

## NEWTON



Carol Fuller, of Newton, has written a book about her experiences after her husband suffered a stroke in 1991, aged 50.

Picture: BIANCA DE MARCHI

# Hope comes from devastation

James Gratton

CLIVE and Carol Fuller were a happy couple who shared a love of travelling the world and spending time with their daughters, Penelope and Sarah.

But when Mr Fuller suffered a stroke in 1991, aged 50, their lives were turned upside down.

"It was sheer devastation because Clive was a very healthy person and didn't have any medical conditions that would be associated with him having a stroke," Mrs Fuller, now 73, of Newton, says.

"It just happened out of the blue.

"It made us realise that it could happen to anyone at any time."

After coming out of a five-day coma, Mr Fuller lost his ability to speak, read and write, while also suffering a partial loss of vision and epilepsy.



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Over the following years, the couple balanced weekly doctors' appointments while attempting to still live life to the fullest.

"Every day became a challenge, not unlike riding on a seesaw, the continuous ups and downs," Mrs Fuller says.

"His struggles associated with rehabilitation, loss of independence and the frustrations associated with speech when words would not come.

"Our motto became accept and adjust."

Despite his condition, in 2001, the couple travelled to Singapore and Hong Kong to celebrate Mr Fuller's 60th

birthday. Ten years later, he was diagnosed with terminal cancer in the small intestine and died 12 months later.

After more than 20 years caring for her husband, Mrs Fuller was inspired to share her experiences in an attempt to help other families dealing with life after a stroke.

In September, she launched her book, *Echoes of a Closed Door - A life lived following a stroke*, to help share her family's message of hope.

"The book aims to send a message through to people that have been given such a severe diagnosis to never give up hope," she says. "There really is a quality of life after a stroke if you learn to accept a different life."

**Echoes of a Closed Door - A life lived following a stroke (\$17) is available at [carolrfuller.com](http://carolrfuller.com)**