

# Spinal Outreach Team Newsletter

Issue 17, January 2014



Welcome to 2014! Everyone here at SPOT wishes you, your family and friends a Happy New Year. The theme for this year's newsletter is **Staying Connected**. We hope you find something of interest that keeps you in touch!

## Mark stays connected with his community

Mark was 14 when in 1994, an afternoon swim with his brother at the end of a hot day, changed his life. He sustained a C5 level spinal cord injury. At that time Mark was, by some years, the youngest person in the Spinal Injuries Unit at Princess

his passion, achieving great success over many years.

Mark is renowned for his whale and dolphin photography and every whale season, he joins the crew of the whale watching vessel, "Whalesong" for a few days, to photograph these amazing mammals during their migration.

Mark also follows other pursuits, his love of fishing, breeding miniature ponies with his brother and working as a volunteer. His miniature ponies are not only incredibly cute but, also Brisbane Ekka (the Royal Queensland Show) prize winning.



Alexandra Hospital. Mark's parents and two brothers were by his side throughout his rehabilitation. How true it is that a spinal cord injury does not just happen to the one person, it happens to the whole family. With home being in Hervey Bay, it was especially tough for everyone, being away from their local community and supports.

Just prior to his injury, Mark had got special permission to leave school early, to start a full-time job aboard a fishing charter boat. With his injury that all had to be put on hold. This happened at a stage of his life when he was at the beginning of many of life's milestones. It would have been easy for him to be left behind and to become isolated from his friends, but Mark's parents were very aware of this and actively encouraged and supported Mark to find new direction and purpose in his life.

### Wind the clock forward and Mark has an impressive track record.

Mark has always had a passion for photography. With some ingenuity, modifications and a little assistance from family and those around him, Mark has been able to stay connected with his community and continues to pursue



Mark and his prize winning miniature pony

Mark works as a volunteer, educating students about the prevention of spinal cord injuries, as well as teaching photography through the Cerebral Palsy League to people with a disability.

In 2001 Mark was named Young Queenslander of the Year. His life philosophy has been simple: "The way I saw it back then and now is there are two ways you can look at life: you can stay home in bed and do nothing, or you can get out and enjoy life."



Just a few examples of Mark's excellent photographic work, which he has kindly shared with us

"The way I saw it back then and still now, is there's two ways you can look at life: you can stay home in bed and do nothing, or you can get out and enjoy life."

### Contained in this issue:

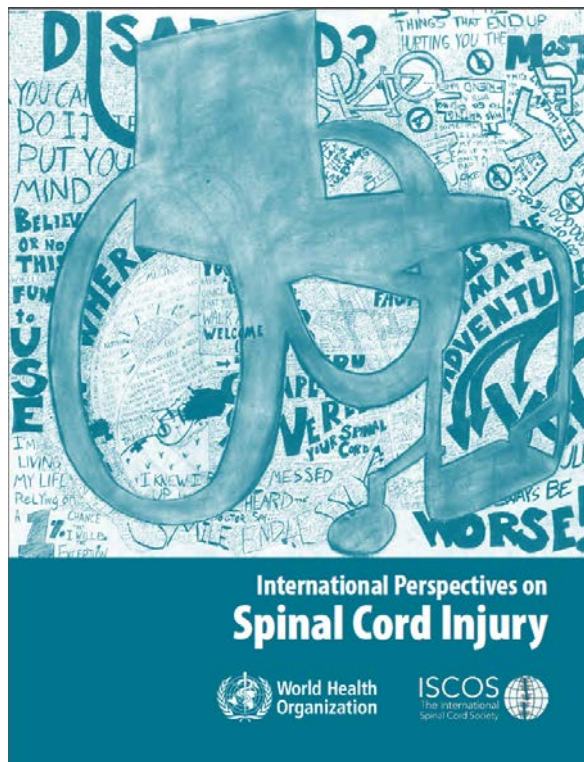
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Queensland Government

## International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury (IPSCI)

“... spinal cord injury is preventable, survivable, and need not preclude good health and social inclusion.”



[http://www.who.int/disabilities/policies/spinal\\_cord\\_injury/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/policies/spinal_cord_injury/en/)

The 3rd of December this year was the ‘International Day of People with Disability’, This year’s theme was “**Break barriers, open doors: to realise an inclusive society for all**”,

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS), launched their report, **International Perspectives on Spinal Cord Injury**, in Geneva on this day.

This report is a first of its kind and was developed in association with the Swiss Paraplegic Research. The aim of the report was to assemble and summarise information on spinal cord injury, and to make recommendations for action that are in line with aspirations of people with disabilities.

“Spinal cord injury is a medically complex and life-disrupting condition,” notes Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, WHO. “However, spinal cord injury is preventable, survivable, and need not preclude good health and social inclusion.”

### What’s new in Queensland services.....

2013 has seen some innovations in funding options with the introduction of the Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (CAEATI) scheme.

Take a moment to peruse the following websites to see what is new, what might relate to you or your clients, or just to reacquaint yourself with the resources and information available.

Acronym	What it stands for	Website
CAEATI	Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative	<a href="http://www.qld.gov.au/disability/service-providers/caeati-guidelines">www.qld.gov.au/disability/service-providers/caeati-guidelines</a>
VOSS	Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme	<a href="http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/support-and-services/our-services/vehicle-options-subsidy-scheme-voss">www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/support-and-services/our-services/vehicle-options-subsidy-scheme-voss</a>
ILC DATABASE	Independent Living Centre Database	<a href="http://ilcaustralia.org.au">http://ilcaustralia.org.au</a>
MASS	Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme	<a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass">www.health.qld.gov.au/mass</a>
SPOT	Spinal Outreach Team	<a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis">www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis</a>
SCIN	The Spinal Cord Injury Network Australia New Zealand	<a href="https://spinalnetwork.org.au/">https://spinalnetwork.org.au/</a>

Acronym: is an abbreviation consisting of letters that form a word!  
We all love to use abbreviations for these schemes and services. Now you can make the connection.....

## Research and Development Update—Community Connections

The ultimate goal of rehabilitation is to assist people with SCI to be active life participants. Life participation is a very broad term covering activities like work, recreation, social pursuits and family life, to name just a few. There is a considerable amount of research being conducted around this topic. Some researchers are aiming to understand personal experiences of people with SCI as they participate in life situations. Others researchers are developing ways to measure levels of life participation after injury, and yet others are aiming to better understand what determines successful life participation.

When measurement of participation was first considered back in the 1980's some social scientists in the field developed questionnaires to determine how much 'participating' people were doing. The problem with these types of measures is that one person's idea of successful life participation is not the same as another person's. Would you value being part of an online social community as highly as going to the local bowls club three days per week? There is no right or wrong answer to this question and what researchers are now considering is how we can measure life participation in terms of not just how much participating is done but how personally valued that participation is to the individual.

A number of studies suggest that life satisfaction for people with SCI is more closely related to levels of life participation than to the degree of impairment caused by SCI. Similarly it is clear that having a high level injury with significant impairment is not an impediment to participating in meaningful life roles.

Over the next few years at SPOT we are going to focus on the question of what determines the best participation outcomes. We'll be considering factors like environmental barriers and facilitators, as well as attributes of each individual which might help or hinder life participation after SCI. An understanding of these determinants could help us provide better support for people as they work towards their participation goals.



### SPOT Making Connections Through Education and Support

SPOT is available to provide short format **videoconferences and education sessions** on topics related to the community management of spinal cord injury. In 2014 we are planning 4 videoconferences on topics we have found to be popular.

Videoconference Topic	Date	Videoconference Topic	Date
Posture and Seating	March 2014	Mobile Shower Commodes	September 2014
Skin Care & Equipment	June 2014	Managing Change	December 2014

SPOT now has a couple of our long awaited **self learning packages** ready to be posted on the website, hopefully early in 2014! They are "Posture and Seating: The Basics" & "Wound Care in the Community".

We are very keen to hear what you think. Each package will include a link with the option to complete a brief evaluation survey so you can "connect with us" and give us your impressions.



Contact SPOT to register for a video-conference by phone: 34062300 or email: [spot@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:spot@health.qld.gov.au)

SPOT finds working with local service providers a great way to connect with what is happening around Queensland. Nothing beats local knowledge!

This year we have taken the opportunity to ask some of the allied health professionals we have worked with, about how they have found connecting with SPOT! This is what they had to say.

Thank you to all local health professionals and service providers. We look forward to working with you in 2014!

*"Working with SPOT gave me the opportunity to offer a better follow up service with my spinal clients in our rural population."*

*"Working with SPOT was a valuable experience which pointed regional therapists in the right direction"*

*"I really appreciate the advice and assistance that you get from SPOT. Regional visits are invaluable. Can see the client in situ, and the specific problems we are dealing with. Offer practical advice to assist both the client and the health professional."*

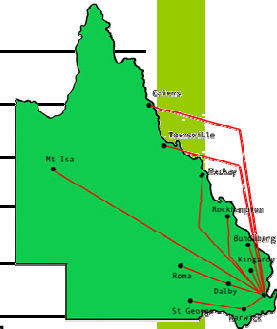
*"Having expert allied health clinicians on hand to offer their advice and guidance has been so beneficial for the client and the service I am able to provide."*

If you would like to receive information electronically from SPOT email: [spot@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:spot@health.qld.gov.au) and request to be added to the SPOT email list.

## REGIONAL VISITS 2014

Check out this year's schedule so you know when we will be in your area.

Area	Week Of
Toowoomba and Pittsworth	3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2014
Roma, Dalby and West	24 <sup>th</sup> February, 2014
Mackay (South to Sarina and North to Bowen)	24 <sup>th</sup> March, 2014
Rockhampton and West, Emerald & Dysart	28 <sup>th</sup> April, 2014
Cairns and northern regions (including Cape)	12 <sup>th</sup> May, 2014
Bundaberg and west to Monto	2 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2014
Nambour and north of Nambour & Gympie	23 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2014
Longreach, Winton and surrounding regions	21 <sup>st</sup> July, 2014
Stanthorpe, Warwick and West	4 <sup>th</sup> August, 2014
Kingaroy, Murgon, Gayndah and Mundubbera	25 <sup>th</sup> August, 2014
Townsville, Mt Isa and surrounding regions (including Palm Island )	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2014
Cairns and South to Cardwell (including Tully and Mt Garnet)	13 <sup>th</sup> October, 2014
Gladstone, Biloela, Theodore and Bundaberg	3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2014
Hervey Bay and Maryborough	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2014



### Have you considered Telehealth to connect to a specialist?

Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services & information via telecommunication technologies including:

- live, audio and/or video inter-active links for clinical consultations (similar to a Skype call)
- digital images, video, audio & clinical data is “stored” on computer, then at a convenient time “forwarded” securely to a clinic at another location, where they are studied by relevant specialists who can give advice
- teleradiology for remote reporting and advice such as sending X-rays and ultrasounds for specialists to look at
- telehealth services & equipment to monitor people’s health in their home (home blood pressure monitors etc)

#### Why use Telehealth?

Telehealth enables you, wherever you are in Queensland, to access specialist care without having to travel to major hospitals. Not only is it convenient for you to remain in your community with family support, it can also improve your health outcome and save money usually spent on travelling and accommodation. All telehealth consultations are private. A secure network connection is used to ensure that your consultation is private and confidential. Just like at your local doctor’s office, you and your healthcare provider will both be in private rooms for your telehealth consultation.

#### Who can use Telehealth?

A wide range of specialist services such as cardiology, endocrinology, dermatology, geriatrics, orthopaedics and paediatrics are available through telehealth. Telehealth is helpful for people of all ages who are based in regional or remote locations and require specialist healthcare services. To find out if telehealth is right for you, speak to your doctor today.

For more information about telehealth, visit : [www.uq.edu.au/coh](http://www.uq.edu.au/coh)



### Spinal Outreach Team Contact Details

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