

Speaking out for care

A father of two has established a cancer advocacy group, writes Health Reporter Jordanna Schriever

ASHLEIGH Moore is giving a voice to South Australians with cancer. After enduring delays in diagnosis and treatment with his own cancer, he established the advocacy group Cancer Voices for others with the disease.

The Tusmore father-of-two's battle with cancer began in 2005 when he was diagnosed with late-stage head and neck cancer.

"There had been a swelling on my neck for six months but checks that had been done and monitoring didn't indicate it was cancer," Mr Moore says.

"I should have had more tests done."

The non-smoker was in remission when, in 2010, he was also struck with stage-three lung cancer.

Mr Moore, 54, felt support was lacking through the hospital system during and after his diagnosis.

"I thought there was something wrong where a patient who was at their lowest, at their limit physically and emotionally... they're expected to research themselves and come to terms with that cancer treatment and (what the) terminology is all about," he says.

"You have surgeons and clinicians saying to you it's your choice but you know nothing about the treatment."

Since his role in establishing Cancer Voices SA branch, he also has met and cycled with seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong.

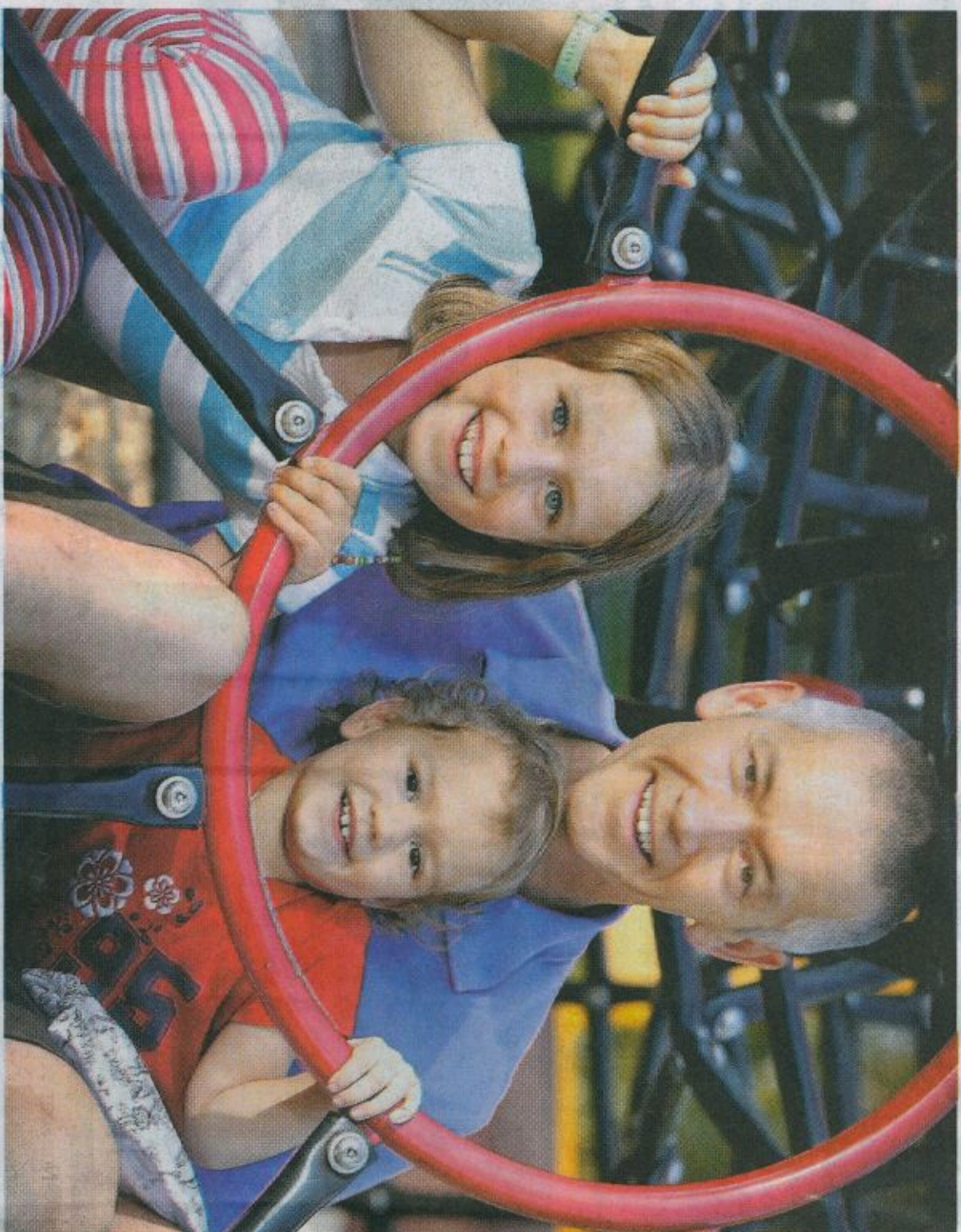
"I read his book and his messages of hope and inspiration stuck with me," he says.

A keen cyclist himself, Mr Moore rode alongside Armstrong while still undergoing treatment during the lead-up to the Tour Down Under last year.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance," Mr Moore says.

Just weeks ago he travelled to the US to participate at a conference for Armstrong's non-profit foundation, Livestrong.

In Mr Moore's role with Cancer Voices, he holds



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advisory positions with various bodies, including Cancer Australia and the SA Clinical Network. This is where, he says, he can make a difference.

"I got into advocacy because I wanted to help improve the system," he says.

"It's once you've been through it that you understand."

"We also need the best processes in place to ensure that nobody falls through the gaps." In January, Mr Moore's advocacy efforts were rewarded with one of Australia's highest hon-

ours - an Order of Australia Medal for services to the community through Cancer Voices.

The recognition marks his dedication to improving care and access to information for those with cancer. "It's an honour and it is so very satisfying to see the work of advocacy by

volunteers and survivors be recognised at the highest level," he says.

He is now back at work as a workplace safety inspector and in remission but undergoing ongoing monitoring and testing.

VOICE: Ashleigh Moore, with his daughters Brook and Erin, is helping other South Australians with cancer following his own battle.

Picture: BIANCA DI MARCHI