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## Inspirational Eltham dad Terry Mitropoulos wins YMCA Victorian father of the year award

**A DAD in Melbourne's north has fought back from severe medical conditions and scooped a state father of the year award.**

Brittany Shanahan, Diamond Valley Leader

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Father of the year Terry Mitropoulos with sons Jonah, 12, and Christos, 9. Picture: Carmelo Bazzano

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TERRY Mitropoulos is a constant source of inspiration to his children.



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Six years ago, the father-of-two, now 41, was diagnosed with a brain tumour and rushed to hospital to have it removed.

But this was only the first of a series of blows.

When Mr Mitropoulos returned to the hospital for a second operation to check his progress, doctors discovered he'd developed a superbug infection, which caused fluid blockages in his brain.

Five different antibiotics and 13 operations later, a solution was nowhere in sight.

The trauma took a huge toll on his body which prompted a stroke, causing the right side of his body to be paralysed.

It wasn't until an imported drug to kill the superbug was given to Mr Mitropoulos that he began to see the light.

He weighed just 55kg and was told it was unlikely he would walk again.

"That just ignited me," he said. "I wanted to show my critics that I can and I will."

Following rehabilitation and strength and conditioning sessions, Mr Mitropoulos was finally able to walk again.

His son, Jonah, watched in admiration from the sidelines and nominated his hero for the Eltham

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The 12-year-old wrote in his submission "He believes in myself and that anything is achievable through hard work and determination. I love him very much."

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Mr Mitropoulos, who was also in contention for the YMCA's Victorian Father of the Year, claimed both awards. He said he was shocked to be crowned the winner.

"Words cannot describe how important this all is to me," he said.

"I carry it (his son's handwritten nomination) with me everywhere."



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