

At first, Sandra tried to protect Jess from her illness, but now she's leaning on her for support.



Jess Mauboy & sister Sandra's battle

We'll fight this TOGETHER

Lupus sufferer Sandra is drawing strength from her famous sister

Sandra Mauboy will never forget when her superstar sister Jessica discovered the true nature of her autoimmune disease lupus. Jess was approached by a fan last year with the same condition, who explained how painful it is, adding that some cases can be fatal. Up until then, **Sandra had sheltered Jess, 25, from her suffering.** Lupus can cause skin rashes, joint and muscle pain, hair loss, fatigue, chest pain and poor kidney function. "Jess came to visit and there was a moment of utter devastation," recalls Sandra, 35. "Neither of us could say anything. After all, what is there to say?" Left raw from the uncertainty of Sandra's future, the sisters shared a hug that Sandra will never forget.

Now, both Jess and Sandra are ambassadors for Lupus Foundation and are speaking out in support of World Lupus Day on May 10. And no matter where singer Jess is in the world, she always makes time to check in on her big sister. **"Sometimes she calls at 3am to see how I am," says Sandra. "It's nice to know she supports me."**

Battling on
Sandra says her family and her partner Maya have helped her get through the toughest times since her diagnosis in 2004. "If I didn't have my sisters in

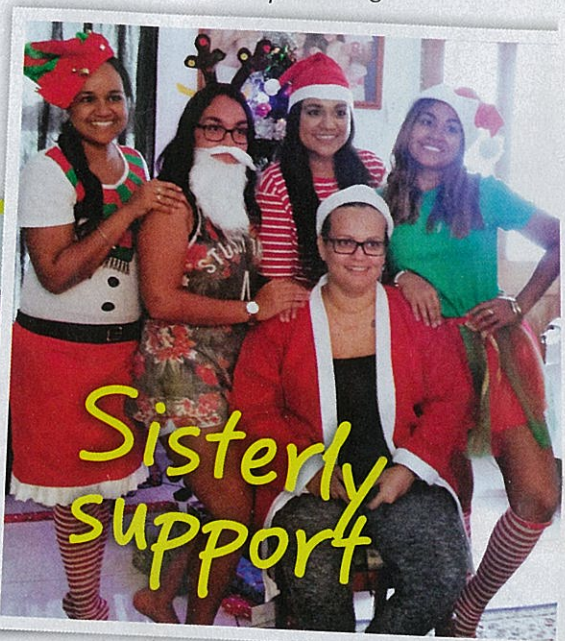
my life, I'd go downhill," she says. Sadly, doctors fear the lupus has spread to her kidneys. Once it attacks her organs, she could face dialysis or organ transplant. Eventually, it could prove fatal. In January, Sandra moved from Darwin to Melbourne for better treatment. She now takes eight tablets a day, spends most of her time in bed and is admitted to hospital at least twice a year. However, Sandra is still

determined to achieve her goals while she can. "I want to raise awareness so others help raise funds for the foundation," she says. **"If I go down, I'll go down fighting.** And I know I'll have my family around me for support."

To support World Lupus Day, visit lupus-sle.org



Sandra credits her family for getting her through the tough times.



Sisterly Support