

# GC focus for VET

KATHLEEN SKENE

MEMBERS of the \$9 billion Vocational Educational and Training (VET) sector have gathered on the Gold Coast and online this week for the 14th annual VET conference.

The conference, the largest gathering of industry professionals in the country, is under way at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on Thursday and Friday.

Among the exhibitors is Coomera-based Cloud Assess, whose systems help businesses streamline the assessment and compliance requirements for apprentices and trainees.

Cloud Assess' software is already used by companies including McDonald's, Major Training Group and Queensland Rail.

Managing director Rob Bright said his company focused on a side of the education sector where many processes still relied on pen and paper.

"This process was convoluted and takes huge amounts of time printing, processing, scanning and storing, even losing important documents if using paper or multiple disconnected systems," he said

"We built a solution to transform this and yet ensure critical compliance requirements are embedded in the process."

# Mum's cough warning



Gold Coast mum Jane Ireland is warning about the deadly danger of a persistent cough. Picture: Glenn Hampson

MELANIE WHITING

A GOLD Coast single mum is warning others about the deadly danger of a persistent cough after she was misdiagnosed for almost a year.

Southport resident Jane Ireland was working seven days a week in Far North Queensland when she first had an inkling something wasn't right.

"I went to my GP because I felt like I had lung cancer and I had a persistent cough," Ms Ireland said.

"He sent me away to go get my liver looked at for some reason, because he was worried about my B vitamins and things like that. (My concerns) just got washed over."

Ms Ireland returned to her GP almost a year later after her cough showed no signs of letting up.

A locum GP sent her off to get an x-ray, which came back showing a large mass on her lung.

She was diagnosed with stage 3B lung cancer in 2017.

"I was devastated," Ms Ireland said.

"I'm a single parent, my son was 13. I had created a really successful business and that was all going to go away."

Ms Ireland is still living with terminal lung cancer despite being told in 2017 she would only have a year left.

Since then she has done chemotherapy, 60 rounds of radiation and remains hopeful of participating in a clinical trial to extend her life.

"This time last year I was 40kg, with no hair and skin falling off," Ms

### Symptoms of lung cancer or lung disease include:

- Persistent (more than three weeks), unexplained cough, or changes to an existing cough
- Breathlessness
- Coughing up blood
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Chest pain
- Voice hoarseness

Ireland said. "I'm grateful for feeling this healthy today."

She is now using her experience to warn others to never ignore a persistent cough.

"If you've been to your GP and you get misdiagnosed like I did, go back and pay the price of the x-ray," Ms Ireland said.

Lung Foundation Australia has launched a new campaign urging Gold Coasters take action if they notice a persistent cough.

The "what if your cough isn't just a cough?" campaign urges anyone to see a GP without delay if they are experiencing lung cancer symptoms.

Gold Coast residents are more likely to be diagnosed with, and to die from, lung cancer.

The Coast has 4 per cent more lung cancer deaths and 12 per cent more lung cancer diagnoses compared to the national average.

Lung Foundation Australia CEO Mark Brooke said that the early warning signs of lung cancer were easy to miss.

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