



# The Territory Way

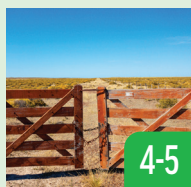
Keeping you informed about Health and Wellbeing

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# Dusty's Story

Hey, my name's Dusty and I was born in Alice Springs. I am an Arrente person, traditional custodian of the land and its people. I live out here, surrounded by all that red desert. I'm now 51 but let me tell you about when I was just a kid of 13.

That's when I found out I had type 1 diabetes. It wasn't easy, especially at school. Kids can be mean, you know? Not only they would tease me because I am different but also because I had to give myself insulin shots and sometimes, I'd have to sit out of sports because of hypos. It made me feel small. My family didn't know how to help me. So, I stopped taking my insulin, thinking it would help me fit in. But boy, was I wrong. That just made things worse. As a result of that decision, I eventually had to have both my legs amputated.

I didn't let that stop me, though. I finished school up to Year 10 and got a job driving buses for an indigenous health organisation. But my health was still a struggle. I had to go all the way to Darwin to have my legs amputated.

That's where I first met Helen. She worked at the hospital, and she was something else. She didn't judge me for what happened or for the mess I was in. She saw something in me, I reckon. She encouraged me to take care of myself, even when it seemed impossible.

The doctors said I might not make it past 45 but here I am 51 years old and still kicking because of Helen. When I moved back to Alice Springs, I ran into Helen again, this time at Healthy Living NT.

Helen introduced me to this thing called continuous glucose monitoring. It helped me keep track of my blood glucose levels without needing a fancy phone. She also reminded me how important it was to take my insulin, even when I didn't feel like it. She kept encouraging me and even found me a team to play wheelchair AFL.

But the biggest surprise came when Helen helped me try out this insulin pump called Omnipod. I could never afford something like that on my own, but Helen worked her magic and found someone from Alice Springs Type 1 community and Alice Springs T1 support group who donated it to me. She also helped the group with fundraising. I was speechless and could not stop crying when I went on the pump. Finally, someone had shown me that they cared enough to help me stay healthy and avoid more diabetes complications. I really do not want to be blind or go on dialysis like many of my relatives.

To top it all off, Helen found me a "pod buddy" his name is Vaughn, who also has type 1 diabetes. We used to play football together at

school here in Alice. I haven't seen him for a long time and didn't know he had type 1. He is on dialysis. It was so good to see him again and we reconnected.

Thanks to Helen never giving up on me or judging, I found hope again. I realised that I wasn't alone in this fight and that there were people out there who cared about me. So, with Helen by my side, I am ready to face each day with a little more courage and a whole lot of gratitude.



# Vaughn's Story

Hi, my name is Vaughn Hampton. I was born in Alice Springs however I belong to the Warlpirri people from Yuendumu. I found out I was type 1 when I was 28 years old. In saying this I have grown up with type 1 around me all my life.

I can recall my sister warning me for putting too much sugar on my corn flakes. "You'll get diabetes" she said. However, I had no idea what she was talking about. After all I was only about 7 years old at the time. Then forward to another 10 years and my sister would die from being in a diabetic coma from the result of a domestic violent incident. This was one of the saddest days of my life. My sister was like a mother to me. Always looking out for me.

When I was first diagnosed with type 1, I was in denial in having the disease. I went from a 100kg footballer to a 73kg unbalanced, shaking and a very weak man. This transformation happened in the space of 3 months. When a man half my size knocked me over, I thought it's time to get this fixed.

I went and got the info and medications. I used it averagely for the next 20 years. It took 2 years to get back to footy and getting my strength back to play football at the top level in Alice Springs again.

When I was 39 my dad would pass from a heart attack after he spent over 10 years managing type 1 diabetes also. I would experience a heart attack at the age of 41 years old. I would then get kidney disease and start dialysis at the age of 47. I have only just got on the transplant list 2 years later. During those two years I experienced nerve damage (neuropathy) from diabetes.

So, to recap what I have been through:

1. Diabetes
2. Kidney disease
3. Heart attack
4. High blood pressure
5. Neuropathy

All the above is tough. I even lost the ability to walk for 7 months. I was in a wheelchair for 2 months, not able to walk at all. However, hard work with the physio and bush medicine and prayers from family and friends gave me the strength to walk again.

You might say it's bad luck. But as I have grown older and survived all the above, I also believe I can manage the main cause of all my issues... T1D.

Since I have made contact with Helen from Healthy Living NT my diabetes has never looked better. Using the Omnipods, I'm all over it. I used to be so shame to use the pen in front of people. That's why my management was so average. I even have the bonus of making a pod buddy. My old footy team mate and school friend Dusty Taylor. The support from my partner, Healthy Living NT (Helen) and Dusty has made managing this silent killer, a piece of cake.

I hope my story will inspire anyone that has to deal with T1D to manage it properly. I would not wish anyone to go through what I did and still dealing with. I will have to deal with neuropathy and diabetes for the rest of my life. I hope and wish all people with diabetes to manage diabetes properly for every single part of your life.

