

FRIDAY 8 January 2010

MEDIA ALERT – February Is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month



OvarianCancerAustralia

**AUSTRALIAN BOLLYWOOD STAR TEAMS UP WITH MRS WORLD AUSTRALIA
TO HELP RAISE AWARENESS OF OVARIAN CANCER AMONG INDIAN COMMUNITY
- February - Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month -**

“Every woman in Australia needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer.”

During a recent whirlwind visit to Sydney, Nicholas Brown (Australia’s hottest new Bollywood star) took time out to team up with Carin Hillman-Varma (Mrs World Australia) to help raise awareness of ovarian cancer amongst women in Australia’s Indian community, and to help raise vital funds for programmes that support women diagnosed with the disease, and their families.

Every 11 hours a woman in Australia will die from ovarian cancer which is why Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (an initiative of Ovarian Cancer Australia) is critical in raising awareness of the disease and in helping women recognise the symptoms so they can seek early treatment that could help save their lives.

Nicole Livingstone, co-founder and Ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia said, “Every woman in Australia needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer. We are extremely grateful to Nicholas and Carin for their support which enables us to reach women and families in our Australian Indian community.”

Nicholas Brown, who starred along-side Shilpa Shetty in the hit West End musical, *Miss Bollywood* and the star of the feature film *Kites* due for international release in May 2010, is a devoted grandson, son, brother and uncle to the much loved women in his life and proud to work with Ovarian Cancer Australia and spokeswoman, Mrs World Australia, Carin Hillman-Varma, to ensure that all women understand the risks and symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Both Nicholas and Carin have deep connections to Australia’s Indian community – Nicholas’ parents were born in India and Carin’s husband Vik was born in Dehli in North India.

“It’s critical that women of every age and every background learn the symptoms of ovarian cancer because every day the disease affects someone’s partner, someone’s sister, someone’s daughter or someone’s mother. We’re also calling on people to support the invaluable work of Ovarian Cancer Australia and asking them to make a donation today to help women diagnosed with this dreadful disease,” Nicholas Brown said.

Carin Hillman-Varma said, “I feel privileged to hold the title of Mrs World Australia, and am humbled by the opportunity to join Nicholas Brown in contributing something important to the Australian Indian community. If together, we can help save the life of just one woman by raising awareness about the early symptoms of ovarian cancer as well as raise vital funds to support the invaluable services offered by Ovarian Cancer Australia, then we will have helped to make a difference,” said Carin Hillman-Varma.

Nicole Livingstone explained the care offered by Ovarian Cancer Australia for women diagnosed with the disease. “Ovarian Cancer Australia plays such a critical role in supporting women with ovarian cancer throughout Australia. Whilst other organisations are chasing a detection test which could be years away, with 1500 women newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer in Australia every year, we are here to support women physically, emotionally and intellectually,” she said.

“We established Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month because awareness of the disease and its symptoms is critical in ensuring women and their loved ones know about ovarian cancer and its symptoms. The more people who know about the disease, the greater the chance we have of women being detected earlier and in turn, the better their survival prospects,” Ms Livingstone said.

The most common four symptoms which women with ovarian cancer experience frequently and persistently are: pelvic and abdominal pain, increased abdominal size/persistent bloating, increased urinary frequency, and difficulty eating and/or feeling full quickly.

For more information on ovarian cancer, or to make a tax deductible donation or purchase teal ribbons (minimum quantity of 5 at \$2 each) please contact us:

- * Phone - 1300 660 334
- * Email - admin@ovariancancer.net.au
- * Website - ovariancancer.net.au

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Journalist Notes

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is the initiative of Ovarian Cancer Australia



On February 1, Ovarian Cancer Australia is launching Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month 2010 to help save lives by raising awareness about the symptoms of ovarian cancer and provide support for those touched by ovarian cancer.

- * In 2010, more than 1500 Australia women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- * More than 850 will die from the disease – that's 1 woman every 11 hours
- * 75% of women are diagnosed in the advanced stages and will not live beyond 5 years
- * Ovarian cancer is the 6th most common cause of death in Australian women
- * Ovarian cancer can affect women of all ages – girls as young as 7 have been diagnosed. But the risk of getting ovarian cancer increases with age. The average age for an ovarian cancer diagnosis is 64.
- * There is no detection test – a Pap smear does NOT detect ovarian cancer
- * The majority of Australian women DON'T know the symptoms of ovarian cancer but almost all women with ovarian cancer suffer symptoms
- * To ensure a good chance of survival it is essential that ovarian cancer is caught in the early stages
- * If found in the early stages, the majority of women will be alive and well after five years
- * Awareness of symptoms is the principle means of early diagnosis to save lives!
- * With the help of the media, we aim to save lives by educating women about the symptoms of ovarian cancer. We aim to inform them about what to do if they have symptoms, empowering them to manage their health

About Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

- * Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is an international campaign to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer. In 2010 in Australia Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is held in February. Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is also a time when Ovarian Cancer Australia, their volunteers and friends, raise funds for their programs and resources to support women with ovarian cancer and to ensure every woman in Australia knows the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Why Is Teal The Colour We Use For Our Ribbons & Branding?

- * Teal is the **international colour** for ovarian cancer

How Can I Support Women & Their Families Who Are Battling Ovarian Cancer?

- * Buy a Teal Ribbon from Ovarian Cancer Australia
- * Donate to Ovarian Cancer Australia. Donations of \$2.00 or more are gratefully received and fully tax deductible
- * Host a fundraising morning tea or BBQ with your friends and colleagues to raise funds
- * Distribute a symptom diary or awareness brochures and posters to all the women in your life, awareness saves lives

How Do Donations Make A Difference To The Lives Of Women Diagnosed With Ovarian Cancer?

Donations of \$2.00 or more are gratefully received and fully tax deductible. Donations are critical in helping fund Ovarian Cancer Australia's support programs and resources for patients and their families. These programs and resources include:

- * 1300 Referral Line
- * Support groups for women with ovarian cancer to meet regularly to talk about common issues, share information and provide emotional support to help them cope with diagnosis and treatment
- * Rural and Regional Tele-Support Group for women who are unable to travel to the support group meetings
- * An online forum where ovarian cancer sufferers can share their stories and offer advice and support to other sufferers
- * Symptom Diary – a useful tool for women to track symptoms and better communicate what they are experiencing with their GP
- * Resilience – a free resource pack for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer consisting of a diary/journal and an information pack that provides up-to-date information support and advice
- * "Ovarian Cancer - The Journey" - Patient Resource DVD and "Silent No More" - Community Awareness DVD
- * Research - Ovarian Cancer Australia also supports the Australian Ovarian Cancer Study, a collaborative research program between clinicians, scientists, patients and advocacy groups aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer

Who is Ovarian Cancer Australia?

Ovarian Cancer Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation providing support and advocacy for people affected by ovarian cancer, and is the peak body for ovarian cancer awareness and prevention. Our programs are focused in these important areas:

- * Promoting awareness of ovarian cancer and its symptoms in the community – giving Australian women and their healthcare providers a better understanding of the early signs of ovarian cancer
- * Providing support networks and resources to women and their families and friends affected by ovarian cancer
- * Advocating with medical professionals, government and the media for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer
- * We are the only organisation that works with Australian women, their families and friends who have been affected by ovarian cancer

Ovarian Cancer Australia Exists To:

- * Save women's lives by raising awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer
- * Support those touched by ovarian cancer
- * Be the voice of ovarian cancer awareness and prevention in Australia

How Many Women In Australia Have Ovarian Cancer?

- * 1 in 70 Australian women will develop ovarian cancer in their lifetime. Each year, more than 850 Australian women will lose their battle with ovarian cancer – that's one woman every 11 hours.

What Is The Life Expectancy For A Woman Diagnosed With Ovarian Cancer?

- * 75% of women are diagnosed in the advanced stages and will not live beyond 5 years. If diagnosed early, the majority of those women will survive. This is why awareness and early detection is so important.

Who Is At Risk Of Developing Ovarian Cancer?

Factors that are considered to increase the risk of ovarian cancer are:

- * Age – women over the age of 45 are at greater risk of developing ovarian cancer. However, it affects women of all ages - ovarian cancer has been diagnosed in girls as young as 7
- * Never having taken the contraceptive pill
- * Having few or no pregnancies
- * A high-fat diet, being overweight and smoking
- * A history of cancer in the family, especially ovarian, breast or some bowel cancers (approximately 10% of all ovarian cancer cases are due to an inherited gene fault and these are found in 1 in 500 people in Australia)
- * Being of Ashkenazi Jewish descent

Facts About Ovarian Cancer In Australia

- * This year, 1500 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer; more than 850 will die from the disease
- * There is no reliable early detection test for ovarian cancer
- * The majority of Australian women do not know the symptoms of ovarian cancer
- * Ovarian cancer is the 6th most common cause of death in Australian women

What Are The Symptoms Of Ovarian Cancer?

The four most frequently reported symptoms from women diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer are:

- * Persistent abdominal pain or pelvic (lower abdominal) pain
- * A noticeable increase in abdominal size or abdominal bloating
- * Needing to rush to the toilet to urinate often or urgently
- * Feeling full quickly or finding it difficult to eat

Other symptoms that have been commonly reported by women with ovarian cancer include:

- * Vague but persistent stomach upsets such as wind, nausea, heart burn or indigestion
- * Vaginal bleeding
- * Change in bowel habits
- * Weight loss or weight gain
- * Excessive fatigue

If these symptoms persist even after prescribed treatment for other more common conditions (for example irritable bowel syndrome), women should ask their GP to consider the possibility of ovarian cancer. Ovarian Cancer Australia provides free symptom diaries to download from their website so that women can track what they are experiencing and be able to better communicate with their GP.

Is There A Test For Ovarian Cancer?

- * No! There is NO early detection screening test for ovarian cancer. A Pap smear does NOT detect Ovarian cancer. This is why awareness of the symptoms is critical to Australian women

How Is Ovarian Cancer Diagnosed?

- * Ovarian cancer can only be confirmed at the point of surgery. If ovarian cancer is suspected, a GP will recommend tests which can suggest if ovarian cancer is a possibility, these include the CA125 test, and a trans-vaginal ultrasound, but these tests cannot be used to screen for or diagnose ovarian cancer.

How Is It Treated?

- * When ovarian cancer is confirmed during surgery, a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus), bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (removal of the fallopian tubes and ovaries on both sides), omentectomy (removal of the fatty tissue that covers the bowels), lymphadenectomy (removal of one or more lymph nodes) may be performed.

Awareness Is The Key To Saving Lives - We Raise Awareness By Promoting:

- * Australia's annual awareness month is February
- * 2010 Teal Ribbon Day is Wednesday 24 February
- * Teal is the international colour representing ovarian cancer

NICHOLAS BROWN

Nicholas Brown is an Australian actor, singer, songwriter, and screenwriter. A graduate of the Acting Course at NIDA in 2000, Nicholas has starred in Anurag Basu's and Rakesh Roshan's Bollywood blockbuster 'Kites' opposite Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan and will appear in the British film 'Quick Slip Me A Bride' and the Australian Indian co-production 'The Test'.

Nicholas has recently returned to Australia appearing in an episode of Channel 7's 'City Homicide', the short film 'Bani Ibrahim' and a Channel 7 comedy pilot called 'Lucky Dragon'. Nick has appeared in Australian films 'The Characters', 'Temptation' and 'A Man's Gotta Do'. His television credits include 'Home And Away', 'White Collar Blue', 'Heartbreak High', 'Drama School' and 'The Cooks' on Channel Ten and Foxtel.

Acting in many international theatre festivals, Nicholas recently performed in Rehaan Engineer's 'Seven Jewish Children' by Caryl Churchill in Project 88 Art Gallery in Mumbai and 'Doctrine: How To Survive Under Siege' in Brussels, Belgium for the Kunsten Festival Des Arts. Nicholas also represented the NIDA company at the UNESCO 2007 drama schools festival in Transylvania Romania, playing Orestes in Aeschylus's Ancient Greek tragedy 'The Oresteian Trilogy.' He also played the villain Nikhil Madhvani opposite Shilpa Shetty in 'Miss Bollywood - A Musical Extravaganza' which toured Germany and the UK including London's West End. Other theatre credits include 'There Is No Need To Wake Up' at the Sydney Opera House directed by Barrie Kosky; Kurt Weill's 'Berlin to Broadway' directed by Jim Sharman; 'Spunks' at the Stables Theatre; 'Frozen' for Company B Belvoir St Theatre directed by Kate Gaul; Toad in the Australian Shakespeare Company's productions of 'Wind in the Willows' and Martin Crimp's 'Fewer Emergencies' at The Old Fitzroy Theatre.

In 2004 Nicholas was a recipient of The Mike Walsh Fellowship and travelled to India, Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris and Rome studying multiculturalism in theatre, film and television. In London he had an internship with the British Indian Theatre Company Tamasha Theatre and began honing his writing skills. In 2005 he was the male understudy for the children's pop group Hi-5 on their world tour.

Having recently completed writing an Aussie Bollywood Musical screenplay called 'Fair + Lovely', Nicholas also wrote the plays 'Rain Supreme' and 'The Glass Soul' - both were performed at Australia's premiere international short play festival, Short and Sweet. Currently Nicholas is creating a graphic musical film of contemporary fairy tales called 'Blue Fairy'. A singer/songwriter, Nicholas also recorded the album 'Big Score' with his disco funk band Modernists in 2004 (the album is available in all good Australian record stores) and performed at Australian venues such as The Basement and The Metro. Nicholas was also invited to perform at 'Raise the Roof' at Sydney's State Theatre in a special concert to raise funds for the Tsunami Appeal in 2006. Nick also wrote and recorded an album with the electro rock outfit 'Listen Like Thieves' and he is planning a solo release in 2010.

CARIN HILLMAN-VARMA – MRS WORLD AUSTRALIA

Carin Hillman-Varma - Mrs World Australia is a wife, mother, spokesperson for Ovarian Cancer Australia will graduate with a law degree from Macquarie University, Sydney in 2010, specialising in corporate law.

30-year-old Carin grew up in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs. She currently lives in Sydney's Liberty Grove with Husband Vik (originally from New Dehli, North India), and their two-and-a-half year old daughter Sahara Ruby. Most of Carin's family live on the Central Coast where Carin spent most of her holidays while still at school. Carin went to school at St Catharine's Girls School at Waverly, then New England Girls School Armidale. Carin's modelling career began in her teens when she was fortunate to travel and work overseas in countries such as Italy and Thailand. Carin had a personal brush with the possibility of ovarian cancer in 2006 when a routine early pregnancy ultrasound revealed an abnormality.

Carin was crowned Mrs World Australia in 2009, and represented Australia when she travelled to Vietnam to meet and compete with 100 or so contestants for the international title of Mrs World. Carin is proud to have the title of Mrs World Australia and honoured to be associated with Ovarian Cancer Australia to aid in promoting awareness of the disease and fundraising activities that support women diagnosed with ovarian cancer, their families and friends.