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**Stroke Care Champion leads life-saving team**

The world of engineering’s loss is most definitely the Sunshine Coast stroke patient’s gain!

Growing up, Rohan Grimley thought he would follow in his father’s footsteps and study engineering.

“I did work experience with my dad and I didn’t like it; I just wasn’t interested in anything mechanical,” he said.

Then when Rohan was in Year 12 at school, he watched his uncle, an ENT surgeon, in theatre performing a rhinoplasty. “I was hooked!” he said.

Now a doctor for more than 25 years, Dr Rohan Grimley is a Senior Medical Officer with the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, and a passionate stroke physician and geriatrician.

“I was an intern at Mackay for four years; I then rotated around Brisbane hospitals to do my specialist training and spent two years as a registrar at Nambour General Hospital,” Dr Grimley said.

“I started in geriatrics and acute medicine; I always liked the holistic and multi-disciplinary team environment of geriatrics and rehabilitation. I came to the Sunshine Coast to be a half-time geriatrician half-time general physician.”

“As time went on I could see the need for specialist stroke services and we didn’t have a stroke unit in the health service, so I gradually began to develop the stroke unit here.”

Dr Grimley helped set up the Queensland Stroke Clinical Practice Improvement Collaborative; was elected chair and has been chair of the group, now transformed into the Queensland Statewide Stroke Clinical Network, for 10 years.

He has been a part of amazing improvements in access to stroke unit care in Queensland, and was deservedly named the 2015 Stroke Care Champion by the National Stroke Foundation in partnership with the Stroke Society of Australasia.

“I get a kick out of developing services. I’m passionate about quality improvement. I love health care and I love people and patients. I love working in a team.”

**Raising the bar in stroke care at Sunshine Coast University Hospital**

Stroke is one of Australia’s biggest killers and a leading cause of disability.
Dr Grimley said it was shocking that one in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime. “That’s someone’s mother, father, partner, sibling, child, relative or friend,” he said.

“Throughout the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, we currently treat about 750 stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA) patients each year.

“The two biggest stroke units in Queensland are on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. “We’ve always developed our stroke services as a whole of Health Service approach; we’ve already integrated our processes in stroke services really well. Patients come into the central stroke unit at Nambour General Hospital; and we also have a satellite unit based in Gympie Hospital.

“The move to the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital in April 2017 offers the chance to further improve the care that we already provide. We will continue to provide the high quality multidisciplinary care within our stroke unit which is the foundation for everything we do; but we will also have access to improved facilities and equipment which will even further enhance the care that we provide to our patients.

“This includes better access to more advanced imaging to quickly identify the best treatment for individual strokes. We are already involved in large international clinical trials exploring new treatments, but this will increase substantially.

“The new ambulatory care centre will help us provide rapid access to the full assessments and treatments that are needed for patients with TIA without needing to be admitted to hospital overnight.

“In addition, we are currently planning a service to provide telehealth support to larger regional hospitals up the coast who do not have stroke specialists.

“The thing I love best about our stroke service is that we’re a team; a fantastic team of really good people working together really well.”

**How do you thank someone for saving your life?**

Just two days after celebrating his 70th birthday, Noosa local Ken Kipping’s whole world changed forever.

On 10 September 2015, Ken drove into Noosa Junction for dinner, parked his car, tried to get out of the car and couldn’t move. He was completely paralysed down one side of his body.

“There was no pain as such, I only felt a twinge in my upper leg, similar to a hamstring tear,” Mr Kipping said. “Otherwise there was absolutely no warning of what was about to happen.”

Mr Kipping was slumped over the steering wheel and fortunately he was noticed by a young man who was driving past and stopped to check on him.
"Little did he know, but in stopping to assist me, that good Samaritan began the chain of events that helped save my life," he said. "In all of this I believe was the hand of God, something special pulling this all together.

"When he stopped and saw the state I was in he contacted the Queensland Ambulance Service, who transferred me to Nambour General Hospital where there was a dedicated stroke team led by Dr Rohan Grimley."

Dr Grimley explained that once you have had a stroke, thrombolysis (clot busting treatment) is the only potential cure.

"If your stroke is due to a blood clot (like 85 per cent of strokes presenting to our service) and you fit the criteria for this treatment, then your chances of survival and managing without support at home are vastly improved. This treatment works best the earlier it is given and is only licensed for use within 4½ hours of the onset of symptoms. This is why it is so important to get to the hospital urgently," Dr Grimley said.

Mr Kipping praised the efforts of Dr Grimley and his team at the Nambour General Hospital Stroke Unit.

"Without the caring attention of strangers, the thorough care of the paramedics and the capable and caring stroke team at Nambour General Hospital, I might not be standing here today. To have a stroke unit based on the Sunshine Coast is an essential service and it certainly saved my life," he said.

“All the staff, even the cleaners, clerical staff and those who made the beds, were genuinely overjoyed to see me recovering so quickly. It was heart-warming to say the least.

“On 8 April 2016 I was able to walk my youngest daughter down the aisle when she was married in Brisbane. This was something I have been looking forward to all her life.

“So, to Dr Grimley and your wonderful dedicated team at Nambour General Hospital, on behalf of my wife and five children and six grandchildren, a most sincere thank you!”

The acronym used for identifying signs of a stroke is FAST which stands for Face, Arms, Speech and Time. Face - has their mouth drooped? Arms - can they lift both arms? Speech - is their speech slurred? Do they understand you? Time - is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

For more information on stroke visit www.strokefoundation.com.au

ENDS

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