

Spinal Cord Injuries Response

Breaking Down Barriers

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Spinal Cord Injuries Response (SCIR)

SCIR is a collaborative, cross-agency response designed to support individuals with new spinal cord injuries in their transition from hospital rehabilitation to community living. It aims to reduce identified barriers to timely discharge from hospital, and enhance quality of life and community participation through the co-ordinated delivery of a comprehensive range of services.

Aims of SCIR

- To reduce the barriers to timely discharge from hospital for people with new spinal cord injuries, and assist in the successful transition from hospital rehabilitation to community living.
- To enhance quality of life and community participation through the provision of a range of co-ordinated responses and services.

Queensland Government Response

- Disability Services Queensland (lead agency)
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Department of Housing

History

- Grew out of community participation in Government decision making in 2005
- Allocated \$1.5M in 2005/6 State budget – initially DSQ only
- Other agencies engaged later in 2005
- Additional budget allocation in 2006/7 for Health and Housing responses

History (cont...)

- Model born out of research from the Lifetime Care and Support Plan (MAA – NSW)
- DSQ developed partnership model with Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service, Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme and Department of Housing

Implementation and Monitoring

- SCIR Reference Group meets bi-monthly
- Individual negotiation with clients in developing transition plans
- Departmental accountability measures
- Responsive and flexible approach
 - At agency level
 - At client level

Prior to SCIR

- **Personal care provision** through HACCC funded services only on discharge – usually only 3 to 5 hours per week.
- **Social Housing** – priority access, but through local offices, multiple contact points
- **Home modifications** – not eligible until after discharge from hospital, 50% subsidy
- **Equipment subsidy scheme**, limited items

SCIR Services

- **Personal care provision** – Funded NGSP
- **Social Housing** – priority access, through single point of contact
- **Home modifications** – fully funded (access, health & hygiene)
- **Equipment provision** – fully funded (access, health & hygiene, functional independence, reduction of personal care needs)

SCIR in Action

Michael's Story

Michael

- 49 year old farmer
- Married to June, 3 adult children
- Lives on 28,000 ha cattle property in central Qld
- C4 ASIA A complete spinal cord injury
- No functional use of arms or legs



Michael's Equipment

- Complex ECU and emergency call needs
- OT consultancy and setup in own home
- Backup mobility and pressure relieving equipment
- Custom made PDWC control system to enhance safety due to spasticity



Michael's Home Modifications

- High cost and other issues due to remote location
- Staged approach to allow early return home
- Minimum major mods completed for safe discharge
- Subsequent mods after Michael's return home
- Installation of generator for backup power

Michael's Personal Care

- Challenges in recruitment due to location
- Challenges with normal service delivery model meeting needs
- Large care package – 5 staff required
- Innovative recruitment strategies used
- Joint primary carer training in Brisbane



Key Benefits of SCIR

- Cross-government approach with dedicated funding
- Timely discharge from hospital, with reduction in unnecessary discharge delays
- Developing co-operative and flexible approaches with “thinking outside the box”
- Promoting sustainability through collaborative commitment

Challenges of SCIR

- Additional burden on QSCIS and SCIR partners due to “new business”
- Developing guidelines and procedures “on the fly” was a steep learning curve and juggling act
- Unique departmental governance structures present challenges/delays in developing new policies and procedures

Life ahead

- Michael and June acknowledge their life has changed
- SCIR allows life for Michael and June to be as near to normal as it can be
- SCIR allows Michael and June to capture an opportunity to live independently again
- Michael and June understand the challenges and stresses ahead

