



**BRA Day Australia supported by innovative BRA-va Art campaign via Instagram
@bravaartofficial**

Sydney. September 21, 2022: A first-of-its-kind Instagram campaign will be launched ahead of BRA Day 2022 (Breast Reconstruction Awareness Day) aimed to raise awareness of breast reconstruction options and promote BRA Day on October 19.

The aptly named **@bravaartofficial** Instagram page, created by patient advocate Luan Lawrenson-Woods, encourages Australians to use Strava (the free digital exercise app) to exercise along a route, making GPS 'art' - known as Strava Art - that visually represents BRA Day. Ideas and inspiration for *BRA-va Art* designs will be promoted via **@bravaartofficial** using graphics.

Luan Lawrenson-Woods, patient advocate and avid BRA Day supporter said her breast cancer diagnosis was devastating and in the mental shock that followed her diagnosis she was overwhelmed with information about different treatments and surgeries.

Luan said: "Reconstruction was a part of my treatment plan, but in the beginning, I was unaware of all the surgical options available to me, so initiatives like BRA Day are essential to help women make informed choices at such a difficult period of their lives.

"After surgery exercise became my lifeline," continued Luan. "I found peace walking around Sydney Harbour with friends, plus it was great for my physical and mental wellbeing. *BRA-va Art* is a fun way to put BRA Day on the map, bringing together my love of walking with my passion for raising awareness of breast reconstruction and letting women know there are reconstruction options they can talk to their team about.

"We want people to have some fun with *BRA-va Art* and use their imagination... 'draw' simple circles, love hearts or smiley faces or even some letters for BRA Day - anything really - and then share drawings to Instagram and tag **@bravaartofficial** and spread the message. I'd love it if we could get 1000 followers on Instagram this year to help us draw attention to BRA day.

Luan concluded: "This is the first time in Australia that Strava Art has been used in this way and we are so excited about the possibilities it presents to pave the way for growing the campaign in future years."

As well as shared *BRA-va Art* designs, the Instagram feed will regularly post content to engage the breast cancer community, including stories of women who have had breast reconstruction to further raise awareness of breast reconstruction options available to Australian women.

The reality is 1 in 7 Australian women are diagnosed with breast cancer. Approximately 40% will have a mastectomy. What many of these women are unaware of are the different reconstruction options available after mastectomy that you can talk to your medical team about so they decide what's right for them.

Associate Professor Nicola Dean, President, Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) said initiatives like BRA Day highlighted the importance of raising further awareness about breast reconstruction options, and she considered the *BRA-va Art* campaign a simple and effective way to stimulate discussion.

"Offering breast reconstruction is in principle promoted as the standard of care in Australia, although anecdotally not all women receive the information they need regarding breast reconstruction options available to them," said Dr Dean.



“We need to continue to raise awareness of reconstruction options and open up communication channels between the patient and their specialist plastic surgeon so they are offered the best care available for their situation,” she concluded.

In conjunction with BRA Day the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons has a free, downloadable booklet available on its website for women and their families wanting to know more about breast reconstruction. To download a free Guide to Breast Reconstruction, visit www.plasticsurgery.org.au.

Ends

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Note to editors

What is BRA Day?

BRA Day began in Canada to promote education, awareness and access for women who may want to consider a post-mastectomy breast reconstruction. Since then, other countries including the United States, New Zealand, and, since 2013 Australia have taken up the challenge, proudly supported by the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Why do we need a BRA Day in Australia?

Australia has very low rates of reconstruction compared with other first-world countries. Only an estimated 20% of Australian women who have a mastectomy go on to have a reconstruction. This compares with about 50% of American women. The Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons believes the low rates point to a lack of awareness of what is involved and the procedure itself, as well as lack of support services in regional, rural and remote populations. BRA Day aims to raise sufficient awareness to ensure all women, no matter where they live in Australia, have the same access to information and the same options to choose from post mastectomy.