getting better sleep, Linda's epilepsy is now well managed and she is doing things she didn't have the courage to do before epilepsy."

"Linda has shared her story through our membership magazine 'flame' and her message of not letting epilepsy get in the way of life is an inspiration for others. It make a big difference when people like Linda and Wally share their stories to break down the stigma of living with epilepsy."

Linda said: "People don't understand epilepsy, they are fearful, so they treat you with kid gloves. You don't want epilepsy to run your life, but it does, so you end up just not telling people."

Epilepsy is the world's most common serious brain disorder, affecting some two percent of Queenslanders or about 100,000 people. People living with epilepsy have the added challenge of managing the social stigma associated with seizures (which occur when a sudden unusual release of electrical activity in the brain disturbs the brain's normal function).

Epilepsy Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to bringing epilepsy 'out of the shadows' and helping to demystify the condition. As well as providing counselling, support programs, advocacy and research, Epilepsy Queensland is focused on educating the broader community so that people with epilepsy can lead fulfilling and satisfying lives. The annual awards recognise the support demonstrated by individuals and groups towards achieving this goal.

Purple Day for Epilepsy is recognised worldwide on the 26th of March. This globally celebrated event is a powerful step toward unmasking the myths and mysteries associated with a disorder, which has a profound effect on so many lives. Find out more: www.epilepsyqueensland.com.au/purple-day

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