

# Leader

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## Moorabbin Kingston Leader

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### Latest News

## Race against cancer

Matt Doran

25Jul07

**THE family of a Moorabbin man in a race against cancer has made a plea for bone marrow donors in a desperate bid to save his life.**

Graham Barnell's world caved in when he was diagnosed with leukaemia during a family holiday at Aireys Inlet over Easter. The cancer came on by stealth \_ the only symptoms were an elevated heart rate and a touch of the common flu but at least it was caught in time.

Four to six weeks later and he'd have been dead, doctors said. But that was where the good news ended: Mr Barnell was later told he'd contracted acute myeloid leukaemia, a very rare and dogged form of the disease that is almost certain to recur. Despite two successful courses of chemotherapy, during which



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the 42-year-old lost 14kgs and became violently ill, the prognosis is not good.

**Graham Barnell and his wife Samantha and their children Jack, 6, and Poppy, 2. CHRIS EASTMAN.**

“The only real chance of a cure is for him to have a peripheral stem cell transplant, otherwise known as a bone marrow transplant,” said Mr Barnell’s wife, Samantha MacRae.

“Unfortunately, because he is adopted, he doesn’t have any siblings that can be tested and the Red Cross have been unable to find a match for him.”

That was until early this month, when Mr Barnell, who has two children, Jack, 6 and Poppy, 2, received the call he had been so desperately waiting for.

“The doctors told me they had found five potential donors in Germany. I can’t tell you how relieved I was,” Mr Barnell said.

“But it turned out they didn’t meet the 12-point criteria needed for an unrelated donor, so it’s back to square one.”

Refusing to give in, Mr Barnell’s wife and children created a website, [www.adonorforgraham.com](http://www.adonorforgraham.com), in a last-ditch effort to find him a donor.

“We’re watching the donor registry every day praying that we might find a match,” Mrs MacRae said.

The odds, though, are slim.

According to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Institute, just one in 1000 donors will be a match for a patient requiring a bone marrow transplant in any given year.

But Mr Barnell won’t be pigeon-holed as a sob-story. “I’m back cycling and I’ve started lifting light weights anything to keep me feeling positive and normal.”

#### CAN YOU HELP?

If you are aged between 18 and 50, in good health and with no history of cancer you can register as a donor by calling 9694 0101.

Last year 48 bone marrow transplants were performed in Australia.

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