

AS THE PANDEMIC RAGED, THIS PROPERTY AGENT GOT A SHOCK LOCKDOWN PHONE CALL THAT SAVED HIS LIFE

We have a kidney if you get a plane to Sydney.



Gold Coast commercial property agent Nicholas Brown got a life-saving kidney transplant last year at the height of the pandemic. Picture: Nigel Hallett

GREG STOLZ

HE'S the Gold Coast property agent given a new lease of life with an organ transplant, thanks in part to the pandemic and the slamming shut of borders.

Nicholas Brown, 47, co-owner of commercial agency Retail Direct, was staring death in the face after being diagnosed with stage 4 kidney disease in December 2018.

"I was told by the nephrologist (kidney specialist) that I was not going to be here in 12 months if we didn't do something about it," he said.

By the time Mr Brown started dialysis in April 2019,

the disease was at stage 5 and his kidneys were functioning at just 10 per cent.

Also a lifelong diabetic, he was on the waiting list for both a kidney and pancreas transplant at Sydney's Westmead Hospital.

As fate would have it, NSW shut its borders to Victoria as the pandemic raged last year and in August, Mr Brown received a lam phone call from the hospital telling him to get the first flight to Sydney.

"The transplant team had to say no to all the would-be organ recipients from Victoria, so six of us from Queensland ended up with the

“ I was told ... I was not going to be here in 12 months if we didn't do something

Kidney transplant patient Nicholas Brown

organs," he said.

There were more health dramas for the veteran property agent when he suffered a massive heart attack three weeks after the transplant as his body struggled to adjust to the shock of the new organs.

But he battled back to health and recently opened a new office at Broadbeach with long-term colleague Ste-

ven Black, who looked after the business while Mr Brown was ill.

"I'm still on about 30 pills a day but it's nothing compared with having to inject myself with insulin four times a day or having dialysis three times a week for five hours," he said.

Mr Brown was given the option to make contact with his donor's family but chose

not to 'for emotional reasons'.

"I'm eternally grateful to his family, who I believe live in Brisbane, but with everything I'd been through, I wasn't up to it emotionally," he said.

Mr Brown said he felt 'blessed' and encouraged people to register as organ donors.

"I don't think a lot of people realise that you have to go online and register," he said.

"It's not like the old days when you ticked a box on your driver's licence."

Mr Brown said the Coast property market was booming and he was relieved to be alive and 'riding the wave'.