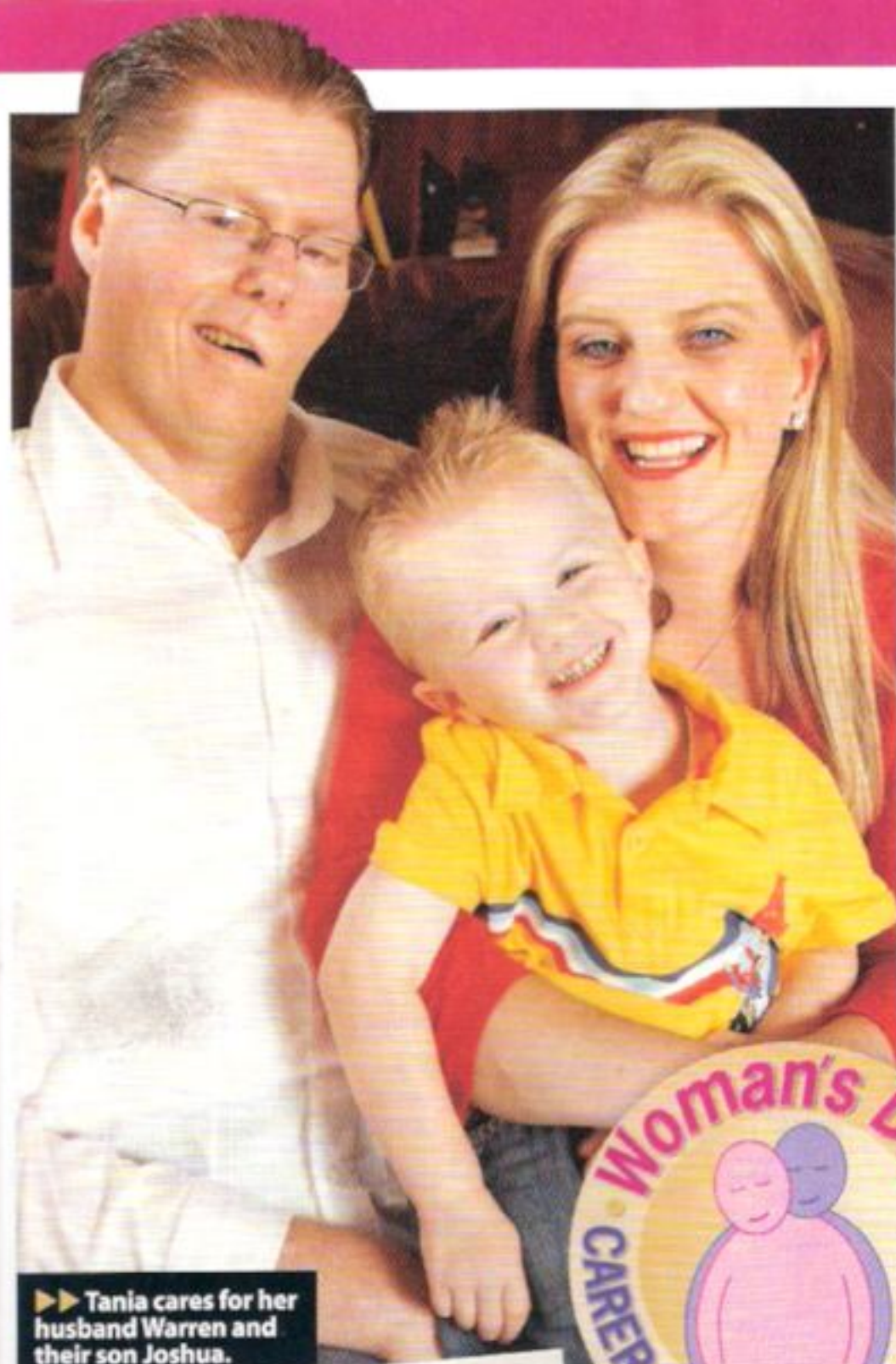


# The Woman's Day

# CARER OF THE YEAR AWARD



▶▶ Tania cares for her husband Warren and their son Joshua.



**WHEN HER FIANCÉ SUFFERED A DEBILITATING BRAIN TUMOUR, TANIA HAYES BECAME HIS FULL-TIME CARER. HERE SHE SHARES HER STORY AND EXPLAINS WHY SHE'S GETTING BEHIND OUR CARER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION**

**T**ania Hayes' life as a carer began when her fiancé Warren suffered a brain tumour in 1997 at the age of 29. The size of a tennis ball, it was tangled around Warren's brain stem and the operation to remove it left him with severe disabilities, including paralysis of his right side, loss of hearing in his left ear and loss of swallowing reflexes and facial and eye functions.

But the easy option – to walk away – never occurred to Tania, who married Warren and became his full-time carer.

Since meeting her last year in our Make My Day pages, when we treated her to a makeover, Tania has won a prestigious prize for being a carer, and published her experiences in a book. She is now lending her support to the first *Woman's Day* Carer of the Year Award.

"I am excited and proud to be supporting the awards," says Tania, author of *Love Has No Limits*. "It's a great way to acknowledge the unsung heroes in our society."

"Carers in Australia rarely receive the recognition they deserve for the important role they play, silently sacrificing their lives to give their loved ones a life worth living. That's why it's great to see *Woman's Day*

being proud to get behind carers and acknowledge the important role they play."

Today the happy couple have a two-year-old son Joshua. But with a combined income of Warren's disability pension and Tania's carer allowance of just \$23,000 a year, Tania knows how important it is to acknowledge the work that she and her fellow 2.6 million carers in Australia do every day.

Tania met Warren when she was just 19 and he proposed on Valentine's Day three years later. "All we could talk about was our beautiful future," Tania says. "Warren said he wanted to work seven days a week so he could set us up."

But after his operation, it was Tania who needed to be there for Warren. Now, each day, Tania, 33, lifts his 100kg frame out of bed and into his chair. Washing, feeding, toileting and dressing Warren, 40, all fall to Tania, plus helping him with his exercises.

Happily, Tania and Warren still make time for romance. "We go out for dinner often," she says. "We'll also do simple things like cuddling on the couch. Simple things mean the world to us."

BY GLEN WILLIAMS

▶▶ Tania's book *Love Has No Limits* available at book shops, rrp \$32.95.

**'SIMPLE THINGS MEAN THE WORLD TO US'**



▶▶ Every day Tania helps Warren to eat, get dressed and do his exercises.

