



Miraculous recovery begins journey to transform lives

Dean Troth
Concern Australia

Many of us experience an epiphany at some stage in our lives. Call it an epiphany – a mid life crisis – a sea change – or a need to buy a red sports car, today's speaker's own epiphany came a little earlier than most – at age 22.

At this tender age today's speaker had already worked for then Leader of the Democrats, Natasha Stott Despoja, and was working for a major lobby firm in Canberra during the era of the Howard Government. All that changed when he fell off a cliff while rock climbing during an adventure holiday in Thailand.

He fell ten metres, shattering his pelvis, several vertebrae, had internal bleeding around the brain and several vital organs. In the middle of the night, literally by the light of the moon, his guides white-water rafted him to a MASH-style refugee hospital on the Burmese border. He remembers none of this – he was near death. At dawn, a military helicopter airlifted him to Bangkok where, thanks to the grace of God and the generosity of a good travel insurance policy, he was treated by the King's personal surgeon.

Medical staff thought he wouldn't make it through the night.

But he did.

Then they proclaimed that he would never walk again. He did that too, in record time.

His recovery was nothing short of a miracle. Not only did he walk again, he experienced a radical shift in his thinking – about what was important, what seriously mattered in his short life, and if the Almighty had given him the opportunity to keep on living, he'd better make the most of it.

So he moved from Canberra to Melbourne and commenced what turned into a series of corporate jobs, each as soulless and frustrating as the last.

He realised his lot in life was not to increase the equity for an invisible Board or shareholders. So he took a job at the opposite end of the spectrum from the Paris end of Collins Street – in Collingwood, opposite the housing trust towers, in a crumbling old church frequented by bikers, the lost, the poor and the weary.



There, at Concern Australia – the youth welfare organisation that grew from the volunteer work of God’s Squad CMC with youth on the streets, in schools and in prisons - Dean has thrived and is intent on moving it from a small, community based charity that prides itself on dealing with the person as a whole, rather than the issue.... to a large community-based charity with exactly the same focus.

Dean’s major goal is to be able to raise the profile of Concern Australia so it can assist hundreds more young people who find themselves homeless on the steps of Flinders Street Station, and many other groups of marginalised youth Concern work with, not just with a food voucher or a pat on the back or a lecture on the evils of drinking, drugs or gambling – but a long-term change of attitude to life, and a fresh start on a journey of hope towards a new path in life.

Hear Dean share his incredible story at:

**Rotary Club of Southbank
Tuesday 6 October, 6.30pm**