Local family rewarded for supporting medical research

A Victoria Point family has been handsomely rewarded for their support of an important research project into child health.

Mother of five, Maritta Dawson, was last week presented with a voucher for $2000 of complementary travel by Escape Travel at Indooroopilly after being randomly selected from a group of participants in a study conducted by the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR).

Mrs Dawson was one of 290 Queenslanders who responded to a study into Childhood Inflammatory Bowel Disease an inflammatory condition of the digestive system. Her family formed part of what is known as the “control sample” for the study. A control sample is used to assess people who have no symptoms of an illness and provides a way to assess those who are affected against those who are not.

The study is being conducted by QIMR researcher Laurel Brett under the leadership of Associate Professors Graham Radford-Smith and Peter Lewindon. The researchers said that while people who are unwell are often very supportive of medical research which may help them manage their condition in the future, securing people to participate in control samples is often far more difficult.

“Everyone in the scientific community speaks about the low response rates we receive when trying to analyse control samples”, she said.

Ms Brett said however that in this case the ability to offer the travel prize incentive had made a difference.

“We needed to maximise participation rates and Escape Travel’s generosity allowed us to provide an encouragement for people to participate”

Mrs Dawson said that while the chance to win the prize had been an incentive to complete the survey she was also pleased that she had been able to do something to support people suffering from what can in some cases be a debilitating condition.

“We’ve been blessed with good health, if we’re able to help people who are not as blessed then we are happy to do it,” she said.

She said she and husband Bruce had already given some thought as to how to use the prize and were now planning a North Queensland adventure.

“I’ve always wanted to see the Great Barrier Reef and visit the Daintree and maybe even do a hot air balloon flight. This prize now makes this possible,” she said.