

## ON-SITE DEFIBRILLATOR SAVES TONY'S LIFE

After suffering a sudden cardiac arrest at the Florida Beach Bar in Terrigal's Crowne Plaza Hotel, Tony Collins walked out of hospital less than a week later.

But it would have been a very different story if the bar had not had a defibrillator on hand.

Tony, 65, was having a few beers with his mates on 14 April 2016 when he suddenly slumped forward.

"I said that I was about to leave, and that's the last thing I remember before it happened," he said.

"I had no symptoms – my wife had seen me an hour earlier and said I looked fine, and I felt perfectly fine."

People in the nearby area acted quickly. Staff ran to get the bar's defibrillator, and a woman in the hairdresser next door was alerted to the scene.

"The woman, a nurse, ran out and inserted a guedel\* from the bar's First Aid kit into my throat to keep my airway open," Tony said.

"I was given CPR and the defibrillator was used to shock me three times."

"Doctors and ambulance officers later told my family that if it hadn't been for that early intervention of CPR and use of a defibrillator by the bar staff, I wouldn't have survived."

Tony was flown by helicopter from Gosford to Royal North Shore Hospital and was heavily sedated and intubated. It was around 14 hours before he came round, with no recollection of what had happened.

"I was very fuzzy in the head and very sore – which I later learnt was from the effective CPR," he said.

"I was in ICU for three nights, then moved to Coronary Care where I had an internal defibrillator known as an ICD (implantable cardioverter-defibrillator) fitted on Monday 18 April. I was home by Tuesday night."

While Tony's stay in hospital was short, he now faces months of careful monitoring and care.

"I'll be having regular follow-ups to check the progress of the ICD and whether it has had to administer any shocks, as well as attending rehabilitation and seeing a nutritionist," he said.

"My GP has advised me to cut out alcohol and to take time off work. I also can't drive for six months."

Although Tony had a quadruple bypass 18 years ago, at the time of his sudden cardiac arrest he was eating healthily, had a personal trainer and “felt great”.

He hopes his story can spread the word on the importance of defibrillators in venues, with his experience showing that sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at any time.

“Since my cardiac attack, I’ve learned that for every minute without CPR and defibrillation, the victim’s chance of survival decreases by 10%,” he said.

“It was nine minutes before the ambulance arrived when I had my cardiac arrest. Without that defibrillator on site at the Florida Beach Bar, I would be dead.

“Such a small investment can have such a massive impact. It can save lives.”

Realising how fragile life is, Tony is now looking to the future.

“I plan to work less, stress less and pay more attention to my family, as well as looking after my health,” he said.

*\*medical device used to maintain or open a patient's airway*

## **ENDS**

*The Crowne Plaza Terrigal has multiple defibrillators on site – provided by Cardiac Responder.*

*The Collins & Drover family story was shared by Central Coast Gosford Express Advocate on 5th May 2016 – [Click Here](#) to view full article.*

The Michael Hughes Foundation was established in honour of Michael Hughes who passed away in 2013 from sudden cardiac arrest at 38 years of age. The aims of the Foundation are to raise awareness of sudden cardiac arrest, the placement of defibrillators in the community and turning bystanders into first responders.

**For more information, visit [www.mhf.life](http://www.mhf.life)**