

the advocate

A voice for accessible, equitable and empowered lives Autumn 2020

Spinal Life
Healthy Living
Centre



IT'S OPEN!
INSIDE OUR NEW
HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE

Join our Inclusive
Communities campaign

HOW WE'RE IMPROVING
TOURISM AND HEALTH
SERVICES



Spinal Life
AUSTRALIA

SmartDrive with PushTracker E2

There were so many times I said no to something because I didn't feel like I could. With the SmartDrive I can go all around the farmers market, go shopping, meet a friend for coffee, walk the dog and still do a ton of other things when I get home.

— Julie M.
Permobil User



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CEO's message

Goals for the year ahead

Welcome to the first issue of The Advocate for 2020.

It's exciting to be able to provide a more in-depth look at our new Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre in Cairns.

From fully accessible accommodation to the gym and hydrotherapy pool, as well as allied health and therapy services, a community café and meeting spaces, we hope this becomes a vibrant hub to support and empower people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities for many years to come.

The Centre is a flagship project for Spinal Life and is something we are hoping to bring components of to other regions as a new model of service delivery.

If you don't live in Cairns, we would also love to welcome you to the Centre – you can contact our team to find out about available funding options for your stay.

Aside from this milestone, this copy of The Advocate provides us with the opportunity to share more about our latest advocacy campaigns and how you can become more involved in creating long-lasting change in your community.

From an advocacy perspective, we are continuing to focus on issues that matter most to you in 2020. Our advocacy agenda has been established after many conversations with members and clients and monitoring changes

and concerns in the sector.

With your support and involvement, we can continue to achieve positive outcomes, and look forward to reporting more on these over the coming months.

As we look to the year ahead, we will be continuing to connect and engage with community leaders, key government agencies, partner organisations and you, our valued members and clients.

My goal is to find out more on how we can best work together to continue to deliver high-quality programs and services and make improvements wherever possible.

It's also important that we continue to strive for innovation, which includes leading and supporting research projects that will improve the quality of life of people with spinal cord damage, as well as look to new models such as the Healthy Living Centre in Cairns.

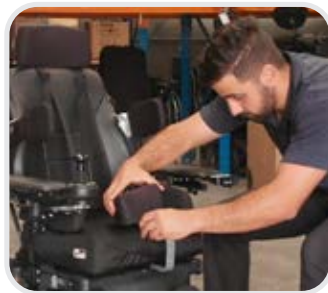
We also want to see Spinal Life become a national advocacy leader, as the collective voice of our members working to enable accessible, equitable and empowered lives.

I hope you find the magazine is a valuable resource, and as always please don't hesitate to share your feedback with us.

Mark Townend
Chief Executive Officer



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Robert finds his calling with the SEAT team

Robert Spencer is Spinal Life's longest running presenter for the Spinal Education Awareness Team (SEAT) and he's not planning on going anywhere anytime soon.

The Brisbane member said joining the SEAT team over 30 years ago was one of the best things he ever did, but it nearly never happened.

"I was asked by another presenter if I wanted to join but the amount of travelling involved put me off at first," he said.

"It actually wasn't until a break-up a few months later I found myself looking for a change and decided to sign up."

"It ended up being one of the best things I've ever done!"

As a presenter, Robert talks with Queensland students from Prep to Year 12

about his own personal experiences with spinal cord damage and the importance of students looking after their own safety.

"The kids are great – usually the younger the student, the better the questions," he said.

"There's nothing they're afraid to ask which is just how I like it."

"I try to use a lot of humour in my presentations and plenty of stories – most of which are true."

Robert says while he loves a laugh and a bit of banter in his presentations, he's not afraid to discuss more serious topics such as how his spinal cord injury impacted him and his family and the major causes of spinal cord injuries such as road accidents and falls.

Robert Spencer

- › Sustained his spinal cord injury during a football match
- › Is the SEAT program's longest running presenter
 - › Had never done public speaking before joining SEAT – since joining, he has hosted awards ceremonies, luncheons and balls
 - › Says most common questions received from younger students are about getting dressed and going to the bathroom
 - › Most common questions received from older students are about driving, playing sports and sex.

"I love what I do; I'm always going to new places and seeing new people or catching up with people I haven't seen for years," he said.

"I couldn't even tell you the exact year I joined the SEAT team, all I know is it's been over 30 years and I'm not going anywhere soon."

Visit spinal.com.au/seat for more information on the program.



Bryan hits the open road on the road to the Open

From grand slams to the grand prix, member Bryan Flemming started his year with the road trip he never thought was possible after sustaining C6 quadriplegia.

From their hometown of Toowoomba, Bryan and his wife Julie drove down to Melbourne for the Australian Open, before making their way south to the Phillip Island Grand Prix circuit.

As a former motocross champion, Bryan said attending the International Island Classic at the iconic circuit was a special opportunity.

"I've watched the road racing there on TV for years; this is the first time I've ever been to the course in person and met the stars for myself," he said.

"After racing on dirt, I've always thought that racing on the bitumen would be a great experience.

"The Australian Open was incredible too; the atmosphere was absolutely buzzing with excitement."

Bryan and Julie rounded up their three-

week road trip with a visit to Apollo Bay in southern Victoria, across the Great Ocean Road to Mt Gambier and then Adelaide.

From there, they went up to Mildura via the Murray River, travelled through dust storms to Broken Hill then to Bourke, St George and then back home to Toowoomba.

"It's the longest road trip I've done at more than 5,300km, but who doesn't like a challenge?" Bryan said.

"Since I was gone, Toowoomba went from drought to vibrant green in just three weeks.

"The tricky part was finding carers – Spinal Life set me up with carers before for smaller trips in Queensland, but this trip covered three other states.

"Thankfully it all worked seamlessly, and my Spinal Life Plan Manager Natalie Alison was able to work with other state providers to get support payments approved as part of my NDIS goal to see more of our beautiful country.

"Sometimes it can be tricky finding

Spinal Life set me up with carers during my last road trip up to Cairns

accessible accommodation that's also affordable – calling directly seems to be the best option although you'll occasionally run into those places that don't understand accessibility."

Bryan said he had a fantastic time exploring parts of Australia he had never been to before.

"I went through oceans, forests, beaches, deserts, mountains – all just within a few hours' drive," he said.

"Nothing beats living the dream you always wished for."

If you're planning a holiday and want to know more about funding support from the NDIS and other schemes, contact us on enquiries@spinal.com.au or 1300 774 625.



Assistive technology

From October 2019, the NDIS introduced a new option for the funding and supply of assistive technology supports between \$1,500 to \$5,000.

The funding option is only related to nine new general assistive technology items and needs to be included as a reasonable and necessary item within a participant's NDIS plan and budget.

This means that participants can purchase some standard items with appropriate advice from an assistive technology assessor, such as one of Spinal Life's Occupational Therapists, without the need to gather quotes and have the agency review and approve the application.

The nine categories listed are:

1. Assistive Products And Accessories Relating To Prosthetics And Orthotics
2. Assistive Products And Accessories For Personal Care, Hygiene, Beds

3. Assistive Products Relating To Vehicles And Transport Safety
4. Assistive Products And Accessories Relating To Personal Mobility Or Transfer
5. Assistive Products And Accessories Relating To Participating In Household Tasks
6. Assistive Products And Accessories Relating To Home Modification And Access
7. Assistive Products And Accessories Supporting Comms And Information Needs
8. Assistive Products Relating To Vision
9. Assistive Products Relating To Recreation And Sport

If you have any questions and need further support, contact our team at enquiries@spinal.com.au or 1300 774 625.

Transport funding changes announced for NDIS participants

An updated NDIS Price Guide and Support Catalogue has now been released, which includes changes to transport funding for participants.

From 1 March 2020, NDIS participants can use core support funding in their plans to claim costs from service providers who transport them to and from community-based activities.

At the time of publication, it appeared that these transport costs could only be claimed if the participant was going somewhere where they would also be supported by the transport provider.

This includes having a support worker transport a participant to a community-based activity, where they will also provide assistance.

Spinal Life's Executive Manager - Member Services, Ross Duncan, said the organisation was continuing to seek clarity on the new changes to best support NDIS participants.

"Travel costs can be a huge barrier for people wishing to access the community, so we hope this will be a positive change for participants," he said.

The new NDIS Price Guide and Support Catalogue is available online at ndis.gov.au/providers/price-guides-and-pricing.

Our NDIS Supports Coordinators can assist you to navigate your plan. If you have funding for this service, or would like to know how it can be included in your plan, contact us on enquiries@spinal.com.au or call 1300 774 625.



Wellbeing Series returns for 2020

Our Wellbeing Series events has returned for 2020 as we host another round of discussions on health, recreation and lifestyle topics relevant for people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities.

Our first event for the year took place on Saturday 29 February, which focused on Recreation and Community Participation.

Held at our Woolloongabba office, the sold-out event aimed to help people get more out of their spare time, with discussions on recreation equipment and assessments and NDIS advice, accessible tourism and activities and how to make the most of volunteering opportunities.

Guest speakers included Occupational Therapists Kasey Morel and Emily Nielsen, Advocacy Officer – Inclusive Tourism Dane Cross and Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor Tania Goossen.

Occupational Therapist Kasey Morel said the event provided more information on the assessment process for assistive technology to support someone's community participation and recreation.

"There are all sorts of assistive technology options that can help people get out in their community or enjoy some leisure time, including wheelchairs for sports or the beach, hand cycles, all-terrain wheelchairs and pool hoists as well as accessible technology that can assist with computer or tablet access, smart watches and gaming equipment," she said.

"For NDIS participants we provided some tips and tricks for applying for funding for recreational equipment, but we also provided info for non-NDIS participants including availability and locations of beach wheelchairs and accessible community pools."

The Wellbeing Series is proudly supported by our partners at Coloplast,

who we are working with on a range of initiatives to promote effective continence care for health and wellbeing.

You can learn more about our upcoming events at spinal.com.au/events or call 1300 774 625.

For information on future events, keep an eye on future editions of The Advocate or follow our Facebook page at facebook.com/spinallifeaustralia.

We're looking forward to holding more Wellbeing Series events throughout 2020 to provide you with information on issues relevant to people with a physical disability. We're currently planning our next event on emergency response and evacuation plans for people with a physical disability – watch this space!



Feedback gathered for Royal Commission

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is continuing across Australia, to hear feedback on this important issue.

We recently surveyed members about general feedback on a range of key topics that are part of our Advocacy Charter, to inform our own submission as an

advocate for people with disabilities.

The survey covered access to housing and accommodation, local communities, employment, aids, funding or equipment, health, transport, as well as government, financial or retail services.

Submissions can also be made by visiting the Disability Royal

Commission's website to download a form, which can be posted or emailed, or completed over the phone.

Community forums are currently being held to gather information and hear directly from people with disability, along with public and private hearings on topics including health, education and justice.

Once recommendations are made to the Australian Government, we will be reviewing all our policies and procedures to ensure they continue to meet best practice, and fully support this process.

An interim report is expected to be released by 30 October 2020, and a final report by 29 April 2022.

If you or anyone you know needs help, you can call services such as Lifeline (13 11 14), 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) and the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1800 880 052).

You can also visit disability.royalcommission.gov.au to find out more.



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Message from the Chair

Leading the Board in 2020

It was a proud moment for me personally when I was re-elected at our 2019 Annual General Meeting in November, and I thank members for putting your trust in me to lead the Board.

Members also voted for Directors Michelle Wilson and Gerard O'Brien to continue in their positions, after they first joined the Board in May 2019 to fill vacancies and share their professional skills and experience.

We also welcomed a new Board Director, Bradley Kinsela, who has been

a member of Spinal Life for many years. Brad has spent the past 30 years working in a range of roles in the community and government sectors including disability advocacy and housing, and numerous public sector roles.

Brad brings an extensive background in corporate governance, risk management and strategic planning, not to mention his lived experience, and I am looking forward to working closely with him throughout 2020. You can read more about Brad on Page 29.



Welcoming your feedback

We're looking forward to an exciting year ahead as we continue to work with our members and clients to promote accessibility and inclusion in our communities throughout 2020.

One exciting project we're looking to take on this year is the development of an accessibility app for your smartphone which aims to provide accurate and up-to-date information on accessible accommodation, eating establishments, bathrooms, entertainment venues and more.

The app will also allow users to submit their own reviews and experiences. We will be holding a series of workshops for you to share your feedback on what information and features you would like to see to ensure the app is relevant, useful and user friendly for you. You can read more about this on Page 19.

The Board would like to receive your feedback and thoughts on this or any of our other activities for the year ahead – feel free to email me at chair@spinal.com.au if you'd like to have your say.

Gyl Stacey
Chair

NOW OPEN!



Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre

In our 60th year of supporting people with spinal cord damage, we've officially opened the doors at our biggest project to date – the Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre.

Just metres away from where the water laps against the shore on the beautiful Cairns Esplanade, the Centre is now open and ready to support residents and visitors to Far North Queensland with spinal cord damage or other physical disabilities.

The Healthy Living Centre provides fully accessible, self-contained accommodation for holiday stays as well as transitional accommodation for people returning home after injury, where guests can be assisted by a Personal Support Worker during their stay.

Guests can also access a suite of specialist therapies, including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Hydrotherapy and Exercise Physiology.

Spinal Life's Regional Manager – Queensland North, Margaret McDonald, said she was excited for the opportunities the Centre will provide for the Far North Queensland community and visitors to the region.

"Everything about the Centre has been specifically designed and constructed to meet the needs of people with a physical disability," Margaret said.

"It's the first of its kind in Queensland and it's right here in Cairns.

"It's an exciting step forward in our mission to enable solutions for people with spinal cord damage to live an accessible and empowered life."

Cairns member Andrew Jamieson had the chance to tour the Healthy Living Centre in the lead-up to its opening on 10 February and said he was impressed with what he saw.

"It's great to have a purpose-built facility right here in Far North Queensland," Andrew said.

"The facility is state-of-the-art and it was quite exciting to see it for myself."

As a keen athlete and Ironman competitor, Andrew was especially interested in the Active Gym and therapy spaces.

"I really liked seeing such a good mix of equipment and not just in terms of function – I can see how both people with very limited mobility and people with a higher level of mobility will find something in the gym that meets their needs," he said.

Andrew said he could see the Centre giving Far North Queensland a needed boost in accessible tourism.

"You can find some accessible accommodation or gym equipment around the region but there's nothing that has this level of speciality for people with physical disability," he said.

We're hosting a Community Open Day at the Centre on 19 March from 3pm – 6pm. Join us to celebrate with an afternoon of guided tours, refreshments, and more! You can also visit spinalhealthyliving.com.au to find out more.

The facility is state-of-the-art and it was quite exciting to see it for myself

THE CENTRE

Accommodation – seven self-contained, fully accessible units with one or two bedrooms and water or mountain views available. There are options for holiday or medium-term transitional stays as well as NDIS-funded packages with included access to Personal Support Workers and therapy services.

Active Gym – equipped with state-of-the-art accessible equipment that can be used with or without a wheelchair. Circuit and boxing classes are also available.

Active Hydro Pool – available for independent use, small group classes or one-on-one sessions with a qualified Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist by appointment. Turn to Page 16 for more on the benefits of hydrotherapy.

Skills Area – a mobility skills area for people with newly-acquired injury or mobility impairment to practice manoeuvring around various terrain, including ramps, curves, grass, and more.

Assistive Technology Room – innovative equipment available for people with limited mobility to trial, which can be used for navigating computer interfaces using head or eye movements and automating devices around the home.

Community Rooms – two accessible community rooms available for hire, including projector, screen and kitchenette.

Guyala Café – Spinal Life member Ian Chill and Oliver James from the Tattooed Sailor Coffee Roasters are serving up delicious food and drinks at the Guyala Café, with views over the Esplanade.



SERVICES

Physiotherapy – Specialist physiotherapy services tailored for people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities.

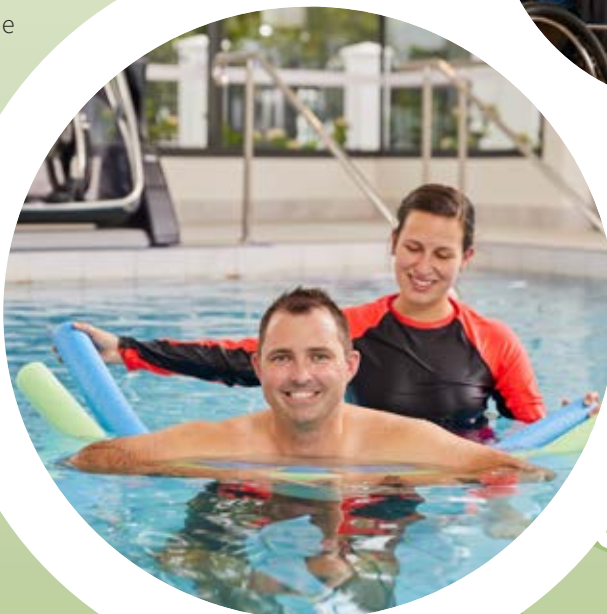
Hydrotherapy – Make the most of the Active Hydro Pool with a one-on-one consultation with an Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist.

Exercise Physiology – A new service exclusive to the Centre, this service will assist you by designing, delivering and evaluating safe and effective home, gym or hydrotherapy programs.

Occupational Therapy – Our Allied Health professionals can support you to find and apply for assistive equipment and modifications as well as helping with NDIS applications, funding assessments and more.

Personal Support Services – In addition to providing personal support to our clients in the Cairns community, we can also provide Personal Support Workers for guests to the Centre.

Supports Coordination – Our Supports Coordination service can help you navigate your NDIS plan, along with improvements for plan reviews, to suit your needs and your lifestyle.





Meet the newest members of the Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre team

We've recently welcomed some new team members to support our Healthy Living Centre guests look after their health and rehabilitation, receive specialist occupational therapy or enjoy the accessible accommodation on offer at the Centre.

Exercise Physiologist Elise Reddicliffe, Physiotherapist Julie Ince, Occupational Therapists Georgia Fowler and Lucy Burke and Guest and Services Manager Ben Griggs have joined the existing Cairns Spinal Life team to provide additional services.



BEN GRIGGS
Guest and Services Manager

My role is introducing guests into the Healthy Living Centre, including checking guests into accommodation, organising Active Gym memberships and Active Hydro Pool sessions, managing appointments with our resident therapists and more.

I have extensive experience in the Hospitality and Tourism industry as well as 13 years working with the Department of Child Safety, Communities and Disability Services.

I love working at the Centre – it really is a world-class facility and our guests have commented on how excited they are to see a centre that is truly accessible for all wheelchair users.



LUCY BURKE
Occupational Therapist

I'm looking forward to working with the Far North Queensland community to provide comprehensive Occupational Therapy services that empower and facilitate people to achieve their personal goals.

I am particularly interested in how assistive technology can support people to improve their participation, mobility and independence.

I have a decade of experience working as an Occupational Therapist in Australia and overseas in paediatric care, Indigenous family health and disability services.

I'm thrilled to provide innovative community rehabilitation as part of the team at the Cairns Healthy Living Centre.



ELISE REDDICLIFFE
Exercise Physiologist

It's an amazing opportunity to work with a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals all under the one roof to provide a holistic rehabilitation experience.

I'm thrilled to be Spinal Life Australia's first ever Exercise Physiologist and I look forward to delivering safe and effective home, gym or hydrotherapy programs to assist people in meeting their goals and improving their quality of life.

Since graduating as an Accredited Exercise Physiologist in 2015, I've worked in gym, hydrotherapy pools and clinical environments and I'm very excited to be able to return to my hometown of Cairns to work at the Centre.



GEORGIA FOWLER
Occupational Therapist

I'm very excited to start work at the Healthy Living Centre and feel very lucky to be able to join a team of great people.

I believe the Centre will become a real focal point and meeting place with a strong sense of community.

I've held previous Occupational Therapy roles in Melbourne, Cairns and England and I'm looking forward to developing my skills and knowledge to best support people with physical disabilities.



JULIE INCE
Physiotherapist

I received my Physiotherapy degree in England in 2001 but after spending three years in Cairns and receiving the opportunity to work at the Healthy Living Centre, I believe Cairns will be my forever home.

I have extensive physiotherapy experience in neurological rehabilitation and am looking forward to assisting clients with pain management, strengthening movement, stretching, wheelchair skills training, neurological rehabilitation, hydrotherapy and gym programs.

I'm looking forward to being at the start of this amazing new service in Cairns, especially with access to a fully accessible gym and hydrotherapy pool.



There are four different properties of the water that are utilised for rehabilitation:

1. **Buoyancy:** Buoyancy provides opposition to gravity's downward pull. It can decrease joint stress and allow increased freedom of movement.
2. **Hydrostatic Pressure:** This pressure can assist in venous and lymphatic blood flow, oedema management, increased urine output and increased efficiency of cardiac and renal systems, as well as helping with pain management.
3. **Viscosity:** The resistance created by the water itself can stimulate the sensory system, provide a safe secure environment to slow down movements.
4. **Thermal Properties:** The hydrotherapy pool should be at 32-34°C. The warm water allows relaxation of the muscles which may cause a decrease in pain and spasticity. This relaxation also allows more range and comfort for stretching any tight muscles or joints.

Exploring the benefits of hydrotherapy

Research has found that hydrotherapy offers a range of benefits for people with spinal cord damage and other related physical disabilities.

Hydrotherapy involves undertaking specific exercises using water resistance and is ideal for people with restricted mobility as they have more freedom of movement in the buoyant environment.

In addition, the water is heated to a specific temperature which can help with reducing pain, promoting muscle relaxation and facilitating movement, as well as increasing comfort.

Spinal Life's Exercise Physiologist, Elise Reddicliffe, said the warm environment helps with spasticity, which is often experienced by people with neurological injuries.

"Hydrotherapy provides the opportunity to strengthen and work on neuromuscular re-education, which is an important part of rehabilitation," she said.

"Not only is it a great way to get some exercise and address areas of pain and weakness, there are unique benefits that can be gained."

Elise said these benefits included:

- › Relieving some of gravity's effects, which assists to decrease pain sensation
- › Stimulating the skin's touch receptors to increase blood circulation and assist with releasing tight muscles.
- › Assisting with decreasing anxiety levels.

Elise said people who would be appropriate for hydrotherapy include those experiencing:

- › Tone and spasticity
- › Pain
- › Weakness
- › Reduced range of movement
- › Fatigue
- › High falls risk

The new Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre offers the Active Hydro Pool with one-on-one sessions with an Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist depending on your individual needs, along with small group classes.

This can be accessed while staying in the accommodation, or by residents in the community who wish to take advantage of the facility.

We are also currently offering multi-visit passes for people wishing to independently access the pool, where you can purchase 10 visits and receive your 11th visit free. Note, this pass is not valid for classes or one-on-one therapy sessions and bookings are required.

To make a booking with Elise or our Physiotherapist Julie Ince at the Healthy Living Centre, visit spinalhealthyliving.com.au or call 1300 774 625.

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Continence Care

Advocacy Charter guides activities

Our Advocacy Charter was first developed in 2018 to guide our advocacy activities and address key issues that are impacting the lives of our members, clients and community each day.

These key areas include accessible accommodation and local communities, employment, access to aids, funding and equipment, research, transport and health.

In line with this, our current advocacy campaigns include the upcoming local government elections and promoting access and inclusion to candidates, as well as improving inclusive tourism

with assisting individual members with challenges they were facing in their daily lives.

"We encourage all members to become more involved in our campaigns, or attend one of our upcoming Self-Advocacy workshops to build their skills to advocate in their local communities," he said.

Ross said the Charter would be reviewed to ensure it continued to reflect current feedback and experiences.

"We will also be looking at what's happening in the disability space including further

Our key priorities

As an advocate for people with spinal cord damage, our aims include:

- › supporting our members to advocate on their own behalf when possible
- › working to identify and remove barriers to participation in mainstream services and the community.
- › advocating to all levels of government, providers of products and services, community organisations and more.
- › understanding your needs and priorities through regular engagement on issues of importance.
- › communicating our advocacy initiatives with our members and stakeholders, to provide an opportunity for you to become involved.
- › providing feedback to members on the outcome of initiatives.

opportunities and addressing barriers to accessing health services.

Spinal Life's Executive Manager – Member Services, Ross Duncan, said the advocacy team was focused on local, state and national issues, along

improvements to funding schemes such as the

NDIS and My Aged Care, to make sure we are targeting areas of concern that matter most to our members."

Visit spinal.com.au/advocacy to find out more.

Current projects



Accessibility: beaches and national parks

In December last year we held a workshop to discuss how to improve beach accessibility.

The workshop was attended by representatives from Surf Lifesaving Queensland, the Local Government Association of Queensland, Department of Housing and Public Works, Department of Communities, Volunteering Queensland and Moreton Bay Regional Council.

Another follow-up workshop is being planned to further discuss the issue. We are also working to advocate for greater accessibility in national parks, including the availability of accessible toilets.



Disability parking spaces

Our Advocacy team has written to all local governments across Queensland, along with the Department of Main Transport and Main Roads, asking for information relating to disability parking permits.

These results are being compiled and all local governments will be contacted again to ask them to increase the penalties for inappropriate use of disability parking spaces, increase their regulation efforts and to consider entering into agreements with owners of major shopping precincts to regulate parking, if they do not already have these arrangements in place.



New accessibility app to be launched in consultation with members

This year, we're looking to design, build and launch an accessibility app for your smartphone, dedicated to helping users to find accessible venues, facilities and services in the communities they visit.

The app will aim to provide accurate and up-to-date information for people with physical disability or mobility issues on accessible accommodation, restaurants, bathrooms and other venues and facilities throughout Australia.

Executive Manager – Member Services Ross Duncan said the app will be developed to assist users to quickly and easily identify accessible venues both in their own area and when travelling to new locations.

"Our Advocacy team is always investigating ways to reduce barriers to participation in the community for people with spinal cord damage and other physical disability," Ross said.

"We're hoping this app will help users to easily find accessible venues in their region while on the go."

Ross said feedback and input from Spinal Life members and clients would be integral to the development of the app.

"Over the next few months, we'll be offering numerous opportunities for members to provide input on the app, including face-to-face meetings in March," he said.

"We want to learn more about what

features people would like to see included and how it could potentially benefit them when they're out and about in their community."

Workshops on the accessibility app will be held throughout March in Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Cairns and Toowoomba, with additional workshops planned for Perth for WA members.

Members will receive an invite to their local workshop soon – if you would like to know more information, or would like to submit feedback about the app, contact members@spinal.com.au or call 1300 774 625.

Self-Advocacy workshops return in 2020

We're planning another round of Self-Advocacy workshops to empower our members to play an active role in their community.

The workshops were held throughout Queensland in 2019, with positive feedback received by attendees.

This year, our Advocacy team will visit the same regions, as well as WA, to share their tips and discuss local issues and how these could be resolved.

Topics covered at workshops last year included access to

health services, transport, local shops, toilets, venues and footpaths, as well as the misuse of disability parking spaces.

Attendees are also given a toolkit to take home to assist them in the future.

The workshops are planned for April in Queensland, with invitations to be sent closer to this time and updates on our website and Facebook. Watch this space!



Have your voice heard in election campaign

With local government elections planned in Queensland on Saturday 28 March, we've launched a campaign to raise awareness of key issues to be addressed at a community level.

As part of the campaign, we will be hosting workshops for our members and clients to share ideas and information and will invite other community organisations and local representatives to attend.

We have also provided resources such as a letter template and list of questions to ask in conversations with local candidates, encouraging them to consider how they can improve access and inclusion in future.

The key issues we are focusing on are:

1. **Access and inclusion plans** – reviewing and updating plans as needed in consultation with constituents who have a disability, or creating a plan if there is none
2. **Disability parking** – ensuring there are enough accessible spaces to meet demand, and increasing regulation when these parks are used by non-permit holders

How you can support the Inclusive Communities campaign

Join the campaign and have your voice heard:

- › Download our letter and send it to your local candidates
- › Print out a list of potential questions and ask them at community meetings and in conversations with local candidates
- › Attend a workshop to discuss local issues and how these can be addressed
- › Share our Facebook posts about the campaign to spread the word!

3. **Community connections** – exploring how residents and visitors travel from their homes or accommodation to services and venues, including footpaths, kerb ramps, crossovers and pedestrian crossings, as well as looking at potential infrastructure improvements
4. **Economic development** – promoting inclusive tourism opportunities and resources to improve the skills and knowledge of local businesses to better serve people with a disability
5. **Transport** – examining accessible transport options including buses and taxis, and the connections between these options, so that people with a disability can access vital services such as healthcare
6. **Housing** – actively encouraging developers to deliver accommodation that meets or exceeds the requirements of the silver level of liveable housing guidelines.

Spinal Life Peer Support Volunteer Deb Reaves (pictured), who lives in Mackay, said the workshop discussed issues including undercover disability car parks, access to businesses, clubs and sporting events, as well as an accessible toilet at Council events.

"The workshop was great and the timing couldn't be better with the upcoming Council elections," she said.

"We also spoke about having more interaction with Council when they are planning and approving new projects in the Mackay region, as well as tourism especially making buses accessible for people with disabilities.

"I think with the help of Spinal Life, we can work with councils and governments together to make Australia more inclusive and accessible to all."



Visit spinal.com.au/inclusivecommunities to find out more and download resources. If you have any questions, contact members@spinal.com.au or call 1300 774 625.



Raising awareness of the late effects of polio

One of our goals is to continue to raise awareness about the long-term impacts of polio on survivors, especially amongst medical professionals.

We are working in partnership with Polio Australia to bring a new conference to Brisbane in May, which will feature guest speakers and the latest information and updates for polio survivors, health professionals and others who are interested in the topic.

An information booklet we created last year, *The Late effects of polio: A guide to management for medical professionals*, has now been officially recognised as an Accepted Clinical Resource by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

This lends further weight to this publication among GPs, who can access it via the RACGP website. In addition, the booklet

has the support of Polio Australia as the leading national resource for GPs and other health professionals.

We are also planning to print additional copies and will share these with our Spinal Life Peer Support Volunteers and interested members, who can provide it to their local GP clinics.

We are also putting the finishing touches on an online education module for GPs about supporting patients with the late effects of polio. This online module will also be approved by the RACGP.

Our Medical Alert Card is also available for polio survivors to carry in case of emergency.

For a copy of any printed materials, or if you have any questions, contact members@spinal.com.au or call 1300 774 625.



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Inclusive tourism regional reviews begin with Cairns



As part of our Inclusive Tourism campaign, Advocacy Officer Dane Cross recently travelled to Cairns with expert Bill Forrester to conduct an extensive review of accessible activities in the Cairns region.

The project identified locations, activities and attractions that are most accessible, which can be shared with guests staying at the Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre as well as on our new app under development.

The project also examined areas that could be improved with continued advocacy and information.

Dane said there were seven recommendations that resulted from the review, which would be discussed at an upcoming workshop with Tourism Tropical North Queensland and tourism operators.

We are planning similar reviews in other regions, and will create state-wide recommendations to be presented to the Queensland Government along with exploring Western Australia offerings.

To read more about Dane's trip, turn to Page 34.

The Cairns review's key recommendations were:

1. Improve skills of existing tourism operators

Improve how tourism operators and their team members can better support travellers with disability, including providing training sessions to raise awareness.

2. Improve the availability and ease of location of information about accessible accommodation and experiences in the Cairns region

Ensure all current data is more readily available including across travel websites and in search engines.

3. Enhance marketing efforts for existing tourism activities, experiences and infrastructure that are already accessible

Raise awareness about accessible options, including accessible itineraries for both domestic and international tourists wishing to visit the Cairns and Far North Queensland region.

4. Consider pursuing an application to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's 'Accessible Tourism Destination' award

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation introduced a world-wide award for the best 'Accessible Tourism Destination'. Preparing to enter for this Award would be a great opportunity to address issues identified in our review, plus unite the local tourism industry and further promote accessible tourism.

5. Advocate to the Queensland Government and the Australian Government to create an "Excellence in Inclusive Tourism" category in the annual tourism awards

We have advocated for the introduction of a new category in the annual tourism awards programs in Queensland and Western Australia along with the national tourism awards program, to create further incentives and awareness among operators. See the next page for the outcome!

6. Increase the number and diversity of tourism opportunities that are accessible

Encourage hotel accommodation providers to increase the number of accessible rooms they have available whenever rooms are refurbished, renovated or built. More information should also be provided to tourism operators about how they can improve accessibility, including local connections such as transport to and from their activity.

7. Seek commitments from transport operators, from airlines to cruise-liners and ground transport providers to retain and improve existing capacity

Increase accessible air transport between Cairns and other airports, with appropriate equipment for transfers, as well as space for wheelchairs in the baggage hold. This would be accompanied by training for airline staff to improve customer service and minimise equipment damage. Accessible transport options also need to be addressed, including rental vehicles with hand controls, and existing bus and trains servicing the Cairns region.



Inclusive Tourism to be recognised in national awards

We've recently welcomed a response from the Minister of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development advising the introduction of an inclusive tourism recognition program from 2021.

The response came as part of our campaign to introduce an Excellence in Inclusive Tourism award category in the Queensland and Western Australia Tourism Awards, a major part of our Advocacy team's Inclusive Tourism campaign.

In a written response from the office of The Hon Kate Jones MP, it was advised the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) recently proposed an inclusive tourism recognition program on a state and national level from 2021.

The letter advised the new program will allow all general award entrants across Australia to nominate for the inclusive tourism category as part of the regular state Tourism Awards.

Executive Manager – Member Services Ross Duncan said Spinal Life had written to state Tourism Ministers and Councils to push for an Inclusive Tourism category in the Queensland and Western Australian Tourism Awards, as well as Tourism Australia to promote national recognition.

"We've welcomed the proposal of the introduction of a recognition program for Inclusive Tourism in the response we've received," Ross said.

"We will be in further discussions with the Queensland Government and the Australian Tourism Industry Council on how the awards program can effectively recognise inclusive tourism operators and raise awareness of the benefits of inclusive tourism."

Visit spinal.com.au/advocacy to find out more about our advocacy activities.

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Spinal Life calls for radiology clinics to address disability access issues

We're pushing for greater accessibility in Queensland's radiology clinics and X-ray facilities, as part of an ongoing campaign calling for better access to health services for people with a disability.

Spinal Life's Advocacy Officer – Inclusive Health, Lachy Chapman, said discussions with the organisation's members, most of whom have spinal cord damage, found that many radiology clinics across Queensland are inaccessible for wheelchair users, with hoist equipment rarely available.

"Sustaining spinal cord damage and other conditions that can lead to a physical disability often require extensive and ongoing medical attention," Lachy said.

"As part of our investigations into the accessibility of health services, we've found there are many accessibility issues and barriers to access, particularly in the area of radiology."

"Manoeuvring onto an x-ray table can be very difficult for people with limited mobility, especially when a hoist is not available on premises to assist people to transfer from their chair to the relevant equipment and back to their chair."

Lachy said early discussions with Queensland's leading radiology providers had seen mixed results.

"While some providers have been less responsive than others, radiology specialists Qscan have listened and are looking at providing more hoists at their Queensland clinics," he said.

"While this is a positive result, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to make radiology clinics and services accessible for people with a disability across the state as well the rest of Australia."

Lachy said he was aware of current complaints made to the Queensland Human Rights Commission over this issue.

We've found there are many accessibility issues and barriers to access, particularly in the area of radiology

"We'll continue to support our members to pursue improved accessibility in all forms of health settings," he said.

"In the short-term, we are hoping for greater consideration of people with disability in radiology clinics."

This push is part of our Inclusive Health campaign, which aims to remove barriers to accessing health services for people with a physical disability and educate health professionals about the needs of people with spinal cord damage.

Visit spinal.com.au/advocacy to find out more about our campaigns.

Health services encouraged to improve accessibility



Another element of our Inclusive Health campaign involves promoting accessibility to GP clinics, along with improving the information that is available.

To achieve this, we are planning to work with researchers from The Hopkins Centre as well as Health Direct, which has an online database of GPs that is regularly updated and includes filters related to accessibility.

As part of the project, Health Direct will share a survey to GPs about their accessibility, in order to improve the information that is available via its website.

We will be choosing a number of these respondents for members to conduct audits, to check whether the clinic's own self-assessment matches the expectations and needs of people with a physical disability.

In doing so, we can further tailor activities to raise awareness about accessibility and what is actually required to improve inclusion for people with a physical disability, along with other community members such as seniors and parents with prams.

We are also aiming to work with other agencies to create educational tools for GPs about spinal cord injury, to enable them to better support the health and wellbeing of their patients.

We have already developed an educational guide for GPs about the late effects of polio, with further planning for resources for anaesthetists in future.

Visit spinal.com.au/advocacy to find out more about our current campaigns, and how you can become more involved.

Catch up with members in your community

Join us to hear from guest speakers, share your experiences and connect with others on the issues that matter to you. Come along to one of our Peer Support Catch-ups across Queensland and Western Australia.

Spinal Life Peer Support Groups

Bribie Island: Contact Bill Peacock on 0403 686 998.

Combined with Post Polio group.

Brisbane: 11am, first Wednesday of the month.

Contact Bill Simpson on 0412 729 843.

Bundaberg: 10.30am, third Tuesday of the month.

Contact Pat Allison on 4153 1005.

Cairns: Contact Jeanette Kretschmann on 1300 774 625.

Combined with Post Polio group.

Fraser Coast: 12pm, third Wednesday of the month.

Contact Jeanette Kretschmann on 1300 774 625.

Ipswich: Contact Eric Rushton on 0403 191 698

Mackay: 12pm, first Friday of the month.

Contact Debra Reaves on 0487 021 735.

Moreton Bay: 1pm, first Wednesday of the month.

Contact Tom Dutton on 0448 949 910.

Rockhampton: first Thursday of the month.

Contact Robynne Clifton on 0473 576 107

or Anne Guthrie on 0407 116 035.

Toowoomba: Contact Wendy Adams on 0422 799 580.

Combined with Post Polio group.

Western Australia: Contact Debbie Nobre on 0420 985 734.

Post Polio Groups

Cairns: Contact Joy Hay on 4055 5795.

Gold Coast: 10.30am, second Monday of the month.

Contact Lyn Glover on 0448 206 856

or Joan Radanovic on 0413 178 073.

Sunshine Coast: 10am, second Friday of the month.

Contact Cathy Newman on 5447 6608.

Townsville: Contact Eric Collins on 4729 0275.

Transverse Myelitis Group

Contact Louise Remilton on 0414 254 531.

Join our member community today at spinal.com.au/membership or call 1300 774 625 to find out more.

Tino returns to his desk with a little help along the way



At an age where many are counting down the years to retirement, Tino Domanti is keen to take on even more work.

After 20 years at Hatch, Tino sustained a spinal cord injury in 2018 which put a temporary pause on his role in the development, implementation and training of new technologies.

Keen to return, he met with Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor Lisa Moore from our Back2Work program who worked with both Tino and Hatch on getting Tino back to doing what he loves.

"Hatch's Brisbane team hadn't worked with an employee with a spinal cord injury before and I was one of Lisa's first Back2Work assignments, so it was a new experience for all of us," Tino said.

"Lisa worked with Sarah de Kousemaeker from Hatch's HR team to ensure that all the equipment I needed to get back in the office was organised and funded.

"Together, they made my return to work seem effortless."

Tino said while retirement was likely less than 10 years away, he was still hoping to increase his workload at the office.



"Due to health and rehabilitation issues, I've had to return to part-time hours but I'm hoping to move that up over time," he said.

"It's a challenging role but I really enjoy it and I love working with my team, so I don't mind seeing more of it before I'm finally ready to wind things down for retirement."

Tino said right before his accident he had organised to facilitate a training course in Croatia later that year and was keen to continue the course.

"Lisa assisted with providing travel and accommodation advice for my first international trip as a passenger with a spinal cord injury," he said.

"Thankfully, it all ran smoothly and the course was delivered successfully.

"I feel a lot more confident about my next overseas adventure and with this role, you never know where you might end up."

Back2Work is a specialist project that provides early intervention vocational rehabilitation to patients of the Spinal Injuries Unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Visit spinal.com.au/back2work for more information on the program.

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management including catheter changes, general health assessments and respiratory support.

Paula (pictured) can also assist with applying for funding to access health support and nursing services, such as through the NDIS, and shares her knowledge with Spinal Life's WA team of Personal Support Workers.

Our Personal Support Workers assist people at home, work and in the



It's a great move for us as we continue to grow our presence in Perth

New home for Western Australia team

Our Spinal Life team has now relocated to 12 Lindsay Street, Northbridge, within the offices of National Disability Services (NDS).

It's a great move for us as we continue to grow our presence in Perth – with the larger space, we can also use the venue for face-to-face meetings with members and clients in WA.

In addition to providing opportunities for members to catch up with our

team and connect with each other in the community, we also have services to support people with spinal cord damage throughout their daily lives.

This includes community nursing assistance, with Registered Nurse Paula Williams joining the Spinal Life team in late 2019 to provide support in Perth and surrounds.

These services include wound care management, bladder and bowel

community, with daily tasks as well as domestic assistance and lifestyle support to attend recreation, sport and other activities.

For more information on accessing specialist community nursing or home care and support, along with events and other activities in Western Australia, contact enquiries@spinal.com.au or 1300 774 625.



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Bradley Kinsela, Director



Bradley has been a Spinal Life Australia member since the early 90's and has previously held board positions on disability-related organisations such as the Queensland Disability Housing Coalition, Transport Lobby Group, Speaking Up For You and more.

He has held numerous senior and executive roles in community and government sectors for more than 30 years, with a special interest in disability advocacy and accessibility as a result of his lived experience with sustaining a spinal cord injury.

He became Spinal Life Australia's newest Board Director at the 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

What made you want to get involved with Spinal Life?

About 18 months ago I took an Australian Institute of Company Directors course to help me get more involved in boards. The disability sector has always been something that's been close to me and I was encouraged to put my hand up at the last Spinal Life AGM.

What do Spinal Life Australia's values mean to you?

The values of Spinal Life are embedded with who I am, as someone with spinal cord damage.

What personal or professional achievement are you most proud of?

Over the last year or two I've been using my knowledge of the NDIS to support people with disabilities and their families to navigate the scheme; it's been great to be able to help others. Another moment I was proud of was when my university graduation venue was not wheelchair accessible, and I successfully fought through the anti-discrimination process to make it accessible for future graduates with a disability.

How do you define effective advocacy?

Delivering desired outcomes through partnerships, awareness raising and having a solid set of principles.

What's the best piece of advice you've received?

Adapt, don't give up.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love cooking although I'm not one to follow recipe books to the word – I usually end up taking meals where I want to take them.

What would you like to see Spinal Life achieve in the future?

An ideal future is one where Spinal Life's advocacy is needed less and less as accessibility becomes a mandatory part of the development and planning of all new services, support and infrastructure across every aspect of society.

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Seated Wear



Easy On - Easy Off Shoes

EveryHuman launches adaptive and accessible fashion platform

Matthew Skerrit believes the future of fashion is accessible.

In December 2019, Matthew launched online platform EveryHuman, dedicated to adaptive clothing for people with disabilities seeking fashion options that are practical and easy-to-use, without sacrificing style.

"We're seeing a lot more brands consider inclusive fashions, even the big players like Nike and Tommy Hilfiger are now considering disability in their ranges," Matthew said.

"Self-expression and identity are important for everyone, including people with a disability, and that includes the clothes you decide to wear."

Matthew (pictured) said he had sourced clothing for EveryHuman from adaptive fashion brands from around the globe, including shirts with magnetic buttons,

shoes with easy access zippers and jeans designed specifically for people who spend a lot of time seated in a wheelchair.

"In the lead up to the launch of EveryHuman, I spent a lot of time talking with people with lived experience in disability about their thoughts on adaptive clothing and what items would best suit their lifestyle," he said.

"To my surprise, many people I talked to didn't even know adaptive clothing was available – many of the people who would benefit the most didn't even know it existed."

Matthew launched EveryHuman on 3 December 2019 in conjunction with the International Day of People with Disability.

"It's still early days but I'm already receiving feedback from people about what they'd like to see more of," he said.

"One common bit of feedback I've received is people saying they've been waiting for something like this to come to Australia – most adaptive clothing options available here tend to be more medical and not something you would feel confident wearing when out and about."

"We're already thinking about the future and looking at some big players we'd like to bring on board – watch this space!"

For more, visit everyhuman.com.au



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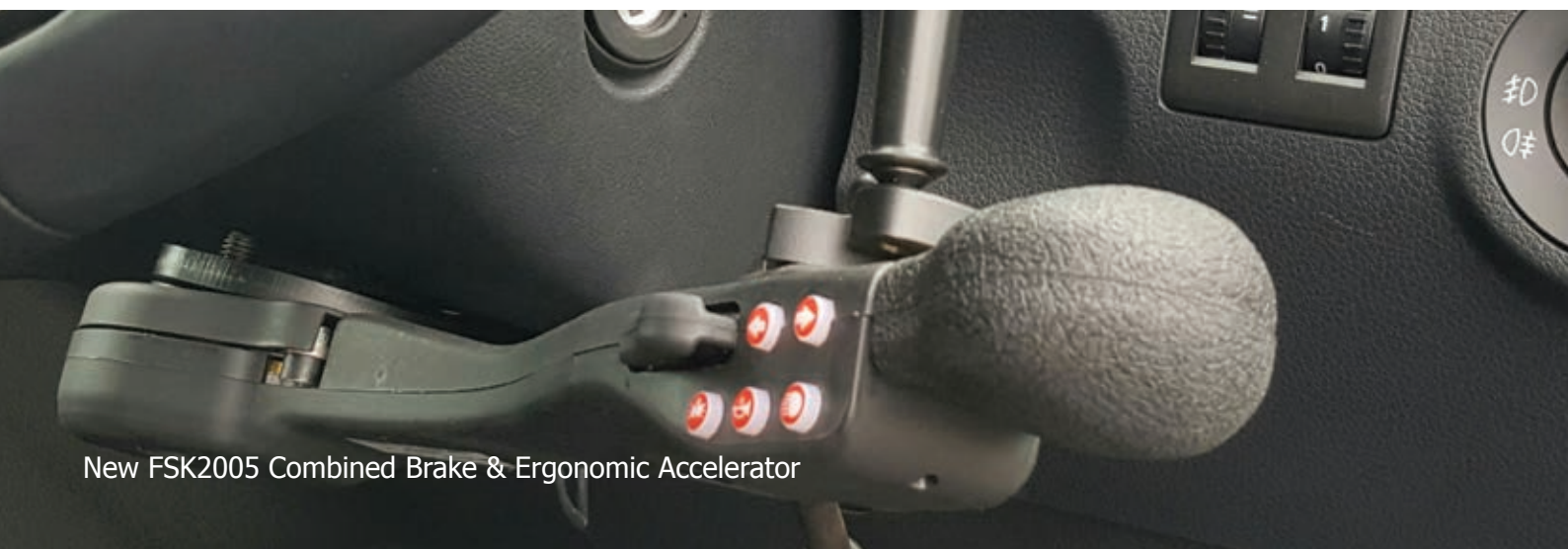


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Ame was born with no arms, one leg and three toes... Ame operates her wheelchair, phone and computer using her toes in the same way most of us use our fingers. She uses those toes for "absolutely everything". So far "everything" is a pretty impressive list that includes representing Australia in competitive sailing and playing the trumpet.

Since she was a teenager, Ame would tell anyone who asked that the "biggest dream in her life" was to learn to drive

a car. When Ame first looked at the possibility, assistive technology just hadn't developed far enough to help her realise that dream. Zoom forward to now and the story is very different.

Ame is now taking driving lessons with Total Ability's High-Level Assessment Van. It is equipped with some cutting-edge technology making the impossible dream a realisation.

A joystick for her toes serves Ame as an accelerator, brake, and steering wheel. Voice activated auxiliary controls allow Ame to command the blinkers, horn, windows, and wipers with specific words and phrases.

Ame's progress brings new perspective on how many more people with a wide range of disabilities can now achieve more independence by learning to drive. The possibilities and solutions are almost endless.



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A visit to Cairns and the Far North: Dane's suggested itinerary

Advocacy Officer Dane Cross recently visited Cairns to conduct an extensive review of inclusive tourism in the region (read more about his recommendations on Page 22). He has shared just a few of his highlights.

On top of the world with Skyrail

The Skyrail is a 7.5 km scenic cableway running above the Barron Gorge National Park, travelling up to Kuranda where you can access shops, attractions and more.

To get on the Skyrail gondola, the lift system is stopped, and a ramp is placed across the carriage, and station staff know which ones are transporting people with a disability so they can assist as needed.

Along the way, you can stop off to view the Barron Falls from the wheelchair accessible boardwalk and visit the

information centre which is located at the interchange for the gondolas.

The gondolas were designed and built 20 years ago and have some limitations for wheelchair users, which must be less than 630mm wide and no longer than 950mm.

The weight must be "manageable" to allow for loading and for the tilting required to negotiate the ramp. For passengers with chairs exceeding those dimensions, loan chairs are available, which you can pre-arrange ahead of time.

You can choose to do a return trip on the Skyrail or travel one way with the Kuranda Scenic Railway, although you will require a short taxi trip between stations to collect your vehicle at the end.

Cairns tourism operator Tropic Wings also has wheelchair accessible coaches and offers tours that include transport

to and from the Skyrail.

Stepping back in time in Cape Tribulation

Cape Tribulation is renowned as the place where the world's most ancient rainforest meets the Great Barrier Reef.

It's a full day trip if you're heading there from Cairns, as it takes about one-and-a-half hours to reach the ferry that takes you over the river (tickets are \$30 return). An accessible toilet is also available on the Cape Tribulation side of the river.

There are three accessible boardwalks to experience the Daintree, with each made of a smooth recycled plastic material.

Marrdja is a stunning walk through the rainforest, with a 1.2 kilometre 45-minute circuit from the carpark.

Dubuji is the second boardwalk along the trip, which has an accessible toilet and a picnic area. The boardwalk is another 1.2 kilometre, 45-minute loop. The two ends of the trail are linked by the gravel Myall Beach access track, which is quite loose in places so would be difficult for wheelchair users with small front casters.

Kulki offers beach access and a 350m boardwalk to the lookout over Cape Tribulation. The beach access takes you through the trees and over a series of boards before meeting the soft sand, which is manageable with assistance or a beach wheelchair with large front casters.





Snorkelling the Great Barrier Reef

Accessible day trips to the Agincourt Reef operate out of Port Douglas with Quicksilver, with reef tours operating daily depending on the weather.

The vessel boards at the Port Douglas Marina (Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina) which has accessible parking and toilets. There is a wharf with a ramp to get onto the vessel, with the gradient depending on the tide.

There are no designated accessible toilets on board the vessel, and the ones available are very narrow (around 650mm), with a step leading into them.

The vessel docks to the Agincourt Reef Platform, which is a stable two-storey structure, with a lunch buffet, bar and water activities on the lower level.

The ramp which provides access to the lower level is steeper than what would be recommended by Australian Standards however assistance can be provided by staff, if required.

Unfortunately, access to the underwater

observatory, swim platforms and Quicksilver's semi-submersible coral viewing vessels are by stairs only.

Access to the water for those with limited mobility is achieved via a water powered lift (hoist), which has a chair that you transfer to and from.

To enter the water you will need to wear a lycra swimming suit, which are available in all sizes (up to XXL) from the Activities counter on the lower floor.

There are also no designated accessible amenities or change facilities onboard. However you can access the toilets marked 'Staff Only' which has a wider, level doorway opening of around 780mm.

Passengers can swim directly off the lift's chair into the weightless environment of the reef where they can snorkel and explore at their own pace. While staff (lifeguards) will assist with using the lift, including transferring on/off the chair, they are not able to assist you to snorkel around the reef.

Other things to do in Cairns:

- › **Sailing** – with the Cairns Yacht Club's Sailability program, two afternoons a week
- › **Bungee Jumping** – at the AJ Hackett site just 20 minutes north of Cairns, which allows people to jump in their wheelchair.
- › **Kuranda Scenic Railway** – to travel up to Kuranda, if you don't wish to take the Skyrail (or why not try one each way).
- › **Hartleys Crocodile Adventures** – to take an accessible boat tour and watch crocodile feeding.
- › **Tjapukai Cultural Park** – to explore Aboriginal culture and history
- › **Diving** – at the Career Dive Centre, who are Cairns' only certified diving instructors for people with disability.
- › **Atherton Tablelands** – to view waterfalls, the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway, and more.
- › **Fishing** – from the jetty or land at Palm Cove



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Top left: the Spinal Life team recently had the opportunity to meet with Metro South Hospital and Health Service representatives.

Above: congratulations to long-time member and Allied Health client Alex Steele who recently married his partner Anne-Marie at the Wynnum Manly foreshore and wanted to share his big day with readers of The Advocate.

Left and below: Inclusive Communities workshops in Mackay (left), Gold Coast (bottom left) and Bribie Island (bottom right) brought together members to discuss key issues.



Learn more about NIISQ

We are providing more information on NIISQ after receiving questions about eligibility and what is involved to access this funding.

The National Injury Insurance Scheme, Queensland (NIISQ) is currently supporting 40 participants who are living with serious spinal cord injuries.

The NIISQ was established in July 2016 to provide treatment, care and support to people who have sustained eligible serious personal injuries after this date, including spinal cord injury, in Queensland road accidents. NIISQ is funded by a levy that is collected with CTP premium and vehicle registration in Queensland.

The NIISQ Agency administers the scheme, providing access to specialised equipment including wheelchairs, shower commodes, hoists, pressure relieving equipment, and environmental control units; continence aids; medical and allied health services; medications; home and vehicle modifications; and attendant care and support services.

NIISQ participants and their families work with the NIISQ Agency Support Planning team to plan and achieve participant goals.

The NIISQ Agency's Support Planners, who include qualified allied health professionals, are experts in supporting people with serious personal injuries recover from injury and return to life in their community.

Spinal Life member and NIISQ participant Ben Shortland said that NIISQ had given him someone to reach out to whenever problems arise, or if something needs to be re-assessed.

For further information about NIISQ, or to speak with a Support Planner about your individual circumstances, visit niis.qld.gov.au or call 1300 607 566.



Are you entering the NDIS or renewing your plan?

BrightSky Australia supports people with disability and their NDIS needs by providing healthcare products and claiming directly with the portal or working with plan managers so you are not out-of-pocket or over budget.

We offer a comprehensive range in:

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- Mobility Equipment
- Wound Care, Skin Care and other specialist healthcare products

All proceeds from BrightSky go towards helping people with physical disability and their support network

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CALENDAR of events

MARCH

8 March
International Women's Day
19 March
Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre Community Open Day
19 March
Coloplast information clinic, Townsville
*Workshops – Accessibility app development**
3 March – Moreton Bay
6 March – Mackay
10 March – Bundaberg
12 March – Rockhampton
24 March – Cairns
26 March – Toowoomba

APRIL

7 April
World Health Day
*Workshops – how to be a better self-advocate**
3 April – Mackay
7 April – Moreton Bay
9 April – Rockhampton
21 April – Bundaberg
23 April – Cairns
30 April – Toowoomba

MAY

9 May
WA Disability Support Awards 2020
11 May (TBC)
Polio Australia conference, Brisbane
18 – 24 May
National Volunteers Week

** Dates and times subject to change.
Visit our website for updates or follow us on Facebook!*

Don't miss out on the latest news and events!

 Follow us on Facebook
(facebook.com/spinallifeaustralia)
 or Twitter (twitter.com/spinallife)

Don't forget you can read *The Advocate* online at
spinal.com.au/resources/advocate-magazine/



About our services

We are here to support you to find 'your more,' as part of your trusted team for life.

NDIS Pre-planning and Supports Coordination

Our experienced team can help you navigate the NDIS and assist with pre-planning and coordinating your supports.

Member Services

Our members can access a range of services including peer support, individual advocacy assistance, events and activities, research and innovation projects, high-quality advice, volunteering opportunities and more. You can also help set our course and have an active voice in our organisation.

Allied Health Services

Our dedicated professionals include physiotherapists, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists and registered nurses, who can assist with:

- › Access to expertise and funding schemes
- › Mobility, seating and equipment solutions and prescriptions
- › Specialist personal advice and assessments, including driving assessments
- › Workplace assessments, home modifications and pressure mapping
- › Continence and wound assessment and management
- › General health assessments and respiratory support
- › Specialised physiotherapy.

Services available in some areas only. Contact us for more information.

Personal Support and Home Care Services

Our team provides reliable services seven days a week* including:

- › Personal care at home and work
- › Specialist complex personal care
- › Domestic assistance around the home
- › Lifestyle support to attend appointments, activities, holidays and events
- › Transition support from hospital to home.

** Seven-day service available in most locations. Contact us for more information.*

Employment, study and workplace assistance

The Spinal Life Australia Back2Work® program supports patients in the Princess Alexandra Hospital's Spinal Injuries Unit to return to work or study, while our Allied Health team also provides detailed workplace assessments and equipment solutions.

Plus, we deliver disability awareness workshops to educate staff on inclusiveness, conducted by our Training Solutions facilitators. **Contact us today on 1300 774 625 or enquiries@spinal.com.au to find out how we can support you.**

Win a trip to Cairns and a \$1,000 holiday voucher

And the Empowered Travel Prize

We are giving YOU the opportunity to win a **4-day vacation to the brand new Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre** and a **\$1,000 voucher** to go towards your flights or centre services such as gym or therapy.

Being away from home doesn't have to be an overwhelming challenge. Our Coloplast Care team is dedicated to empowering you to have a memorable trip away where urinary problems don't hold you back.

Coloplast is proud to partner with Spinal Life Australia to give YOU the opportunity to win the Empowered Travel Prize.

The Empowered Travel Prize includes

- 4-day stay in a 2-bedroom apartment at the Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre (\$795 value)
- \$1,000 pre-paid Visa Card
- Kindle (\$139 value)
- Set of hand sanitiser sprays and antibacterial wipes
- Foldable toiletry bag
- x2 Stay Hydrated water bottles
- An assortment of SpeediCath intermittent catheters for your trip away



To enter, visit our website <http://coloplast.to/AU-CC-MajorPrizeSLA> and complete the online form during the promotion period.

The brand new Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre in Cairns offers accessible accommodation and specialist services to support the health and wellbeing of people with spinal cord damage or other physical disabilities.

Located close to the iconic Esplanade, the Centre features seven fully-equipped accommodation units, Allied Health and therapy services, a rehabilitation gym and hydrotherapy pool, as well as a community café. Guests also have the option to access specialist personal support, where and when you need it, so you can make the most of your time exploring beautiful Far North Queensland.

Visit spinalhealthyliving.com.au to find out more.

Entries open 01/03/20 at 12:00am AEST and close 30/06/2020 at 11:59pm AEST. Open to all Australian residents aged 18+ only. Limit 1 entry per person. Drawn at Coloplast Ltd, ABN 57 054 949 692, Level 4, 1 Acacia Place, Notting Hill Victoria 3168 on 02/07/2020 at 12:00 noon AEST. The winners will have their details published in The Advocate, Summer Edition 16th Nov 2020 and on <https://www.coloplast.com.au/empoweredtravelprize> on 02/07/2020. Total prize pool valued at \$2,961.96 AUD. Full terms and conditions are available at https://www.coloplast.com.au/about-us/Landing-pages/terms_and_conditions_cc/. Promoter: Coloplast Ltd, ABN 57 054 949 692, Level 4, 1 Acacia Place, Notting Hill Victoria 3168 Ph:1800 653 317. NSW: LTPS/xx/xxxx, SA:



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