

# Zane on road to recovery

MELISSA DAVEY

ZANE Conroy suffered a life-changing accident on Australia Day this year.

Like many other young people, the 27-year-old South African had been celebrating with friends by the water at Blues Point.

But when he decided to go for a swim, he misjudged the depth of the water and broke his neck after hitting his head on the sand.

"I was lying face down and I realised I wasn't able to move," Mr Conroy said.

"I couldn't kick myself over and eventually a friend jumped in and flipped me over. I said to him, 'you just saved my life'."

Mr Conroy said as they waited for the ambulance to arrive, his friends tried to reassure him everything would be OK.

"But I knew I would never walk again," Mr Conroy said. "From that moment, I had started dealing with this whole thing."

Mr Conroy was left a quadriplegic, but has made remarkable progress since then. He is now able to feed himself and use a mobile phone, plus he never misses a physiotherapy session.

He has refused to wallow in his pain and has remained determined and optimistic.

He now advocates for people to take out health insurance when they travel, which he wants to be made compulsory.

"Thankfully I had insurance to cover my in-hospital costs so my situation could have been a lot worse," he said.

"But it should be mandatory, with reminders on the back of aeroplane seats and in airports."



Picture:  
BRENT  
MCGILVARY

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DONATION TO HELP

■ Zane Conroy Fund, BSB 062 070, acct # 10249799  
Please include your name in the details field so organisers know who to thank.

■ By Paypal : [zaneconroyfund@yahoo.com.au](mailto:zaneconroyfund@yahoo.com.au)

■ By cheque to Zane Conroy Fund, 14/60  
Greenwich Rd, Greenwich, NSW 2065

■ RSVP to the fundraising dinner by email to  
[zaneconroyfund@yahoo.com.au](mailto:zaneconroyfund@yahoo.com.au) Tickets are \$90.

Because Mr Conroy is not yet an Australian citizen, he will not be entitled to any government assistance or funding once he leaves Royal Rehab in about a month.

He will need \$50,000 worth of special equipment before then, including an electronic wheelchair, a special bed and mattress as well as a hoist, plus a minimum of \$1000 a week for

continuing personal care. He also needs to find a home to rent along with two of his friends, who will help with his care.

Mr Conroy's friends have rallied around him and have organ-

ised a fundraiser evening at the Shelbourne Hotel, Sussex St, at 6.30 on June 17, which Mr Conroy will attend.

"The support has been overwhelming, sometimes I think I have more support in Australia than in South Africa," Mr Conroy said.

"I don't want to be a burden, and my goal is to be back at work by September 1. I am grateful to everyone, but I want people to know I want to become independent."

Editorial, Page 14