

My name is Peter Szentirmay. I am 52 years old. In 1990, I was assaulted. I had my own house, had a couple of spare bedrooms, and took in a friend as a boarder. It all started out ok, until one unfortunate day. Next thing I knew, I woke up in hospital. I had a cerebral haemorrhage; my head was out like a balloon. Because of that, I had a massive epileptic seizure and was rushed down to Melbourne. When I gained consciousness, two days later, I was in a hospital bed. And then I remembered, I had got king hit in my backyard. It all came back to me.

I eventually went home from hospital and was managing to live by myself the best I could. My father got me a spot in a disabled workshop where I was for 14 years. In 2004 I snapped my leg in half, finding out I had Osteo-Arthritis. When it came time to leave hospital this time, I went to live in a nursing home. Aged 42. Eight months later, I moved out of the nursing home. I was one of the first to receive a YPIRAC (Young people in residential aged care) funding package. I currently live in a Healthscope house, receiving the YPIRAC funding.

I call myself Hop-Along Cassidy, Peg-Leg Pete, Neil Armstrong (When I stand up, that's one small step for me, and one giant leap for myself). I now use a walker. I need a bit of help here and there but more or less I am independent. My short term memory isn't great, but ask me about something that happened 10 years ago!

Term of Reference (d) the appropriateness of the aged care system for care of young people with serious and/or permanent mental or physical disabilities

I was 42 when I went to live in a nursing home. All the elderly in there were old enough to be my grandparents. I was a new kid on the block, they were at least 40, 50 years older than me. I wasn't confronted, I am a sociable guy and I mix in with everyone. Anyone can be a friend of mine. You just have to go with the flow. They need hospital beds for people to come in and it was my time to get out of hospital. The nursing home was the place to go for that time being.

I always think "You never know what's around the corner" and "Life wasn't meant to be easy."

After a while I felt like the odd one out. Young people shouldn't be in nursing homes. I was glad to get out. God bless my family. They fought for the YPIRAC funding to move me out of the nursing home. They fought for me to live where I am now, to be set up for the rest of my life.

Term of Reference (i) what have you achieved by virtue of YPIRAC (MyFutureMyChoice) funding and what are you afraid of losing?

I was in the nursing home 8 months before I secured the YPIRAC funding package to move out. I moved out to a Healthscope house, where I still live. I will probably be here till the day I die, it suits me just fine.

I can do anything expect hopping, skipping and jumping. I am out and about most days of the week. I am in a lot of groups, like the men's ABI group, Interchange and woodwork group. I also go to gym.

Living in supported accommodation I am around people my own age group. I can just come and go as I like, I can do all the basic things, everything is good. One of the best things is I've always got support and help if I need it. And another great thing is I've got is good company. The clients and the staff are great. Living in this house is just like another family.

The YPIRAC funding allows me to have all my needs met.

My Ideal World

I prefer to be living in supported accommodation, it is the best. Although wouldn't it be lovely if it could be not far from the country, not far from the ocean, not far from the city where I could go shopping and all that stuff.

I always say, anything unfortunate you go through, something good can come out of it. For me, acquiring my brain injury, it has turned my life around. Although living with pain, it has changed my life for the better. I know now, by sharing my story with other people, it can make them change their own attitudes about themselves and life.