

CATWALK

NEVER SAY NEVER

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust



THIS ISSUE

July 2020

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A special thank you to our supporters who help us produce this magazine





The MacCallum Family

Founder's FOOTNOTE

Research is CatWalk's focus. Research that makes a real difference to those living with a spinal cord injury.

Dear CatWalkers

When the going gets tough -- yes you know it, the tough get going. COVID has certainly been an interesting time for everyone. One thing's for sure, we will all remember 2020.

The daily funnies sent through by CatWalk ambassador Hamish Ramsden, along with Nadia Lim's My Food Bag, have been lifesavers for me. The consistent baking from the neighbours meant working harder on the next bike ride if I was to avoid a repeat of a comment from riding friend Maurice Beatson many years ago in the spring: "My you've wintered well!"

The CatWalk filly (Brazen Beau - Stepanova) donated by Darley in 2017, purchased by Kevin and Jo Hickman and then auctioned off at NZB's Karaka 2020 sale to the bid of Jo and Brendon Lindsay is literally the gift that keeps giving. Jo, Jo and I have the honour of selecting her name as she steps out into her racing career so please, send in lots of creative suggestions. No pressure but make sure it's a winning one!

With thanks to Darley's owner Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, Vin Cox and Alastair Pulford, CatWalk is the lucky recipient of a service to their newest stallion to stand in Australia: Microphone. Fully booked for the 2020 season means only though CatWalk can you secure his service. We love this "big picture team" @ Darley who're always aiming for the big accolades on the track and also recognise CatWalk's focus on the big SCI cure. Team Darley, your recognition of the importance of supporting world class SCI research is not just admirable but critical. Thank you for backing CatWalk.

Each time CatWalk throws an event, takes on an adventure or steps up to a challenge the CatWalk family grows. So many

people have stepped up and created their own challenges recently where CatWalk has been lucky to benefit. A special thanks to you all and everyone for supporting them as we know how tough these challenges are. To have put yourself in the spotlight to achieve every wheelie's dream is incredibly special.

The French adventure last year gained 76 new members and I'd like to make a special shout out to Dave MacCullum. Dave, a lawyer based in Hawkes Bay, joined us with his partner Pru, sister Rosie and brother in law Paul, son Dougal and Dougal's girlfriend Robyn. Their final speech in week 2 was worthy of an international award. Quite simply Dave "got" why we were in France. We wanted adventures with like-minded friends and we wanted a cure for spinal cord injury. Dave and his family were there to back us all the way. We lost Dave on 18th May to that other C word. It has rocked me. It reiterates how precious our days are with like-minded friends and family and how the greatest gift you can give anyone is time.

Post-COVID the world will be different. But for me my goal is still the same, dancing with Sam on my feet, and after dialling in on the latest CatWalk board meeting I can assure you the drive from the team at the helm is as strong and focused as it has ever been. They're a diverse group of passionate people brought together with one goal to support the very best cutting edge research to get wheelies walking again. Every decision is moulded around this outcome and you can be sure CatWalk and every dollar of your support is in great hands.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR International Patron

Dear CatWalk friends and family

What challenging times we have all been living through. Whether we're in the UK, New Zealand or somewhere else in our beautiful world, no one will have been untouched (directly or indirectly) by the effects of COVID-19.

Here at home, I am very proud to have been involved with the Equestrian Relief project, with the main aim being to get everyone involved in doing as much as possible to support and help others across Britain.

Like the team behind CatWalk, Equestrian Relief recognises the power of equestrian sport to raise money and change lives. All donations to our cause have been going directly to the NHS Charities COVID-19 Urgent Appeal.

As you will be with your frontline healthworkers in New Zealand, I am so proud of our NHS staff and the way everyone has pulled together. Our nightly "Clap for Carers" is something that has really taken off and brought the nation closer.

Let us all hope that COVID-19 is soon controlled and 'normality' resumes. Until then, Mike and I send you our love and support.

Zara Tindall, MBE



Clapping for Carers

NATIONAL PATRONS

Richie McCaw ONZ; Dr Rick Acland, Dion Nash; Lance O'Sullivan, ONZM; Aaron Slight MNZM; Toni Street, Sir Mark Todd, CBE; Sarah Walker, Duane Kale ONZM; Dame Lowell Goddard, DNZM, QC.

TRUSTEES

David Pretorius (Chair), Deb Haworth (Deputy Chair), Emeritus Professor Louise Nicholson, Grant Sharman, Tom Brady, Paul Wilcox, Fiona Webby, Simon Manners.

Chairman's Report

Our vision is a world free from spinal cord injury paralysis and the role of CatWalk is to fund world - class research which will help create this reality. Thank you for being a part of this. I am delighted to again present this report of the progress of the CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Research Trust for the year ended 31 March 2020. It turned out to be another momentous year for the Trust.

As a result of the generosity of all of you, our donors, the Trust generated a net profit of \$449,706 on revenue of \$1,298,507. During the financial year, payments of \$222,853 were made to scientific research projects of an exceptional nature, sponsorship of educational programmes, and the continued funding of the state-of-the-art Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility based at the University of Auckland.

I want to make mention of the seemingly low proportionate Dollar value of grant payments made during the year (\$222,853). This inconsistency is due to the nature of scientific research. Each of the projects currently funded by CatWalk span at least a two-year term, meaning that payments are made in fluctuating annual instalments. By way of example, as it currently stands today, we are already committed to making grant payments of \$939,589 for the 2021 financial year, with more outstanding applications already undergoing external review.

Judicious governance and fully transparent financial policies ensure that CatWalk is always at the ready to immediately support breakthrough spinal cord injury research, and even cope with an unprecedented global pandemic!

Here is where your money went during the 2020 financial year.

Project funding

PhD student Connor Clemett has been working in the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility in Auckland on a two-year study to combine gene therapy with cell therapy. Connor injects cells into the injured cord that wrap around nerve cells and improve the connection with other cells. This approach aims to make stronger new connections, leading to even better outcomes. A grant of \$38,077 was paid (out of the total funding of \$114,777 approved over a three year term).

The next step would be to use a new technology where cells can be grown from the skin cells of a person with a spinal cord injury, again increasing the chance that such an approach will be successful.

Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (Auckland)

A number of existing and new projects continue to progress in the lab and under the leadership of Dr. Simon O'Carroll, together with his team of specialist researchers, additional funding from other sources is now occurring.

\$83,554 was paid out (of the total funding of \$167,107 approved for payment over two years), to cover the costs of a Technical Manager

to manage the day-to-day running of the Facility and provide expert technical support and training. This funding also allowed for a Student induction programme to introduce undergraduate biomedical science and medical students to the fields of spinal cord injury research.

Joint Funding Partnership

The strategic partnership between The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and CatWalk to fund research into spinal cord injury continued into its second year. Together, the goal is to support further innovative research into treatments and an eventual cure for spinal cord injury.

Funding of \$79,365 was paid out (of the total funding of \$250,000 approved for payment over three years), to a project, headed by Associate Professor Darren Svirskis, who is investigating an innovative new treatment combining both beneficial electrical fields and nerve growth factors to regenerate damaged nerves following spinal cord injury. They will first determine the best combination of treatment parameters in vitro before delivering them through their bioelectronic implant to an animal model. In the animal model they will seek to demonstrate that damaged nerves can be regenerated and functional recovery achieved.



The CatWalk board with researchers from the SCIRF

Sponsorship

The Trust once again contributed \$15,000 towards sponsorship of the Brain Bee Challenge. This is an annual competition for high school students (in year 11) to learn about the brain and its functions, understand the latest discoveries in neuroscience research and to find out about the exciting career opportunities brain research has to offer. Previous Brain Bee alumni are currently working within the SCIRF as part of the Studentship programme, while others are completing their PhD and Postdoctoral studies.

Sponsorship of AU\$6,5000 for Professor Michael Fehlings to attend as the keynote speaker at the meeting of the Australian & New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) was paid in March 2020. Due to Covid-19, this conference has now been postponed until 2021.

Here's how we fundraised during financial year 2020.

La Loire et CatWalk

Thanks to Anita and James MacKenzie for their donation of the use of their Chateau d'Oyre. Over a four week period in May and June 2019, 76 guests had the opportunity to eat, drink, walk, cycle and laugh their way through the Loire Valley. Guests paid for a once in a lifetime experience which had been lovingly crafted especially for them. Net proceeds went directly to spinal cord injury research.

Marathons

Taking place in October 2019, TeamCatWalk ran various distances at the Auckland Marathon. The 60-strong team ranged in age from 12 through to the mid 70s, with all team members running and walking with big smiles on their faces! All distances were covered from the 5km walk through to the full marathon, and also included Laura Stuart and Wesley Pigg in the wheeled division which is now a permanent category of the marathon after the successful trial in 2018.

Then, soon after, TeamCatWalk continued our love affair with the New York City marathon, taking another team of Kiwis over to this magnificent city in order to complete this world-famous marathon event. The November event broke new records in having more than 53,000 runners complete the circuit, making it the largest collection of marathon finishers in history! I returned for my 5th (and final!) New York marathon run, taking a team of 8 very committed runners with me. Once again, everyone funded their own way there in addition to raising funds for spinal cord injury. The team successfully raised over \$65,000 for this campaign, which took the collective total with the Auckland marathon to over \$150,000.

Over the course of my last 5 New York marathons plus the two most recent Auckland marathons, the collective CatWalk team effort, which includes well over 200 people from all walks of life, has raised over \$800,000. It has been an unforgettable experience for me personally, and I wanted to thank each and every runner for the part they have played in this incredible "Running so others can walk" campaign. It is not over yet, and we have purchased more entries for the Auckland 2020 marathon, which we hope occurs in Early November this year.

Filly-anthropy

Lot Number 313 at the January 2020 NZ Bloodstock Yearling Sales was incredibly significant for spinal cord injury research. The sale was a culmination of a story which started in 2018 with a donation of the Brazen Beau service fee by Godolphin at CatWalk's Remarkable event. The service was purchased that evening by Jo and Kevin Hickman, with the resulting filly being produced by their Stepanova mare.

Furthermore, Jo and Kevin also offered the sale proceeds of this remarkable filly to CatWalk. Preparation of the filly was supported by an expert team at Valachi, and also included Matamata Veterinary Services, Whitehall Farriers, NRM Equine Feeds, BetaVet Supplements, Mark Old Dentistry, and Savvy Touch Chiropractor/physiotherapist. NZ Bloodstock waived the entry and commission fees on the sale, all in the name of supporting spinal cord injury research.

As she was led into the sales ring by the handler from Valachi Downs Stud, all eyes were on her. The auctioneer's hammer slammed down hard on the final sale price of \$200,000. And the purchasers were none other than Cambridge Stud, owned by longtime CatWalk supporters Brendan and Jo Lindsay. Stuff of fairytales.

Other notable happenings during the year included:

- Ongoing partnerships with Mitavite, an equine nutrition company, Magnum Industries, which manufactures and supplies walkers, stables and hardware for the equine and agricultural industries, and New Zealand Agriseeds selling bags of a specialist horse pasture seed mix exclusively for sale by CatWalk.
- Bell Gully and Findex again provided pro-bono legal and accounting services respectively. Their services in-kind save the

CatWalk Trust thousands of Dollars, all of which go straight back into research projects.

- Significant donations were received from generous donors, of which we give ongoing thanks: Thompson Family Foundation, Dorothy Cutts, Scarlet Trust and the Jones Foundation.

Thank you to our Board of Trustees and Founder for their unwavering commitment to CatWalk. Thank you also to the CatWalk team - Meg, Chris and Donna - for their endless hard work and sincere interest in the cause over the past year. Thank you to our Patrons and Ambassadors for their dedication.

But most importantly, I would like to thank you. We cannot make a difference without you. Thank you for your help in funding and helping to find a cure for spinal cord injury.

David Pretorius
Chairman | CatWalk Board of Trustees



CatWalk Chair David Pretorius with Auckland Marathon 2019 team member Wesley Pigg

JUNE 2020

Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility Progress Update

The beginning of 2020 has been a challenging time for the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility.

Due to Covid-19 the lab being closed for nearly two months, which has, unfortunately, had an impact on research progress. But we are now back on board, with research underway and everybody rearing to get things moving again. All the projects underway in the SCIRF are progressing nicely, and we are looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

Use of multi-electrode arrays for the guidance of nerve cells

The most recent project underway in the SCIRF is developing the use of microelectrode arrays to guide the regrowth of nerve cells after spinal cord injury. This project was funded by a joint Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC)/CatWalk Trust initiative and is a collaboration between Associate Professor Darren Svirakis, an expert in designing drug delivery systems and Dr Simon O'Carroll in the SCIRF, who are leading a large team of scientists and students working on this project; Dr Sam Paritt, Dr Bruce Harland, Dr Brad Raos, Dr Ziad Arqawe, Anusha Dravid and Ernest Cheah. By using the microelectrodes to deliver electrical currents to the nerve cells of the spinal cord, and by selecting the correct current, we will be able to stimulate the nerve cells to grow and

“By using the microelectrodes to deliver electrical currents to the nerve cells of the spinal cord, and by selecting the correct current, we will be able to stimulate the nerve cells to grow and reconnect.”

reconnect. These electrodes can also be used to deliver growth-promoting drugs to the cord in combination with electrical stimulation. They will be a powerful tool for the repair of the spinal cord after injury. To date, we have designed systems for testing drug delivery to cells on culture and are currently adding electrodes to allow electrical stimulation. These systems will allow us to trial potential treatments before moving to move complex animal models. We can implant electrodes in our model of spinal cord injury and detect signals from the cord. Current work is optimising this, and once we have done this, we will determine changes in electrical activity following injury and trial electrical stimulation to repair the cord.



“...We are undertaking a project where we can use a camera to look at changes in the brain and spinal cord as they happen.”

Visualising changes in the spinal cord after injury

To improve our ability to develop effective techniques to repair the spinal cord, it is essential to follow the changes that occur in the spinal cord and the brain with our treatments. To do this, we are undertaking a project where we can use a camera to look at changes in the brain and spinal cord as they happen. This work is in collaboration with Dr Juliette Cheyne, an expert in a method that uses a cutting-edge microscope to look at brain and spinal cord tissue in a living animal. The work is being carried by PhD student Ms Zahra Laouby, funded by the generous support of the Jon and Louise Nicholson Spinal Cord Injury Research Scholarship. We are currently optimising experiments to visualise nerve cells in both the brain and the spinal cord. Later this year, we plan to do these experiments following a spinal cord injury.

Gene therapy and cell transplantation

To build on our previous work using gene therapy to break down scar tissue in the cord and improve recovery after spinal cord injury, we have a project underway to transplant cells into the injured spinal cord. These cells will help protect new nerve cells that grow following our gene therapy and lead to even greater improvements. This project is a collaboration with Associate Professor Debbie Young and Professor Bronwen Connor from the Centre of Brain Research and is being carried out by PhD student Connor Clemett. We have determined the best time to transplant cells, and Connor is currently optimising how to programme these cells so that they will give the best protection to the new nerve cells. Early next year, we plan to carry out experiments where we add the cells to the injured spinal cord.

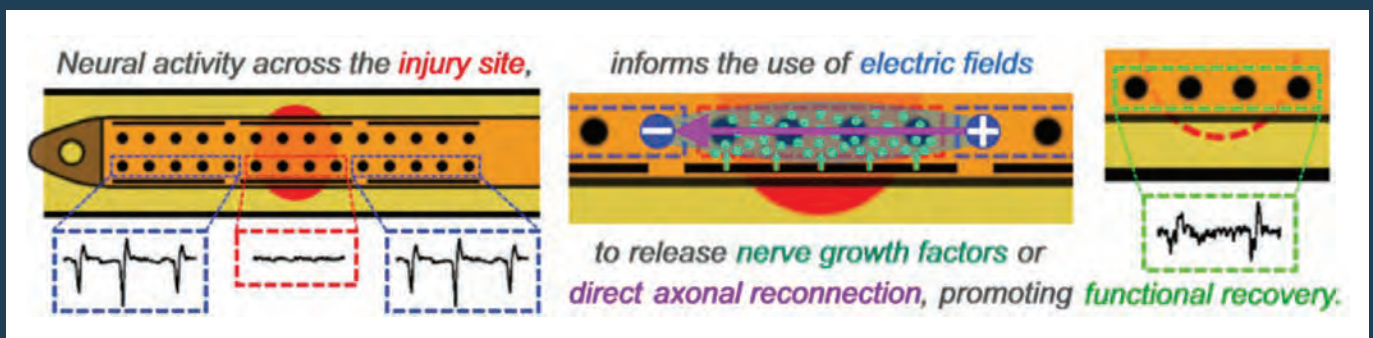


Figure 1: Design of the microelectrode arrays – Understanding changes in electrical signals in the cord after injury will be used to deliver the right signals to promote functional recovery in the spinal cord.

CatWalk/HRC Funding Partnership

UPDATE FROM ASSOCIATE PROF. DARREN SVIRSKIS

Funding for this project started on 1 of March 2020 for a three year period.

Preliminary research activities were already underway and there has been a seamless transition. Since this funding was granted we are pleased that the named investigators, Drs Brad Raos and Bruce Harland, have received additional support from the Neurological Foundation which allows them to concentrate 100% of their research efforts in this research area for the next two years, at least.

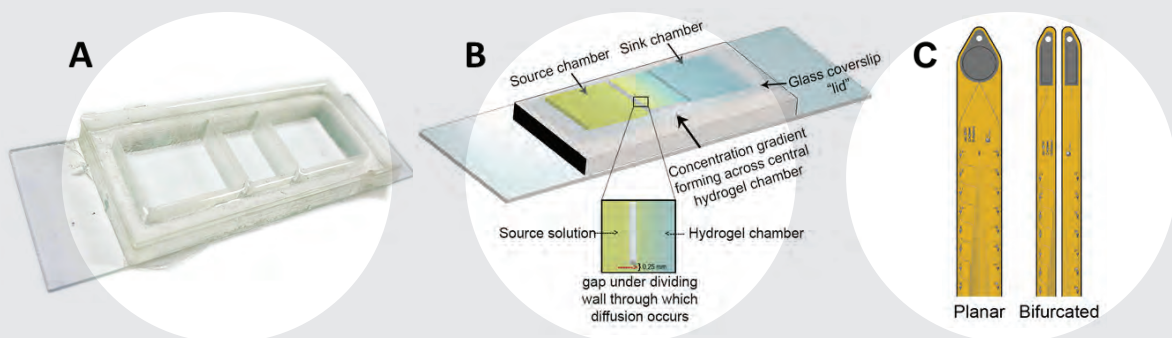
The research is progressing with Anusha Dravid, a PhD student in our group, recently publishing a manuscript that describes a gradient generator that can be used to investigate how cells, such as neurons, respond to concentrations of drugs or growth factors. We have some concerns on whether the size of the gradients will be sufficient to guide nerve cell growth following a spinal cord injury, so we are exploring an improved system. Over the next 6 months (COVID-19 dependent) Anusha will explore a new type of gradient generator that is prepared by 3D printing gels using equipment recently purchased by the School

of Pharmacy. We have gained a strong understanding of requirements in this area with Anusha publishing a second article, a review titled, ‘Determining neurotrophin gradients in vitro to direct axonal outgrowth following spinal cord injury’.

We are currently negotiating for the purchase of a custom cell stretching device by the University of Auckland that can stretch cells very quickly and precisely. We will use this to damage cultures of nerve cells as a model of spinal cord injury. These injured cells will then be used to investigate potential treatments, including using the gradient generator described in the paragraph above.

“We are currently negotiating for the purchase of a custom cell stretching device by the University of Auckland that can stretch cells very quickly and accurately”

Regarding our bioelectronic implant we have recently made changes to reduce the width and alter the design, where the implant is split like a forked tongue to lie on either side of the posterior spinal vein. We have tested these changes in rats and have shown that the implant can be placed on the surface of a spinal cord of rats for 7 days with no negative physiological changes or lasting motor impairments. Obviously this is very important as the treatment should not cause further damage!



Above: Figure A and B show the gradient generator made to investigate how cells respond to concentrations of growth factor. Figure C shows a schematic of the bioelectrode implant with the original planar design and the new bifurcated design which is like a forked tongue and sits either side of a major vein on the spinal cord.



A group of CatWalkers had the opportunity to visit the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility at Auckland University on March 11th to view and discuss the research with Dr Simon O'Carroll and the team. The group which included a selection of our 2019 Auckland Marathon team and founding Trustee, Greer Draper, were impressed with the facility and found the visit wonderfully informative.

A Stimulating Story

CATWALK'S MOST RECENTLY APPROVED GRANT FUNDING IS OUR LARGEST YET

In 2011 *The Lancet*, one of the world's most prestigious medical journals, did something unusual. It published a paper with an "n = 1", meaning the results were from a sample size of just a single person.

For a journal dedicated to evidence-based medicine, and a peer-reviewed publication with low tolerance for margin of error, the willingness to publish such a study demonstrated the extraordinary nature of the reported breakthrough.

The study detailed the case of C7/T1 paraplegic Rob Summers, the first person in the world to receive an epidural electrical stimulator to treat spinal cord injury. For the first time ever, a peer-reviewed scientific paper showed it was possible to restore meaningful movement and function to a person years after they were paralysed.

Fast-forward to 2018, and another incredible milestone in SCI research was reached — six volunteers recovered the ability to stand and walk with only the aid of a walking frame for balance.

Many more have recovered life changing movement and function in other experiments.

A world free of paralysis caused by spinal cord injury – that's the world The CatWalk Trust asks its supporters to imagine, and such a world is our ultimate goal in funding research into a cure for SCI-paralysis.

But the effects of spinal cord injury go far beyond the loss of the ability to walk, and those who are injured also lose other everyday functions, such as bowel and bladder control, sexual function and cardiovascular stability. Not to mention the chronic and often excruciating neuropathic pain that is caused by abnormal communication between the damaged spinal cord and the brain.

As a result, the benefits of the research we fund don't just have the end goal of a cure in mind, but also tend to demonstrate significant benefits in improving pain management and quality of life for those living with SCI-paralysis.

At the end of 2019, CatWalk's Sydney equivalent, SpinalCure Australia (SpinalCure), approached us with a proposal to co-fund a research project by Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA), which seeks to further develop neurostimulation treatment for people with SCI-paralysis.

Neurostimulation has delivered some of the most compelling results into a cure for SCI-paralysis to date — returning significant feeling and function to people who have been paralysed for many years.

Most of the headline results have used implanted "epidural stimulators", which requires surgery. However, the work NeuRA is focusing on investigates the ability of "transcutaneous" neurostimulation, which uses electrodes placed on the skin, to restore movement.

This method of applying the stimulation eliminates the high cost and risks of an operation, and the long post-operative recovery. That would mean any successful treatment developed could be distributed much more quickly, and more widely.

Following an independent review process and unanimous board support, The CatWalk Trust is excited to provide AUD\$600,000 in

financial support towards the research project. A further AUD\$600,000 grant is proposed for 2021, which will bring The CatWalk Trust in line to match SpinalCure's AUD\$1.2 million grant.

"This project got the big thumbs up all-round," according to CatWalk Trustee Grant Sharman MNZM. "When SpinalCure approached us to co-fund the project, we were aware of some of the transformative results of research into neurostimulation, but of course the Devil is in the detail."

As CatWalk's analysis of the proposal progressed, it became clear that the research held immense potential.

"The CatWalk Trust is excited to provide AUD\$600,000 in financial support towards the research project. A further AUD\$600,000 grant is proposed for 2021"

For those involved with CatWalk, each nascent project generates something deeply emotional, a glimmer of hope that this might be “the one”. The excitement for the NeuRA proposal was visceral.

When the new NeuRA Spinal Cord Injury Research Centre (SCIRC) was completed in early 2020, and the first test subject “wired up” to the neurostimulation device, SpinalCure CEO Duncan Wallace experienced a similarly emotional response. “SpinalCure first became interested in neurostimulation as a direct result of the Lancet paper released nearly a decade ago,” explains Duncan. “To be able to support this line of research and finally see the first test stimulation experiments commence, I can only describe it as incredibly cathartic.”

For Duncan and for Grant who are both tetraplegics, the first-hand knowledge of the challenges of living with SCI-paralysis means the promise of this research, and its potential benefits, is profound. But research isn’t free.

The more funds CatWalk can raise, the higher the chance of our funding continuing through 2021, and the faster these treatments can be developed and eventually made available across Australia and New Zealand. While being some way from a complete cure, which will likely require a combination of interventions, neurostimulation is profoundly improving volunteers’ health, abilities and quality of life.

Imagine these benefits made available to all people affected by spinal cord injury.

About the research

The SCIRC contains an extensive exercise facility, complete with a gravity-assisted walking track and treadmills, along with other state-of-the-art research equipment. Based within NeuRA’s headquarters in Randwick, NSW, it is surrounded by research labs, offices and wheelchair accessible loos big enough to host a party in.

A randomised clinical trial is planned to formally assess transcutaneous stimulation — an important step toward gaining approval for eventual wider distribution of the treatment. The trial will primarily look at restoring the ability to stand and take steps but improvements in bowel function will also be measured. Volunteers will undergo an intensive exercise program, coupled with neurostimulation treatments over many weeks. The finer details of the trial, in terms of stimulation settings, electrode placement, exercise routines and the criteria for participants, are still being finalised. These are influenced by previous research and by the exploratory testing that has started at NeuRA.

While human experiments are temporarily on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team at NeuRA still have plenty to do. This includes things like writing in-depth ethics submissions, refining protocols for the clinical trial, and analysing all published work on non-invasive spinal stimulation to ensure the trial is ready to launch when Australia’s restrictions are finally lifted.

Other neurostimulation experiments are planned to complement the clinical trial, focusing on the restoration of other functions that would greatly improve people’s quality of life and independence.



What is neurostimulation?

Many of the spinal cord injuries experienced in New Zealand and Australia are ‘contusion’ injuries where the spinal cord is crushed on one side but not completely severed. This leaves some nerve pathways between the brain and body intact. However, these pathways seem to go dormant. Applying gentle electrical currents to the spinal cord “wakes up” these pathways re-establishing the transfer of messages between the brain and body. Scientists are still trying to determine exactly how this happens but the results for the paralysed person are profound.

One approach, epidural stimulation, was originally developed to treat chronic pain. A tiny array of electrodes is implanted in the epidural space on the ‘dura’ (the protective layer that surrounds the spinal cord) and used to deliver electrical impulses to precise parts of the cord. In addition to returning significant control of muscles, epidural spinal cord stimulation has been shown to safely restore important autonomic functions.

Epidural stimulation requires an expensive operation and is not without risks. The alternative is to place the electrodes on the skin (transcutaneous) at certain locations over the spinal cord. This method has also been shown to improve blood pressure control, bladder function control of legs and hand function.

Assuming larger scale clinical trials confirm benefits and safety, this treatment could be made more widely available in a matter of years.

Source: SpinalCure Australia



“The reason I chose CatWalk was because many years ago I had a skiing accident and fractured a vertebrae in my spine very nearly putting myself in a wheel chair - ever since I have felt extremely grateful that I can walk. I think it would be so exciting if a cure could be found.”

“I would like my [chosen] charities to be continued on when I am no longer here and I know they will carry out my wishes.”

Leave your Legacy

A few words in your Will can give those with spinal cord injury paralysis hope.

Leaving a gift in your Will could benefit spinal cord injury in a special way. Your charitable legacy may well ensure that the vital research necessary to cure spinal cord injury paralysis endures, no matter what the cost.

CATWALK
NEVER SAY NEVER

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST

A gift for the future

Our vision is a world free from spinal cord injury paralysis. We fund the best research in NZ and internationally to find treatments to restore movement and sensation.

We want to reach the day when spinal cord injury is no longer the devastating event it is today but a routinely treatable condition.

You can help to create this future - with a gift in your Will.

After you've looked after family and friends, would you consider leaving a gift in your Will to CatWalk?

If you want to leave a legacy gift, we would welcome the opportunity to talk with you to ensure we fulfil your wishes and make the most impact in the areas you care about.



magnum™



SPOTLIGHT ON A **Supporter**

Established in 1997, Mark Brady took over ownership of Magnum Industries in 2001 and it has gone from strength to strength ever since. Increasing the range of products to include the Horserail equine safety fencing in 2008 and expanding the market into Australia in 2014 has seen the staff grow to nine including two based in Australia.

The first contact with CatWalk was through Little Avondale Stud who undertook a major re-fencing project at the stud with the Horserail. On learning about CatWalk, and with the company in a position to be able to give back to the community, Magnum chose to support spinal cord injury research due to the number of horse related accidents that resulted in spinal injuries.

According to CatWalk's General Manager, Meg Speirs, "the annual donation from Magnum Industries allows CatWalk to commit to spinal cord injury research on an on-going basis."

"Knowing that their contribution is guaranteed each year means that we are not restricted due to a lack of assured

funding, we can identify the best quality world-class research and allocate funds directly. It makes all the difference."

Magnum are manufacturers and suppliers of the highest quality Horse Walkers, Aqua Walkers, Horse Stables, Stable Hardware, Feed/Water Bins, Mare and Foal Crushes, Horserail, Gates and Rubber Matting for the Equine and Agricultural Industries. They will be bringing some exciting new products to their range in the near future including a 16mt Aqua Walker, Black Magnaclad wall lining and 25 and 50mtr straight pools.

For more information please visit www.magnum.co.nz or www.magnumequine.com.au

Thirty-eight in 38

Thirty-eight in 38 was the highlight of our 2019.

On December 14th and 15th 2019, myself and thirteen of my peers each set out to try to and individually climb Mount Maunganui thirty-eight times in 38 hours; equivalent to the height of Mount Everest. We did so to raise awareness of, and fundraise money for, Catwalk - New Zealand's Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Research Trust.

After months of endurance training and fundraising, the day had finally arrived. We began our climb in the early hours of the morning, and from the beginning, the energy of each and every team member, support crew, and sponsor was palpable. It felt magnetic. Catriona Williams had arrived at 4 am ready to see us off - how could it have been anything less?

We set out on this challenge as a team, wanting to push ourselves to the limits of what we could achieve on our own two feet so that someday more people would be able to get back on theirs. Over the preceding months, we had spent time learning about the sudden and debilitating nature of SCI's, which hundreds of New Zealanders sustain each year. It acted as a fitting reminder that mobility is something that we take for granted too easily. To that end, the suffering of people with SCI's and CatWalk's relentless efforts to find a cure remained steadfast in our minds throughout the event.

As the hours clocked by, the number of ascents and donations climbed higher, whilst the food (and energy) reserves steadily declined. Meanwhile, our black Thirtyeightin38 tops, with CatWalk's signature spinal cord on the back, caught the eyes and the hearts of locals and tourist alike. We completed day 1 on the stroke of midnight and were up again at 5am ready to start day 2. The team persevered through numerous blood noses, injuries and sun-battered exhaustion, determined to complete the challenge at hand. By the early afternoon, with a roar of encouragement from everyone at basecamp, we each began to complete our 38th ascents. On average, we completed our challenge in 35 hours: we each covered 8,850m of elevation, 113km in distance, over 150K+ steps and over 2450 steps climbed.

We each felt a sense of complete exhilaration and disbelief, as we took our final few steps off Mauao. Due to the astonishing efforts of our support crew, we had also raised over \$10,000

throughout the weekend, bringing our overall tally to \$33,674.81. Ultimately, we, the Thirtyeightin38 team, felt incredibly lucky to have been able to support such a critical cause and to have helped shed some light on the debilitating nature of SCI. We hope that our efforts will help support CatWalk's mission to find a cure.

There are numerous people to thank for supporting this event:

Thank you to our sponsors: Colliers International Tauranga; Tremains Tauranga, Chanda Suri & Eves Tauranga, Nut Brothers, Sanatorium, Abes Bagels, Best Ugly Bagels, R-Line electrolytes, Independent Stevedoring, Bureta Physiotherapy, eighthirty, Eden Park, Ewa Bigio Yoga, Zaroa Meats, Richard Somerville Orthopaedics and Coca-

Cola Amatil. This event would not have been possible without your generosity and support.

Thank you to our family and friends who supported us tirelessly throughout the event. Thank you for your relentless fundraising efforts, encouragement, and for educating so many locals about SCI and the critical role CatWalk plays in trying to develop a cure. A special thank you to my parents and grandparents. Thank you for your unwavering support, energy, and devotion to everyone involved in this event. Thirty-eight in 38 wouldn't have been possible without you.

Thank you to Catriona Williams and the wider CatWalk team for their continued support. Catriona, we were humbled by your presence and personal investment in our event. You were an integral member of our team, who supported us selflessly and passionately, in every way possible. Thank you.

And finally, thank you to the Thirtyeightin38 crew. Your passion, tenacity and commitment were beyond anything any of us could have imagined. You pushed yourselves to the limit, mentally and physically, and left every bit of yourselves out there on Mauao, for a cause bigger than ourselves. Thank you for your dedication to this event and for bringing this idea to life with me.

You, the Thirtyeight-in-38 crew, made this weekend monumental, and one that I will certainly never forget.

Thank you. Sita Tarini Clark, Team Member.



Team 38 in 38

STEP UP for a cause



Maija Vance (3rd from right) with some of her supporters

The goal was set!! Climbing the 576 steps to the top of Mt Maunganui on Sunday, March 22nd-to many people this may seem like just a nice day out with a bit of a stroll, but for Maija Vance, this goal was stretching her limits and something she never thought possible after an accident in 2018.

“16th September 2018 was a day that changed my life. I had my race riding accident and amongst other injuries, I broke 5 vertebrae with the T8 level crushing my spinal cord which left me paralysed from the waist down with an incomplete spinal cord injury. The prognosis was that I would most likely never walk again. I spent 3 months in the Auckland Spinal Unit with three rehabilitation sessions each day. Last year I regained enough movement back to be able to walk again and since then I have kept up a very strict rehab programme which I continue to improve on.”

Training with her physio Tracey Stirling leading up to the climb helped to fine - tune her walking pattern and although it was a tough climb for Maija, she managed to complete it in 35 minutes and celebrated along with her friends and family who had come to walk alongside her. Maija raised \$5500 for spinal cord injury research through donations to her cause.

“The reason I wanted to do the walk was because as soon as I could walk I wanted to do something to give back. Being in the racing industry I’ve sadly seen so many accidents that didn’t turn out as lucky as mine did. The walk went really well we were so lucky to do it when we did as we went into lockdown shortly after, I was actually surprised I didn’t struggle more but I had put a lot of effort into training for it. There were no rails on the steps so I was very lucky my over protective Physio Tracey Stirling came along and bought walking poles for me to use, I would either use them or my friends

arm for support when I needed it. I was really proud I could make it to the top as well as being able to contribute something to help get others out of wheelchairs for good.”



CatWalk founding trustee, Pip McCarroll was one of the supporters who walked with Maija.

“Maija Vance is an absolute inspiration, her determination and unwavering focus for her walk up the mount was a complete pleasure to be a part of. The group supporting her were energised and all exclaimed about the feat that was set. Our climb was steady and Majais attitude got her to the top with no complaints. It was all done in true CatWalk style, with friends, it was fun, and with the goal set and achieved. Once again I am proud as a founding Trustee of CatWalk that the spirit of FUNdraising was accomplished. Maijas story is one to behold. She is beautiful, inspiring and driven (sounds a little like our Founder Catriona!)”

Maija recently started a business - Rusty Pony Homeware - creating equestrian based homewares.

“The idea actually started when I came out of the spinal unit and have been playing around with getting the bits right. It’s a really unique range of homeware and furniture with an equestrian flare, using recycled bits and upcycled furniture”

You can visit Maijas store through her Instagram [rustypony_homedecor](#) or Facebook Rusty Pony homeware.



ECOYA Women of Influence panel and organisers. Photo © Kampic

CatWalk at the Landrover HORSE OF THE YEAR

The 2020 event saw CatWalk founder Catriona Williams as one of the panellists of the ECOYA Women of Influence evening.

A large crowd attended in the VIP Marquee to hear the stories of five influential women ably facilitated by MC Kerre Woodham

- Catriona Williams (Founder of the CatWalk Trust)
- Tonia Cawood (First Female Rugby Chair)

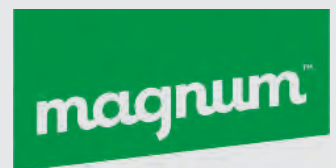
- Katherine Corich (Founder of global business Sysdoc)
- Jacqui Brown (Comedian)
- Matilda Rice (Author & Host)

ECOYA and The Rider Shop very generously donated prizes for a raffle on the night which raised \$1100 for spinal cord injury research, and the guests were also treated to Mumm champagne and finger food as the night progressed.

CatWalk has been fortunate to be the charity partner for 2019



ECOYA





Brooke Edgecombe jumping the CatWalk fence in the Norwood Gold Cup class. Photo courtesy of Cornege Photography

CatWalk Founder, Catriona Williams, counts the NZ Horse of the Year show as one of her favourite events she has competed in, and she had numerous successes over the years.

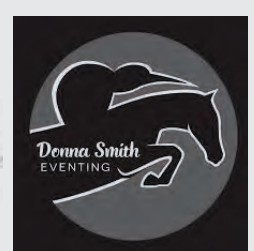
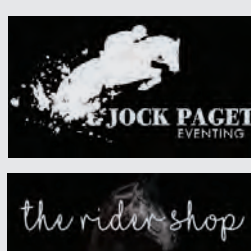
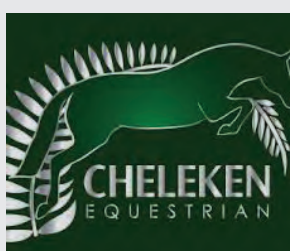
and again in 2020 for this iconic NZ equestrian event. Five days of competition and supporting events were held at the Hawkes Bay Showgrounds and for the first time CatWalk had a continuous presence in the main showjumping arena thanks to the new CatWalk show jump made by Jump-a-Bull. This proved to be a popular talking point and was mentioned many times by the announcers over the course of the event.

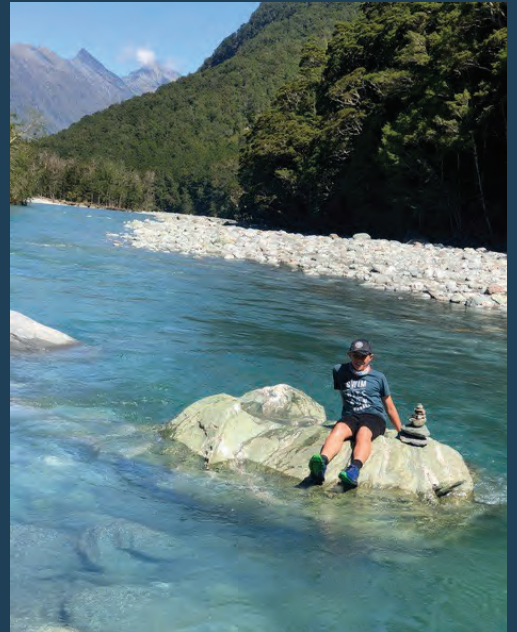
Support also came from premier sponsor Harrison Lane who donated \$1000 in lieu of advertising to the riders, and

a Facebook auction with goods generously donated raised a further \$4200 for spinal cord injury research.

A very big thank you to Stacey, Lauren, Anna and the team at SMC events for their efforts behind the scenes to make this event happen and for choosing to support spinal cord injury research.

We are extremely grateful to the businesses and individuals for donating products and services.





HOY 2019 Prize Review

The 2019 Horse of the Year held an auction in support of CatWalk with Kate Lambie bidding for the Best Foot Forward – NZ Adventure Pack kindly donated by Bob McLachlan.

Bob is a World Adventure Racing Champion and has spent nearly 30 years as a qualified outdoor guide, adventure racing and competing in some of the most world's most gruelling biking, running and water sport events. Racing with and mentoring the likes of All Black great Richie McCaw for endurance events like Godzone, (www.bestfootforward.co.nz), Kate, her husband David and children Madeline and Hunter travelled south and this is their adventure:

We were lucky enough to win the auction prize for an amazing Hike and

Float trip in the Mt Aspiring National Park, Wanaka.

What a day! We were somewhat nervous as it was going to be slightly different for Bob taking us on a trip rather than teaming up and training with the likes of Richie McCaw for his adventure races.

We need not have worried as we were put at ease straight away, Bob is a born teacher and took us on the most incredible hike up the East Matukituki River, followed by a raft trip back down.

From learning how to cross a freezing glacial river as a team of 5, walking along a single wire, perfecting our rock

skimming and paddling an inflatable raft, Bob taught us so much.

My son and I, not particularly skilled at rafting or great as a team spent many a laughing moment ending up backwards or wedged on a rock! Let's just say we definitely improved over our time rafting!

We felt very privileged to have spent the day with Bob and now it has fuelled ideas of new adventures in the future. NZ really is a stunning place. Thank you to HOY, CatWalk and Bob for a great family experience.

For more information please visit - www.bestfootforward.nz



Team

CATWALK

2020

Running so others can walk



Join Team CatWalk 2020 in the ASB Auckland Marathon!

On Sunday 1st November you can run the city with Team CatWalk. We have limited places reserved as an official Charity Hero partner of the ASB Auckland Marathon. We'd love to have you join us, all we ask is that you do commit to raising funds for spinal cord injury research. It's a super fun event and will be a brilliant #supportlocal day! Distances include full, half, 11km traverse, 5km family run, 2.2km kid's marathon, plus the wheelchair category. For further details and to register for the team visit catwalk.org.nz or email info@catwalk.org.nz





Filly-Anthropy Lot 313 a huge success

Day two at the 2020 NZ Bloodstock sales at Karaka will hold a special place in CatWalk history.

It was another chapter of a story that began back in 2018 when a Brazen Beau stallion service donated by Darley was auctioned at our Remarkable charity dinner. The successful bidders were Kevin and Joanna Hickman of Valachi Downs Stud who chose to put the mare Stepanova to the stallion. The generosity did not stop there with Kevin and Joanna deciding to put the resulting filly through the 2020 Karaka sales with all proceeds coming to CatWalk for spinal cord injury research. What happened over the next few months continued to delight and amaze us as equine industry specialists joined the cause by covering her costs such as feeding,

vet work, farrier, bodywork and supplementation. NZB waived all entrance fees and commission at the sales and Love Racing have waived all fees for her New Zealand racing career.

The filly was beautifully prepared by the team at Valachi Downs and entered the ring on Monday at 1.30 pm with a large crowd of supporters in the audience. Bidding was strong with the hammer falling at a phenomenal figure of \$200,000 to the buyers Brendan and Jo Lindsay of Cambridge Stud with strong CatWalk supporters, Tony Rider and Guy Lowry, as the underbidders. There were emotional scenes as the crowd clapped and the filly was led

from the ring to start the next chapter of her life at Cambridge Stud under the guidance of Henry Plumptre and his team.

This is a story of overwhelming generosity and in the belief that funding the crucial research will lead to a cure for spinal cord injury – our sincerest thanks to everyone involved.

The filly has begun her education at Cambridge Stud and you have the chance to be involved by entering the Name the Filly competition – check out the details on page 23.

Thanks to NRM, Matamata Veterinary Service, BetaVet, Savvy Touch, NZTB Marketing

CAMBRIDGE
STUD


Godolphin

(NZ)
THOROUGHBRED
MARKETING


NEW ZEALAND
BLOODSTOCK


VALACHI
DOWNS



Name THE Filly

COMPETITION

It is time for the Stepanova/Brazen Beau filly to be officially named and you can be involved!

CAMBRIDGE STUD

Submit a name for the filly and be in to win a nights accommodation in Cambridge and a personal tour of the iconic Cambridge Stud!

The competition opens on 1st July and closes at 5pm on Friday 31st July. Entries are to be submitted through the form on the CatWalk website along with a minimum \$5 donation to spinal cord injury research per entry. Judging will be conducted by a panel of three who have been instrumental in this project - Joanna Hickman of Valachi Downs, Jo Lindsay of Cambridge Stud and Catriona Williams, Founder of The CatWalk Trust. The name will be submitted to the NZTB racing board for approval with the winner being announced once the approval has been given. The judges' decision is final.



For further details and to submit your entry please visit www.catwalk.org.nz/name-the-filly-competition

An Antique Roadie

Imagine a world free of paralysis from spinal cord injuries.

This is the vision of John Winkie, an inspiring octogenarian with oil flowing through his veins! And in his 80th year he'll be riding his 80 yr old race bike in one of NZ's toughest 1 day road cycle races to help raise awareness and \$80,000 for spinal injury research.

John reckons that this challenge is nothing compared to the daily mental and physical 'mountains' that people with spinal injuries climb in their rehabilitation.

After a very close friend received treatment at the Burwood Spinal Unit with amazing results John was inspired and wants to help others get out of their wheelchairs by helping to fund research.

"My friend is currently recovering from serious spinal injuries in Burwood spinal unit and receiving incredible help. Two other close friends have also had serious spinal injuries and recovered to live totally full lives due to the amazing help and support they have received and they also plan to join me on this venture and ride Le Race."

"The charities supporting spinal research and rehabilitation need all the financial support they can get and I wanted to help them in some way and I figured if I could get people to sponsor me riding in one of New Zealand's toughest road races then that would be a good challenge as I approach my 80th year. This was

next levelled when a few of my riding mates cheekily quipped "Why don't you make it a harder goal mate and ride it on your old bike and then we'll 'sponsor' you if you 'finish it'!"

John says " I had wanted to set myself a lofty personal goal that I could step up to, and would inspire others to support me to help the trust. Luckily I have my trusty Duckett road



"My friend is currently recovering from serious spinal injuries in Burwood spinal unit and receiving incredible help.."

bike which I bought and raced back in 1953. It's nearly 80 years old and so the idea was born."

He says "Researchers face major challenges every day in the funding of their ongoing research and if I can help support them with this new fundraising effort I can hopefully raise \$80,000 in the process so it may help people leave their wheelchairs sooner".

John is no new comer to such challenges. His sporting career spans over five decades and he still rides his road and mountain bikes and his motorcycle when supporting cycle races as a marshal.

"I think many people tend to let go of their fitness and I want to show that remaining fit and healthy as you age is important and cycling is great as you can enjoy it at any age anywhere."

Now he'll be riding his trusty 80 year old antique road race bike over the high alpine peaks of Banks Peninsula to raise awareness of spinal injury rehabilitation and also raise \$80,000

to support the researchers who are working to find a cure for SCI.

"An antique roadie on an antique road bike will be quite a sight I imagine and should make for a great day out. I am looking forward to both the mental and physical challenges and support".

"I've got Lloyd O'Brien - the legendary Bike Dr rebuilding the wheels to original spec as rust was having a field day with

the spokes! I've also got parts from David Benson of Worrals to get it back to original spec to be ready for the 1,500 + metres of climbing in Le Race".

As a prelude John plans to ride 80km around Matakana on the 4th September then drive to Christchurch via Hamilton, Whanganui and Blenheim for training rides and support for Le Race on 19th Sept 2020.

Further updates and dates will be posted on the CatWalk website leading up to the event.

You can learn more about John at www.keywin.com//about.php and follow John's progress at www.strava.com/athletes/467111. If you would like to support John, donations can be made at <https://give.everydayhero.com/nz/an-antique-roadie>



Rewardhub

We're excited to share a way to raise funds that costs nothing and can even save you money.

Rewardhub is a website where more than 100 leading brands will Reward us with free donations, at no extra cost to you, when you shop online and are signed up to support us. It's an easy place to shop and includes special discount codes on big brands in fashion, beauty, entertainment, travel, utilities, money, homeware, food, drink and more. To learn more and sign up to our page, please visit <https://rewardhub.co.nz/catwalk>

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Over **\$5000** has been donated via sales over the 2019/2020 sowing season
Thank you!

Most pastures in New Zealand are dominated by perennial ryegrass and white clover, largely sown for sheep and cattle. Such pastures are not ideal for horses. As well as having relatively low fibre, ryegrass also tends to be high in sugars, particularly during spring and autumn. This can have negative behavioural impacts on some horses and also cause serious problems such as contributing to laminitis.

The Barenbrug Agriseeds-CatWalk Trust Specialist Horse Pasture Mix contains brome, cocksfoot and a small amount of low endophyte ryegrass. Brome and cocksfoot contain no endophyte and are higher in fibre content than ryegrass. Bags are available at \$200+GST per 25kg bag (recommended sowing rate for 1 hectare).

For more information visit www.catwalk.org.nz, www.agriseeds.co.nz and to place orders please contact your nearest Farm Source store <https://store.nzfarmsource.co.nz>.



Our Wonderful Journey

POSTPONED

It is with regret that due to the worsening global COVID-19 pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to postpone Our Wonderful Journey. As a health-based charity, we recognise the critical need to protect all New Zealanders from the risk of infection, particularly those within our community who are most vulnerable. While the event is not scheduled until Saturday 25 July, all the blood, sweat and tears that goes into planning such a special occasion means we need to make this decision now. As you can imagine, we are deeply disappointed to have to put this special 15-year celebration event of our CatWalk journey on hold, but rest assured it will still happen – now we have even more time to make it spectacular! We will advise a new date as soon as we can so please keep an eye on our social media and website for updates.

CATWALK
NEVER SAY NEVER

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TRUST

Thank You

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CATWALK
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Venue - Cheleken Equestrian - Mangatangi - All levels welcome

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Please accept my gift: (all donations of \$5 or more are tax deductible)

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OR

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I authorise CatWalk to make automatic deductions from my credit card until further notice.

Amount: \$ _____ Frequency: Weekly Monthly

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Please debit my credit card: VISA MasterCard Amount: \$ _____

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