

# Cancer drug buying time



Melbourne woman Tracey Keogh says the treatment allows a better quality of life while fighting breast cancer. Picture: DAVID CAIRD

“ I hoped for five (extra) years and I'm nearly at six ... because of the continuity of these treatments ”  
TRACEY KEOGH

## Arrests follow ram-raids

ALANAH FROST AND OLIVIA JENKINS

TWO men were arrested and police cars rammed on a day of drama in Carlton yesterday.

Police arrested the men on Nicholson St after an alleged high-end crime spree which included a ram-raid at designer boutique Miss Louise on Collins St last month and a spate of burglaries yesterday.

Police are understood to have been in pursuit of the pair across the morning before their noon arrest, during which two police vehicles were rammed.

A witness told the *Herald Sun* a man driving a ute slammed into two police cars on the corners of Nicholson and Johnston streets.

“The ute crashed into a police car and the driver was on the ground,” she said.

The witness said the man, who appeared to be aged in his 40s, then laid on the ground against his car surrounded by more than 10 plain-clothed officers.

Police were also seen inspecting a suitcase they pulled from the ute.

A 30-year-old Northcote man and a 56-year-old Carlton man are expected to be charged with offences including burglary, theft, dangerous driving and intentionally exposing an emergency worker to risk by driving.

## Lobbying secures green light to widen scope of patients

A GLIMMER of hope has been given to metastatic breast cancer sufferers with a drug that can slow the progression of cancer made available to more people in Australia.

The Breast Cancer Network Australia will today announce a new access program for the drug Kisqali (ribociclib), which has been shown to improve the quality of life of women and men suffering from the incurable disease.

It works by blocking the effects of enzymes called cyclin dependent kinases, which chemically signal cancer cells to grow and multiply.

ALANAH FROST

The drug, known as a CDK inhibitor, is widely available in the US but had only been freely accessible to Australian patients who have had no prior treatment or at about \$5000 a month for other sufferers.

But after years of lobbying pharmaceutical companies, multinational company Novartis has given the BCNA the green light to widen the scope of eligible patients.

It will now include women and men who are in second and later line treatment who have hormone receptor posi-

tive, HER2-negative metastatic breast cancer and qualify for the program.

BCNA chief executive Kirsten Pilatti said as the drug did not have the side effects other treatments could have, it could give patients the priceless time to enjoy with loved ones.

“We know that this access program will mean that people have more options to chose for their treatment,” she said.

“The results have been very good for making or ensuring in some patients that their breast cancer can be made stable, which is really important.

“The quality of life, the side

effects — they really matter in this time of someone's life and it seems we can really keep most symptoms at bay.

“It really means people can be there to take their kids to school or go to family weddings, and really live well during the time they're taking it.”

The combination treatment is used together with a hormonal anti-cancer injection, which is also not subsidised.

The BCNA is now working to get the full treatment approved by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Melbourne woman Tracey Keogh, 54, was diagnosed with

stage 4 metastatic breast cancer in 2014 and knows just how vital such treatments can be.

She self-funded a similar treatment, which used CDK inhibitors and said it was “life saving”.

“It's all about buying time,” she said. “I hoped for five (extra) years and I'm nearly at six. And I know it's because of the continuity of these treatments that provide better quality of life while fighting cancer.”

Ms Keogh said making the treatment available to more breast cancer patients was a “no-brainer”.

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## GIRLS 'FILMED BALCONY FALL'

TWO teenage girls allegedly filmed and egged on the brutal assault and torture of two men in a Gold Coast apartment before a Brisbane teen plunged to his death trying to escape.

The girls, aged 15 and 16 from Coomera, are facing charges of murder, robbery, deprivation of liberty and torture in relation to the death of Cian English, 19, in Surfers Paradise on May 23.

The girls were part of a gang who allegedly invited Mr English and a friend, both of whom were staying in the same building, to party with them in their apartment.

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