Pass the baton – SCHHS Transition Care Program has John Comm Games ready

The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s (SCHHS) Transition Care Program (TCP) team has assisted a patient to achieve his dream of taking part in the Commonwealth Games Queen’s Baton relay.

Gympie businessman Stephen ‘John’ Buckley was proud to have been chosen as a Queen’s Baton bearer for the 2018 Commonwealth Games earlier this year, but six weeks out from the big day, while recovering from major back surgery, he had a fall and fractured his spinal joint, received a deep wound to the left ankle and disturbed the metal rods and screws in his lower back. John was confined to bed and unable to walk.

John was treated at Gympie Hospital and referred on to the SCHHS’s Transition Care Program, which provides multi-discipline, goal oriented therapy to older people after a hospital stay.

“I wouldn’t have been able to get back to the point where I was strong and healthy again without the help of the Transition Care Program,” John said.

TCP Services provide case management, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, dietetics, psychology, nursing and social work. Other services which might be provided during the program are showering, cleaning, shopping and wound care.

John’s Case Manager Toni Ellis said the package of care John received from many health disciplines, as well as John’s dedication to rehabilitation, greatly assisted his recovery.

“John received weekly Physiotherapy sessions, was attended by an Allied Health Assistant twice a week, had weekly Occupational Therapy, was under the care of a Register Nurse for wound support twice a week, received domestic support once a week including a Dietician review.

“John was very compliant and motivated during the program, and as a result, he met all of his goals. Within several weeks, John had returned to exercising in the pool, he had returned to working in his home business and was able to drive short distances,” his Case Manager Toni Ellis said.

John biggest achievement was realising his dream of completing his 200 metre leg of the Commonwealth Games Queen’s Baton Relay in Gympie in March.

“I reckon they gave me the toughest section of the of the Gympie course, I had to go up a steep hill, then under a railway bridge, up an incline and take a sharp turn left. But with the
support of my family and friends cheering me on, and some adrenalin, I reached my goal,” John said.

“The therapy from the Transition Care Program all worked in together and really helped me to reach my goal. Each week I could see improvements in my legs and feel my body regaining strength and that gave me the momentum to keep going.”

John is now walking independently around his home and continues to undergo Physiotherapy sessions to improve his strength and endurance.