



Image courtesy of Daily Telegraph

John 'Fitzy' Fitzgerald OAM is a former professional Australian tennis player who played right-handed, with a single-handed backhand.

During his career, he won 6 top-level singles titles and 30 tour doubles titles, including 7 Grand Slam doubles titles, and a career men's doubles Grand Slam (winning all four titles—the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open). He reached the World No. 1 doubles ranking in 1991. His career-high singles ranking was World No. 25 in 1988. He was a member of the Australian team which won the Davis Cup in 1986, and also captained the Australian Davis Cup Team from 2001 to 2010. He is currently the Head Tennis Ambassador for Tennis Australia.

Fitzy is also a long-time Ambassador for Let's Beat Bowel Cancer and is committed to promoting the message that screening for bowel cancer does save lives. Over a coffee recently, we asked Fitzy a few questions about why the *Let's Beat Bowel Cancer* message is even more important to him now...

Q. What made you decide to become a Let's Beat Bowel Cancer Ambassador? And do you have a personal connection to bowel cancer?

A. Previously, I just thought it was the right thing to do and it made sense. It took very little time and energy for me to support such a great cause. And now my friend Andrew Florent (former Australian tennis player) has very recently been diagnosed with bowel cancer at age 42, it's really hit home and is a cause even closer to my heart now.

Q. What have you learned about bowel cancer as a result of taking on this role?

A. I've learned that bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer-killer in Australia, yet is preventable if detected early enough. The best news for me is that if you can detect the bowel cancer or polyp early, with the help of a bowel screen test, it can be fixed before it's too late. Early detection is the key.

Q. Getting people to do a bowel screen test can take a bit of 'encouragement'. What are your words of encouragement?

A. A bowel screen test is not something to be afraid of. It's a simple and easy test, you can do at home. It's only a takes a few minutes, every 1 to 2 years. It's not embarrassing at all. Be smart. Be organised. I'm always talking to my son about time management and getting your life in order and this is no different. Just do it!

Q. What do you hope to achieve by being a Let's Beat Bowel Cancer Ambassador?

A. I just want to help raise some awareness and increase the number of people doing the bowel screen test, and help beat bowel cancer - in straight sets..!