

– Lyme Senate Inquiry Submission

Age: 48

About my journey

- I acquired Lyme-like illness at: Frenchs Forest, Sydney, NSW June 2012
- I had not been out of Australia for 5 years at least prior to illness
- Type of Bite: Tick bite with tick embedded for 2 days in my chest
- I was sick for 6 months before I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease in December 2012
- I have negative blood tests for Lyme from Australian Biologics and negative WesternBlot. I am soon to get an iSpotLyme test
- I have seen 5-6 doctors and medical practitioners in my journey
- I have have been admitted to hospital 4 times for my illness.
- I have also been diagnosed with Crohn's disease after serious illness/close to death in hospital at Royal North Shore Hospital

My life

Prior to my illness, my life was great. I was very healthy at the gym every day and had a successful career as an emerging artist. I was in the Archibald Prize for 3 years in a row up to 2013.

The initial Crohn's diagnosis was dubious as my initial symptom was a granuloma lump 4cm x 3cm in my lung. I had none of the traditional Crohn's symptoms, no diarrhoea whatsoever or pain in my stomach. I also responded immediately and significantly to antibiotics within a few hours but this was not admitted as relevant by the medical team. None of the treatments for Crohn's have been successful at all and I have continued to be sick since 2013 and unable to work or study. I am on 25mg Prednosine steroids and Humira at the moment. The Humira is not working and my last colonoscopy in August 2015 showed moderate to severe ulceration. I attempted a BFA Honours twice at the National Art School and had to quit due to illness each year in 2013 and 2014. I have been unable to paint or continue my career as I hoped in anyway being sick most of the time. When I do have energy, I spend most of my time trying to work out how to treat my condition or researching overseas Dr's and Lyme experts hoping to find help withing my now very limited budget due to illness. All Dr's in Australia deny the existence or possibility of a Lyme like illness officially although I have heard many stories of people being treated for it unofficially. My gastro Dr often seemed at a loss at our sessions. I respect them hugely but it always seemed that my illness was a mystery to them. I have now had to travel to the USA to seek help. I have no funds for this and am hugely in debt. I cannot resume my art career properly until I have this illness under control.

Kind Regards,