

'At 25, I decided I was too young to die' Remarkable courage honoured

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WHEN Rosanna Robertson from West Ryde was shot in the back of the head nearly three years ago, she could have easily been killed.

After an argument with her then boyfriend at a pub, he took her outside, pulled out a gun and shot her, and it was two hours before she was able to crawl to a security guard for help.

Because of her slurred speech the security guard and paramedics assumed Ms Robertson was just drunk, and it wasn't until she arrived at hospital that staff realised she had been shot.

From here she spent one week in a drug-induced coma, a month in intensive care, two months in a hospital ward and six months at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre in Ryde.

So it was remarkable that last Wednesday morning Ms Robertson was able to stand up and give a speech when she was inducted to Royal Rehab's Wall of Fame as part of Brain Injury Awareness Week.

Four others were also added to the Wall of Fame – Neil Donnelly, Arabella Horton, James Poole and Robert Gallagher, their induction acknowledging the hard work and determination they had shown to rebuild their lives following serious and often life-threatening brain injuries.

Ms Robertson said she felt grateful to be alive every day.

"When I was shot, I remember thinking my little boy would need his mummy and at 25, I decided I was too young to die," she said.

"I have been home since June 2008 and my eight-year-old son has been living with me full-time for the past six months.

"I want to say thank you to all of the hospital staff."

A former fitness instructor, Ms Robertson currently uses a rollator frame and said her attention was now focussed on being able to walk.

It was an emotional morning for those who attended as the inductees shared their stories, with many upset by the uncertain future of the hospital given recent funding cuts.

One wheelchair bound Royal Rehab patient was in tears as he yelled out from the crowd "Thank you for all of the care I have had in here."

The annual Wall of Fame event is in its ninth year, and the photos and stories of all Wall of Fame members can be found on the walls of the brain injury unit.

Patients along with their friends and family members, hospital staff, members of the community and health staff attended the special event and morning tea last week to congratulate the latest round of inductees.



Clayton King announcing this year's inductees to the Wall of Fame.