

# Local woman beats chronic fatigue syndrome

By Donna van Staden

WHEN Londoner Arzu Unel (36) had to quit her job after a seven-year battle with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), she gave up hope of ever living a normal life again.

However, a chance meeting in Australia would change her life and not only lead her to a complete recovery, but also to a husband, a child, a new country to call home and the chance to help others recover from this disease.

"It's hard to describe what it's like. Imagine having the flu and the worst hangover ever and then running a marathon. For me, it started with a virus. I had never missed a day of work in my life and suddenly I couldn't function properly. After seeing many doctors, I was eventually diagnosed as having chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). At first I felt vindicated, as I was so frustrated with health practitioners telling me my blood tests were normal, therefore I was fine," she explains.

But with the diagnosis came the news that there was no cure and that she must accept a slower pace of life. "I was Head of Marketing for England's largest charity, with a budget of \$16 million. I was devastated. It took over my body and I felt helpless," she says.

"I hadn't had a refreshing night's sleep

for years. I would sit in meetings and it was like they were speaking a different language. I called it 'brain fog'. I couldn't handle looking at bright lights or even computer screens. My whole body ached and my skin felt like it had ants crawling under the skin. Worst of all, people would tell me that I looked so well. Just talking on the phone was exhausting and would put me in bed for a day."

It was then Arzu decided to take a break, after seeing a picture of an Australian beach in a magazine in a doctor's waiting room in London.

"The sunshine and break from the stressful job helped a little and then I fell in love with Australia and a man - Ian Cleary! For a time I was doing well - part of the variable nature of the disease. Ian moved to England, but I crashed again and my symptoms returned with a vengeance. Ian became my carer. At my worst, I couldn't get out of bed or if I could, Ian would have to help me to shower or even brush my hair. It was horrible - I had always been so independent. But we got through the worst times and tried to enjoy life when things were okay. We dreamed of a normal life and doing normal things. We decided to move to Australia," she recalls.

Like the estimated 60,000 sufferers of the debilitating disease in Australia, Arzu

believed the medical professionals when they said there was no known cure. But in January 2007, a friend rang about a programme called the Lightning Process. She had made a complete recovery after 10 years of CFS.

"It was only available in London, so Arzu flew over. The results were dramatic and by the second day, she realised that she had finally found the answers she was looking for. Arzu returned to Australia a new woman," says Ian.

Ian was so impressed that he decided to train in London to become the southern hemisphere's only practitioner. "CFS is such a cruel physical disease. One day with CFS is too long when recovery is possible. The Lightning Process is not for everyone, but what I would say to those suffering is that recovery is possible, so don't settle for merely managing your symptoms," he says.

"Over 1,500 people a year now make a full recovery from CFS and related conditions using the Lightning Process in Europe. Its 85% success rate has come to the attention of health insurance companies overseas who are looking at paying for their members to attend. It is currently not covered by Medicare in Australia."

The Lightning Process programme will be available in Victoria in February 2009. Go to [www.lightningprocess.com](http://www.lightningprocess.com) or e-mail Ian at [info@inacleary.com](mailto:info@inacleary.com)



The new Arzu Unel trekking with her son