

Statement from Paul Faraguna

About two days after disembarking from the cruise ship, the Ruby Princess, on March 19 and flying back to Adelaide, I became ill and apparently the doctors didn't know whether I would survive.

I was taken to the Royal Adelaide Hospital by my wife Robyn and tests were made to confirm I had COVID-19. I became so ill that after a few days I was transferred to the ICU and put into an induced coma and on a ventilator for about four weeks.

For much of the time Robyn and my two adult children, Adam and Stacey, were not permitted to visit me because of the severity of my condition. Eventually they were able to see me, but I was not responsive to them.

Robyn was kept informed daily about my state, but it seemed very grim as I started to suffer multiple organ failure. The doctors were unable to say what my future would be if I survived, even suggesting that I may have brain damage and be permanently disabled.

When it was decided to take me out of the coma, I was transferred to the general ward where I currently am. I have no memory of it all, leading up to my awakening. I just assumed that I had only just been admitted and I felt reasonably normal, except that I was hooked up to various life support equipment.

I have been out of a coma for approximately two weeks and I don't have any permanent damage or side-effects. My memory is as good as before I got sick and I remember everything from before and after my coma. The only challenge left is to walk normally again which should, I feel, happen in the near future due to my physiotherapy program.

I remember that, after awakening from my coma, virtually every doctor and nurse consistently telling me that my recovery was a miracle. I thought they were saying it just to give me encouragement. Since I came out of the coma I have a more complete understanding of my miraculous journey and realise the medical staff literally consider me to be a miracle survivor.

Whilst I was in the ICU, my wife Robyn got to know the nurses and doctors very well and she cannot praise them highly enough. She has told me they are very caring and dedicated professionals. She was particularly grateful for the help and understanding received from Dr Abbie. Even though I don't remember any of the time that I spent in the ICU, I very much appreciate the caring treatment I received and would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart.

In the 6G ward in which I have been since I left the ICU, I have got to know the nursing staff and doctors very well and they are all caring and dedicated in their jobs, and I believe that they are a major factor in my rapid recovery.

Another group I would like to thank very much is the physiotherapy and occupational professionals. There are too many staff to name individually, but I would like them to know how much I appreciate them. One individual that I will name is Karen, the nursing manager. She has been very personable and friendly to myself and my family, and we appreciate all the courtesy and help she has given us.

I don't particularly enjoy being in hospital for such a long time, but the experience of being looked after by the wonderful staff has made it far better.

Finally I would like to say how fortunate I feel to live in Adelaide and to be cared for at the RAH. The staff and facilities are excellent and I can't imagine that there are many places in the world that could match this standard. I will never be able to repay all of the dedicated medical staff, but I give you my heart felt thank you.

***The Faraguna family thanks the media and community for their support and has requested privacy as Paul continues his recovery.**