It can happen to anyone.
It happens in seconds.
Jason’s Story

“I was road-tripping around Alberta, Canada on a snowboarding trip. On one of the last days that we were snowboarding at Lake Louise something just went wrong, my feet went out from underneath me and I landed on my neck. I was lying motionless on the snow before being taken off to hospital for a seven hour surgery. I then woke up in ICU with a diagnosis of quadriplegia.

In an instant, everything changed. Having a spinal cord injury is a lot more than being in a wheelchair. The injury has had an impact on every aspect of my body. Trying to keep my body well and get through the day can seem like a monumental, never-ending struggle. Work, social activities, just getting around – all of these change dramatically and require incredible emotional and physical adjustments that the average person never has to think about, let alone deal with.”
Most of us don’t want to think it could happen to us. But spinal cord injury does happen, and the consequences last a lifetime. More than 10,000 Australians live with spinal cord injury. They are children, parents, and partners. They could be your child, your parent or your partner.

**SPINAL CORD INJURY: THE COSTS**

**THE HUMAN COST**
Enormous. Not only does each individual with spinal cord injury face incalculable hardship over many decades, their families, friends and communities are also deeply affected.

**THE FINANCIAL COST**
Over a lifetime, spinal cord injury costs $9.7 million for a quadriplegic and $5.1 million for a paraplegic. The costs to the Australian economy from spinal cord injuries total approximately $2 billion annually.

**WHY RESEARCH MATTERS**
Targeted spinal cord injury (SCI) research can dramatically improve well-being and quality of life for every person living with spinal cord injury. Australia is home to some of the world’s leading spinal cord injury researchers. These researchers are working with patients to advance understanding of the acute and long-term effects of spinal cord injury, and identify new and better ways to prevent and/or manage them.

People living with spinal cord injuries face many health complications that greatly diminish their quality of life: bowel and bladder dysfunction, respiratory problems and pneumonia, to name a few.

Spinal cord injury complicates daily life in ways most of us would find hard to imagine. It can take hours to get ready in the morning. Sleep apnoea makes just getting through the day hard. Dependence on carers can be demoralising, leading to isolation and strained relationships.

People living with spinal cord injuries want to be full, active members of the community, but the constant assaults on their energy, health and time are huge barriers.

The majority of spinal cord injuries happen to young people, who face 50-60 years of living with these medical challenges. More recently there has also been a rapidly increasing number of older people incurring spinal cord injuries from accidents at home.

Researchers hope to find a cure for spinal cord injury one day. Until that day comes, the 10,000+ Australians living with spinal cord injury require ongoing assistance to be healthy and to lead active, productive lives. They desperately need the medical advancements that only world-class medical research can provide. And this is where we can all play a part in helping them.

**How can you help?**
LEADING THE WAY

The Spinal Research Institute (SRI) and The Spinal Cord Injury Network (SCIN) are two peak organisations collaborating to:

- Raise awareness about spinal cord injury – its prevalence, impact, and the need for research
- Facilitate novel research into better treatment and management of spinal cord injury
- Promote rapid translation of the latest scientific and clinical advances into life-changing clinical practice
- Drive spinal cord injury expertise, capacity-building and infrastructure

Between them, the SRI and SCIN are currently involved in over twenty-five national and international spinal cord injury research programs, all aimed at finding practical measures to assist people with long-term spinal cord injury.

A message from Assoc. Prof. Doug Brown

“Despite ground-breaking advances in recent years, there is still much more that can be done to enhance the health, quality of life, and capabilities of those living with spinal cord injuries. Rigorous research, and the timely translation of scientific discoveries into clinical practice, is dependent on funding.

Current funding support from Australia’s government bodies, whilst vital and appreciated, is simply not enough. To make a significant difference to the lives of those with spinal cord injuries and their families, we need much more. Over more than three decades, I have met thousands of people with spinal cord injuries. I know what their lives are like, and I know the huge difference the right research could make to their well-being and quality of life. This is why we are asking for your help. You can make a difference, today.”

Associate Professor Doug Brown
Director, Spinal Research Institute (SRI) and President, International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS)

How can you help?
By donating to spinal cord research. Today.

www.thesri.org
(VIC, TAS, South and West Australia donations) Ph: (03) 9496 2579

www.spinalnetwork.org.au
(NSW, ACT, Queensland and Northern Territory donations) Ph: (02) 9029 5220

Every dollar counts. Donate via the websites above or contact us to find out about becoming a donor, sponsor or partner. Corporate supporters are needed. Contact us about how we can work together. All donations of $2 or more are tax deductible.

Find us and friend us on Facebook and Twitter.