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Loving father, Steven Farrugia, said he was the proudest dad ever when he used his NDIS funding to engage regular physiotherapy, and after 25 years in a wheelchair, he was able to walk his daughter Hayley down the aisle

Using a walking frame, was quite a feat for the 52-year-old, who was diagnosed 27 years ago with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) – a condition affecting the central nervous system, which interferes with brain, spinal cord and optic nerve impulses.

Steven said it took him two years of weekly physio and occupational therapies to be able to achieve his goal of walking Hayley down the aisle.

“It was a beautiful wedding. It was held at Bendooley Estate,” he said. “Everyone was crying. They all knew what I was doing.

“As I stood up, Hayley put her hand on top of my hand on the walking frame and as we walked all the way down the aisle she talked to me the whole time, saying come on dad you can do it, you can do it. She gave me so much confidence,” Steven said.

“I was as proud as you could possibly be. I got my wish to walk my beautiful daughter down the aisle. It was a proud moment walking next to her, even though I was walking a bit funny, I didn’t care. All I could focus on was Hayley talking to me, where my feet were, walking straight ahead and thinking to myself, not far to go now.

“When I watched the wedding video I couldn’t believe it was me. I had tears in my eyes. We watched it in the lounge room so thank God people were sitting behind me.”

With MS, Steven said there are three categories - slow, progressive and aggressive.

“Mine is slow but being part of the NDIS, and having funding to buy equipment and choose your own supports, like a good physiotherapist and a good occupational therapist, and having a goal to walk Hayley down the aisle,

really gave me the incentive and the ability to move,” he said.

Gone are the days where Steven said he felt like a burden to his family and friends.

“Through my NDIS plan I’ve been able to get a range of supports so I can be more independent,” he said.

“The NDIS has also modified my bathroom. I didn’t have to wait long and it has made life so much easier. I’m really grateful for that.”

Steven said he has a few new goals front of mind to include in his next NDIS plan.

“I would like to be able to walk down my hallway, to help maintain the strength I have built since working with my physiotherapist so one day I can show my grandkids how I walked their mum down the aisle,” he said.

“I’m only 52. I have sat down more in my life than I have walked. Now, the NDIS has given me the opportunity to get off my backside and try to move more because I’m still young and I’ve got a lot more life to live!”

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