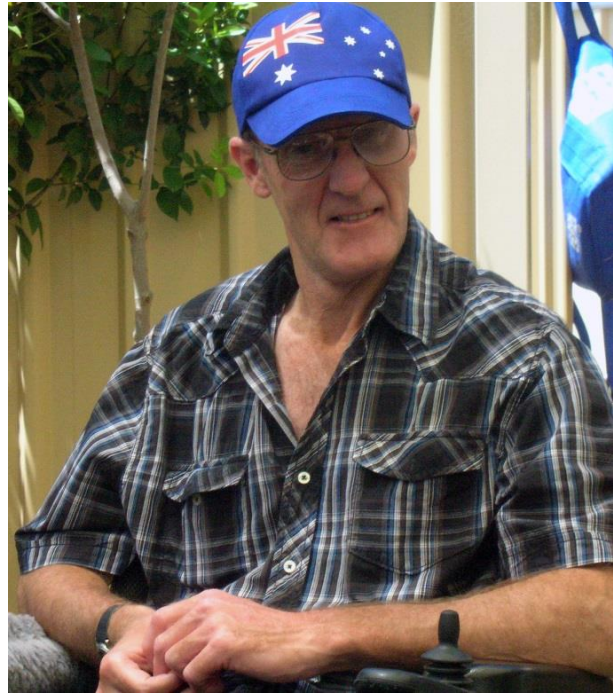


## When Time and Money Run Out

Gary Woodlands grew up in Cannington, Western Australia and in 1979 at the age of 17 was working hard in his final year as apprentice electrician. It was a job that he loved and showed great aptitude for.



On the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1979, Gary was driving his Holden van when he collided with another vehicle that had failed to give way at a stop sign. His van was hit on the driver side and despite wearing a seatbelt he was propelled against the roof of his van. Gary's injuries were catastrophic - compound depressed skull fracture, brain damage, nerve damage and paralysis of his right hand side, a chest injury, hearing and visual loss and many broken bones.

Gary spent several months in Royal Perth Hospital followed by Shenton Park Rehabilitation Centre and then Melville Rehabilitation Centre. Despite improvements Gary is left with a significant Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) resulting in memory problems, speech, hearing and visual impairments and right hand side paralysis.

Gary's family were a force to behold not only caring for their son but also connecting with other families who had children with an ABI and forming the Head Injured Society – what is now known as Headwest, Brain Injury Association of WA Inc.

As a consequence of the injuries sustained, Gary was awarded \$950,000 in compensation. His parents cared for him in their own home until the payout enabled Gary to build two independent homes (on the same block). One was specifically designed for Gary and his disabilities; the other has been used by a number of Carers over the past 30 years. Gary is well known in his community and has been able to hold onto some level of independence; however his disabilities make it difficult for him to have a high level of social interaction. Instead Gary prefers to listen to conversation and often says he enjoys just going to shopping centres to watch people and listen

Increasingly over the past 34 years there have been many instances when Gary's care has been provided by his parents and sisters. In 2009 Gary's principle Carer, his mum Val, died of Cancer and from then on his sister took on the role up until her death also from Cancer in 2012.

Since then life has been extraordinarily hard for the Woodlands family as they have struggled to come to terms with the death of loved ones and also provide constant care for Gary. Lindsay, Gary's dad, is nearly 80 years old and his two sisters, Lynda and Vanessa live some distance away and have young school age children making it difficult for them to assist.

Both Lindsay and Lynda describe the stress and worry that they experienced with regards to Gary and his injuries. The trauma from seeing a healthy teenager with the world at his feet to a person with significant needs and the requirement of ongoing Care has affected their lives immeasurably.

Their hope for Gary is that he will continue to maintain his independence despite the changing needs of his family and their ability to provide support and care for him.

Whilst Gary's compensation has enabled him to purchase his house, he has no earning capacity and no income to pay for the care that he needs. His family are concerned he may need to move into to a retirement village or worse a nursing home despite only just turning 51 years old.

Gary is heartbroken at the thought of leaving the home and the community that he loves.

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