



CHRIS BOYD

Chris Boyd, a fit twenty-one-year university student, first noticed the symptoms of his rare sinus cancer around November 2008. Chris was on holiday, surfing in Hawaii, when what he thought was an ongoing ear infection began to get worse.

While on holiday and on his return home, antibiotics had little impact and the pain increased. Chris was then referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist in February 2009. Several tests including an MRI, hearing test and a biopsy of a mass visible by scope, confirmed a rare Embryonal Rhabdomyo Sarcoma – a malignant tumour the size of a ping pong ball in his nasal cavity.

“This cancer is extremely rare in someone my age as it is usually only found in children,” Chris said.

“The pain was incredible. I was referred to a highly regarded cancer specialist at RPA, Professor Martin Tattersall who was able to liaise with RPA’s children’s cancer specialists to work out the best treatment plan. Once I was diagnosed the news got better. If the cancer had been a different type it would not have been as treatable however a PET scan showed it was an isolated tumour and had not spread to my lymph nodes.” he said.

Chris began chemotherapy in March and simultaneously began radiotherapy under the supervision of RPA’s head of radiation oncology, Associate Prof Chris Milross.

“Both doctors, nursing team and Nurse Practitioner, Keith Cox were all fantastic. I couldn’t have felt happier in terms of who I was treated by. It was a positive experience.” Chris said.

“The effects of the radiotherapy were hard as I had to be treated through the face which affected my tongue, causing incredible pain, but being young helped my recovery,” Chris said.

Chris was supported through the treatment by his girl friend, Faye, and parents Victoria and Steve who did so much to help him get through the treatment and to drive him to RPA from their home in Caringbah for his chemotherapy and radiotherapy which finished in late June.

Chris said it was a cancer that came out of the blue and that despite the news of his cancer and the treatment being horrible at the time, he was fortunate to have all good news after diagnosis.

Chris deferred his law/international studies at UTS during treatment but is now back at university and feels he is almost back to regaining fitness and health.

“I’ve changed my outlook and know what I want, including giving back to Lifehouse at RPA.” Chris said. Chris and a friend hope to paddle the Murray River on kayaks from Mount Kosciusko to Adelaide in 2010 to raise money for Lifehouse at RPA which as Chris said, did so much to successfully treat his cancer.