

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**The beard must go: it’s time for the mo**

**28 October 2015:** When your beard is your trademark and a constant reminder of a pledge to one of the most important people in your life, there has to be a really good reason why you would decide to shave it off.

Jo Engelbrecht (33) has made the decision to be a Mo Bro and help change the face of men’s health and there is no turning back, but “it hasn’t quite sunk in yet” so he hasn’t put any thought into the type of Movember moustache he will be growing in its place.

“Everyone knows that my beard is my trademark,” he says. “But there is a personal reason why this is a real sacrifice.”

Two years ago, Joseph Usher Bell was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

“He was my oupa, the man I was named after, the man who brought me up and who was a great influence on my life,” Engelbrecht said. “He took it very hard, and became very depressed.”

Engelbrecht, who had been growing his beard for a year, decided that he would issue his grandfather with a challenge.

“I made him a deal. I told him he could stop fighting cancer when his beard was longer than mine, and that was the beginning of a year-long competition.”

Engelbrecht posted the pictures on Facebook and Instagram, and his Oupa discovered that he had friends and supporters from all over the world. “It really helped him to be motivated,” Engelbrecht said.

Sadly Oupa Bell died two months ago. “He was 88, which many people would say is a good age. But I still feel like cancer robbed him. His father lived to 104, and my oupa always said he would make it to 105. He was fit and healthy, and if it wasn’t for the cancer, I am sure he would have.”

Engelbrecht had thought of shaving his beard after his oupa died, but Garron Gsell, CEO and founder of the Men’s Foundation, persuaded him to wait until November 1.

“Jo’s story fits perfectly into the theme for this year’s Movember campaign: *Shaped by Experience*,” Gsell says.“The message of the Movember campaign is that if you choose to live well and follow a healthy lifestyle, and pay attention to your health and the warning signs, you can help shape your future.”

Engelbrecht agrees that early diagnosis is vital. “It is difficult to speak about prostate or testicular problems,” he says, “but if my Oupa had spoken up earlier maybe he would still be here today.”

Movember encourages men to become Mo Bros by signing up on [www.movember.com](http://www.movember.com). The rules require each Mo Bro to start 1 Movember clean shaven and to grow and groom a moustache for the entire month, effectively becoming a walking, talking billboard for the 30 days of Movember.

With the support of the women in their lives or Mo Sistas, who are also asked to sign up, Movember is driving the message that early detection is key: annual health checks are vital, along with a monthly testicular self-examination which can help make you aware of your body and able to note any changes.

This year there is also an option to sign up to MOVE for the 30 days of Movember by incorporating more exercise into your daily routine.

Engelbrecht will be signing up to MOVE as well, although it is hard to imagine how he could be more active in his daily life. Besides spending time with his wife and two young daughters, he is working with a team laying fibre optic cables in Gauteng, and walks between 10 000 and 15 000 steps a day (over 10km). He makes biltong, which he sells under the brand name The Bearded Butcher. He also plays in two bands – What Ships Are For, which he says is his way to blow off steam, and the Found Generation which raises money for charity. He is also a worship leader for 11 churches in Gauteng.

Show your support for Engelbrecht and join the Beard Sacrifice team. Sign up on [www.movember.com](http://www.movember.com), join the team, create your own mo-space page and start clean shaven on 1 Movember to grow and groom a mo for Movember.

E-mail a pic of you sacrificing your beard, along with why you support men’s health, and you could win R5000 in cash, R5000 for your Mo Space (entering you into Movember Premium status) as well as an exclusive product hamper from The Captain’s Beard.  To qualify, simply join the Bearded team, upload a pic to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and tag Movember while using the hashtag #LivewithHeart. Entries close on November 30th 2015.

*For more information, visit* [*www.movember.com*](http://www.movember.com) *or download the Movember app on your mobile device. Follow Movember on social media: @MovemberRSA on Twitter or facebook/MovemberSouthAfrica.*

**ENDS**

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**Factsheet**

**Name:** Jo Engelbrecht

**Age:** 33

**Beard age:** 3

**Beard length:** Long enough for daughters to plait like Elsa in Frozen

**Profession:** musician/butcher/worship leader/construction worker

**Motivation:** Jo’s beard is his trademark, his defining feature and his link to his oupa who died of prostate cancer just two months ago. The beard was Jo’s challenge: The deal was that he could stop fighting cancer when his beard was longer than his grandson’s, and the old man’s mood changed from depression to determination as the pictures were posted on Instagram and he found support and encouragement from all over the world. Jo is passionate about the importance of early detection and a healthy lifestyle. He is a little apprehensive about the big shave – his younger daughter has never seen him without a beard, and his wife is reluctant to see it go – but he is determined that the experience of prostate cancer in his family should be shared in the hopes that it will encourage other men to seek medical advice about prostate or testicular problems as early as possible.

**About the Captain’s Beard Sacrifice:**

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**Social media channels:**

#tag: #MovemberRSA

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