

# Inspiring family takes the top honours



SPRINGFIELD'S John, Leanne and Clayton Coutis have shared a prestigious state award for their inspirational courage.

The three share the Anglicare Family of the Year Award with Leanne's mother, Dorothy Saras.

John, 34, had both legs amputated just below the hip.

His mother-in-law Dorothy has fibromyalgia, a condition characterised by chronic fatigue and muscle pain.

Ten-year-old Clayton was born with hydrocephalus, or fluid in the brain.

Last year the family walked from Ipswich to the Gold Coast to raise money and awareness for hydrocephalus, amputees and fibromyalgia.

The 120km trip, completed in seven days, raised about \$40,000.

The walk took the family through their own suburb, where students at Woodcrest College gave them a rousing reception.

Leanne said the Family of the Year Award was an unexpected honour and showed the importance of a family sticking together.

"We have a lot of challenges to overcome," she said.

"It would have been easy to put up our hands and say it is too hard.

"We all help each other out. The challenges pull us together. We inspire other families."

Ipswich City Councillor David Morrison (Division 1) said he nominated the Coutis family because they were an inspiration.

"Despite the hardships they face themselves they are always willing to help others," Cr Morrison said.

John Coutis with wife Leanne and son Clayton at Springfield during last year's charity walk.

JCS/MS