



Vaughan Bullivant with wife Lydia and daughter Chanel at their Redcliffe home.
Picture: Jamie Hanson

Vaughan Bullivant living on \$1000pw as he battles for empire

Daryl Passmore, The Sunday Mail (Qld)

February 3, 2019 12:00am

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ONE of Queensland's richest men has been given \$1000 a week spending money as he fights for control of his finances.

Flamboyant entrepreneur Vaughan Bullivant built a \$100 million-plus vitamins empire before becoming a tourism tycoon.

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But in a tragic twist of fate, Mr Bullivant now has decisions made for him by two former employees and a lawyer who holds power of attorney over his affairs.

It follows a series of health scares that have left the 73-year-old with some short-term memory loss, eyesight problems and some physical frailty.

A psychiatrist's report said Mr Bullivant is no longer able to manage his affairs.

But he and his wife Lydia, 46, are angry – arguing that they are capable of making their own decisions – and a second medical assessment has supported that.



Vaughan Bullivant with then three-year-old daughter Chanel

"It's like Vaughan is nothing," Mrs Bullivant said.

"I'm trying to stand up for him. We are husband and wife."

Mrs Bullivant said she felt hurt and excluded by the process.

"They have detached me," she said. "I'm his wife, there 24 hours a day (for him)."

The couple, who have been married for 12 years, live in a beachside mansion at Scarborough, north of Brisbane, with their daughter Chanel, 11.

The colourful businessman joined the ranks of Queensland Rich Listers after selling his Nature's Own vitamins company for \$137 million in 1997.

He reinvested much of it in developing Daydream Island in the Whitsundays before selling the resort to a Chinese group for \$30 million in 2015.

It followed successful battles against cancer.



Vaughan Bullivant with Lydia Apao in happier times at Daydream Island

Surgery to remove part of his tongue in 2012 led to complications and treatment in a specialist clinic in Germany.

The following year he had a brain tumour removed and underwent months of chemotherapy and radiation treatment for the disease, which had spread, before being given the all-clear.

Last year, around Easter, Mr Bullivant suffered a seizure – possibly a reaction to some medication.

“My face swelled up and I could hardly breathe,” he said. “They put me in a coma for several days.

"They put a breathing tube in me to keep me alive."

That's when the enduring power of attorney which Mr Bullivant had previously granted was enacted to safeguard his affairs.



Vaughan Bullivant at Daydream Island

"They said he had lost his marbles," his wife said.

Mrs Bullivant said she pleaded with the powers of attorney not to act too quickly.

"I said can you please wait for him to get out and get off the meds before you do anything.

"He is supposed to be a vegetable or dead before the powers of attorney take over."

The couple say his condition has improved since, and his need for 24-hour care has been reduced.

"It makes me rather scared," Mr Bullivant said.

"They have so much power and I have no say.

"I believe they have complete control and there's nothing I can do about it.

"They can sell my house or anything."

He has \$1000 a week discretionary spending money.

Mrs Bullivant says she, too, feels helpless.

Despite their predicament, the couple say they are happy to have each other.

"People might have criticised us for the difference in age but we have a happy life together," Mr Bullivant said.

Mrs Bullivant added: "Vaughan and I are so happy that we are still together after all that happened. It's happy ever after."

Mr Bullivant also has four other children from previous marriages.