

More aid needed for stroke victims

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By KYLIE FLEMING

THE establishment of a day care centre to help rehabilitate younger stroke victims is the dream of Carol Fuller from Newton.

Carol has first hand experience of the trauma of strokes on the victims and their loved ones.

Her husband Clive suffered a massive stroke two years ago at the age of 50 and she hopes drawing attention to her husband's plight will help others in the same boat.

"After Clive's stroke, I was told he would need to be transferred into a nursing home and that he'd probably not be able to be rehabilitated and I was not prepared to accept this," she said.

Clive could not hold his balance in an armchair, had no comprehension, suffered loss of language and speech, partial loss of sight in each eye and paralysis on the right side of his body.

"He is now vocalising, walking, has sensation on the paralysed side, has full comprehension and is learning to use the other side of his brain," Carol said.

"These significant gains have been against all odds and it has been stated he is not a text book case placed in a 'one-off' category."

Carol has written to government ministers including previous Health Minister Don Hopgood and expressed concerns about the lack of accessible rehabilitation care for younger stroke victims. She wants to get "the wheels in motion" for a day centre for stroke victims which would include general rehabilitation and "re-skilling" for work.

Carol said politicians were "remote from the struggle" and progress was never made because they were not affected personally.

"The problem is very real and the only way to feel for us is to step into our shoes, wear them for a while and feel the financial pinch when it's time to pay out privately for treatment one would expect from a supportive government" she said.

Carol said there was nowhere for a stroke victim in the younger age bracket to go after initial rehabilitation and most centres catered for senior citizens.

"To be barred from a centre due to the age factor seems to border on discrimination and strokes do not solely affect the aged population



Stroke victim Clive Fuller of Newton rehabilitates at home last year. Inset: Clive Fuller and his wife Carol, who has fought long and hard for increased support for younger stroke sufferers.

of society," she said.

Private therapy, as undergone by Clive Fuller, can be very successful but Carol said this was often "out of reach" for people who needed these services three times a week.

"This luxury can only continue for as long as an income still flows and there's a yearly limit on how much people can claim from private health cover and then it's 100 per cent out of the pocket," she said.

"You wouldn't believe the depression, trauma and the way people grieve for their former self. Often their career goes and unless there's private help, there's nothing and what exists is very expensive."

Carol said "barriers need to be broken down and stigmas removed" about stroke victims in the community.

For further information and support about strokes phone Stroke SA on 268 6222.