

The official magazine of

CATWALK™

Funding research to cure spinal cord injury



June 2022

The Tora

**The eWALK Trial
Neuromodulation for spinal cord injury**

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June 2022

This issue

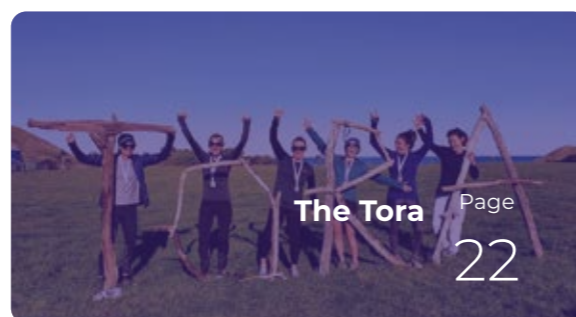
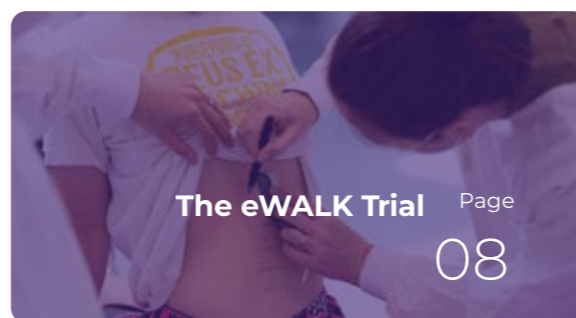
A special thank you to our supporters who help us produce this magazine

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Founder's Footnote

Dear CatWalkers

Huge HIGH FIVE to those who did the inaugural 'The Tora' event. Brainchild of Ollie Bradshaw, hosted by Kiri and Sky Elworthy, executed professionally by Total Sport with CatWalk benefiting and enjoyed by everyone. Whether you were a competitor, volunteer or there to wave the CatWalk flag, the physical effort that was witnessed and enjoyed was one that said 'Let's do this again', well done to ALL!

A beautiful bunch of girlfriends have kicked off a CatWalk support promotion called 'Dig Deep for CatWalk'. They came up with the idea when yours truly decided to break her neck for the second time 12 months ago. By purchasing a limited edition, imported, hand-forged trowel, you'll be supporting CatWalk's fundraising, for world class spinal cord research. It highlights the constant challenge of mental health and one that I blame a large proportion of on social media. Getting outside and

into the garden can be hugely beneficial to mental health when one is required to 'Dig Deep'. I often say when delivering a speech to any demographic 'That you don't know how strong you are until being strong is your only option... ultimately it's up to you.'

Personally, we've had a magical six months that's included lots of training on this body but also lots of fun. A Group 1 winner for our LA homebred owned and raced mare Roch 'N' Horse in the Newmarket in Melbourne closely followed by a meet and greet with Lord and Lady Lloyd Webber at the stunning Sydney Botanical Gardens in Sydney, where 'The Phantom of the Opera' was on show. They kindly donated to CatWalk a service to their exciting Dubawi stallion Too Darn Hot eight months ago. Another fortune of timing allowed for a 24hr catchup with CatWalk supporter Sir Michael Fay on Great Mercury Island (Ahuahu) thanks to Ben Falloon's purchase of this generous auction prize at CatWalk's 10 Year Anniversary. We had Ben's 14yr old



daughter Xanthe with us and great friend Anna Hood to assist me. We were all mesmerised. You're able to visit and walk over the island but if you ever get this opportunity to experience the 24hr 'spoilt by Sir Michael' package, bid high/dig deep, you're in for a treat!

Recently I was at Nga Tawa school thanks to an invitation by Amy Scott to speak at Birch House. I was yet again blown away by a beautiful bunch of girls, their families and dedicated staff who you can see are just wanting to give these girls the tools, the courage and the opportunity to fly.

A special note to every wheelie out there, I just wanted to say Hi. It is you that keeps me going. Living life from a chair as a parent, as a painter, as a partner or quite simply as a person takes guts, character, moral and physical support and quite often a gritted smile. Keep going, we're with you every step of the way.

Catriona





International Patron

At the time of writing, we've been enjoying a lovely start to the English summer, and it's been great to be out and about competing.

It was a thrill for me to partner our beautiful Class Affair to a nice win at Chatsworth in May and although unfortunately I didn't get to run him at Badminton this year, I know his time will come again. That's horses for you!

Like everyone who supports our wonderful sport of Eventing, I

still loved watching and following Badminton. I've also been sending my very best wishes to Nicola Wilson in her recovery. I know that the international support they've received means a great deal to Nicola and her family.

It is always special for me to represent any hardworking charity and I am certainly so glad to continue supporting the SCI research which CatWalk helps drive in New Zealand. At the same time, it's always good to get involved with something completely different, and the Tusk Ball in London recently was certainly that! Tusk does incredible work around

habitat loss, poaching and the illegal wildlife trade. It makes me feel good to do anything I can to raise awareness around all these vital causes.

Finally, I can not let this note pass without acknowledging what a special time we have had in the UK, marking the Platinum Jubilee. People have been so happy and supportive of this unique occasion.

It has certainly been my great privilege to take part in this celebration.

Zara Tindall, MBE

Purchase THE GREAT DIXTER

and support

The CatWalk Trust &
World Class Spinal Cord Injury Research

Some call it the Black Dog. Others call it the Blue Devil. Some say they've Got the Morbs, or the Mubble Fubbles...light-hearted names but with heavy-hearted consequences. Depression, and the battle for mental health, can claim anyone. It is disturbingly commonplace. Its insidious and barbed seedlings often planted by a single episode, a happening, a split second of complete and undeserved misfortune.

Like a spinal cord injury.

The only retaliation for those who suffer these cruel injuries is to 'Dig Deep' within themselves. And to hope that real progress can be made in the research for a cure. That's where you can help.... By digging deep yourself, and purchasing or gifting this limited edition trowel you will be helping to fund that vital research.

Commissioned from Sneeboer in The Netherlands, the Dig Deep trowel is hand-forged, cocooned in a recyclable merino wool drawstring bag, and branded with the Dig Deep lovemark.

A very limited number will be available for this is a lifetime garden tool. And it can help make a lifetime of difference.

\$145 + post
digdeep4catwalk.myshopify.com

DIG  DEEP
for CatWalk



Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility

Progress Update

Associate Professor Darren Svirskis

We have enjoyed being back in the labs and full steam ahead with our research in 2022.

We've recently published some of our findings in the highly regarded journal, *Advanced Science*. For those with the interest you can read the full publication here: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/advs.202105913

In summary, we've demonstrated to the international scientific community that our implants can be positioned directly on the spinal cord in rats, where first, they do no harm, and secondly, in a world first we have been able to record electrical signals passing up and down the spinal cord in freely moving animals. Publication is an important part of research, informing the scientific community of breakthroughs allows us to build on the work of one another.

Research is ongoing to understand electric signals recorded from the spinal cord, to learn more about what happens



PhD student, Brittany Hazelgrove is a bioengineer who joined the lab two months ago. Her work is on understanding electrical signals recorded from the spinal cord to learn more about what happens in a spinal cord when it is injured, and what happens during recovery.

in a spinal cord when it is injured, and what happens (and what we want to happen) during recovery. For this work, we have recruited a new PhD student Brittany Hazelgrove, along with Professor Leo Cheng from the Auckland Bioengineering Institute to provide expert advice on signal processing.

In parallel we are developing treatments for spinal cord injury and the tools to deliver those treatments. Dr Brad Raos has been fine-tuning protocols for growing human derived stem cells into neurons (Figure 1). These cells will be used in the second half of 2022 to model injuries that occur in the spinal cord, and to test electric field treatments. Coming back to the implants, Dr Bruce Harland will test related treatments delivered through our implant directly to the damaged spinal cord. As I write this update, we are poised to start testing these treatments in live animals for the first time in June.

The research team are excited and grateful that CatWalk has committed continued support to our research team by offering CatWalk research fellowships to two outstanding researchers Drs Brad Raos and Bruce Harland. Brad and Bruce currently work on CatWalk funded research and this continuity of funding allows us to build momentum towards designing and testing new treatments for spinal cord injury.

Finally, some of the research team recently took part in the Tora walk, raising money for CatWalk sponsored activities. While most

of us did the 5km spectator walk, Brad Raos and Svenja Meissner were brave enough to complete the full 21.5 km route. Being scientists they each independently reported the route was in fact 22.7 km!

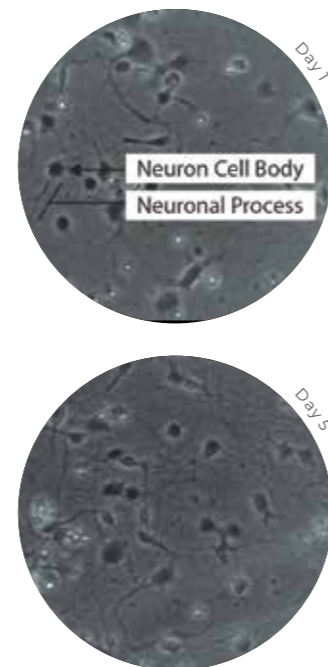


Fig 1: Human neurons growing in a Petri Dish extend long and thin neuronal processes (axons and dendrites) from the central cell body. Over time these processes connect neighbouring cells in an extensive neuronal network that allows cell-to-cell communication.

In Spinal Cord Injury these networks in the spine are broken, preventing signals from the brain reaching a person's musculature. We are ready to use these cells in an injury model to test how treatments allow neurons to regrow their damaged axons.



Part of the research team at the Tora walk, raising money for CatWalk funded activities. L to R, Simon O'Carroll, Svenja Meissner, Jerram Sheehan, Chloe Svirskis, Darren Svirskis, Talia Svirskis, Brad Raos.

Progress Update Dr. Simon O'Carroll

After the impact of Covid in Auckland last year, everything has returned to normal, and we are pushing ahead with our progress on their projects to make discoveries and treatments for spinal cord injury.

Projects:
Gene therapy and cell transplantation

This project uses cells called oligodendrocytes, which are involved in protecting nerve cells and allowing them to function correctly. It gives us an understanding of how these cells can be promoted to grow and mature by removing scar tissue and how our enzyme that removes the scar can act in these cells to facilitate their function. Ph.D. student Connor Clemett has submitted his Ph.D. and is

off to the next exciting part of his scientific career. His work has shown that we can use our gene therapy approach to remove scar tissue and promote the growth and function of these protective cells, which is an exciting finding of how our gene therapy works. As part of his work, Connor looked for novel genes that might be affected by our gene therapy, and during this study, he discovered a gene that may be a key regulator or "master-switch" for injury. We will look further into this exciting finding to see if this can be targeted as a potential treatment. Jerram Sheehan has completed his Masters and is staying on in the lab to continue this work. He found that when we injure oligodendrocytes, the scar-removing gene gets switched off in these cells and stops them from maturing and functioning correctly. We are currently confirming this, and the next step will be to see if we can express our gene in these cells to protect them from injury.

Visualising changes in the spinal cord after injury

The work being carried out by Ph.D. student Zahra Laouby, in collaboration with Dr. Juliette Cheyne and funded by the Jon and Louise Nicholson Spinal Cord Injury Research Scholarship, aims to understand how changes happen in the brain and spinal cord in real-time and therefore understand more precisely how treatments work. This project, which uses a tiny camera attached to the rat to study changes in nerve cell activity in the brain and spinal cord as they happen, is back on track following the disruption caused by Covid. Zahra is making some excellent progress in allowing us to see how activity changes in the brain and spinal cord with injury. Ultimately we will use this approach in conjunction with treatment and be able to accurately measure the effect it is having and how we might improve it. This work will enhance our ability to develop more effective techniques to repair the spinal cord.

The eWALK Trial

CatWalk and SpinalCure are funding the eWALK trial, a human trial with transcutaneous (over the skin) spinal cord stimulation, due to its safety and potential to make a real difference to people with spinal cord injury. It is also a much more affordable option to roll out into the community.

Ongoing research is still trying to understand what exactly happens within the spinal cord but the results from recent studies are very promising. They show that people with SCI are able to produce walking-like movements with spinal cord stimulation.

The eWALK trial, a world-first randomised control trial using transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation, in people with SCI hopes to answer some of these questions and is a game changer in terms of SCI rehabilitation. Here we hope that spinal cord stimulation will help stimulate neuroplasticity which makes recovery more permanent.

Non-invasive spinal cord neurostimulation,

or transcutaneous spinal stimulation, is like a hearing aid for the spinal cord.

The idea is that tailored electrical currents can amplify messages sent via surviving neural pathways, so the brain and body can talk to each other better.



#1: Electrical currents applied to the injured spinal cord.



#2: Restores communication between brain and body.



#3: This can result in life-changing functional recovery such as:

- Bladder and bowel control
- Hand movement
- Cardiovascular stability
- Walking

Project Spark

Co-funded by CatWalk and SpinalCure, Project Spark is so-called because it could spark a revolution in spinal cord injury treatment.

We believe that transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation could be a game-changer, and are aiming to expand our trials and studies around Australasia. If successful, we could get the evidence needed to get neurostimulation devices approved for use by people with SCIs around the country.

GOAL - Translation: Provide the evidence to support approval of the treatment for mainstream use.

The five-year objective of Project Spark is to establish neurostimulation as a mainstream treatment for SCI.

Not only will this greatly improve the lives of those living with a SCI, it will also reduce the annual costs of an SCI to the whole economy.

CatWalk has committed NZD\$2,800,000 from 2021- 2024 for the E-Walk Trial and Project Spark.



If you wish to discuss making a donation to change lives, please contact Meg Speirs, meg@catwalk.org.nz or **06 377 5430**

For further information on the E-Walk Trial and Project Spark www.visitspinalcure.org.au/campaigns/projectsark



Photographs by Cameron Bloom Photography

See who you're supporting with your donations

	2022 1 April '21- 31 March '22	2023 1 April '22- 31 March '23	2024 1 April '23- 31 March '24
<p>Sydney Neurostimulation</p> <p>eWalk Clinical Trial</p> <p>Application of non-invasive neurostimulation (electrical currents) to the spine to wake up neural pathways.</p> <p>Total commitment: \$1,750,000 (payments also made in 2021)</p>	\$967,519		
<p>Auckland Connor Clemett</p> <p>Gene therapy and cell transplantation in chronic SCI - Extension payment due to COVID-19 lockdown</p> <p>This project aims to combine the gene therapy approach with enriched cell transplantation to promote stronger connections for recovery.</p> <p>Total commitment: \$114,777 +extension (payments also made in 2018, 2019, 2021)</p>	\$17,915		
<p>Auckland</p> <p>The NZ Brain Bee Challenge (NZBBC)</p> <p>This high school competition encourages students in Year 11 to learn about the brain and its functions, the latest advances in neuroscience research and career pathways.</p> <p>Total commitment: \$95,000 (committed 2020 - 2024)</p>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
<p>Auckland Dr Simon O'Carroll</p> <p>Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (SCIRF)</p> <p>Underpinning our research, the goal of the SCIRF is to maintain ongoing research programmes to develop novel treatments for SCI and to attract new ideas through local and international biomedical and clinical collaborations.</p> <p>Total commitment: \$580,880 (committed until 2025)</p>	\$116,176	\$116,176	\$116,176
<p>Auckland Dr Amy Chapman</p> <p>Generating human oligodendrocyte cells for the treatment of SCI - Postdoctoral funding - Extension payment due to COVID-19 lockdown</p> <p>This study investigates whether the precursor cells of human oligodendrocytes (highly specialised neural cells) generated from human skin cells can be used for cell transplantation to promote natural repair and improve electrical pathways.</p> <p>Total commitment: \$186,842 (payment also made in 2021)</p>	\$94,284		
<p>Sydney NeuRA, SpinalCure and CatWalk</p> <p>Project Spark: sparking a revolution in the way spinal cord injury is treated</p> <p>Building on the eWALK trial evidence, this project aims to take the research out of the lab and into mainstream use. Project Spark involves a series of rigorous clinical trials and community-based studies with the initial aim of improving respiratory, hand and upper limb function.</p> <p>Total CatWalk commitment: \$1,050,000 (committed 2022-2024)</p>		\$350,000	\$350,000

Auckland Dr Bruce Harland

Electroceutical therapies to treat spinal cord injury in a preclinical model

This fellowship will create and test second-generation bioelectric implants that are flexible, and use electrodes that are less prone to degeneration. It will focus on one of the most promising therapies to spinal cord injury and explore how well the implants are tolerated; seeking to provide evidence for axonal regeneration.

Total commitment: \$246,362

\$123,181

\$123,181

Auckland Dr Brad Raos

Computational modelling and analysis to inform electrical treatments following spinal cord injury and assist in development of electrical biomarkers

This impressive project will provide a means to both record and stimulate directly from the spinal cord. It has high potential to provide breakthroughs, not only in terms of treatment but also in understanding of spinal cord injury.

Total commitment: \$246,362

\$106,884

\$106,884

Auckland Associate Professor Darren Svirskis

Applying sustained electrical fields to achieve functional recovery after SCI

This project aims to determine the efficacy of sustained electrical fields incorporated into a bioelectronic implant to direct axonal regeneration after SCI.

Total commitment: \$337,942 (payment also made in 2021)

\$142,564

\$64,700

Auckland Dr Sheryl Tan

Calcium binding buffer proteins and neuroprotection

A series of functional studies will be conducted using human spinal cord tissue and stem cells to see if the distribution of calcium binding buffers are altered in the injured spinal cord and therefore if they create neurodegeneration.

Total commitment: \$186,818

\$91,226

\$95,592

Auckland Dr Amy Chapman

Generating human oligodendrocyte precursor cells from adult human dermal fibroblasts – Project funding

Extension payment due to COVID-19 lockdown

This project will compare the viability and differentiation of cells encapsulated in 3D bio printed hydrogels verses the traditional flat 2D substrates.

Total commitment: \$55,833 +extension

\$55,833

+ \$23,500

2022

1 April '21
31 March '22

2023

1 April '22
31 March '23

2024

1 April '23
31 March '24

Total :

\$1,524,017

\$871,533

\$711,241

Thank you for all your support!

Your generosity enables critical research and gives hope to those with spinal cord injuries that they will walk again.

Neuromodulation for spinal cord injury

What is it and how does it work?

An explanation from Dr. Jarred Griffin, ex Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility Auckland and now based at The German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases.

From the NeuRA E-Walk clinical trial to the recent study published from the Courtine Lab in Switzerland, a lot of attention has recently been placed on the use of neuromodulation for spinal cord injury. This term includes quite a variety of applications and so you may be questioning, what is neuromodulation and how does it work to treat spinal cord injury? In simple terms, neuromodulation refers to the modulation of neuronal activity which can be achieved through electrical or pharmacological means. Research has pushed our understanding of the spinal cord to now think of it as an extension of the brain rather than a mere connection highway to the peripheral body. In fact, the execution of a lot of our movements occurs entirely within the spinal cord and doesn't

require input from the brain at all. Following spinal cord injury, tissue below the injury remains active and responsive irrespective of connections to the brain. As such, these networks remain receptive to stimulation and capable of generating certain movements. Most patients who have motor complete SCI do however retain some spared descending connections, yet spinal excitability is substantially disrupted, rendering intact spinal circuits below the injury non-functional. Furthermore, the role of sensory fibers is important. Proprioceptive fibers (sensory fibers involved in the sensation of self) enter the spinal cord through the dorsal roots whereby the information they bring can modulate and stimulate classified movements. Targeting of proprioceptive circuits through the stimulation of individual dorsal roots enables motor neuron pools in different spinal segments to be spatiotemporally activated to coincide with a voluntary movement. Therefore, principle behind neuromodulation is to increase the baseline level of spinal excitability so that low levels of spared connections from the

brain and/or sensory input can surmount thresholds required for motor function. Furthermore, when neuromodulation is combined with motor-based training, spinal networks can reorganize and re-learn how to process information into motor outputs.

Electrical neuromodulation can be achieved by brain stimulation, spinal cord stimulation, peripheral stimulation, and brain-machine interfaces. Focusing just on spinal cord stimulation, this is predominantly achieved through epidural electrical stimulation and transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation. Transcutaneous stimulation is when the electrode is placed in the surface of the skin whereas epidural stimulation relies on the surgical placement of the electrode within the epidural space of the spinal cord (underneath the spinal processes but above the dura).

The E-Walk trial utilises transcutaneous stimulation combined with step-walking rehabilitation. Stimulation of the dorsal roots of the spinal cord through the skin in turn activate the dormant spinal cord motor circuits. This approach is a relatively cheap and non-invasive treatment for SCI without requiring such high expertise required for other neuromodulation methods. Studies have anecdotally reported the possible effectiveness of this therapy for example, it was shown to improve upper limb function in a patient with chronic complete SCI at the C3 level of the spinal cord. When combined with training, it also aided lower limb motor control in five patients with chronic motor complete SCI. Clinical trials to date, however, have not included appropriate controls and rigorous study designs that allow us to know

their empirical effectiveness. The NeuRA E-Walk trial aims to address this by conducting the first world-wide randomised, blinded controlled clinical trial to give us a definitive answer.

There is however a major drawback of transcutaneous stimulation over epidural stimulation. That is that it lacks the temporal and spatial precision of epidural stimulation, which can activate specific muscle groups in a step cycle. The recent study published from the Courtine Lab used specific surgical placement of the electrodes on the dorsal roots of patients and then created a patient-specific stimulation protocol to activate specific muscle groups in a step cycle or other movements such as swimming or cycling. This resulted in an incredibly impressive and comprehensive approach that immediately restored activity-specific stimulation programs to stand, walk, cycle, swim and control trunk movements. One very important thing to remember is that these movements are only achieved when the stimulation is on and when the specific stimulation protocol is set. The addition of rehabilitation however further mediated sufficient improvement to restore these activities in community setting. For example, after several months, patients regained volitional control of previously paralysed muscles without the stimulation. This represents a promising approach but we will need to see its implementation in more patients to get a better understanding of its effectiveness.

The widespread and long-term use of neuromodulation devices in the clinical setting is currently limited by a number of factors, including affordability, accessibility and the expertise required for the operation of some of the equipment. The main key difference between these two approaches mentioned is the sophistication of the electrodes and the surgical placement of them but this is a trade-off of accessibility. Furthermore, durability might become an issue

as implanted electrodes can cause tissue damage around the implant site, resulting in deficits in recording and stimulation efficiency. The development of biocompatible nanoelectrode arrays with increased flexibility and smaller size should help to minimize tissue damage while increasing the efficiency and longevity of the devices. The Courtine lab have also studied the use of subdural application (direct to spinal cord) of electrodes and developed a drug delivery system. Currently, the major issue with this approach is the profound damage this can cause to the spinal cord directly from the implant or immune reactions to the implants. Associate Professor Darren Svirskis's team is attempting to fabricate such electrodes from another material and is focusing on recording electrical signals after the injury.

Research has pushed our understanding of the spinal cord to now think of it as an extension of the brain...

In saying these things, there is much more research to be conducted. The relationship between electrical stimulation and its effect on neurons needs much greater understanding, particularly how electrical activity affects neuron growth and synapse formation. Furthermore, the field of neuromodulation is just getting started. Future directions could include a brain stimulation, brain-machine interfaces brain-spinal cord interface to further facilitate movement of intentional control, and certainly combinatorial approaches.

An interesting space to keep an eye on!

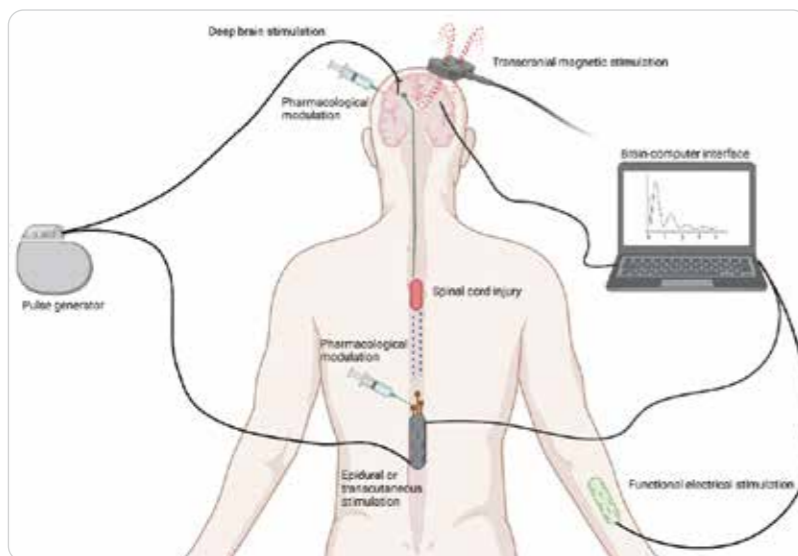


Personal update

Three years have now passed since I left New Zealand. The time has certainly zoomed by but at the same time it feels like an eternity since I've been home. The last two years during the pandemic certainly haven't been easy to spend on the other side of the world in a foreign country, especially through the winter months. In saying this, it's been a valuable lesson in building resilience and adaptability. I'm certainly not the same young man I was when I left and I'm sure some people would say that this is perhaps for the better ;)

My research is going well and I am learning a lot in this environment. I am continuously amazed by how talented my peers are here. Most of the time it is quite intimidating to tell the truth. Last year I was awarded a large research grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG) for a collaborative research project (SFB). This is to fund the next four years of my ongoing research here in Germany that is investigating how rehabilitation influences neuroplasticity. Though I probably won't be staying here for the next four years. In December I plan to visit Australia and New Zealand to begin presenting my research throughout the Universities and planning the next stage of my research career. It would be a pleasure to organise a day in which I can share my research with you all and see some familiar faces that have supported me throughout the years! Will update you further on that later this year.

Best regards,
Jarred



CatWalk is very proud to announce a **New partnership with Benchmark Horse Feeds.**

#FeedForTheFuture

The tagline of Benchmark Horse Feeds shows their commitment to investing in the future health and wellbeing of equines throughout Australia and New Zealand. Benchmark Horse Feeds are also investing in a future where a spinal cord injury does not mean paralysis for life by committing to a new partnership with CatWalk.

Starting on 1st May a donation from every bag of Benchmark Perfect Mash sold in New Zealand will be made to support the funding of world class spinal cord injury research.

“We are thrilled to welcome Benchmark Horse Feeds as a committed supporter of CatWalk”, says GM Meg Speirs. “CatWalk and Benchmark both strive for a positive future, and this generous support will assist us as we focus on our vision of improving the function of those living with a spinal cord injury”.

Benchmark Horse Feeds was founded by Colin Price and Suzanne Hull, both of whom have extensive ties to the equestrian and business world. Prior to its sale in 2018, Colin was the manager of Mitavite for 15 years, and his knowledge and expertise in this field has seen the development of the Benchmark range of horse feeds. Alongside providing nutritional expertise, Colin and Suzanne also enjoy the development of relationships both within business and the community and are looking forward to building a strong partnership with CatWalk.

“Our family has a strong connection to The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust”, says Colin, “and we



are proud to donate every time a bag of Benchmark Perfect Mash is sold in New Zealand”.

Benchmark Horse Feeds are available through independent feed stores and saddleries throughout NZ. For further information visit benchmarkfeeds.com.au or the Benchmark Horse Feeds Facebook page or join the Benchmark Horse Community Facebook page.



The only time we're looking for *below par* support!

Come join us for

The CatWalk Open

SUPPORTED BY JARDEN

Thursday 6th Oct 2022
@ Wainui Golf Course,
North Auckland

Teams will compete for the coveted **CatWalk Blazer** while supporting spinal cord injury research.

Special prizes and events throughout the course!

For further information and registration
www.catwalk.org.nz or email info@catwalk.org.nz

Wainui.
EAT. PLAY. MEET

**SPONSORSHIP
OPTIONS
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 **JARDEN**
New Zealand's leading investment and advisory group

 **CATWALK™**
Funding research to cure spinal cord injury



The Grocery Charity Ball 2022

Supports Spinal Cord Injury Research

Held annually since 2004, the NZ Grocery Charity Ball is regarded as the premier event of the social calendar for the grocery industry who come together to support charities in New Zealand.

Since its inception, the NZ Grocery Charity Ball has given out over 3.7million in donations and **CatWalk are thrilled to be named as the 2022 recipient charity.**

This years event is to be held at the Cordis Hotel, Auckland on October 29th.

Further details can be found at www.grocerycharityball.org



Yearling sales a winner for CatWalk

It was a welcome return to being onsite at the magnificent NZB Karaka sales pavilion 6-12 March 2022 for the annual yearling sales.

CatWalk and our supporters were particularly focussed on Lots 74 and 741 owned by Mr Ben Kwok. Mr Kwok had generously gifted the proceeds of the sales of these two fillies to CatWalk and Beyond The Barriers, a NZ based thoroughbred rehoming charity.

First through the ring was Lot 74 who was prepared and presented by Windsor Park Stud. After some duelling between online and ringside bidders, the hammer came down at \$40,000 to prominent owner/trainer – and CatWalk supporter, Mr David Ellis of Te Akau Stud.

We had to wait a couple of days before Lot 741 entered the ring. Prepared and presented by Little Avondale Stud, this lovely filly went under the hammer for \$21,000 to Mr J Blackadder of Christchurch.

The generous support of NZ Bloodstock in the waiving of their sales fees, and both Windsor Park Stud and Little Avondale Stud preparing these fillies without charge resulted in \$61,000 being split between the two charities.

We are extremely grateful to Mr Kwok for his kind gesture, and to everyone else who came together to make this such a successful outcome.

We are extremely grateful to Mr Kwok for his kind gesture, and to everyone else who came together...



Lot 74 - Rip Van Winkle ex. Alana's Dream filly



Nadia Mackle and her Wheelie Good Friends

Nadia Mackle and her Wheelie Good Friends raised \$6939.51 for spinal cord injury with their Kaikoura based event.

Nadia tells us all about it..

It's funny how it all started actually, I've wanted to do the Red Bull Wings for Life world run for a couple of years, but never managed to get around to it. I mentioned it to Patrick as a bit of a laugh one night and he was keen to enter too! I thought hey maybe it'll just be us two, and next year people

might join us. So, I actually have him to thank for showing interest in getting involved, motivating me to make it happen. Within hours of the chat happening, we had a small crew together, which eventually grew as race day neared.

Kaikoura is small, but mighty supportive of a good cause. CatWalk is so important to me, and with my 30th birthday happening just next month, I wanted to do something special to celebrate - that's where the fundraising aspect came in, for The CatWalk Trust.

The support was immense, straight away! We had over 45 generous

The support was immense, straight away! We had over 45 generous donations from friends, family, local businesses and members of our community.

donations from friends, family, local businesses and members of our community.

Some opted to donate prior to the run, while others chose to sponsor a runner per km, donating following the race. Some even turned up at 11pm to cheer us on as we ran up and down the Esplanade front street of Kaikoura!

We all started the event at the same time as everyone globally, which was 11pm NZST. Each of us had an app on our phones, which we carried

Nadia Mackle and her Wheelie Good Friends raised \$6939.51 for spinal cord injury research

with us for the duration of the run. Once we had been running for 30mins, a virtual car began chasing us, on the app. driving faster and faster as time went on. There is no finish line, the race is over for you once the car overtakes you. The app alerts you throughout the run how far away the car is. So obviously the faster you were at the start, the further you are away from the car - so everyone really dug it in to get a good head start on the car.

I had a small goal in mind, for fundraising - which was exceeded by a mile!

13 of us pulled together creating the team "Wheelie good friends" (11 runners, 1 wheelchair, 1 finish line cup of tea lady) and managed a combined effort of 138.39km in total.

We opted to do the run in Kaikoura, which is hometown to the entire group, though some are living away now. They chose to travel

back home for the run, they really went the extra mile which was so dedicated of them. Their bosses all really amazing too - letting them have the Monday off work since many of us didn't wind down till after 3am!

We are all looking forward to participating again next year, and believe this is now a tradition - just like that! Obviously, they will have forgotten about the blisters and the chaffing.

So grateful to the team and all of our supporters, there is no amount of thanking I can do to show just how appreciative I am!

I constantly feel loved and supported by these humans - and when people ask me how i am so positive about life since my accident - it's because of these friends and family surrounding me, constantly supporting me - it's as simple as that.

A Day at the Cricket

with CatWalk Ambassador Hamish Ramsden

I can't wait, tickets are booked, sandwiches made, hot flask at the ready and we're good to go.

A day at the cricket, it's a shame it is not a day watching test cricket, being the purist that I am, but the next best thing is watching the Blackcaps in a one-dayer.

There is a special area for wheelchairs and partners at the ground so there is no need to get there too early, as there is usually plenty of space but also, conversely, you can't leave it too long as with being such a fantastic ground, it usually has no trouble filling up. So, we leave just-in-time to hopefully give us some options of where we sit when we get there.

The place is about half full when we rock on in and after the complimentary bag search, we pick what we think is the best spot from those available and park on up. Having unpacked and spread ourselves out, one of the party offers to go and get us an alcoholic refreshment I heartily agree but purely for medical reasons as it is important to keep my fluids up. So off he goes only to come back sometime later to say that we can't have our refreshments as we are in a non-alcoholic area. What's

this all about? Just because I'm in a wheelchair and seated in the accessible area I'm not allowed to have a beer, really!?

So, we pack up and move away from the wheelchair friendly area and situate ourselves further down the way, where those who have already taken their spots have left what is a very nice and generous area right at the front. Why wouldn't they want to sit here, where there are almost perfect views? We were to find out very soon. So, we unpack again and get ourselves suitably comfortable. I run through the rules pertaining to me and my protection at any cricket match. Those accompanying me are under strict orders to be extremely vigilant at all times, to be aware that the cricket ball could come in my direction at any time, in which case they are to put their body on the line and sacrifice themselves for me by stopping the cricket ball in any fashion they deem suitable. A fair trade, I think. I bought the tickets.

Out come the players, the national anthems are sung and then we're into it, fantastic. We get to the end of the first over I turn to my friend

and am just about to engage in intelligent conversation when music blares out from speakers (which we hadn't noticed) right in front of us. I can't hear a thing that comes out of my mouth or from anyone around me. Thankfully it doesn't last long and the next over is started, only for the music to be repeated time and time again at each interval, each wicket, four, six, catch, anything at all. But it's too late, we can't move anywhere else as now, everywhere is full. I glance back now at the attractive looking accessible area, now full, but everywhere else, at regular intervals, has these beastly noise emitters.



The cricket goes well, the day is fine, along with the company.

It seems to me that the sage lessons to be learnt from the excursion are; that you are not allowed to drink alcohol if you are disabled, you have to be satisfied with not being able to hear or talk to friends all day long, and your life is in danger fairly constantly from a 5 1/2 ounce flying red missile. But hey, we get a car park nice and close so that'll keep me appeased for another day. If only I could get rid of this ringing in my ears.

Corporate Supporters



Nga Tawa Birch House



Over the last few weeks, Nga Tawa's Birch House have been running a raffle.

This has been very generously supported by local businesses and families. The raffle containing three prizes, and was drawn on the night of our Birch House Dinner. We were lucky enough to have Catriona Williams as our guest speaker. She was a true inspiration and we were all captivated by her and her story. When we were choosing a charity for Birch to support this year we could not go past CatWalk Trust. The hope they bring into so many

people's lives is inspiring and Catriona's story is incredible.

Our raffle enabled us to sell all 500 available raffle tickets and raise just under \$2,500 for CatWalk Trust!

Thank you to the people who purchased tickets and the local businesses listed below.

Hire a Housewife, National Drivers Training Center, Scullys, Little Savannah, Marton New World, Intrigue, The Egg Project, Fat Rabbit, Moomaa, Orlando's, Focal Point Cinema, The Herb Farm, and Leaf & Petal.

Amber Scott – Birch House, Nga Tawa Diocesan School



Nga Tawa teacher Tony Cosgrave with Catriona.

Treadlite

A MASSIVE thank you to Treadlite NZ Ltd for choosing to support us for the past 18 months and thank you to everyone who purchased their Premium Arena Mix.

By purchasing this product you helped support world class research that aims to improve function and mobility for those people who are living with a spinal cord injury.

Make sure you check out the fabulous work this company is doing to reduce landfill waste

by repurposing used tyres and manufacturing high-value new products. treadlite.co.nz



Ride Aotearoa

Jeremy Waters somehow talked Johnny Nevill, Jez Simpson and Andy Evans into riding the length of the country as part of Tour Aotearoa 2022.

Starting on Feb 25th from Cape Reinga the tour finished 3000km away at the iconic Bluff signpost. Their 4 Old Fellas on an Adventure fundraising page saw \$1410 raised for spinal cord injury research - a brilliant effort.

Thanks!



The Tora

On Saturday 28 May, one of New Zealand's most popular private walking tracks was opened to the public thanks to a new one-day trail event on the Southern Wairarapa Coast.

Simply known as "The Tora", the event provided three different walking and running options on the private Tora Coastal Walk trail with

a portion of proceeds from the day going to CatWalk and our mission to fund world-class research and innovation to cure spinal cord injury

Thanks to the generous support of Kiri and Sky Elworthy, CatWalk were offered the opportunity to create a fundraising event using their spectacular property. This is the first time the magnificent Tora Coastal Walk has been opened for such an event as it is usually only open from September – April for a three-day fully catered walk which is booked out from year to year in

advance. Walkers get to experience the magnificent landscape of the rugged Tora Coast up to the hilltop ridges offering amazing 360-degree views, native bush and flowing streams.

An introduction by CatWalk Ambassador Ollie Bradshaw brought in expert event management in the form of sport event company Total Sport. The Tora offered three distances to choose from, with options of running or walking 13.5km or 21.1km, or taking part in a self-paced

5km supporters walk - this walk took participants up to "The Trig", and provided impressive views of the Pacific Ocean.

As the description by Total Sport eluded to – the 21.5km and 13.5km tracks were no walk in the park and generally, if you aren't going up you're going down! With a 691m elevation gain for the 21.5km and 399m for the 13.5k, there was plenty of opportunity to take in the amazing views thanks to a stunning clear blue-sky day. Strategically placed aid stations along both courses provided hydration and nutrition including some extra special Tora treats of jam & cream scones and cheese & crackers.

"We feel very fortunate to have had access to The Tora Coastal Walk track for this event. It's a



... this special event supports our goal of curing spinal cord injury so people can get out of their wheelchairs and walk again





beautiful part of New Zealand that should be on everyone's bucket list, and with the challenging terrain and stunning scenery, it was an absolute treat for trail lovers," says Meg Speirs, General Manager of the CatWalk Trust.

"What's most exciting for us is that this special event supports our goal of curing spinal cord injury so people can get out of their wheelchairs and walk again.

Anyone who participated in this event is helping make that happen."

The Tora was all-inclusive trail event, with the ticket price including entry fee, home baking, the choice of three burgers, barista coffee, local wine, beer and non-alcoholic refreshments, and post-event entertainment provided by local musicians.

Everyone was well-fed, watered and entertained, Tora style!

Thanks to all who participated, and for those who missed out – look out for when entries open for the 2023 event.

Over \$14,000 raised!



POT OF GOLD

Raffle Success

After a hiatus of a couple of years, the Pot of Gold raffle returned and was a great success with over \$50,000 being raised for spinal cord

injury research. We are extremely grateful for the donation of four amazing prizes – and the winners are...

PRIZE ONE:

FIORDLAND DISCOVERY PACKAGE FOR TWO PEOPLE.

Ticket #89 Judy Cox



PRIZE TWO:

PEPPERS ON THE POINT ROTORUA PACKAGE FOR TWO PEOPLE.

Ticket #99 Jacqui Pritchard



PRIZE THREE:

ADVANCED FLIGHT AND TANTALUS WAIHEKE PACKAGE

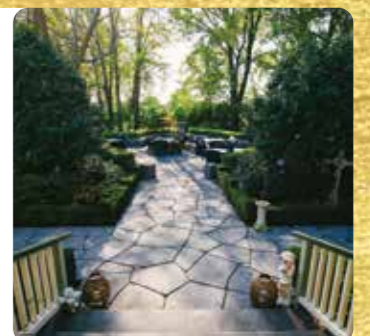
Ticket #194 Kay Fuller



PRIZE FOUR:

THE OLD CHURCH BAY VILLA PACKAGE

Ticket #121 Jenny Tosswill





The Flight of the Future

Lynda Harrap

From the slow and painful beginnings of learning to fly back in 2005, I had finally reached a level I was happy with

- I was renowned for my instruction techniques and highly regarded for them but I was embarking on a new branch of flying within my own small helicopter business – private and personal, special and “different” helicopter flights, to show off our incredible mountains and beautiful local lodges and resorts, that we are so lucky to have in our Selwyn community. I wanted to become “The helicopter/Pilot of Choice” and things were looking promising.

Then came June 12, 2021.

It's funny how things work out, maybe there is a “meant to be” thing that happens in our lives, for reasons we will never know or maybe understand, but that day I was not meant to be the pilot. I was away on a weekend with my partner and kids, at Lake Benmore, celebrating my 53rd birthday when the call came in that my nominated pilot could no longer do the job. Not wanting to let the beautiful bride down, I made the decision to drive the 3 hours back home, fly the bride to the magical spot for the long-awaited photo shoot and then drive

myself back down to be with my family again.

It was a beautiful day in Canterbury and the helicopter was all ready for me when I arrived home. All I need to do was the final checks and put my “special occasion gold trousers” on. I was excited to be doing this job and felt happy that the bride was not going to be let down.....

Arriving at the Terrace Downs Resort with plenty of time to spare, I shut down the helicopter and gave my stunning bride, her new husband and the very experienced photographer the safety talk, then we were all safely strapped in and on our way to our spectacular mountain top destination.

Not more than 3 minutes into the flight, incomprehensible disaster struck. I remember hearing a small pop sound and then for the next 10 seconds, I was on way down, heading towards a “new normal” life. Not that I knew that at that time. For me, there was deathly silence during that time and the only memory I have, is the clear picture of a vividly bright green splodge, with two black splodges on each side.....a completely unrecognisable picture. This image turned out to be a golf fairway and two lines of pine trees on either side of a gap – through which I navigated the stricken helicopter.

I have been since been told in that in a ‘Flight or Fight’ situation, the reasoning part of your brain detaches from the survival mode we all have built into our amazing bodies. This is absolutely what happened for me and for this, I am grateful as it not only helped me react instinctively, it also helps me understand and appreciate where some of my other fellow pilots, that haven't been so lucky, were at, at a particularly distressing time of their lives. If I was going to die, I wouldn't have known it.

We hit the ground with a loud Whoomff – that part I clearly remember, along with the realization of the fact that we had



just crashed. A stunning moment in time. When the reality hit me, my brain started to fire up again and I began to be able to process the reasoning “what to do next” stage.

“Is everyone ok?” I asked? I knew the bride and photographer were alive as they were making noise – I didn't have any idea of the status of the Groom, which was terrifying for me.

I remember the scene clearly – a broken jagged bubble, a helicopter skid displaced way off to my left, my flight manual pages scattered and blowing all over the green. People running toward me. Gathering my thoughts, the next reasoning thought was, “are we safe from a possible fire?” Realising that I couldn't move my legs and holding on to the seat to take the pressure off my sore back – I politely asked the man at my door to do the necessary things, to protect us all from further disaster, which he did – I actually don't remember doing this but apparently, I did – once an instructor, always an instructor!

The next memory was people gathered all around the broken helicopter and my clients being taken care of – it was a huge relief to know they were in good hands and I could focus a little more on myself. My back hurt, but not badly and that was all. I didn't realise then, that I had severely broken my tibial plateau, my legs were cut up and my left hand, ribs and sternum were broken. Adrenaline is a wonderful thing!

Two rescue helicopters arrived, one driven by an old work colleague, Matt. I looked up at him and smiled “Matt, what are you doing here?!” “Lynda, Lynda, Lynda” was his reply. It was good to have him with me, just basic talk and straight-up facts – I knew I was in confident and safe hands.

I don't remember being removed from the helicopter and transported into the ambulance for the journey to hospital – but boy, do I remember being on Ketamine – the hallucinatory drug! I was in a red and yellow water slide, spinning around and around, moving at speed down the pipe..... “am I dying?” I asked Steve, the ambo officer – he assured me I was not!

Arriving at A & E is a blur – it was incredible, all the people around me, professionals, caring and amazing people. I felt overwhelmed that all these people were here to help me. Ketamine was again at its best when I witnessed my right leg being



plastered up – I was absolutely sure I was watching my leg spin around in the hip socket, like a dolls' leg, while a machine, not unlike the suitcase baggage wraps they have at the airport, wrapped my leg firmly and securely. I was amazed!!

I spent a week in Christchurch hospital, and I don't remember a lot of this time – there were visitors, nurses, specialists, doctors and family constantly around me – again, it was overwhelming. I did have friends come in and give me a haircut which was out of this world!

Moving to Burwood was terrifying – I cried, I fought, I still didn't understand what had happened to my body and I was afraid to take this next step. I needn't have worried – Burwood has an incredibly amazing name, as the best spinal unit in the world, and that could not have been closer to the truth. I still clearly remember receiving the book “living with a spinal cord injury” and the reality that dawned on me only then, the position I was now facing. It was the first time I cried over the damage that I now realised my body had sustained.

My 11 weeks in Burwood was a phenomenal experience, that few people in this world get to have. Of course you wouldn't choose

to go there, but by crikey, what a place to be cared for, supported and encouraged. They changed my life again, gave me insight and understanding of the journey ahead and not for one moment did they discourage me about my future. Never have I experienced such an incredible group of people caring for others. Having absolutely EVERYTHING done for me physically was a real learning experience – Your day-to-day health and body functions are so taken for granted, it wasn't until this happened that I had any realisation of just how much we do for ourselves and how our body constantly works to remember and perform these daily tasks effortlessly. What a learning curve! These trained, kind, empathic but serious people saved my life, saved my body, saved my brain and I will always always be incredibly grateful for their expertise and work. They carried me through a whole new journey, slowly and with purpose. I cannot thank them enough and I hope to be able to do some voluntary work with them in my exciting future.

It wasn't just the nursing staff – the Hospital aids, the Spinal Trust team, the therapists, the physios, even the wonderful tea lady (Joy) who made my time at the unit bearable and always with the light shining at the end of the tunnel. The night time cups of tea and stories from the old hat “ladies of the night” – some of them made me laugh until I cried. They were always there for me to give me a hug, to encourage me, to support me and to reassure me of my positive gains and to always keep my eyes looking firmly ahead.

Yes I can walk, but I can't run, jump or climb – yet! my legs don't seem to want to obey what my head is trying to tell them – it's a very odd feeling!

Others not so fortunate as me, were bedded down early, so I took this chance to visit them, in my wheelchair, offering a positive chat and bikkies, homemade by my wonderful 80yr old Dad. I was always firmly told to be back in my room, with my teeth brushed and ready for bed by 9pm. How this made me laugh! Chatting with other patients was always inspiring, people are so positive and accepting of their injury, we all have our down days, but I didn't experience too many of them and I found others to be the same. We weren't sick, we were just broken. Poop talks were common and always compared and laughed about. Each of us being positive toward each other, each of us know that we all had a personal journey ahead, regardless of the extent of our injury. It was heart-warming, inspiring but at the same time I experienced and dealt with the guilty feeling that I will be able to walk whereas some of them dealing with a very different New Normal. But no-one whinged or complained – they had accepted their own journey and were dealing with it in their own way. Incredible. My experience at Burwood was out of this world - an amazing learning experience, a wonderful bonding time and setting a whole new outlook to life, for myself and others.

I am a "Dud" – one of the lucky ones to be able to walk out of TR – I broke my L1 and this has left me with nerve damage to my bowel, genital and bladder area. I self-catheterize and am dealing with this well – it is astounding how many other people out there that have a "tip of the iceberg" spinal injury, something I have never understood but certainly respect and appreciate so much more now. People are open to talking about it and there are so many support groups out there that are always willing to help. I am happy to share my experiences, trials, and tribulations with others, we, as general public and a community, could learn so much more but people are afraid to ask, for risk of offending or upsetting. It is what it is and talking about it not only helps others learn, it helps me be positive and active about my future., and perhaps theirs!

Going home in August was scary. And hard. After the full-on care and support from the Burwood

Team (who understand what is happening in your body) to being in your own home with people that don't have the experience of knowledge of your injury, makes one feel unsafe about the past familiar inviting environment of your own home. However, the support from my partner, Mark, my kids, my close (and not so close) friends has been humbling to say the least. Struggling with trying to be independent (but not having to!) was difficult and I spent a lot of time angry, sore and frustrated until I learned to accept the help and support that I hadn't needed in the past. I had to remember that they too, were dealing with unknown new factors and I had to help them as much as possible. Being honest, open and willing to talk about good and bad was the way to tackle this, but it wasn't all easy going for sure. Acceptance played a huge role in adapting to being back at home and for me, that took a while. It was scary, it was painful, and it was hard to deal with the fact that you were actually safe, that those around you loved you and were only trying to do the best they could to help, with the little knowledge they had. It was a trying time to begin with, but we have slogged through, and I have settled down – which has made it easier for everyone! Joe, from ACC has been absolutely wonderful, ACC have been a tower of support and encouragement and my family and I are very grateful to have had this.

Something important to remember, is that there are some people out there that will struggle to deal with what has happened to you and you must respect their actions and choices too. There is no right or wrong, you just manage your own responses, in your own way and that is to be respected as well. Stay strong. Stay positive and keep looking ahead in your own way.

Where am I at now? Will I fly again? The answer to the latter question is yes. A helicopter is a machine and machines fail from time to time. But being responsible for other people? That fills me with dread at this stage and I feel that my flying career will be quite different to what it was in the past. Time will tell as life goes on and things change, as they have a way of doing, but at this stage my job is to focus on healing myself to the best of my ability, not just my

physical body, but my emotional side as well. I see things differently, I am so grateful to be alive, (I mean, who is lucky enough to survive a helicopter crash?!) – I am so grateful and relieved that we ALL survived, and we can all walk. Yes, we will all have a new normal and we have to deal with that – a wonderful saying a friend gave me and I have up on my fridge, I say to myself and others every day:



ADJUST, ADAPT, OVERCOME.

That is such a strong and positive affirmation for all stages of life, good and bad. I can walk. I can talk. I can ride my horse and train my dogs. I can spend wonderful quality time with my partner, family and wonderful friends. I am fortunate, grateful, and positive. I am strong and can work hard to improve my physical and mental strength. I can accept help from others. I can be me, to the best of my ability. I am lucky.

My journey had been so interesting, such a wonderful learning curve, such a challenge and so eye opening – this is something that others may never get to experience, and I would like to say a massive and very heartfelt thank you, to everyone that has been by my side. And boy, were there a lot of them!

Life is precious, grab it and go for it. Be the best person you can be, regardless.

Lynda Harrap

A tribute to Dr. Angelo Anthony

Dr. Angelo Anthony passed away on November 23, 2021, peacefully at Christchurch Hospital, aged 81 years.

It's hard to know where to begin to say "Thank you" to a man who basically gave his entire working life to one group of people - and to one institution. Such was Dr. Angelo Anthony's 43 years of continuous service to New Zealanders with spinal cord injury.

He was an integral part of the team that really established the Burwood Spinal Unit as one of the best in the world. Dr A, as he was affectionately known, was such a permanent presence at the unit that it seemed as though he was going to go on for ever – continuing to look after people in one of the most challenging, intense and probably emotionally draining fields of medicine available. He always seemed ageless and he was always unstoppable.

I first met Dr A at 1 AM on 27 October 1994 when I found myself in the Burwood Spinal Unit. He was on call and had been summoned to the unit to help stabilise my spine after I'd been flown down from the North Island, (I'd been hurt by a cow on my family farm). Although very professional Dr A was not immune to an appropriate joke at the appropriate time and since I was covered in cow shit there was a little bit of levity bought to the situation by the nurses and Dr A commenting on my mad cow disease.

Dr A was an excellent doctor and could diagnose just about anything such was his wealth of experience. He was always ready and eager to engage in conversation about whatever the topic or problem might be. In fact, on occasions when I might have a direct question for him, he sometimes wouldn't give me a direct answer, which I must admit was mildly frustrating at the time. What I found after I had deliberated on our conversation was that he'd given me all the clues that I needed

to answer my question, and he would let me come to the correct answer by myself, having been guided by him. I'm not sure whether this was a direct strategy or not but it certainly helped me to become more informed about my situation and help me immensely to lead my own care when it came to asking questions and guiding my rehabilitation.

Many spinal patients have had their lives saved by Dr A's investigative skills and crazy work ethic. When you can't feel large parts of your body and something goes wrong, you can be very unwell by the time you realise action is needed. In this field he had either seen it all or he would search until he had solved it all.

He knew about your body before you knew it. If there was one doctor on the planet that knew how to fix you, the spinal injured person, it was him. Dr A also pioneered work on assisting people with spinal injuries to conceive children which has, and obviously continues to have, a lasting impact on many people's lives.

Later in his career Dr.A became particularly focussed on the various issues that people aging with a spinal injury were encountering. Of course, this had only become a problem because of his outstanding ability to keep us all alive.

In particular, urological issues had always been the primary killer for the spinal cord injured. The regime that Bill Utley began, and then Angelo and others, along with the world-class Urology team at the Burwood spinal unit, was keeping us all alive longer – long enough for other issues

to now become apparent.

I know that at the time of his retirement he was still very concerned that our health system was not properly taking onto account the issues that aging with a spinal cord injury was now presenting.

The key reason why Angelo was so loved by those he cared for and those who worked with him was that he was basically a really nice person. The cold calculating clinician was never a mode for him. He was never afraid to become friends with his patients and indeed one of his greatest talents was his ability to relate to people from all walks of life, in ways that worked for them. And to do this he would adapt his style to suit who he was talking to.

His ability to relate so well to his patients was also evident in his great cultural understanding. He was so down to earth, humble and easy going, and as previously mentioned, had a great sense of humour and would love a great laugh. You could engage with him anytime, anywhere and he always showed an interest and made time.

So finally, after having recognised Dr A. for all he has done for us, now, on behalf of his patients, I also want to say a massive "thank you" to his family for sharing so much of this great man with us – because we know it can't have been easy.

His dedication and complete obliviousness to the hours that made up a normal working day was legendary and we his patients were the winners from that dedication. So how do you follow on from a man who was an icon, a legend in his field? Well, you can't. You can't replace him, just be grateful, as indeed I am, that I managed to share a bit of his time.

Hamish Ramsden



Dr Angelo. Photo Courtesy of Paul Stafford - NZ Spinal Trust



ViMo Mountain and Urban Powered Wheelchairs

Getting outside in the natural environment is good for everyone – it is associated with lower blood pressure, faster healing, happiness, increased feeling of wellness, and many other benefits.

Design Engineer, Peter Thompson, developed the ViMo range of wheelchairs specifically to help his wife, Ginny, after a stroke left her with walking difficulties. Thus the primary driver behind the design of the ViMo MOUNTAIN and URBAN wheelchairs was to be able to get back to places that used to be accessible and to enjoy the outdoors again, to put some vitality back into their lives.

Also on the design priority list was the ability for the wheelchair to be transported in the boot of a small car so that the extra expense of a van and hoists or lifts could be avoided.

And finally, the ability to quickly and easily disassemble the wheelchair into manageable parts for transporting means it's easier to handle and thus less of a barrier to getting back out there.

Lotus Cars founder, Colin Chapman, once said, "Simplify then add lightness". Less is more.

At only 35kg for the complete wheelchair (including battery) the ViMo's conform to that philosophy.

The unique way the frame flexes, along with pneumatic tyres, provide comfort, stability and safety when overcoming bumps and dips on the

land. 140mm of ground clearance opens up new possibilities.

The ViMo can be considered to be more of a small all-terrain vehicle than a powered wheelchair. Most testing is done on a logging track west of Carterton (Mt Dick) but the ViMo is equally at home on rough farm country, beautiful bush & cycle trails and rocky riverbed environments.

Early tests included a drive to the Anchorage Hut on the Abel Tasman track and to drive up to the observation points on the Franz Josef Glacier and Sentinel Rock.

The ViMo is designed and manufactured in Greytown and is tough, easily maintained and repaired, and designed to last a lifetime.

We are responsive to user needs and suggestions so each ViMo can be customised to suit the individual. More supportive seating, headrests, a variety of upholstery and frame colours and anti-tipping bars (for the really steep slopes) are just a few of the many options.

The MOUNTAIN model has dual tyres per side for extra traction on gravel, soft dirt and firm sand while the URBAN model has single tyres per side which allows for better indoor access at the expense of traction in really difficult conditions.

ViMo's are only available direct from the factory in order to keep the price down. However demonstrations and trials can be arranged. Visitors are always welcome to visit the factory and take a ViMo for a test drive on our purpose built test track.



A ViMo on the Bird Walk section of the Toi Trail, Whakatane. Ready for another adventure



Prices start at \$8190 incl. GST.

For more information visit vimo.co.nz, email peter@vimo.co.nz or ring (021) 43 63 53.

We're also seen at on

ViMoWheelchair

@mountain_chair

CatWalk founder Catriona Williams spent a day recently with Emily Crofoot at the stunning Castlepoint Station, and used a ViMo chair to access the uneven terrain and beachfront.

Emily has been using her chair for some time now and shares her experiences below:

FREEDOM was the first thing I felt, when I trialed the ViMo all terrain wheelchair. We live on a farm with a lovely garden, near the beach. It has been frustrating that the uneven terrain prohibited me from enjoying these places that I loved. My former power chair weighed 135 kgs, with much of the weight being in the batteries. I recall going out into the garden and promptly sinking into the lawn!!! This chair also required a modified vehicle for transporting. I had kept my eye out for an all terrain wheelchair, but none seemed to fit the bill for me. A friend suggested the ViMo and I have never looked back!!!!

The features that I love about this power chair are that it goes on rough terrain and soft sand, only weighs 35 kgs including the battery, easily collapses to fit into the boot of a small vehicle (with no tools required), that the frame flexes which eases the bumps and the fact that the chair can be customized for each person. The battery has a long range on a single charge, and has a regenerative component.

When I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis 20 years ago, our fencing contractor said "we will need to put mud grip tyres on your wheelchair!!!" and this chair certainly has those. I only need a chair for going long distances or when I am in an environment where everyone is standing. Otherwise I can get around on two crutches. The ViMo is the only chair that I use.

It is wonderful when going for 'beach walks' as I did with Catriona, to be able to keep pace with the others in the group.

I have attended many farm field days, and have no trouble fully participating. Best of all, along with my independence, it has freed up my husband or caregiver to set their own pace and not be constrained by pushing my manual wheelchair.

I have recently travelled overseas for three weeks and along with my crutches, the ViMo was the only chair that I had with me, using it inside and out. It worked a treat!!!!

I highly recommend this wonderful chair! And do come enjoy using it at Castlepoint!!!



Enjoying Marlborough Farmer of the Year Field Day at Bonavaree.



Travelling on a rough farm track on Castlepoint Station.



At Castlepoint Beach in the Wairarapa, Emily and Anders Crofoot have some accessible accommodation available for rent at the Castlepoint Motels and Holiday Park.

Motel 3 is fully accessible, and sleeps four. It has a wheelchair ramp to the unit directly off the driveway, and the large ranch slider makes it easy to enter the unit. There is a wet floor shower with a wall mounted shower seat, as well as a low benchtop at the breakfast bar.

Seaview, which sleeps eight, has a wheelchair ramp, a wetfloor shower with a shower chair, and there is a portable commode. It is not fully accessible as there is not room to do 'a transfer' onto the fixed toilet.

For more information and to book these units please visit www.castlepoint.co.nz



Donate to spinal cord injury research

Your donation will help fund world-class spinal cord injury research and contributes to our vision of a world free from spinal cord injury research.

Become a Core Supporter

Just as a strong core is needed to support our bodies, our Core Supporters strengthen our ability to fund innovative spinal cord injury research by giving a donation regularly.

Leave a legacy by naming CatWalk in your Will

Leaving a gift in your Will could benefit spinal cord injury in a transformational way by ensuring the vital research endures until a cure is found.



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Account number: **02-0108-0525933-00**

Bank: **Bank of New Zealand**

Branch: **Private Bank**

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The additional details required for an international transfer are:

Physical address: **Level 29, 188 Quay Street, Auckland 1010, New Zealand**

Our banks details: **Bank of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand**

SWIFT BIC code: **BKNZNZ22**

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If paying by Direct Credit, please ensure the following details are provided so we can track and receipt your donation:

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