



Heidi and Ned Mules with Amelie, 3, as they prepare for the Gold Coast Marathon to raise funds for the Stillbirth Alliance.  
photo // Chris McCormack.

## RUNNING FOR

# Sophie

**F**OR Heidi and Ned Mules, this weekend's Gold Coast Airport Marathon is more than just a race.

It's a chance to honour the memory of their precious baby girl Sophie and to raise funds and awareness for the Australian and New Zealand Stillbirth Alliance (ANZSA).

Sophie, the couple's second daughter, was stillborn at 40 weeks and six days gestation on December 7, 2011 due to a rare complication called placenta abruption where the placenta comes away from the uterine wall prematurely, cutting off a baby's life supply.

At an appointment with an obstetrician the day before, Heidi says, "Everything was fine, I was already 1cm dilated and had an induction planned for two days later."

When Heidi woke up the next morning, she says she had vague labour symptoms so knew "it would be happening that day".

After labouring at home for most of the day, and making three phone calls to the hospital to check when they should go in, the couple arrived at the hospital where

it was soon discovered that, tragically, Sophie's heart was no longer beating. Sophie was stillborn about four hours later weighing 3.6kg and 53cm long.

Hoping to raise awareness for the sometimes-taboo topic, Heidi, 40, and Ned, 38, who also have a three-year-old daughter Amelie, recently told their story via blog Pearls of Willisdom.

"I wouldn't have necessarily just told my story just for people to hear it, but this fundraising opportunity is the main reason, and we've received great responses highlighting how much of a real issue it is, and how it's really not spoken about as it's a bit of a taboo subject," Heidi says.

"Also, in talking to my counsellor, it's also important that the general public are aware of comments they make to people when they don't know the full story.

"For example, we already have our daughter Amelie, 3, and as I'm now 40, people say 'oh when are you having number two'... on the assumption we want a second child and there have been no

fertility problems or that we haven't already had another. They may be well-meaning, but they don't know the background, and it can hurt."

Heidi, who works part-time as a physiotherapist and is now pregnant with a baby boy due in August, is still receiving counselling to deal with the stress and fear of pregnancy.

"Rather than just looking forward to the birth, we've learnt to break this pregnancy down into one step at a time.

"I also do pregnancy yoga to help with stress relaxation and focussing," she says.

Providing Heidi has been given the all-clear by her obstetrician, she and Ned will today participate in the Gold Coast Marathon Festival: Ned will run 10km, while Heidi (at almost eight months' pregnant) will walk the 5.7km event.

"I'll be 33.5 weeks pregnant, so if I'm physically able to do the 5km walk - guided by medical advice - I will."

The couple have received more than \$5300 in donations through their Sophie Mules Memorial Fundraising Page Everyday Hero account - which has been transferred to ANZSA.

Lauren Paris

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