18 December 2015: Championing the voice of people with hep C

December 18, 2015 By David Pieper

Now that my treatment is over I am considering the future of this blog. For the past 13 years treatment has been almost an obsession for me. It was what kept me awake at night and it was the reason I found my voice through this blog. Treatment has not only provided me with a subject matter, but it gave me the courage to be open and it has become the lens through which I expressed my hep C experience, and saw the hep C experience of others.

I guess there are thousands of people around the world that also have, or are just about to, finish treatment, and hopefully hundreds of Australians will soon join their ranks. Like me, many of them may be thinking, what next?

Collectively our battle with hep C has put us all in a unique position to comment on all aspects of hepatitis C, from the impact of stigma and discrimination on our lives to the need for education, prevention and access to treatment. We must not miss opportunity to take the reins and be at the forefront of the discussion about issues such as: the expansion of access to treatment; better education for those at risk and those providing care; advocating for effective public health prevention measures; research into the psychological impacts of living with hepatitis C; and ending the failed war on drugs.

I refuse to be silent on these issues. I demand that the response to hepatitis C is directed by people living with hepatitis C and that policy decisions affecting us are made with our best interests at heart, not for political expediency. I will be part of the movement that says “Nothing about us without us”. I will help others find their voice. Who’s with me?