

# Queensland's first evidence-based early intervention vocational rehabilitation model for people with spinal cord injury

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## Background

The Back2Work model is an innovative model of early intervention vocational rehabilitation (EIVR) for people with spinal cord injury (SCI).

It is informed by a comprehensive literature review which identified core elements of effective EIVR and endorsed by key stakeholders.

The Back2Work model includes a strong focus on maintaining and nurturing the pre-injury 'occupational bond' between injured workers and employers; identified as a key driver of improved outcomes and reduced length of time to return to work (RTW).

The Back2Work model is currently being trialled and evaluated in the Spinal Injuries Unit at the PA Hospital.

## Intended Impact

- ▶ Increased rate and timeliness of RTW outcomes for people with SCI
- ▶ Improved QOL and financial outcomes for people with SCI
- ▶ Reduced socio-economic burden of unemployment following SCI
- ▶ EIVR fully integrated in multi-disciplinary primary rehabilitation teams
- ▶ Positive culture and expectation for RTW within the client group, hospital and wider community
- ▶ Improved policies to support employment pathways for people with SCI

## For Whom

People with a newly acquired SCI undergoing rehabilitation in the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service

## Statement of Guiding Principles

- ▶ Person centred <sup>(1-6)</sup>
- ▶ Strengths based <sup>(7-10)</sup>
- ▶ Integrated and early vocational rehabilitation <sup>(7, 11-15)</sup>
- ▶ Focused on building positive expectancy to RTW <sup>(12, 16-18)</sup>
- ▶ Meaningful, sustainable vocational outcomes <sup>(13, 16, 19-21)</sup>

# Back2Work

## Aims

- ▶ SIU staff positively engage with the B2W program and actively refer clients to the program
- ▶ Increase in RTW rate compared to baseline data
- ▶ Earlier RTW, within 12 months of discharge
- ▶ Employers and community partners have increased confidence in supporting people with SCI returning to employment
  - ▶ Produce evidence to inform the development of B2W and other early intervention vocational programs

## Process

- ▶ Engage SIU staff and promote the benefits of RTW for patients <sup>(7-13)</sup>
- ▶ Engage participants with positive messages about RTW after SCI <sup>(3, 15)</sup>
  - ▶ Provide vocational assessment, counselling, job search & RTW skills <sup>(14)</sup>
- ▶ Support goal setting and development of RTW/ vocational plans <sup>(22)</sup>
  - ▶ Engage and support employers, to facilitate RTW <sup>(12, 23-24)</sup>
- ▶ Develop community partnerships for ongoing local support, post-discharge <sup>(20, 25)</sup>



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Back2Work is a three-year pilot project delivered by Spinal Life Australia, in conjunction with an active research program through Griffith University. Research participation is voluntary. The Back2Work project is proudly supported by the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, in partnership with Griffith University and Metro South Hospital and Health Services.

For full reference list go to: [spinal.com.au/back2work](http://spinal.com.au/back2work)