

GAZETTE

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

NEWS

Foundation launched



Get out the big guns: From left are Councillor Bob Porter, Londonderry MP Allan Shearan, Greenway MP Louise Markus, Erik's father Johan Hausoul, Mayor Bart Bassett, Erik's mother and sister Denise Seymour and Aimee Hausoul, Sydney Cancer Centre's Professor Martin Tattersall, and the Australasian Sarcoma Study Group's Associate Professor David Thomas and Dr Sally Whyte.

How can I help?

Donate: to the foundation at PO Box 154 Richmond NSW 2753 or at any Westpac branch, account name Erik Hausoul Sarcoma Foundation, account number 279199, BSB 032-274. Donations are tax deductible.

Sponsor: a Foundation fundraising event.

Volunteer: Raise funds through morning teas, trivia nights or by calling the foundation to help with its fundraising events.

Contact: www.erikhausoul.com, sarcomafoundation.com. Phone 4561 2012 or email ehsfoundation@hotmail.com. More study group details at: australiansarcomagroup.org

by Justine Geake

A HOBARTVILLE family's devastating loss of their son has resulted in a solidly positive outcome – the creation of the Erik Hausoul Sarcoma Foundation.

Erik Hausoul, 17, died last November of osteosarcoma, a cancer which mostly affects teenage boys, but before he died he asked his parents "how can we stop this happening to other people?"

In an effort to answer that question his family took on the challenge of establishing what they hope will be a real and positive step towards finding out what causes sarcomas, thereby reducing their death toll.

The Foundation was launched at Richmond Club last Thursday, in

front of an audience of 50 which included some heavyweights from the community and the medical fraternity.

Those present included Mayor Bart Bassett, Councillor Bob Porter, Londonderry MP Allan Shearan, Greenway MP Louise Markus, Professor Martin Tattersall, of the Sydney Cancer Centre, who treated Erik at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

His mates from Richmond High Chris Coutlis, Matt Jones and Luke Griffiths were also there, along with The Gazette's general manager Damien Tomlinson and editor Peter Gladwell.

The Foundation's fundraising activities will directly fund research into causes of osteosarcoma by the Australasian Sarcoma

Study Group (ASSG), based in Melbourne.

The study group has approximately 100 members, all of whom are key players in sarcoma research in Australia, and two of its members – Associate Professor David Thomas and Dr Sally White – also attended the launch.

Ass Prof. Thomas said he had seen how research led directly to improved survival rates.

"In the 1980s the survival rate of osteosarcomas was 20 per cent – now it's 60 per cent, but since then it's plateaued," he said. "The purpose of the ASSG is to act as a beacon to those affected by the disease so we can put our resources together to make a difference.

"I'll be calling on the Federal

Government to commit to funding for research into this disease."

Erik's father Johan Hausoul said the Foundation's goals were to fund research, raise public awareness, lobby the government for funds, create a forum for patients and families, and catalogue early symptoms to help earlier diagnosis.

He said one of their aims was to get the early symptoms as well known as those of meningococcal are now. He said parents could then get a simple blood test done on their child which can indicate the presence of cancer.

"In the Foundation's first three years we want to fund five times this, and we are looking for help in sponsorship, event management, project planning and general volunteers."