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Cooktown local Waylon is just one of many First Nations people benefiting from NDIS supports being delivered remotely.

Waylon, 28, has a psychosocial disability and his goal is to become more independent.

Using his NDIS funding, Waylon is accessing culturally appropriate support through local disability provider My Pathway, who he chose to work with to help build his skills.

Waylon was matched with program coordinator Pietrina and support worker Stepho, who support him daily. The pair have taken Waylon under their wings, like one of their own.

‘We’ve been supporting Waylon to learn how to cook and to eat healthy, to shop, and we are helping him to understand how to maintain a budget. These skills are important to make sure he has money for bills and food, so he can support himself,’ Pietrina said.

Stepho, a local for 30+ years, takes Waylon to all his appointments, and the pair are working on building Waylon’s fitness and handyman skills to help him find work.

‘Stepho’s a good bloke,’ Waylon said. ‘We drive around looking for odd jobs and stuff.’

Stepho said they have access to a lawn mower and whipper snipper, so he’s shown Waylon how to use it.

‘He’s not too bad at it either, so I’ve also got him helping his mum out at home, mowing lawns,’ he said.

‘Stepho’s helped me get my Ls (learner licence or L plate) too. Now we are working on my Ps (provisional licence or P plate),’ Waylon said.

The pair often go out on country for walks. Waylon likes to collect blackberries and add them to water with some salt and sugar to make his favourite drink.

Stepho’s also supporting Waylon, helping him to repair an old bicycle.

‘I found it and donated it to Waylon,’ Stepho said. ‘I’m teaching him how to fix it up, so he’ll have some wheels to get around on until he can get his drivers licence’.

Pietrina and Stepho have also supported Waylon to apply for public housing in Cooktown.

‘I’m on the waiting list. I’m hoping to get my own place in a few years,’ Waylon said.

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