



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### icare RELEASES NEW GUIDANCE FOR LIVING WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY

Living with a spinal cord injury is a difficult journey, requiring ongoing support from paid and unpaid carers. icare's updated guidance tool will assist the injured person, their carers and the health professionals involved in making decisions about their support needs.

According to its developer Sue Lukersmith, a person-centred approach is the focus of the third edition of [Guidance on the support needs of adults with spinal cord injuries](#), produced by icare, the insurance and care provider for NSW.

"The injured person plays a key role in making decisions about the support they need. After all, they are the expert in understanding and managing their own progress, physical needs and goals," said Dr Lukersmith.

Dr Lukersmith undertook extensive research and review. She led a working party of experts, including health professionals, researchers, service providers, support workers and injured people. Over 14 months she drew on the experts' practical knowledge as well as the rich first-hand practical and lived experience of the injured person. The updated guidance includes simple definitions, screening tools, maintenance checklists, practical advice and links to information and resources focusing on the injured person.

"We asked those living with a spinal cord injury what support and resources they require, not just immediately following their initial assessment, but over time, as their age, condition and lifestyle change. We also involved their 'informal' unpaid carers – family members and friends who assist and support them," said Dr Lukersmith.

icare participant Jayme Langfield lives on a farm in Cowra with his family. He was invited to join the working party to provide lived experience expertise. For him, getting involved behind the scenes was a great opportunity.

"I was able to contribute my first-hand experiences so others can hopefully benefit. Everyone in the working group was open-minded and wanted to hear about my own experiences so that we could provide guidance that better supports others living with a spinal cord injury," said Mr Langfield.

Don Ferguson, Group Executive of icare's Integrated Care division, explained that icare's role is to support the long-term and lifelong needs of people who have sustained spinal cord injury and many other serious injuries occurred through a motor vehicle crash or at work.

"This new, multi-dimensional approach to decision-making aims to provide the injured person with more choice and control of support services. It is one of many integrated care initiatives we undertake to improve how we support participants to take greater control of their recovery," said Mr Ferguson.

"By including our customers, experts and international peer reviewers in the working party, icare has developed a truly person-centred resource which should be leveraged well beyond NSW – across Australia and around the world."

This week, members of the working party, carers, supporters and users gathered at icare's Sydney office to celebrate the launch of this innovative guide which is [now available online](#).

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