

Ava, 5, battling rare kidney disease

■ From: P1

A course of antibiotics and a week in Canberra Base Hospital and Ava appeared to be on the mend, but two days later the vomiting returned, far worse.

"She went straight into the ICU and obviously they were quite concerned. The pediatrician called the renal specialist at Westmead Children's and he said to get her to Sydney as soon as she was stable. Two days later the family was on a plane to Sydney as Ava battled unpredictable fevers, severe swelling and pain.

"Her kidneys continued to deteriorate, fluid was being held in her body. She went from 15kg to 21kg in one week," James said.

The concern for potential brain damage and heart failure grew and Ava was rushed to theatre where surgeons inserted a catheter for hemodialysis and performed a biopsy.

In the following weeks Ava would have two more operations – one for another biopsy and the other to insert an abdominal catheter for peritoneal dialysis.

James and Tegan have started a month-long course to learn how to perform the dialysis at home.

The Daily Examiner spoke to James on Monday but that night the family received the news that

AVA'S WEEKEND

Saturday, December 8

■ 12noon – Golf at Westlawn Golf Course (\$10 per person, can of drink and sausage sizzle included)

■ 7pm – Trivia and Auction Night at Grafton District Services Club (\$80, team of 8)

Sunday, December 9

■ 11am – Chillaxing Day at Clocktower Restaurant (\$20 entry, two beverages, finger food and entertainment)

Contacts: Brendan 0427 008 661, Katie 0407 464 727, Kasey 0410 589 894

the second kidney biopsy had come back showing that Ava had what James described as "one of the rarest diseases that exists" – dense deposit disease.

James used his Facebook page to express his dismay.

"The doctors in Australia don't even know how to treat her now; they have to consult with specialists overseas," he said.

"We're pretty much ruled out as donors now and she has to go through the long wait living on dialysis. Even if the transplant is successful, its likely that the same thing will occur in the future ... gutted doesn't even begin to cover how I feel ... why our girl?"



HEALTHIER TIMES: James Bancroft, his daughter Ava, 5, and wife Tegan in April this year before Ava developed a serious kidney disorder.

"What has she ever done except been the perfect, beautiful, amazing soul that she is?"

James' Facebook page was bombarded with messages of love and support.

Ava's grandfather Warren Bancroft, who still lives in the Clarence Valley, said Australian doctors were working with their US colleagues to try and come up with a solution for Ava's case.

He said dense deposit disease affected one in two million people, but Ava's case was progressing at a much faster rate than normal.

How can you help?

FRIENDS of the Bancrofts have organised Ava's Weekend on De-

cember 8-9 to raise money to relieve financial stresses the family is under. Tegan has had to quit her job, James is working remotely with his job and the cost of medications is growing.

See the fact box for details on Ava's Weekend.

➤ Dense deposit disease is a condition that primarily affects kidney (renal) function. The signs and symptoms usually appear between the ages of 5 and 15 and features a loss of protein in the urine, blood in the urine, swelling, low protein in the blood and reduced output of urine. It is often a life-threatening disease.

■ Information from the Genetics Home Reference website.

Injured boy, 6, 'improving'

THE SIX-year-old boy who was hit by a car on Lawrence Rd, near Butterfactory Lane about 4.30pm on Sunday is understood to be responding to treatment.

The boy was taken to Randwick Children's Hospital in Sydney and placed in an induced coma. His condition is now understood to have improved.

Reports suggest a group of children were playing near the road when the young boy wandered into the path of an oncoming car.

Police said the driver tried to avoid hitting the child but was unable to do so.

The driver was routinely tested for drugs and alcohol and police are awaiting the results. No charges have been laid.

It is understood the boy is a student at Westlawn Public School.

Firies busy as winds prevail

STRONG winds and dry conditions pushed a number of bushfires over their containment lines, resulting in spot-fires breaking out across the Valley on Monday night.

However throughout yesterday RFS crews were able to make some good progress during the milder weather.

Last night RFS spokesman Ron Collingwood said crews had made good progress on all major fires and were hoping the weather forecast of the Clarence Valley experiencing milder weather would prove true.

"The fire danger remains high at present but it is hoped it will drop significantly later in the week," said Mr Collingwood.

"The forecast should see cooler weather across the area as the week progresses."

The fires Mr Collingwood said were of concern were the Doboy fire in the Ramornie State Forest, the Ingalbar fire near Jackadgery Gap off the Gwydir Hwy and another blaze near Hernani which 10 crews fought to try and contain to protect nearby properties.

However by last night he was confident that most fires would soon be contained.

Spray-on crime stopper

Bowlo installs security device that releases a film of DNA

By JENNA CAIRNEY

jenna.cairney@dailyexaminer.com.au

CRIMINALS who target Maclean Bowling Club will cop a spray.

But this spray won't be of the verbal variety, it will be a thin layer of unique DNA that can later be used to link perpetrators to the crime scene.

Club secretary manager Ian Wills said he had the new equipment installed last week as there was concern over an increase in armed robberies at clubs on the North Coast.

"We've been fortunate not to have an armed hold-up, but we lost our ATM a few years ago," Mr Wills said.

"We had camera footage but it

We're trying to be proactive

Maclean Bowling Club's Ian Wills

was dark and wouldn't have been reasonable evidence.

"This DNA would have been able to link them to the crime scene."

Tania Jolley, managing director of DNA Security Solutions, an Australian company that supplies the equipment, said the idea was to create a proactive rather than reactive approach to crime.

"Previously alarm systems have been reactive where we take a

happy snap of someone pointing a gun at your staff," she said.

The system can be installed anywhere in the venue but is mainly put over doorways and around certain areas. If a panic button or alarm system is triggered the unit sprays the criminal with a 5-10ml fine mist of ultraviolet solution.

"They don't feel it," Ms Jolley said, adding each location has an individual DNA code.

"It marks everything they have on them – their clothes, skin, weapons, anything they've stolen or their shoes."

Ms Jolley said her research showed an average reduction in crime of over 95% at busi-

DNA SECURITY

- Costs an average of \$1 a day over five years
- DNA stays on skin for 6-8 weeks and washes into clothes

nesses that had installed the device.

Mr Wills, whose staff were in armed robbery training this week along with representatives from other pubs and clubs across the region, said ideally he hoped the equipment wouldn't be put to the test. "But we're trying to be proactive," he said.

"It's hard to put a glass screen between a bar and its patrons."



INVISIBLE SHIELD: Secretary manager of the Maclean Bowling Club Ian Wills. The club has installed a DNA spray security system as a preventative measure in the club.

PHOTO: JOJO NEWBY

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