



## JONATHAN'S STORY

When I was 12 years old I was hit by a car going too fast as I crossed the road near my home. I wasn't expected to live, then wasn't expected to walk, talk or even eat again. But I hate being told I can't do something, so with my mum and dad's help, I worked really hard and proved the doctors wrong! I went back to my old school and got my HSC, and now have a part time job and am learning to drive. After my accident I spent 5 months in Sydney Children's Hospital where all the nurses and some of the therapists made me feel special and that I would one day get my life back. After I left there I still went back twice a week for about 6 months as an outpatient, but then they thought I should look at getting rehab closer to home, so they lined up community rehab. I had to go to the local hospital at Sutherland for physiotherapy and all of a sudden I was in an old hospital with old people recovering from strokes, as well as that the physio used words I had not heard at the children's hospital, like 'spastic' for my tight muscles. I remember feeling very unhappy, and mum tells me that this is when my cycles of depression started. Mum decided to get me into the local gym and found a young guy to be my trainer and help get me stronger. This really cheered me up and I became good friends with my trainer Trent, who used to take me out to footy games as well! This worked well and for the next few years mum took me everywhere, even Melbourne, for expert neuro-physiotherapy, until I was old enough to go to the Liverpool Brain Injury Unit as an outpatient, where I still go to now. Overall I found transition from child services to adult services a really big difference – there were no clown doctors to cheer us up, or famous celebrities to meet, and now I miss the great outings and Christmas parties we used to have. When you're a child everyone tells you that you will get better – when you're 18 they stop saying that – but I still have goals, like running again, and I am prepared to do whatever it takes to get there!

### **Update 2007**

Over the last 18 months a lot has happened. I have been skiing in Canada where they all do a very good job at helping people like me ski. They have professional instructors as well as volunteers to help and I learnt to ski in just 3 days! I also now have 3 part time jobs – 2 are voluntary, at the video shop and at the local leisure centre – but one I get paid for! I work in a factory on a Tuesday and Friday where they distribute chocolates and biscuits to shops and I am on the end of the production line and I have to take all the carts off the rollers and stack them up on a pallet and then take them back to the front of the line. I

really love working there it makes me feel like a regular person and it is good to be busy every day although I still have to do all my stretches and exercises each day and oh yeah, guess what else I can now do – RUN! It has taken me over 8 years of training every day but it has been worth it. Maybe next year I can get back to some sports that I used to play like soccer.

