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as ever. With yet more support and encouragement from WCSWA, Andrew started fundraising for an off-road handcycle. The handcycle finally arrived in mid-2013 and his next objective commenced – to be the first paraplegic in Australia to complete in a stage of renowned MTB stage race the Cape to Cape. This goal drew a lot of attention and resulted in Andrew's journey being followed by media, including the filming of a documentary. And then Andrew was back on the trails! "It's easy to describe what it feels like – freedom. It takes me to places where my legs and wheelchair can't. It's better than the dreams I have where I still walk – it's real." 2013 was a massive year for Andrew. On the 30th of November, five years to the day after his accident,

he went back to Brisbane to let go of the past and move on with his future. A very special group of people, who had Andrew's back from day one of his accident and recovery, set out to entertain him the day after the anniversary. A group known initially as "Adventure Angels" had started out as a search for likeminded women that enjoyed MTBing and trail running. Since the group's inception in 2009, it has turned into more than they could ever have hoped for. The Brisbane-based group, which now also goes by the name "FOMO" (or Fear Of Missing Out for those not hip enough to know), now includes an active bunch of men and women who love nothing better than getting a little dirty while enjoying some fresh air and some good old cardio. This comes in the form of MTBing,

trail running, hiking and travelling. In stark contrast to the Sunday morning of his accident, this Sunday was bright and sunny when the activities commenced. Knowing Andrew was always up for something new, the FOMO team decided to test his new beast on a local pump track. Watching Andrew challenge himself was nothing short of inspirational. To say he was excited was a massive understatement. "Never caught so much air time! Little tricky on the smaller berms and jumps, but bring on the big table top jumps any day!" A stint of frisbee golf also took place bringing about feelings of being a kid again chasing plastic discs around. It was also the day that the Cape to Cape documentary aired. Back at the house, the silence spoke volumes as everyone sat glued to the television. "It was liberating. To have so

many friends, strangers and fellow mountain bikers crammed into a room watching the same thing, feeling the same emotions and experiencing the same excitement which the Cape to Cape doco brings was very comforting," he said. It also gave Andrew time to reflect on part of the reason he pushed so hard towards off-road cycling. "Watching my mate Daniel for the first time on TV sharing his story was probably the highlight for me," he explained. "It added more fuel to the fire inside me to raise the profile for off road handcycling in Australia. I really want to see him slogging it out with me on the dirt trails one day." 'Daniel' is Daniel Sonnabend - a car vs cycle accident left Daniel a paraplegic with the added complication of a head injury. Daniel has returned to the roads in the form of handcycling, but his goal is to take

to the trails as well. The future for Andrew is full. His brush with one stage of the Cape to Cape has only served as a teaser for wanting to complete all four stages in 2014. Being the first Australian paraplegic to complete a multi-stage MTB event would certainly be one for the history books. For the moment, his excitement for this challenge needs to be put on the backburner while he turns his focus to his wheelchair basketball career. Wheelchair basketball is like most elite sports - 4am starts, hour long drives to training, time off work and the sacrifice of turning down social drinks and friend-filled weekends. Go hard or go home. Andrew is a shining example of someone not willing to give into the depression that inevitably follows when you have experienced such change.

He explains that he is human and the same emotions affect him. His advice is positive: "Don't ignore those thoughts and feelings, let them come, but also let them pass. They help create you as the person you are now and build unique characteristics. Able-bodied or otherwise, the biggest enemy is ourselves. We hear it all the time 'true happiness comes from the inside' and 'you're your own worst enemy'. You can have all the support and encouragement around you 24/7, but nothing happens unless you really want it to happen." Andrew is the very definition of taking those earlier hypotheticals, kicking them in the arse and turning them upside down. He is making it happen. And he will continue to do so.