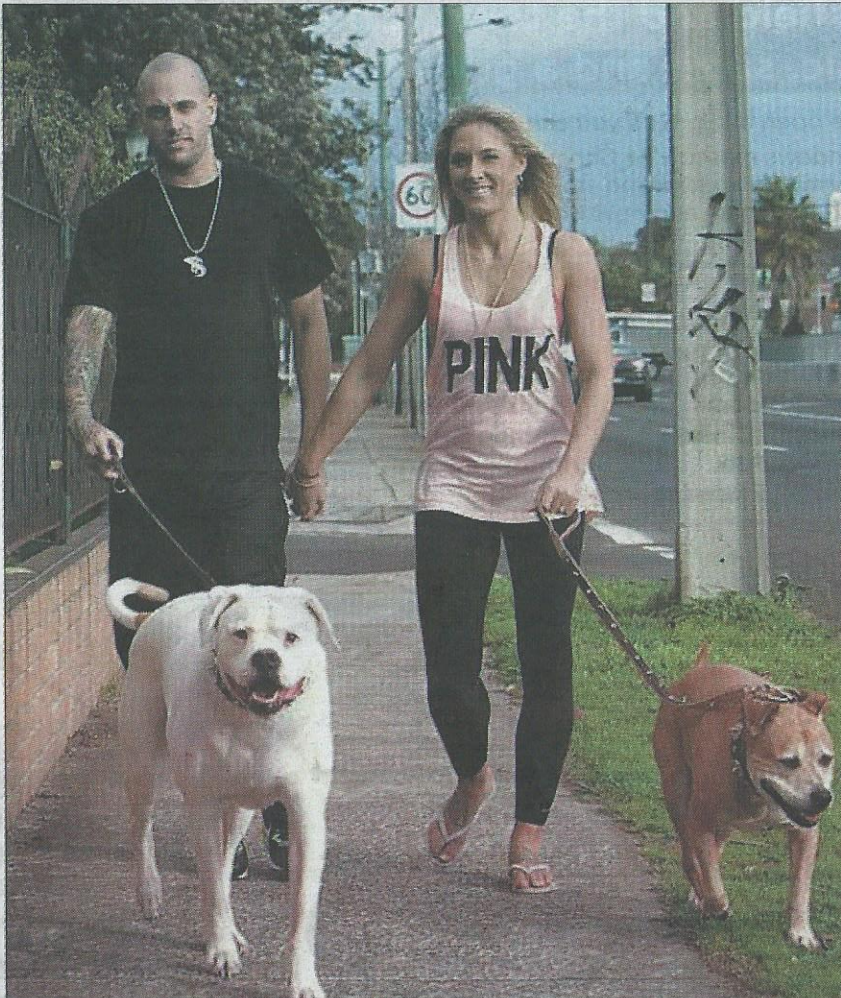


From elite snowboarder to instant quadriplegic

By RICHARD JAGO



LONG WAY BACK: Elite snowboarder, Josh Wood, has an inspiring story to tell of his relentless determination to walk again after an accident that left him quadriplegic. He is now walking unaided, seen here with his wife Amelia and dogs Thor (left) and Montana.

PHOTO: Nick Dale

SOMEONE once said – I think it was Ron Barassi – there are three kinds of people: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened.

In the same way when disaster strikes, people can choose to rise above the waves, float along on the tide or just be enveloped by waves of despair.

Josh Wood is definitely one of the first kind of people.

When he was 18 years old, Josh was an active snowboarder who suddenly came to grief at Mt Buller through actions he freely admits were risky.

With some of his friends he constructed a ramp to perform an aerial jump across a road, but he only made it halfway.

Through some misjudgement he landed on the road – on his head – seriously injuring his spine and becoming a quadriplegic instantly.

In the months that followed the horrific realisation, and under the shadow of professional advice he would never get out of bed again, Josh set himself the task not just to survive, but to walk again.

Now 13 years later, Josh is not only walking unaided but even riding dirt bikes and snowboarding.

But that is not to say he is free from pain – he experiences and lives with major nervous tissue pain, in addition to physical and mental stress, along with lack of circulation.

His journey was no cakewalk either, but it underscores the mental toughness this man had not to accept the status quo but to change it to suit his life view.

This is not to take anything away from his mother, Kay Ledson, who mobilised an alternative medicine team and supported Josh throughout the dark early days.

“I began by just toe,” he said.

“I reasoned if I then I could get ev

“By concentra moving, somehow weeks and hundre tion.”

Painfully, slow to his arms and le discharged himself just over four mon

After a further in his next ambit wheelchair and ta with the aid of cru

His next goal v and walk unaided fulfilled during a he participated in Spinal Cord Inju California.

Josh now acts a and has written a ney, which he hop recognise the pow ience of the huma utter dedication to

The book – Rel All Odds – has b America and is n Australia at ww

All books ord signed by Josh.

After meeting he could at last te will help others.

“I don’t regret Josh said, “becau have what I have i my mother, my m

“It doesn’t hel to think of some are – there are ce than me.”