

## Lalor couple's baby blooms



BORN far too early, Lalor toddler Billie Anne Palmer is proving that nothing can hold her back.

Billie Anne, who turned two on Saturday, weighed just 837g when she was born prematurely by emergency caesarean on September 25, 2008, at 24 weeks' gestation.

She spent 36 weeks fighting for her life, cared for in a humidicrib, breathing with the help of a ventilator and C-PAT machine, treated for respiratory problems, chronic lung disease, three infections and underwent several blood transfusions and laser eye treatment.

Her parents Kelly Smalley and Guy Palmer knew their baby was a "little fighter".

The couple spent 89 days by their daughter's bedside at Heidelberg's Mercy Hospital for Women's neo-natal ward, dreaming and hoping that she would beat the slim survival odds.

"It was touch and go from day one as we were told there was a 50 per cent survival rate and of disability," Ms Smalley said.

"When she was first born I didn't get to hold her for a good three weeks.

"I had hope, as I always knew she was going to be OK as she was always moving even before I had her. She's been a real little fighter."

Despite their ordeal, Ms Smalley says her daughter is a happy, active and normal two-year-old.

Treasurers Foundation will hold a Walk For Prems as part of National Premmie Week to raise awareness and \$50,000 for babies on November 14 at Albert Park.