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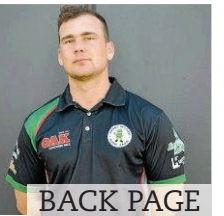
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Weekend Advertiser



MIRACLE: Adam Symons - pictured at home with his dog, Isla - is lucky to be alive after a hay baler accident near Marrar in October. Picture: Emma Hillier

'I thought I was going to die'

Adam Symons felt he had two choices - possibly bleed to death in a paddock or find help. The father-of-two's arm had just been ripped off in a horrific hay baler accident and, as he looked down at where it should have been, he knew he had to act quickly.

"I thought to myself 'I need to get help or I am probably going to die in this paddock because I am losing a lot of blood'," Mr Symons said. The 36-year-old somehow managed to drive his tractor and find another farmer, who he knew was nearby, while alerting his family of what had happened.

His quick actions, strength and determination led to the successful reattachment of his arm and he is now recovering at his Ganmain home.

Full story: Pages 4-5



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FAMILY INSPIRES SURVIVAL: Adam thought of Stevie, 6, Frankie, 5, and Amanda as he started to bleed, and it gave him the push to seek help.

with a lot of therapy. Once I have the second operation done, it's going to be a lot of rehab. I will be in Canberra a fair bit. As for work, I have been told not to even think about it at this stage."

Adam said people often ask "how much movement will you be able to get back", but in his mind, the doctors have already got him halfway there.

"They got my arm back on, and I am still here," he said.

"That's what I am focusing on. But, the surgeon thinks we can get it back to 60 per cent."

When his best mate, Nathan McPherson heard the news, he decided to start a GoFundMe page to help ease the financial burdens he knew the Symons family would face. Nathan and Adam have known each other since birth, growing up on neighbouring farms. They were even each other's best

man.

"We were saying that if we could get \$20,000, then we would be pretty stoked," he said. "But to get more than four times that is pretty overwhelming."

Nathan said when he first heard the news, he did not think there was any possibility that Adam was going to get his arm back. But, he was ecstatic to be proven wrong.

"He's in pretty good spirits being back home, but he's

got a long road ahead," Nathan said. "The locals have outdone themselves with getting behind him."

The GoFundMe raised \$81,711, smashing its \$20,000 goal. More than 350 people dipped into their pockets to lend support to the family. But, Adam said it was not only financial donations that people contributed.

"When I got home, there were people here baling hay and the next day they were

carting hay, stacking it and bringing their machines to help," he said. "People turned up with headers, trucks, and they were mowing lawns, and cooking meals. It wasn't just for us either. They were doing it for my mum and dad and my sister and brother."

Adam added that he did not expect the overwhelming support at all, especially considering the year it's been and the struggles fellow farmers have faced.

“

I thought to myself 'I need to get help or I am probably going to die in this paddock because I am losing a lot of blood'.

Adam Symons

"The way people have dropped everything to be here, especially with harvest which has been a struggle for the last three years," he said. "They just turned up like it was an everyday thing and got into it."

Amanda said it was special to be a part of a community that rallies when someone needs help, and she is so grateful for all the support they received.

"It's a miracle that he is alive, so anything that comes is a bonus, and the lesson in it all is you're only promised today," she said.

"That's given me a big wake up call," Adam added. "I was working all the time, and it's hit home that work is not everything. I am really focusing on my family because that's what is important."



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NEWS

Farmer's will to stay alive

BY ANNIE LEWIS

ADAM Symons could have bled out in a paddock after a hay baler ripped off his arm. But, with the thought of his family fuelling his will to survive, he managed to drive to a neighbouring paddock to get help.

Adam, from Ganmain, was in Marrar doing a baling job when suddenly he heard a knocking noise in the machine.

"I had heard it before and got up to do a routine check and all of a sudden my arm was pulled into the machine," he said.

"I looked down, and it was gone. It happened very, very quick. I think my shirt was grabbed and pulled into the machine."

As Adam was looking down at where his arm was supposed to be, he knew he could not just keep standing there.

"I thought to myself 'I need to get help or I am probably

going to die in this paddock because I am losing a lot of blood'," the 36-year-old said.

"I had a lot going through my head. I was thinking of my family and thought 'I am the main provider, and if I am not here how are they going to go without me'.

"I knew Damien [another farmer] was in the next paddock, and I knew he was not far away. I did what I had to do."

So, jumping back into the tractor, and leaving his arm behind, Adam managed to drive to the neighbouring paddock while calling his dad to tell him to give the other farmer the heads-up.

"I found Damien, and I had never actually met him before I jumped out of the tractor," Adam said.

"There were three ambulances that arrived, from memory, and one of the paramedics said 'he needs to go to Canberra, not Wagga' and I do remember the helicopter landing, but after that, I

could not remember much."

His wife, Amanda Symons, was walking through their door when she got the call that no one could prepare for.

As Adam's name flashed on the screen, she answered, and he told her "Darl, my arm's been ripped off".

"It's hard getting service in this house, so I was standing still and just saying 'where are you'," Amanda said.

"He said 'I am in Marrar', which is about half an hour from me. Then he just stopped talking, so I didn't know if he had passed out or if he had called for help, or if anyone was with him."

Amanda told Adam's mum what happened, and they found out his brother was on the way to him. But, after finding out exactly what happened, she was amazed at her husband's strength and determination.

"It was incredible that he still had the mental capacity to make sure they got his arm



GRATEFUL: Adam Symons says the incident has taught him to focus on the people he loves most. **Pictures:** Emma Hillier

out of the baler," Amanda said.

"He had to run them through what to do on the machine to retrieve it safely."

"I explained to Damien what lever to pull, and that it should just flick it [the arm] out the back, and he just picked it up, wrapped it up in a towel," Adam added.

After waking up in the hospital, Adam could not believe that his arm was there.

"I looked down, and I

remember my mum came over, and I said 'that's not my arm, that can't be my arm'," he said. "She had to call the doctor over because I was pretty emotional, and he told me that they had been able to get it back on, and it had a pulse. My brother rang, and my mum had to take a photo of my arm and send it to him because he couldn't believe they had been able to reattach it."

Adam would stay in Can-

berra Hospital for 22 days, during which he had at least four skin graft operations. Both he and Amanda said they could not thank the doctors enough.

"I am just in the healing process now, and then I am going to go back in February and talk stage two," Adam said. "There's a lot more operations to get my hand to move. I don't have feeling in the lower part of my arm. Next year will be very busy

Community Consultative Committee Albury to Illabo NSW



The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is establishing a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) made up of two sub-committees for the Albury to Illabo Inland Rail project.

One committee will cover all the project's enhancement sites within the local government areas of Albury and Greater Hume.

One committee will cover all the project's enhancement sites within the local government areas of Lockhart, Wagga Wagga and Junee.

CCCs are a forum for open conversation between the Inland Rail project team, the local community, stakeholder groups and local councils on issues directly relating to the project.

The Independent Chair of the Albury to Illabo committee is inviting nominations from people who are interested in being on the committees.

You can nominate yourself or be nominated to represent a community, local area or industry. Nominations close on **Friday, 15 January 2021 at 4pm.**

We are looking for a mix of people who live locally or are members of a stakeholder group (community, environment, Aboriginal or industry) to join the committee.

The role of members

Your role as a committee member is voluntary.

You will be expected to contribute constructively to committee discussions, attend about four meetings a year, and share information about the Albury to Illabo project with the broader community.

How to apply

To apply, download the nomination form from inlandrail.com.au/a2i-ccc

For more information, please contact the Independent Chair, Garry West.

0418 215 059

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The Australian Government is delivering Inland Rail through the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the private sector.

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