

## ABSTRACT

### Medically abandoned in Australia

*An estimated half a million people are suffering from a Lyme-like illness in Australia. Many of them cannot obtain basic medical care. They are chastised, ridiculed and suffer intolerable discrimination. Many are told it's all in their heads.*

*This situation exists because of legacy thinking, dogmatic denial, ignorance in research and the extensive apathy of policy makers to properly investigate the phenomena. The impacts affect real people; these are the 'abandoned ones' and this is their story.*

*We are a small yet powerful registered charity and Australia's peak patient body. We are all volunteers who advocate on behalf of patients for accurate information about all aspects of the illness, well researched prevention programs, research and clinical studies, patient support and appropriate diagnostic and treatment guidelines.*

*In this session we'll set out the barriers that impede the science, cripple the policy makers and exasperate the lack of communication and collaboration in Australia. The issues that surround the Lyme disease debate in Australia are complex, but its crucial the medical and research communities recognise both the complexity of the issue and the illness and the burdens they impose upon individuals, their families and society.*

*By working together, we can acknowledge the warning signs, leapfrog old thinking, apply the best that modern medical technology has to offer and design solutions for what is lauded as the first epidemic of climate change before it reaches your backyard!*

*We bring you the voices of the 'abandoned ones'.*