



**Virtual guides:** Jayne Coe and Mandy Lake explain cancer journey.

## With you every step of the way

"Hi, I'm Jayne Coe. If you're watching this film, you've probably just been diagnosed with breast cancer. I guess you're feeling alone, frightened and unsure of what's ahead of you.

"OK, so this is where this film comes in. *Side by Side* is a virtual map of the road that may be ahead of you and a guide to the support you can find along the way.

"And we hope that it will show you are very much not alone. There are plenty of people who will and can be by your side. So how about you go and make yourself a cup of tea, put your feet up and let me do all the walking."

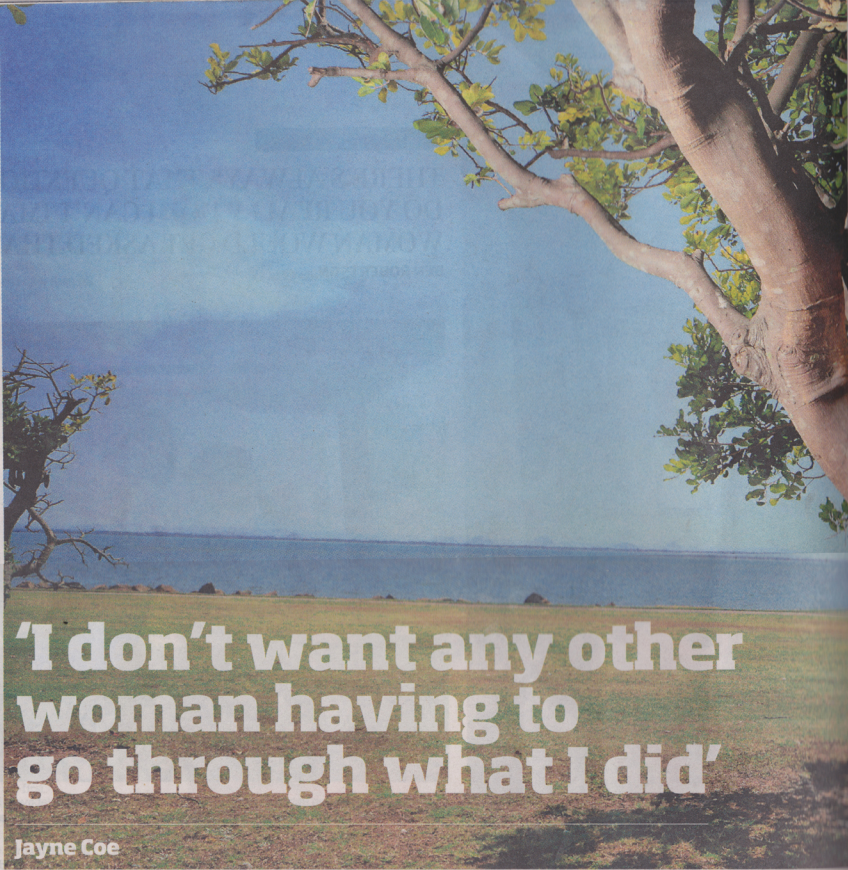
What follows is 43 minutes of engaging, informative and gently humorous introductions, led by Coe, complemented by phone numbers and web addresses for national breast cancer support agencies. A Redcliffe district breastcare nurse, oncology surgeon,

chemotherapy nurse, psychologist, social worker, pharmacist, radiation oncologist, occupational therapist, general practitioner, wig and turban consultant, support group leader, dietician, physiotherapist and more introduce themselves and explain how they can help patients. Most important are the stories of the survivors - which includes some of the professionals.

"You have to let it teach you things. That's life. It's been given to me as a gift. I can go on and be different and have a better life where I'm not so worried about things all the time," says one. Says another: "This is not a death sentence. This is the best thing that's ever happened to me."

*Side by Side* has been sent to every breastcare nurse in Queensland, as well as their local Zonta Clubs.

Watch a trailer at [zontaredcliffe.org.au/wp/side-by-side/](http://zontaredcliffe.org.au/wp/side-by-side/) or email [info@zontaredcliffe.org.au](mailto:info@zontaredcliffe.org.au)



# 'I don't want any other woman having to go through what I did'

Jayne Coe

*A teacher and a filmmaker meet in a doctor's surgery. The result is a heartfelt documentary guiding breast cancer patients on their journey, showing them they never have to be alone and there is hope, writes Leanne Edmiston*

The cloudless blue sky stretches wide over the gently rippling ocean at Scarborough, north of Brisbane, on a picture-perfect spring day. Sitting on a park bench, soaking up the sun and laughing with friends, it's the ideal place for Jayne Coe to share her story of hope, support and serendipity.

The Burpengary primary school teacher is a breast cancer survivor making it her life's work to live - really live - and provide support for other women to do the same, any way they desire or can.

Coe is the driving force behind *Side by Side*, a documentary funded by the Zonta Club of Redcliffe to give newly diagnosed patients "a virtual road map to the breast cancer journey and the people who could be by your side along the way".

It's a message of hope because Coe, 55, and so many other women are proof the disease is not an automatic death sentence but often a chance to reinvent and reinvigorate; support because there are people in so many

different roles willing and able to help; and serendipity, because of the strange way people we need come into our lives at just the right time. That's how the documentary Coe's so passionate about became a reality.

"Life's never going to be the same after you go through something like that, be it breast cancer or whatever. It's never going to be the same but it's not too bad," says Coe, who lives with husband Stephen, 59, and is on leave from teaching.

"I'm doing things I've never done before. I've been overseas dragon-boat - Penang, Singapore, Canada. I've never been in a service club, now I'm in one helping people and meeting all these women.

"Most of my friends before this were all teachers, now I've got this really wide range of friends. I appreciate things more and little things don't upset me so much. And I really appreciate being outside," she says, lifting her face to the warm spring sunshine.

"There's no chemo, no radiation, no doctors, no nurses... no breast cancer."

Coe is the first in her family to have breast cancer. She lost her right breast in 2004, her left in 2008. In October last year, the cancer returned in her chest wall (coincidentally, diagnosed the day of *Side by Side's* local premiere) and earlier this year in her right hip.

Coe recently celebrated receiving the all-clear on her full-body scan with a holiday to Norfolk Island with her mum, but now it's down to business. This film is going national, if not international, if she has anything to do with it.

There's every reason to think Coe will succeed. After all, this is the same woman who started the Redcliffe Snappers - the Redcliffe Dragon Boat Club's first breast cancer survivor crew - after her first bout with breast cancer and joined Zonta Club of Redcliffe when it bought their first boat.

The intrepid bushwalker, yoga and water aerobic enthusiast, dragonboat paddler,

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film company Flickchicks with Margie Brown. Lake went to Pine Rivers State High School with Chern and accompanies her mum, Meg, 77, to all her appointments with him.

Coe and Lake met, hit it off, raised \$22,000 and after 18 months of intense research, interviewing and editing, produced *Side by Side*.

"I had never even heard the word 'oncologist'. It was so scary, frightening, overwhelming and consequently I'm so passionate about the DVD because I don't want any other woman having to go through what I went through in 2004," she says, slapping the picnic table for emphasis.

Here's where serendipity played its part. Sitting in oncologist Dr Boris Chern's office one day, Coe asked him what he needed that her Zonta Club could help with. She thought he'd say a new chair or piece of equipment - "something I could buy from a shop".

"He said, I want a film and I know the person who can help you do it."

Enter former photojournalist Mandy Lake, who runs documentary

film company Flickchicks with Margie Brown. Lake went to Pine Rivers State High School with Chern and accompanies her mum, Meg, 77, to all her appointments with him.

Coe and Lake met, hit it off, raised \$22,000 and after 18 months of intense research, interviewing and editing, produced *Side by Side*.

Lake's mum Meg thought she'd dodged the family bullet. Her mum, Gladys O'Donnell, died of breast cancer in her 60s, her aunt in her 40s. Meg was 74 when she was diagnosed and started treatment.

Lake laughs. "My sister's had a few scares. We're like custard," she says, "we're all a bit lumpy."

Genetic testing after Meg's diagnosis showed Lake, 45, did not have the mutated BRCA genes associated with breast cancer and was, in fact, more likely to develop bowel cancer. Still, she has annual mammograms. A little over a month ago, Lake had a scare of her own. She was called back for a biopsy on a

suspect lump. In the 24 hours until she was given the all-clear, Lake was convinced her own breast cancer journey was about to begin.

"Making this film personally helped. I thought, right, I've learnt so much from these women in the film and - they hate this bit - their courage," Lake says.

She says that in eight years of documentary making, this is the film she's been most driven to make and most proud of. "I know it sounds corny, but I'm getting all teary," she pauses.

"When we launched it, I did just a little personal dedication to my mum and Jayne. I would have to say it's one of my greatest achievements. My mum's one of those people, she doesn't say a lot but you certainly know when she likes something and she has said that she's proud of me," she says. "And I don't know what Jayne's got because I wish we could bottle that. Just the way she can keep going. She's getting out there and squeezing every last drop out of life."

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Picture: Mandy Gannich