



PARAPLEGIC  
BENEFIT FUND



Meet the men and women who have earned the right to speak from their own experiences, and who share their life-changing stories with the workplace, schools, corporate & community groups.

Extraordinary stories told by extraordinary people to motivate and inspire audiences.

## Our Speakers

### *Injury Prevention Program*

reduces injuries in the workplace and promotes a stronger safety culture

### *Inspirational stories*

that allow audiences to share in the moments that changed the lives of ordinary individuals

### *Motivational presentations*

will change perceptions of personal safety, and challenge attendees to consider safety as a core life value



# Our Speakers

## *Symon Still* Injury Prevention Manager



**"No one is immune from a spinal cord injury.  
There is only prevention because there is no cure"**

At 24 Symon's life was moving fast and on track. Head physical education teacher, high level triathlete and top sportsman. He was focused and he had plans. On his way to work his mind wandered to these plans and he was struck by an inattentive driver who was on his way to the office. The crash left Symon with a permanent spinal cord injury, a partial quadriplegic. Symon visits workplaces and high schools and shares his story with the intent that it will make employees and young drivers think about their actions and inactions, both on the job and behind the wheel. Symon's story leaves a powerful realisation that goals and dreams could be shattered forever in the aftermath of a spinal cord injury.

## *Angelo Pappicco*

**"My greatest fear was how I would provide for my family"**

Returning from a community function, Angelo was struck from his motorbike by a vehicle driven by a distracted driver. Angelo had just begun a new career in IT and his life goals were on track. Suffering from extensive injuries to his spinal cord, wrist and shoulder meant that rehabilitation was long and painful. His employer provided a coordinated return-to-work plan, which meant he could continue to take care of his family. Angelo's positive outlook on life contributed to him successfully returning to full time work as a manager of I.T. projects. Angelo shares his story to Return-to-Work/ Injury Management specialists to motivate them and their injured workers to engage in a plan that will allow them to return to employment. Angelo is also part of the injury prevention team, motivating new drivers to follow the rules and drive safely.



## *Roz Shaw*

**"While you think you are invincible, you have to remember that you are inexperienced – think about possible consequences of poor driving, not only for you, but also for your family and friends"**



At the age of 18, and driving on P-Plates, Roz acquired a brain injury as a result of a car crash. While on a road trip with three friends, Roz momentarily lost concentration, inadvertently veering into gravel on the side of the road, and over-turning her car. In the course of the crash, Roz sustained a fractured spine and permanent damage to her cerebellum (the brain's control centre for balance, coordination and speech.) Roz is a PBF ambassador and tells her story mostly to 16 – 18 year old young ladies at high schools in Perth.



## *Karen Harvey*

**"I saw all the warning signs, but thought nothing would happen to me"**

Karen is a paraplegic following a car crash at the age of 22 in a vehicle driven by her boyfriend who was under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The car travelling at 140km/hr collided with a bridge. Karen's many injuries included a severed spinal cord. Rehabilitation was tough for a young mum who had aspirations of being a sportswoman. She took on motherhood and further career development with a strong will to succeed in life. Her story reminds audiences to assess risky situations and to make decisions to preserve your own safety.

## *Matt Naysmith*

**"It took me 21 years to get my life to where it was, it only took one moment to lose it all"**

In December 2007, with his career and life goals on track, Matt Naysmith slipped from a rock in the Karijini National Park in WA. He sustained a permanent and complete spinal cord injury. His story of injury and survival is part of the Injury Prevention program to high school students and workplaces and includes Matt's insight into peer pressure, risk-taking behaviours and attitudes to safety. Matt is also a recipient of the \$100,000 PBF member benefit payment as the sports club he belonged to, were corporate members of PBF.



## *Ricardo Jansen*

**"I was on top of the world, everything was going my way when an accident that should not have happened, changed my life forever"**

As a 23 year old marine science student, life was sweet for Ricardo. But a distracted driver changed all that when he ploughed into him while he was stationary on his motorbike at a traffic light. He catapulted through a third vehicle's back window. Ricardo died at the scene, but a nurse who was there, resuscitated him. Since that day, he has not breathed on his own for more than an hour – he is a ventilated quadriplegic. Ricardo's remarkable attitude to life and others, makes it easy for him to tell his injury story as part of the PBF Youth and PBF Road programs.





## *Peter Allen*

**"Next time you see someone doing something that could put them at risk, say something...you could save their life!"**

Peter was injured at work at the age of 37. He fell while rushing to get a job done. Peter was a truck driver delivering goods on a Friday afternoon and hurried to get the job done as he was looking forward to the weekend ahead. His mind wasn't on the risks and his own safety, and he fell from a pallet stack onto a concrete floor. Peter is now a T10 paraplegic who tells his story with the view to highlighting the dangers of distraction, short-cuts and ignorance. He is a leisure hand-cyclist and a PBF ambassador.

## *Mike Rowney*

**"Safety is an attitude and can be adjusted"**

Mike fell from a friend's yacht in the dry dock while fishing in Greece, and the resulting spinal injuries caused permanent paraplegia. In 2001 Mike returned to his home in Perth, and now works part time as a PBF presenter doing workplace presentations on the importance of safety. Mike's story reveals all of the challenges a paraplegic faces – from financial ruin to ongoing health issues. Mike is extremely passionate about responsibility and safety, and his engaging story resonates with workplace audiences and community groups. Sometime after his accident, Mike generously sailed to East Timor to deliver wheelchairs for children in that country.



## *Lenny Ettridge*

**"Humans realize how fragile they are when the body suffers a spinal cord injury"**

Lenny Ettridge became a Paraplegic as the result of a shooting accident in Mukinbudin. Spotlight shooting on a friend's farm in March 1967 a shotgun was left loaded and put into the back of a vehicle pointing at the driver. Lenny's story of being a young man high on life is in direct contrast to the painful and challenging consequences of living with paraplegia. He is a grandfather and country singer who also DJ's on radio. Many O H & S representatives would have heard him speak, as he regularly delivers his story as part of their training.

## *Jane Hutch*

**"The new start I planned for my life, ended up being far different to what I was expecting"**

Jane fell from a balcony with a low balustrade on Christmas day in 2009. Jane remembers how in the months leading up to Christmas that year she decided to start a new chapter in her life, make big changes, and to be bold. Dreams and plans are easily lost when facing life in a wheelchair. Dealing with a spinal cord injury as a mature woman has many challenges as Jane has found. She is considering telling her story to other women in WA.



## Scott Oles

**"Regardless of age, a spinal cord injury is for the rest of your life"**

Scott was very young when he was a passenger in a motor vehicle crash, where the driver was distracted and lost control of the vehicle. Scott suffered very serious injuries, including a spinal cord injury. He admits that life as a paraplegic is sometimes challenging, but nonetheless he finds reward in telling others of the risks of being a distracted driver, to oneself, and also to those you love, as part of PBF's Road program.



## Geoff (Spider) Hart

**"When prescribed procedures are not followed, the potential for a serious event occurring is multiplied dramatically, with potentially catastrophic consequences, to yourself and to others"**

A qualified pilot, Geoff was no stranger to the demands of cattle mustering in the Pilbara. Co-piloting a helicopter that was engaged to assist with the mustering, Geoff experienced the frightening force of being in an aircraft and falling to the ground at high speed following a technical malfunction. After being airlifted to Royal Perth Hospital, Geoff spent 7 months in the Spinal Unit in Shenton Park. He tells every detail of that fateful day, from waking in his swag on that glorious Pilbara morning, fit and healthy, to the difficult lessons learnt about not following prescribed safety procedures.



## Paul D'Vorak

**"Life should be an adventure"**

Only a few years ago, a celebration turned to tragedy when Paul was pushed onto a trampoline, and was accidentally trampled when he got in the way, breaking his neck. Paul is an incomplete quadriplegic with limited use of his hands. He tells his story about the effects of alcohol on the ability to make sound decisions, and how, without considering consequences, our actions can tragically impact on the lives of others, even friends. Paul's story of personal loss and life-changing events since his accident is inspiring. He lives in Bunbury, WA.



## Mark Powdrill

**"Think about the choices you make, as they can have a life-long effect on yourself and others"**

Mark Powdrill was an active 20 year old when a swim in the Swan River changed his life forever. Celebrating Australia Day in January 1988 with friends, a dive into shallow water in the Swan River, resulted in him breaking two vertebrae (C4 and C5), paralysing him from the chest down and leaving him with limited movement in his arms. Prior to his injury, Mark was working as a second class welder and studying architecture at night school. Mark delivers his courageous story to young people emphasizing the importance of safety in and around water as part of PBF's Aqua Injury Prevention program.





## *Daniel Marzocchi*

**"Safe equipment and procedures can save your life"**

Danny was fit, active and a professional arboriculturist. Highly sought after and respected for getting the job done safely, Danny used the best personal protective equipment, always planned jobs with safety procedures and rescue plans. These plans and equipment saved his life. One afternoon when working east of Perth the equipment failed and Danny fell 15 metres to the ground. The helmet saved his life and his rescue plans meant he could be quickly flown to RPH in time for life saving intervention. However the fall damaged his spinal cord leaving him confined to a wheelchair. His positive spirit continues as he still supervises other less experienced arboriculturists and shares his story so that others can learn from the tragic consequences of unexpected equipment failings that can and do happen.

## *Bridget Cheffins*

**"Don't think it won't happen to you, because it can.  
Think rather how you can prevent it from happening"**

At the age of 17 Bridget had a bright future to look forward to. An innocent weekend party was to change the course of her life. Bridget accepting a lift with a group of friends. The driver had been drinking and the car was overloaded. He drove recklessly crashing the car. Bridget was not wearing a seatbelt and was thrown from the vehicle breaking her C5 vertebrae paralyzing her from the chest down and leaving her with limited arm function. Bridget delivers her story to teenagers encouraging them to always wear seatbelts and at all costs not to drink and drive, or be a passenger with a driver who has been drinking.



## *Peter Darch*

**"We don't think about being young and vulnerable  
and that our lives can change in an instant"**

Peter is a presenter of PBF's Aquatic program in the Peel Region of WA. Peter suffered a spinal cord injury when a friend jumped off the old Mandurah bridge, landed on Peter and fracturing his neck at C4. His story about being young and adventurous, together with a disregard for warning signs, is a reminder that safety is an attitude that determines behavior and can have devastating consequences. Peter uses a helper dog to help him with simple tasks, works full time for the City of Mandurah and shares his powerful story for PBF to inspire others to make wise, safe decisions and be motivated by what life has to give.





## Programs

The Paraplegic Benefit Fund (PBF) is a not-for profit organization which has been involved in safety since 1984.

The team delivers award-winning injury prevention programs to reduce the number of injuries and accidents in the workplace and in the community

Our programs are designed to positively influence attitudes to safety, raise awareness of serious injury and provide the knowledge and skills to help prevent it.

- Workplace Program** A thought-provoking program that inspires workers to participate in safe work practices. This unique program demonstrates the potentially devastating consequences of unsafe work practices through a first-hand account of serious work-related injury, told by a PBF ambassador.
- Road Program** An award-winning program that targets young people aged 15 – 17 years who are novice drivers, and aims to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting from road crashes.
- Aqua Program** A unique program that seeks to prevent serious injuries and drowning in the primary school age group.
- PBF Youth Program** Encourages young people to assess risks, value their own safety and enjoy their lives.

## *Commendations:*

### **About our Workplace presentations:**

"Firstly I cannot thank you enough for sharing your life experiences with our people and for having touched the hearts and minds of so many of us who were fortunate to hear you speak. You have influenced the way they think about safety; your message was loud and clear; yes it can happen to anyone of us. What you are doing for society as a whole, in giving a strong and passionate message on safety, is commendable. You have certainly made me think twice about how something routine can change your life if you take your eyes off the ball." - **Woodside**

"We need our teams to understand the consequences of their actions and what better way to do it than use the PBF presenters to give a first-hand account of their experiences and answer questions in person. We had a 2009 "Making it Personal" campaign to help reduce our incidents and we achieved a 69% reduction in incidents, along with other campaigns the PBF presentations definitely contributed to this improvement."

- **Conoco Phillips**

"That was one of the best presentations I have ever seen"

"That has changed how I think about safety"

"Everyone needs to see this"

"That one hour was more transforming than a day's safety training"

- **Co-operative Bulk Handling**

### **About our Road presentations:**

"The PBF talks are likely to have more impact on the students than the rest of the unit of work."

- **John XXIII College**

"Very powerful messages about health and wellbeing, making good choices and being responsible for the safety of self and others. Feedback from staff and students has been overwhelmingly positive."

- **Narogin Senior High School**

## *Booking*

To enquire about or to make a reservation for a speaker for your next corporate, O H & S, schools or community event, call PBF on 1800 809 780 or (08) 9388-3366. Enquiries can also be made via the PBF website

[www.pbf.asn.au](http://www.pbf.asn.au)

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