



# The mobile SCI research laboratory

**An exciting sponsorship opportunity**



## **Spinal cord injury**

Everyday another Australian is paralysed by a spinal cord injury. The effects are utterly devastating as communication between brain and body is lost, affecting every aspect of physical and mental wellbeing. In addition to the human cost is a huge cost to the economy estimated at over \$2.5billion a year.

## **The research**

Recent research breakthroughs have shown that it is possible to restore life-changing movement and function to paralysed people years after their injuries by using spinal electrical stimulation (neurostimulation).

Building on very promising results from small clinical studies, Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) and SpinalCure Australia are collaborating to conduct the world's first international randomised controlled trial to determine whether transcutaneous (using stick on electrodes) spinal stimulation combined with locomotor training, is effective at restoring walking ability and lower limb function in people with paraplegia.

The potential benefits of this project to people with a SCI are profound. The ability to stand up from a wheelchair and walk would be life changing for people with paraplegia, improving all aspects of physical and mental wellbeing and functional independence. It would also provide hope to people with all levels of SCI and their families, that a cure is within reach.

## The issue

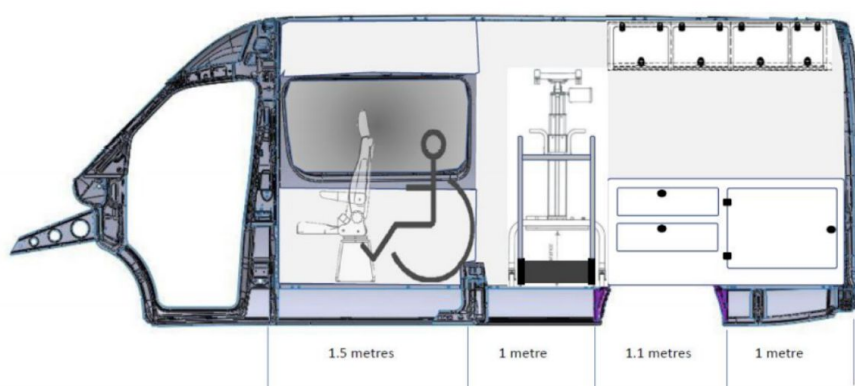
The trial requires volunteers to commit to an hours laboratory training three times a week for 12 weeks. Requiring these disabled research participants to travel to the Spinal Cord Injury Research Centre, at NeuRA in Sydney's eastern suburbs, would not only be an enormous burden to the volunteers but would be very expensive in terms of wheelchair taxi fees.

## The solution

The beauty of this intervention is that it can be delivered to the participant – minimising the personal and cost burdens.

NeuRA has designed a Mobile Therapy Gym to outfit a Mercedes-Benz VS30 Sprinter van. This van would be able to house all the equipment required to deliver a session of the transcutaneous spinal stimulation in conjunction with the locomotor training.

OFFSIDE VIEW



A specialised long wheel-base van with super-high roof design, climate control and an auto levelling system allows for a comfortable training layout (Figure 2), including a treadmill with body-weight support harness system, space for two physiotherapists, a wheelchair and all research equipment. The van would be accessed via a side-door wheelchair lifter and can also be utilised as an accessible transport vehicle.

The mobile laboratory requires a **\$170,000** investment for the 3 years of the main trial (similar to the cost of taxi-fares for 20 people participating in the proposed trial). It will also immediately allow other research interventions to be delivered to people with spinal cord injury and we expect it to be a major research advance for many years.

## The opportunity

The opportunity exists for a forward thinking, brand conscious business to be part of this cutting edge, world leading clinical trial by sponsoring the purchase and fit out of the Mobile Therapy Laboratory.

The vehicle would be branded for the sponsor company (akin to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter) with their logo taking top billing alongside NeuRA and SpinalCure branding, providing an attractive internal and external brand marketing opportunity. The vehicle not only provides a mobile advertisement as it travels around the Sydney region but can be featured in promotional material, reports and a multitude of marketing campaigns created by all parties.

SpinalCure Australia and its SCI network will promote this initiative and the contribution made by the sponsor, through its extensive national marketing and social media channels. Advances in the treatment of spinal cord injuries also attract substantial mainstream media interest, potentially providing further significant exposure for the sponsor of the vehicle.

Specific aspects of recognition and promotion would be tailored to suit the sponsors needs and wider marketing programs.

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The improvement in walking ability for people with spinal cord injury through the work of this vital project would mark the beginning of a revolution in spinal cord injury recovery in Australia. The financial savings to health care would be considerable, in the order of many million dollars per year. More importantly, the impact of this new form of therapy on the physical and mental health of people with spinal cord injury would be profound and life changing.

Being involved with this initiative would highlight the sponsor as a community minded, caring company with the foresight to invest in life-changing cutting edge research.

## Contact

Duncan Wallace  
CEO, SpinalCure Australia  
[duncan@spinalcure.org.au](mailto:duncan@spinalcure.org.au)