

Record payout to tourist crippled on Coast

# \$6.5m for shattered young life

by GREG STOLZ

A YOUNG English backpacker whose life was ruined in a horrific motorcycle accident on the Gold Coast six years ago has won a record \$6.5 million compensation payout.

Nathan Perry, now 27, was left wheelchair-bound and unable to speak after the October 1993 crash at Molendinar.

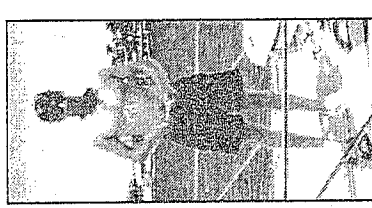
Mr Perry sued for damages in a case which was to have started in the Brisbane Supreme Court last Monday before moving to the Royal Courts of Justice in London next week.

A Queensland judge, barristers, solicitors and more than 40 witnesses had been preparing to fly to England for the trial when insurers Suncorp and VACC agreed to an 11th-hour settlement, said Mr Perry's Gold Coast lawyer, Marcus Woodfield.

Mr Woodfield, of Broadbeach firm Delaneys, said the settlement was a Queensland record and one of the largest in Australia.

He said Glenda Perry, Nathan's widowed mother who turned her life upside down to care for her son, was relieved but no amount of money could compensate for a life ruined.

"It is the largest set-



Nathan ... during his Gold Coast stay

tlement for a personal injuries compensation claim in Queensland history but Mrs Perry's attitude is that no amount of money can ever make up for what has happened to Nathan," said Mr Woodfield. "Nathan was a young man cut down in the prime of his life on his first big overseas holiday."

Nathan flew to Australia in January 1993 with the aim of spending a year here. He planned to travel on to New Zealand and Hawaii before returning home to Gloucestershire 12 months later.

But his holiday of a lifetime turned to tragedy on October 28 that year when a motorcycle on which he was a pillion passenger collided head-on with a car on

Ashmore Road outside the Trinity Lutheran College.

Nathan was thrown from the motorcycle — ridden by his best mate Adrian Green — and suffered extensive injuries including brain damage.

Mr Woodfield said Nathan had been left with little or no movement in his left side and had restricted movement in his right leg and arm.

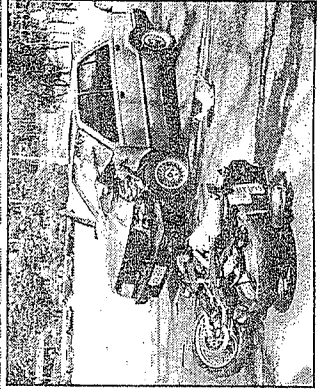
"He is unable to speak effectively and mainly communicates by mouthing words to his carers," said the lawyer.

Mr Woodfield said Mrs Perry, whose husband died a few years before Nathan's accident, had dedicated her life to caring for her son.

Mr Woodfield said the settlement had eclipsed the previous Queensland record personal injuries payout of \$3.8 million.

The settlement, paid by the insurers of Mr Green and the female driver of the sedan involved in the collision, would be used to move Nathan out of his current care facility which was not properly equipped for a patient with his range of problems.

"Mrs Perry will initially use the settlement funds to have a purpose-built house constructed for Nathan and (for a live-in carer," he said.



Wheelchair-bound Nathan Perry with his widowed mother Glenda and family friend Keith Wilkins at home in England and (inset) the Molendinar accident in which Nathan was injured