



**The Gawler Foundation**  
*Profound Healing - Sustainable Wellbeing*

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Leading Cancer Expert refutes claims positive thinking does not work**

Dr Ian Gawler OAM, founder and therapeutic director of The Gawler Foundation has refuted suggestions that positive thinking doesn't work when it comes to dealing with cancer.

This is in response to a team of Melbourne researchers who have concluded that psychological responses to breast cancer might not improve a patient's chance of survival.

The findings by Prof. Kelly-Anne Phillips and colleagues were presented recently at the 2008 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting and may prompt some to conclude that positive thinking does not help someone to deal with cancer.

"As one cancer patient whose story epitomises so called 'positive thinking' I am aghast at the headlines this week," said Dr Gawler.

"Positive thinking was an integral part of my recovery from secondary bone cancer and since establishing The Gawler Foundation in 1983, I have had contact with thousands of people who have benefited from this same approach.

"I am aghast because such a claim in my view is not justified by the research it was based upon and it may well disempower people with cancer, leading to worse outcomes.

"The research and subsequent headlines were based on an observational study. There was no control group, no intervention.

"To extrapolate from this research that positive thinking does not help fight cancer is extraordinary."

Dr Gawler said it is important to encourage people dealing with cancer and serious illness to be authentic with their emotions, both positive and negative.

"To really test if positive thinking works it needs to be researched in line with what outcomes it produces, Dr Gawler said.

"Phillips' observational study does not do this.

"I would urge people affected by cancer not to be misled or disempowered by the conclusions drawn by this new research. The mind affects what choices we make. The mind is connected to the body and affects how it functions, how it heals.

"The mind can bring despair or happiness. Many believe that the mind can lead to longer cancer survival.

"Let us research that proposition properly." **\*\*ENDS\*\***

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