

Palsy sufferer sues over 'humiliation'

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Brandon Tomlin: Taking on Alfred. *Photo: Eddie Jim*

SEVERE cerebral palsy sufferer Brandon Tomlin can communicate only by using a board with letters on it: he flicks his eyes over it and his conversation partner traces out the words.

It is the thread that connects him to people, and he says this thread was cut by mistreatment last year at The Alfred hospital.

The 29-year-old has lodged a claim with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, seeking damages over what he says was a humiliating experience at the hospital.

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Mr Tomlin went to the hospital on the night of May 23 last year, distressed and threatening self-harm. He has no argument with the staff's initial treatment of him — they used his board, asked questions and agreed to admit him to the short-stay unit.

However, he says, staff then stopped communicating with him. No one came past to ask if he was all right. He became desperate to use the toilet and, after an hour and a half, lost control of his bladder and threw himself on the floor, trying to get to his communication board.

When the nurses found him they tranquillized him, he says.

"Surely everybody has the basic right to access a toilet, don't they? To be tranquillized is an outrageous response," he says.

An Alfred spokesman says the hospital has promised to work with Mr. Tomlin on his issues.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/palsy-sufferer-sues-over-humiliation-20080615-2r00.html#ixzz1M6tqDnb1>