

## **AMBASSADOR, Geoff Cox – Bowel Cancer Survivor**

**G** Geoff Cox or 'Coxy' as he is called by almost everyone, is a larger than life personality, best known for his successful music career and as host of travel show Coxy's Big Break, now in it's 13th year. His TV filming commitments take him all around Australia and regularly overseas. As a drummer he has played on 20 gold albums including those by Australian Crawl, Brian Cadd and Kamahl. He did a year long stint as the drummer with Little River Band and also toured Africa with Cliff Richard. Following his musical career, he moved into radio presenting followed by television. Like many men, Coxy put off having regular health checks, always 'too busy'. That procrastination almost cost him his life. He was diagnosed with bowel cancer on October 1, 2008, following a colonoscopy where it was discovered that a large tumour was blocking his bowel.

Coxy underwent surgery at Cabrini Hospital two weeks later, where a cricket ball-sized tumour was successfully removed. Doctors also removed 16 lymph glands from the bowel for further testing, with four of these suspected of being pre-cancerous. Because of this, he was advised to undergo what is known as 'protective chemotherapy', a course of therapy which gives patients an 80% chance of preventing a reoccurrence of the cancer.

*"Both the show's production company WTFN and Channel Seven were fantastic in their support and giving me as long as I needed to get well"* said Coxy.

He underwent chemotherapy treatments every second week for six months. Apart from a little tiredness and appearing 'a bit yellow' in his words, Coxy was fortunate in that he did not experience any nausea or vomiting at all during his treatment.

He was keen to get back to work as a distraction from the treatment, and undertook short trips filming for the show.

In March 2009, Coxy finished chemotherapy. In September 2010 he underwent another colonoscopy, and was delighted with the comment from his doctor after the procedure: 'Cleanest bowel I have ever scanned – see you in two years!'

*"I was an idiot to put off getting checked out"* says Coxy now. *"I did have symptoms of blood in the toilet which I ignored. One of my mates also had bowel cancer the 2004, and begged me to get tested. I never got around to it."*

Coxy said he put off tests for five years because the one-time heavy smoker feared he would be diagnosed with lung cancer. Doctors told him if he had had test sooner, they would almost certainly have found a polyp in his bowel and just burnt it off. Scans of his lungs and liver were clear.

Coxy has been on a personal mission to make others aware of bowel cancer prevention and its early detection through a simple FOB Test. Since his own diagnosis three years ago, Coxy has spoken to many groups and conferences about bowel cancer, as well as to the people he comes across during filming of his show.

*"I've had letters and emails from so many people, thanking me because I prompted them to see their doctors and get tested, and they were subsequently diagnosed with bowel cancer. All had surgery and survived. Many had no symptoms, or had ignored any symptoms they did have – just like I did"*

*"I was right in the high risk category – over 50, did not look after myself or get enough exercise, put off going to the doctor, ignored symptoms – and it almost killed me. I got lucky and got treatment, and now I feel the best I've felt in 10 years."*

*"I urge people to order a home FOB Test and see their doctor if they have any symptoms or have a family history of bowel cancer or polyps. It might be the luckiest decision you ever make too...."*