

## MACARTHUR LIONS CLUB

10<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Charity  
Golf Day

Monday 15th September 2014

Camden Lakeside  
Country Club  
50 Raby Road,  
Catherine FieldSteve White:  
0409 073 251  
Stuart Miln:  
0412 702 834[www.spinalcure.org.au/golfday](http://www.spinalcure.org.au/golfday)

## 5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

▶ **Help spread the word**

"Like" us on Facebook and forward our e-newsletter to a friend

▶ **Have fun and raise funds**Visit [www.everydayhero.com.au](http://www.everydayhero.com.au) and sign up for an event, or create your own, choosing SpinalCure as your charity▶ **Make a gift to SpinalCure in your Will**

A bequest is a wonderful way to help all those affected by spinal cord injury

▶ **Donate an auction item**

An experience or item we can auction or raffle to raise funds

▶ **Make a donation**Online at [www.spinalcure.org.au/donate](http://www.spinalcure.org.au/donate) or complete the form below.

THANK YOU

Please note  
We have a new postal address  
PO Box 908  
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[www.spinalcure.org.au](http://www.spinalcure.org.au)  
**connect**  
Funding research to cure spinal cord injury

NEW PHYSICIAN RESEARCH  
SCHOLARSHIP

The prospect of future breakthroughs in spinal cord injury treatment has been boosted with the launch of a new medical research Fellowship.

The Fellowship is a joint partnership between SpinalCure, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP).

The David Prast Research Establishment Fellowship, valued at up to \$450,000 over three years, will fund research into spinal cord injuries and aim to improve outcomes for the 12,000 Australians living with spinal cord injury (SCI).

It commemorates the work of the late spinal injuries advocate Australian David Prast, a director of both SpinalCure and SCIA who despite a spinal cord injury used his drive and determination to focus on better initiatives in the spinal field, particularly in medical research, until his death in late 2011.

The Fellowship will be of interest to RACP physicians and trainees in a wide range of areas of medicine. Applicants must aim to demonstrate how research outcomes will improve functional outcomes for people living with SCI in a 3-5 year timeframe. Its focus is on promoting practical, translatable research into spinal cord injuries and invest in and develop future leaders in clinical research.

**An area of priority for the Fellowship, according to SpinalCure and SCIA is the burgeoning field of exercise and electrical stimulation because of recent research breakthroughs.**

Said SpinalCure's CEO "These are exciting times for spinal cord injury research – stimulating the spinal cord below the level of injury, has shown remarkable success in rats and now thrilling results in four young men as reported recently in the medical journal Brain".

"The men, who have been paralysed for years, are now able to move their legs voluntarily with the help of a small implanted electrical device, and have also reported improvements in bladder and bowel control."

It is likely that the successful Fellowship candidate may need to spend part of the time of this research study working with leaders in the field internationally with a view to bringing the technologies back to Australia.

**Applications for the Fellowship close on Monday 23rd June 2014.**



David Prast

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## DONATION FORM

Our quest for a cure for spinal cord injury relies on your generous support. On behalf of all those living with this devastating condition, we thank you.

Dr  Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss  Other

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please accept my donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to **Spinal Cure Australia**

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Amount to be debited automatically \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please mail FREEPOST to: SpinalCure Australia, Reply Paid 86831, Mona Vale NSW 1660 or donate online at [www.spinalcure.org.au/donate](http://www.spinalcure.org.au/donate) A receipt will be issued to all donors. Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

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## RIDING FOR A CURE

In June of this year, the courageous Xander Bercari plans to cycle the 1000 kilometres from Brisbane to Wollongong in support of finding a cure for spinal injury. After a good friend suffered a snowboarding injury leaving him with paraplegia, and witnessing first hand the impact this has on the friend and his family, Xander decided to become part of the cure.



At the time of print, Xander has already raised over \$10,000 through crowd-funding site Everyday Hero ([bit.ly/xander-ride](http://bit.ly/xander-ride)), exceeding his goal well before the start of his journey on June 19th, 2014.

We wish to thank Xander for his terrific efforts. To find out more about Xander's ride, you can visit his Facebook page: [facebook.com/xandercycle4spinalcure](https://facebook.com/xandercycle4spinalcure).

## A \$30,000 BOOST FROM ICAP!

SpinalCure was very honoured to be chosen as one of the beneficiaries of the 2013 ICAP Charity Day that took place in December 2013.

ICAP is the world's largest provider of post trade risk services, globally transacting an enormous amount of funds on a daily basis. Each year, on Charity Day, 100% of all revenue and commission from a full day of trading at all ICAP offices is donated to worthy causes. An astounding \$220 million has been raised since Charity Day's inception 21 years ago.

Charity Day at the ICAP offices has a unique and boisterous character, with each trading team choosing a fancy dress theme, and decorating their part of the trading floor accordingly. Notable outfits from the event included teams of green toy soldiers and crash test dummies, as well as characters from The Flintstones and Game of Thrones. It was hilarious to watch as the traders yelled down the phone lines, making multimillion dollar deals dressed as Fred or Wilma Flintstone!

Charity ambassadors had the chance to actually man the phones, and get involved in facilitating deals in the tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars!



Above: Sam Bloom, ICAP's Glenn McMurdy & Duncan Wallace. Right: ICAP traders Jamie Bray and Lisa Spiteri making multi-million dollar deals!

The SpinalCure team visited ICAP's Sydney office again in February this year to be presented with a cheque for the huge sum of \$30,000. Thank you to ICAP for this wonderful contribution and for getting us that much closer to the cure!



## RESEARCH ROUNDUP

Recent research news has been dominated by reports of the first four volunteers to receive epidural electrical stimulators. This was the confirmation we had been waiting for: after years in a wheelchair return of movement and function can happen.

The treatment involves the implantation of small electrical contacts against the spinal cord below the level of lesion. Gentle "zapping" of the spinal cord seems to 'wake it up'. Although researchers aren't 100% certain as to what's going on, it seems that any faint messages managing to get through the damaged area, that were previously too weak to be useful, are now heard, interpreted and acted upon by the spinal cord itself.

All four of the volunteers can now move their legs with the stimulator on! And over time less and less stimulation is required, with one man, Andrew Meas, now able to control muscles and even stand for short periods without it on at all. Perhaps even more exciting is the fact that the volunteers are also regaining some control of bladder and bowels and reporting a return of sexual function.

The stimulators used were originally designed for pain relief and are fairly crude 16-pole arrays. Better

stimulators are being developed and several more volunteers have been implanted so we can look forward to more news in the near future.

Other centres around the world are getting involved in this field of research including a European consortium that has recently received a €9million (\$13million) grant for a similar project.

Stem cell research has also been in the news. Early results have been announced from two phase I clinical trials using stem cells to treat chronic SCI. StemCells Inc's trial and the original Geron trial both report multi-segment sensory gains. Although we are not seeing any motor function improvements at this stage these first safety trials are using quite small numbers of stem cells. The SCI community was very disappointed when this Geron trial was discontinued in late 2011, but it now seems certain that it will resume using higher doses of cells.

Two new stem cell trials have been announced in the last few months. Neuralstem Inc is enrolling patients in California and Sapporo Medical University, Japan, will test mesenchymal stem cells collected from the patients' own bone marrow.

Another major avenue of cure-related research uses biomaterial

scaffolds to bridge the damaged area of the spinal cord. Massachusetts, USA-based InVivo Therapeutics is about to start a clinical trial using its degradable polymer scaffold. In preclinical studies, this scaffold promoted nerve growth and led to improved motor function.

It has long been predicted that a comprehensive cure for paralysis will consist of a combination of treatments. University of Aberdeen scientists are believed to be the first in the world to use a combination of different methods to treat spinal cord injury, using a biodegradable 'bridge' made of silk fibre coupled with electrical and chemical stimulation.

Setting an excellent example for Australia's football codes, Scottish Rugby is helping to fund this project. New research from the UK and Australia shows that a third of professional rugby players have suffered either moderate or severe vertebral fractures. These shocking statistics were found to be the same across both league and union.

With so many promising therapies being tested in people the spinal cord injury community has every reason to be optimistic. Keep up with the latest news via our website, Twitter, Facebook or sign-up for our monthly email newsletter.

## HOLLYWOOD AT HOME

February 4th saw The Ivy Ballroom aglow with all of the glitz and glamour of Hollywood right here at home, for the fourth annual SpinalCure Oscars Luncheon.

The event brought together a host of high profile guests, media personalities, and SpinalCure supporters to

watch a live broadcast of the Academy Awards on four enormous screens while they wine and dined the afternoon away.

Hosted by Renee Brack, and attended by many of Sydney's brightest young stars including SpinalCure Ambassador Rodger Corser, Sami Lukis, Magdalena Roze and Matt Day, the event was reported as one of the "hottest tickets in town" with "guests ordering champagne by the bucket" towards the end of the event!

This year proved a success for Australians in Hollywood, with the enthusiastic crowd erupting into loud applause when Cate Blanchett won her Academy Award. The winners closer to home didn't leave with any gold statues, but with fabulous items from the much anticipated silent auction and raffle.



Above: Tim Davies & Sami Lukis. Left: Matt Speakman & Rene Brack. Far left: Rodger Corser, Lisa French & Sacha Horler

Photographer: Belinda Rolland

Ongoing sponsor OK! Magazine was joined this year by sponsors Empire Magazine and E! Channel, with numerous other companies and individuals graciously donating prizes for the silent auction and raffle. Guests were greeted on arrival with delicious cocktails courtesy of Vodka O, while Fine Wine partners kept the libations flowing during the afternoon with St Hallet wines and James Boag beer.

Thanks to all of the sponsors and attendees at the 2014 event, as well as the fabulous team at Merivale for their impeccable service, and to all at 6DC for putting on such a well-executed event.

## A DAY AT THE EXPO

SpinalCure joined other exhibitors at this year's Independence Expo organized by Spinal Cord Injuries Australia. The Expo, held this year at the Australian Technology Park, is an excellent opportunity for exhibitors and presenters to share new technology and information with those living with a physical disability.

Manning the SpinalCure stand were Duncan Wallace and Marilyn Bullen, who really enjoyed meeting with attendees and being able to discuss the latest promising research with them—something that is always energising and inspiring.

The event was a success for us on the social media front as well, with lots of new Facebook "Likes" and Tweets, and over 60 new subscribers welcomed to the e-Connect newsletter! Thank you for helping us to expand our network, and congratulations to the SCIA team for organising such an informative and enjoyable day.

