

Welcome to richardallen.com.au

This website has been setup to help out Richard Allen.

Richard was playing rugby (1st game of the season) on Saturday April 14th 2007, and as he was running with the ball, got tackled, twisted, landed on his neck, and this has resulted in a broken neck and squashed spinal cord. His injury means he is a Complete Quadriplegic (C4/C5), initially had some complications with breathing problems as he was sick with a cold before the accident and is now unable to cough unassisted or blow his nose, so therefore any kind of illness causes setbacks. Surgery was performed just days after the accident, the broken neck bone (C5) was replaced with the bone from his hip, and a metal plate – stabilising his neck. There is nothing that can be done to improve the spinal cord.

We all have huge hopes for different scenarios of a future for both him and our family... Of course we are hopeful that one day Richard will walk again, but as time has passed, we realise that even if he gets the use of his hands or fingers back that would be miracle enough, bladder and bowel function, ability to pressure relieve, transfer into bed himself, all these things and more would be major bonuses.... we live in hope! In the meantime however, he powers himself around in an electric wheelchair, is hoisted in and out of bed and into shower chair, can hug us as he has his biceps, and works very hard at the WALK ON physio recovery programme in Bowen Hills, Brisbane, with the intention of building up strength in the muscles which still work (above his nipple line and the biceps in his arms) and "firing up" the rest of the muscles in his body in the hope that one day they will wake up....

Richard has shown great strength, determination and motivation and achieved more than what was expected of his level of injury already! We (our daughter Clover (5) and I) are very, very proud. After 10 months in the Spinal Injuries Unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane (daily physio, occupational therapy etc) he was discharged in Feb 2008, and our family were placed in a disability house provided by the QLD Dept of Housing. Richard receives 43 hours per week of carers, provided by the Spinal Injuries Association who help in the morning and evenings, and I do the day shift and nights. We are still an hour and a half north of our hometown of Bangalow, and really miss our friends and support network, who are all working so hard to get us back home.

How are they doing this? Well, within a few days of the accident, a fundraising committee was set up (RA14 fund), and a dedicated group of very special people have worked tirelessly raising funds to build us a purpose build home in Bangalow. We were able to buy a block of land in the Clover Hill Estate in Bangalow, and the house plans were designed by Malcolm Cummings, a well known architect, especially for Richards needs. The building project started on the 16th September 2008 and with the help of many local businesses is moving ahead, and we are hoping to be in the house by mid 2009.

Whilst in hospital, we had so much support by way of phone calls, visitors, financial assistance, and we are eternally grateful that this continues today. We love having visitors to Beenleigh, and really look forward to the day we are "home" once more. Please see the contact us page, the bedside news pages for regular updates or the fundraising pages, for details on how to get in touch, or if you are looking for ways in which to help with our house project for other fundraising ventures. Any help is appreciated. His needs for both health (physio and supplies) and equipment, are ongoing.

On returning to Bangalow, both Richard and I are hoping to return to work in some capacity. Richard plans to continue with his business Earth Art, designing gardens on the computer (he uses an adapted mouse with joystick as he can move his arm and a finger splint to help with typing, as well as voice recognition software) and having subcontractors in to do the physical work, while he overseas the project he has designed. I will assist him in getting to and from jobs (we have purchased a wheelchair van with hoist and secure him in his wheelchair into the back with lock downs), and hopefully be able to work part time also. We don't like the thought of living on Govt. money for the rest of our lives!

Thank you for your interest and support,

Kylie, Richard and Clover