

# Hurt cop compo lifted to \$6m

■ Daniel Mercer

Severely disabled police officer Ryan Marron and his family have finally settled their case for compensation after the State Government agreed to a topped-up ex gratia payment of \$6 million.

Const. Marron, who is brain damaged after contracting a mosquito-borne virus while stationed in the Kimberley in 2011, had been fighting for up to \$12 million to help pay for his future medical expenses.

But after the Government initially refused to budge from an offer of \$5.5 million, his family took the step of pleading for compassion, claiming the figure was not nearly enough.

Yesterday, flanked by Police Minister Liza Harvey, Attorney-General Michael Mischin, Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan and Police Union president George Tilbury, Const. Marron's father Tom expressed relief an agreement had been reached.

"We're very happy it's come to a conclusion," Mr Marron said. "It's for the betterment of Ryan's future and that's all we were looking for the whole time.

"I don't think there are any winners in all of this. It's been a tragic journey and I think it's only just beginning.

"It's been five years since he got injured and I think there's a long way to go. This will help."



Ryan Marron and his parents Sandra and Tom and his partner Megan. Picture: Mogens Johansen

According to Mr Marron, the initial offer put forward by the family and the Police Union would have given his son a "very comfortable" life.

It had been based on an independent assessment calculating that Const. Marron would need

\$6.5 million to pay for his lifelong medical needs alone.

Although the final settlement was significantly short of that, Mr Marron said it would still provide a comfortable lifestyle for his 34-year-old son.

"It might not be the be-all

and end-all but as a family we will stay together," Mr Marron said.

"He's got a future — he's got 30, 40 years of life. So that money is his future."

About \$1 million of the payout is expected to be spent on trus-



Ryan Marron in hospital.

teeship fees but Mr Marron said the extra money would help offset the cost.

Const. Marron was infected with Murray Valley encephalitis while working at the remote Balgo community in 2011.

The virus almost killed him and when he awoke from a coma, the parts of his brain that control movement and speech had been permanently damaged.

Because police officers are not entitled to workers' compensation, his only option was to apply to the Government for an ex gratia payment.

Mrs Harvey said Const. Marron was left stricken while serving the WA public and she hoped the settlement would ensure he enjoyed a quality of life.

She said she aimed to introduce a workers' compensation scheme for police.