



Our Mob

Look after your mind, body and spirit to manage pain

**YOU CAN
CHANGE
your pain**

Mick's story

Mick is 55 years old. He was born and bred in Lismore; a proud Bundjalung man.

Mick has had a full life so far. He played footy when he was younger and took a few hard hits to his body. He has worked at all sorts of jobs including macadamia nut and banana farming, plumbing, paving, building; he spent some time grave digging as well! All of the physical work took a toll on his body.

At the age of 20, he was in a car accident where his right hand was almost cut off. Of course, it was sewn back on, but has needed many operations over the years and now has lots of pain: nerve pain, joint pain and bone pain. He also has back pain with sciatica, shoulder pain and his right knee is really inflamed. He probably needs surgery, but will need to wait a while. He realised that football, being a bloke and hard physical work are probably the cause.

He is on the disability pension, but keeps active and involved in community every day. He enjoys fishing and being at the beach. He does chores at home and likes being in the garden, even though it hurts. He has started delivering leaflets and he reckons it's good because he gets paid to keep moving. Moving and exercise help to keep his weight down and that makes his knee feel better, but he reckons this is a bit too much for him right now because his knee is crook! "You have to know your limits. And think before you do something too crazy!"

Mick has a partner and seven children- the eldest is 37 and the youngest, Kayliegh is 12. Kia has type 1 diabetes and Mick is her carer. He worries about her blood sugar levels, but is keen for her to get out with her friends.

He was on 'hillbilly' heroin (oxycontin) for eight years, and reckon it did him no good. It did not change the pain, and he felt he was 'out of it', angry and depressed with mood

swings. He felt like he only looked at things with tunnel vision. He decided he wanted to 'feel alive' and asked the doctors to help him come off it. So bit by bit, he dropped down off all of his medications, with support, until he was able to cope without medications.

Mick's top tips

- Get involved in activity: stretches, weights, join the 'Knockout Challenge' – it's great to be active with others! You feel encouraged by them and you can also help them!
- Try water exercise where you can keep moving for an hour and keep your heartbeat up, with a bit of a sweat
- Get active – at least twice a week, but every day try to do something even if you have pain
- Get healthy: watch what you eat – have a smaller meal, eat kangaroo, fruit and vegetables
- Learn about your body and pain and work out different ways of doing things. Sometimes you can flare the pain up, but don't worry, ease off for a few days and then build back up again. You might need to slow down and take notice of early warning signs – listen to your body
- Get out and about and talk with others. Join in with family and friends
- Connect with the bush – go camping
- Get help from your health worker and other professionals
- When you have a painful day, when things are getting you down – understand that you can block it out and have a "NO PAIN DAY". You can change your pain!

