

Man awarded \$7.5 million after Civic Pool accident

By Ben Houston
Court Reporter

A former Canberra man has been awarded \$7.5 million in compensation 13 years after he dived into the shallow end of the Civic pool, leaving him a quadriplegic.

ACT Supreme Court Justice Malcolm Gray ordered the ACT Government yesterday to compensate Anthony Richard Leggett, now a 31-year-old living in Sydney, as part of a settlement in which the Government has not formally admitted liability.

But the ACT Government was found to be liable because it was the owner and occupier of the pool complex.

Mr Leggett said the incident occurred when he dived into what he thought was the deep end of the pool.

It was argued that the Government was negligent because there was insufficient signage regarding depth and diving blocks at the shallow end of the pool.

When the incident occurred in August, 1992, Mr Leggett was an Australian National University student with plans to work in the banking and financial sector until he was 65.

He planned to study economics

and science at ANU before switching to an economics/commerce degree the following year, followed by an appropriate post-graduate course suitable for a career in the finance sector.

But a document filed in the ACT Supreme Court paints a sad picture for Mr Leggett.

The document, signed by Mr Leggett's solicitor, states he sustained a crush fracture to a vertebra, leaving him with a host of ongoing disabilities — including quadriplegia.

It puts his future wage loss, using various scenarios, at somewhere between about \$6 million and \$12 million.

Other things said to have stemmed from the incident included weight loss, a profound psychological impact, scarring, dizziness, nightmares, depression and being confined permanently to a wheelchair.

According to the document, Mr Leggett had not worked from the time of the incident until April 2003, when he started working part-time as a peer support officer for Spinal Cord Injuries Australia.

Speaking outside court yesterday, Mr Leggett said he would give the entire compensation payment back if it meant he was able to walk again.

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