



ROBYN RILEY

Stop this obscenity

Red tape hits cancer battle

IT IS obscene that at the same time the state and federal governments are bragging about a multi-million dollar budget surplus, a young mother is facing a death sentence because of budget restraints.

Leanne Bradshaw, 28, has aggressive breast cancer and would have a better fighting chance if allowed the drug Herceptin.

It is readily available and has been so successful in clinical studies that doctors call it a medical marvel.

So why can't she have the drug?

Bureaucracy — and that drives me nuts.

The rules limit Herceptin to women with a certain kind of genetic mutation who are in the last stages of their disease.

In plain language, that means the Government will only pay for the drug when it is, in all likelihood, too late.

As we are talking about a human life, it is time for compassion and commonsense.

Studies show Herceptin should be made available sooner to about 25 per cent of breast cancer patients.

The drug is designed to block the function of the HER2 protein — the type of aggressive tumour Mrs Bradshaw has.

On *A Current Affair* this week, the Brisbane mother of two told her story with courage and dignity.

There would have been few viewers not moved to tears as they listened and watched.

Leanne said she did not qualify to have the drug government-funded, but cannot afford the \$53,000 needed to buy it.

Her oncologist says Herceptin would help Leanne, but because she is not terminal, she can't have it unless she buys it.

It's a ludicrous situation that should not be tolerated.

Her husband, Scott, is



Determined: Scott and Leanne Bradshaw.

Picture: A CURRENT AFFAIR

a career army man who has dedicated 17 years to defending Australia.

He told *A Current Affair* the one thing he knows is how to walk.

So walk he will — from Brisbane to Sydney, to raise the money to save his wife.

His army captain, Terry Cook, said the three-week walk would come close to breaking him.

He predicted blood blisters, fallen arches, sunburn and dehydration, but Scott will not be put off the gruelling journey.

He said he found it hard asking people to reach into their pockets to help, so the walk was his way of earning it.

"I want a wife, I want a mother to my children," he said.

"I'll pay it back 10-fold if I can."

The family has enough to contend with without being forced into a 1000 km walk.

So, too, does Barbara Clark. She is a British nurse with the same type of breast cancer who has launched a landmark case against the British health service to have access to Herceptin.

Ms Clark, 49, will use the Human Rights Act in attempt to force her health authority to prescribe the drug.

For both women, the drug could give them an improved chance of survival — and perhaps their only chance at life.

Ms Clark said she hoped a win in court would help other women in similar positions.



Beyond Hollywood: Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes.

Tom's in the land of ga-ga

THERE is one thing I can say with absolute certainty about the Tom Cruise-Katie Holmes partnership — if it is ever made into a movie, it has Academy Award written all over it.

There's the boy, once so obsessively private, meeting the girl and going completely ga-ga.

The camera pans to Cruise, 43, bouncing up and down like a love-sick puppy on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Then he pops the question in Paris, and before she has had time to check out the big sparkler he has just slipped on her finger, the media are there to capture the moment. Smile for the cameras.

Enter actor Lauren Bacall for a cameo role — in that fabulous husky voice, she attacks Cruise.

"His whole behaviour is so shocking," she tells *Time* magazine. "It's inappropriate and vulgar and absolutely unacceptable to use your private life to sell anything commercially. I think it's kind of a sickness."

And then the necessary twist: Holmes, 27, once an outgoing Catholic girl, now needs a minder — not just to red-carpet openings and interviews, but even to the bathroom.

In a magazine interview with *W*, she is asked to describe her love.

Move in for the close-up. Shock, horror — she goes "blank".

A chaperone saves the day, reminding her that she adores him. And now we have the happy ending.

They are having a baby. Not even Hollywood could come up with a script like this.

She said she was determined to take her case to the highest court in the land if necessary.

"I am not going to stand back and let hundreds of women die," she said. "Under the Human Rights Act, everyone has a right to life."

Many people who have heard of Leanne Bradshaw's plight will be moved to help the family — that's the Australian way.

But it should never have come to that.

A TRUST has been set up for the family.

Cheques or money orders can be sent to: Leanne Bradshaw Trust at the Wesley Hospital Kim Walters Choices Program.

Mark the envelope to Leanne Bradshaw and send it to PO Box 499, Toowong, Qld 4066

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He didn't give up.

Instead, he took a swig of bacteria and proved it caused a peptic ulcer.

This week, Dr Marshall recounted how after about three days he started vomiting, couldn't eat and suffered night sweats.

He had made himself violently ill and his wife hysterical, but he was right.

Such dedication has paid off. This week, along with pathologist and co-researcher Robin Warren, Dr Marshall won the Nobel Prize for medicine.

That's the spirit.

AND ANOTHER THING ...



Winners: Robin Warren and Barry Marshall.

AUSTRALIAN scientists have long been leaders when it comes to courageous and innovative medical research.

Luck has played a part, but so has that larrikin spirit we love.

That sort of can-do attitude has helped our scientists come up with some of the most remarkable medical advances of the past 50 years.

There is no better example than West Australian doctor Barry Marshall.

He suspected that bacteria, and not stress and diet, caused stomach ulcers, but couldn't convince others of his controversial theory.

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