



**It can happen in seconds, but the impact lasts a lifetime.**

Every 38 hours, an Australian experiences a life-changing spinal injury. In an instant, their world will change forever.

**They'll need help. They'll need hope. They'll need you.**



Bianca and Frankie

Hearing the news that you have a spinal cord injury is devastating, and the world as you know it changes forever. Imagine lying in a spinal injury unit wondering whether you can recover or how you can rebuild your life?

At Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA), we understand that the recovery journey is incredibly challenging, which is why the lived experience of our Peer and Family Support team is so critical. Clients often tell us that the day they met the Peer and Family Support team was the day that they felt hope for the first time since their accident.

Bianca was living her dream working in the Royal Australian Navy as a drone operator. However in a split second, Bianca's dreams were literally crushed, leaving her paralysed from the waist down. 31-year old Bianca was using an outdoor shower following a surf at a Sydney beach in January 2020. Bianca heard the giant crack, but unfortunately had no time or chance to move and was crushed under a huge falling tree.

Bianca recalls the incident vividly: "When I hit the ground, I was in shock that I was still alive, I remember the sensation draining out of my legs and it was at that moment when I knew that I had some very serious injuries and my life would change forever".

Pinned under the fallen tree and in excruciating pain, Bianca was alone. Fortunately, passers-by came to her aid, calling an ambulance and comforting her until the ambulance arrived along with two fire brigade trucks, Search and Rescue and the SES.

Bianca was eventually cut free and remained conscious through what was a traumatic experience. "One of my last memories of the accident was when I was in the ambulance and the emergency crew asked me about cutting my wetsuit off. It was in that moment that I got really sharp pains in my chest and I remember thinking that's it for me".

"When I woke up the next day in ICU at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital, I just couldn't believe that I was alive and awake. I knew that I was paralysed, that I was possibly never going to walk again, and my first thought was how am I going to live like this?"

**“When I woke up the next day in ICU in the Royal North Shore Hospital, I just couldn't believe that I was alive and awake. I knew that I was paralysed, that I was never going to walk again, and my first thought was how am I going to live like this?”**

Five-months into her recovery at Prince of Wales hospital, Bianca was introduced to our Peer and Family Support team and instantly connected with team member Jess who is a similar age. Jess experienced a spinal cord injury in a car accident when she was 7 years old, and has a lifetime of lived experience and practical advice to share with Bianca.

Bianca was inspired by Jess' story and achievements and said to her grandma "If she can do it, I can do it". Bianca was able to see that not only could she live with a spinal cord injury, but with the right support and a positive attitude, she could thrive.

"Jess showed me that there really weren't any boundaries even though you're in a wheelchair, you can still do everything. Without the Peer and Family Support team I wouldn't have had the confidence to get back out in the world and I definitely wouldn't have got back into the surf which has really contributed to my overall happiness and hope for the future." Bianca said.



Bianca and Jess

The Peer and Family Support service only exists because of people like you, who believe in making a difference to the lives of those who, through no fault of their own, have been tragically impacted by spinal cord injury.

**This Christmas, we ask that you consider making a special donation to help us to continue to run the Peer and Family Support service which is largely self-funded. People like Bianca need our team to provide the hope and inspiration to rebuild their dreams and goals.**

Please click on the button below to make a life changing donation today or call us on **1800 819 775** to make a donation over the phone.



Kind regards,



**Dianne Lucas**  
Chief Executive Officer



Bianca and her friend Michelina

*PS: Thank you for your support this year – we rely on your generosity to help others.*