

# Janine's journey

## Magnetic Island – Stage 3 Breast Cancer

Janine is a 44-year-old woman who lives with her husband and 2 children (aged 9 and 14 years of age). Janine is an academic at James Cook University and travels over via ferry 5 days a week to attend work. On her most recent mammogram, it was found that she had several spots on her left breast that looked like tumours. Janine was sent for a biopsy of the lumps, which was sent to her family GP on Magnetic Island. She was also sent for Immuno-Histo-Chemistry test. She attended her GP and the results show that she is HER2-positive. Janine is referred by her GP to an oncologist at the Townsville University Hospital. The oncologist sends Janine for further tests, which come back as showing that the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes. She is also sent for a full body MRI and it is found that she has some spots on her spine, which are confirmed to be cancer.



### PRIMARY CARE

Janine attends a general practice in Townsville as it is easier to make appointments around work commitments.

### INVESTIGATIONS

Private pathology and radiology services are a 5 minute walk from Janine's office at the university.



### SPECIALIST CANCER CARE

Janine is referred to the medical oncologist & surgeon at the Townsville University Hospital. Janine meets a breast care nurse who becomes Janine & her families main contact throughout years of investigations, biopsies, surgery, chemotherapy & radiation. Janine receives care in inpatient surgical & oncology wards, oncology day unit & outpatient clinics. She has appointments with many specialists, nurses, social workers, radiation therapists, pharmacists, occupational therapists & physiotherapists. Janine also participates in some clinical trials.



### IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE

Janine takes leave from work. Her husband organises income protection payments through Janine's superannuation provider. The family regularly stay with Janine's parents to avoid travelling back & forth from the Island. They also help get the kids to school. The children don't like seeing their mum without any hair and have periods of not wanting to go to school or sports.

### PALLIATIVE TREATMENT

The breast care nurse explains to the family that the chemotherapy and radiation is not curative and the purpose is to manage Janine's symptoms. The medical oncologist refers to palliative care.

### PEER SUPPORT

Janine's oldest daughter looks at the Canteen website. She and her sister use the Canteen Connect App to talk to other kids who have parents with cancer.

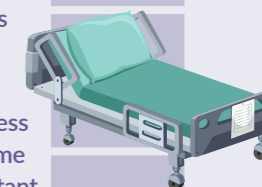
### SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE

Janine & her husband are overwhelmed with meeting a whole new team of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists & social workers & telling their experience over again.

Janine has looked at the Cancer Council & Breast Cancer network websites. Janine's work colleagues invite her to an afternoon to raise funds for breast cancer research.

### DECLINING FUNCTION

The amount Janine can do for her children decreases and, with time, this also impacts caring for herself. The palliative care outreach nurses call regularly and organise contracted community nursing service for palliative care in the home. The Occupational Therapist does a home visit to Janine's house and her parent's house. Equipment suppliers deliver aids to both homes. Janine is spending less time at her own home now, but it is important to her kids that they are on the Island.



### BEREAVEMENT

The social worker, funeral home and school guidance officer all listen & provide advice to Janine's family.

### PALLIATIVE CARE CENTRE

Janine has several inpatient admissions. She has day leave where possible to attend events at the kids' school if she is well enough. Janine dies at the centre surrounded by her family.

#### Key Themes:

- Support for children who have a parent with cancer
- Memory making and planning for children's upbringing without Mum
- Participation in clinical trials
- Specialist coordinators – breast care nurses
- Funding sources for people aged under 65

#### Potential issues/barriers:

- Access to healthcare on Magnetic Island especially in an emergency
- Financial stressors
- Family's adjustment to altered roles & lifestyle
- Fear of dying (mother and children)
- Dying on the Island not an option for many people due to service availability and costs. Transporting the body back to the mainland is very expensive



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