

David, 73

How timely cardiac care helped a motorbike & travel enthusiast stay on the road, La Trobe Valley, **WEST GIPPSLAND**

Retired father-of-three and motorbike enthusiast, David, 73, Trafalgar South, West Gippsland, has lived with a heart valve condition for nearly three decades. Despite regular check-ups and ongoing treatment, his condition has limited his energy and ability to enjoy daily activities.

David's heart murmur was identified in 1996 following a routine medical examination. Within months, he was under the care of a cardiologist, starting what would become a long-term journey of monitoring, surgery, and ongoing management.

Each intervention has played a critical role in maintaining his quality of life. His most recent treatment provided a significant improvement, allowing his heart to work more efficiently, enabling him to walk further and stay more active without tiring as quickly.

While David's pathway to accessing treatment has been more straightforward compared to many others, his experience reinforces the importance of having access to the right care, at the right time. He recognises that, although he did not personally face delays, Australians are facing an average 4.7-year wait for innovative, life-saving technologies to be reimbursed and made available.

This is David's story.

David lives with his wife and spends his time at home or travelling, when his health allows. His three adult children are now living across Australia, but family has always remained central to his life.

Following his diagnosis in 1996, David learned that his heart valve was not functioning as it should. As his condition progressed, tasks requiring energy became increasingly difficult and over time, interventions became essential.

During regular six-monthly cardiac check-ups, his medical team monitored changes and carefully timed each procedure.

David underwent four major treatments in total – each one designed to help his heart pump more effectively and reduce the physical burden of daily activity.

"I can walk easier these days, and longer distances are now possible. That makes a big difference to my life," said David.

David's care has primarily been provided through the private health system, and he describes his experience as consistently positive.

"My last treatment was excellent. Every treatment has been good," David said.

Although David is aware that new, minimally invasive heart valve technologies exist – and understands how transformative they can be – he also understands that many Australians wait years for reimbursement of emerging devices.

While this hasn't been his experience, he believes faster access could make a significant difference for patients facing more urgent and complex diseases.

"People shouldn't have to wait for something that could change their life or their health," said David.

David is lending his voice to this public health campaign because he believes patient experiences should be heard by decision-makers.

He hopes that by sharing his story, he can help highlight the importance of timely access to clinically proven, innovative medical technologies.

"If telling my story can help make things better for someone else, then that's worthwhile.

"I have always trusted my medical team, and each time they've helped find the best solution for my situation," David said.

"Everyone deserves timely access to the medical technologies they need."

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