

Posted on:

26 November 2019

Being an NDIS participant means Michelle can now be more independent and live a more confident life as she pursues her future goals.

Prior to the NDIS, the 54-year-old Chermside resident, who has schizophrenia, experienced paranoia and led a relatively isolated life, trying to manage her condition.

Now, through her NDIS plan, Michelle has Open Minds support workers assisting her to live her life independently, and she said her world has just opened up.

"I'm just so happy," she said. "I was always frightened to go places and I had to fight with myself to get anywhere."

"Now my support workers, Cass and Emily, take me out and when I get scared they reassure me that everything is going to be alright."

A creative soul, Michelle loves craft, so channelling her strengths, Cass and Emily work with her visiting opportunity and bargain shops, sourcing materials.

"I love doing crafts," she said. "I make coiled bracelets, stretch necklaces and earrings."

"I also crochet. We went to an event where there were lots of tables and each one had a different craft you could try on it. I picked crocheting. I love it."

"I've made lots of colourful blankets and I crochet borders around face washers. One of my goals is to hold a stall and sell them," Michelle said.

Living independently, in her own unit, with the support of Open Minds, Cass said she spends two days a week with Michelle.

"On one of our days, we go shopping and stop for a coffee, Michelle just loves it" she said.

"We visit all of her favourite shops and she gets heaps of bargains, which she uses to do her crafts and turn a lot into gifts for people."

"Then on our other day we do her banking and grocery shopping. We go down to Chermside or sometimes Morayfield, and because Michelle wears a beautiful smile on her face and she's so friendly, she's now quite well known wherever we go," Cass said with a smile.

"We have actually seen a huge difference in Michelle in the six months we've been supporting her."

"We've been trying new activities, and we have been able to take her out of her regular routine and venture into a few new places. This has helped her to feel safer and it has increased her confidence."

"We have also noticed the more she concentrates on her craft, the less the voices annoy her in her head. It has just been incredible," Cass said.

Michelle, never one to stay idle, said she is now looking forward to achieving her future goal - learning to sew.

"I'd like to make my own clothes, make clothes for other people and mend my own clothes," she said.

"I've only made two dresses in my life. I did sewing at high school. I wasn't very good but I'd like to give it another go because the support I now get from the NDIS and Open Minds makes me feel so much better about myself," Michelle said.

Related Stories and videos

Ms Ryan is passionate about people with disability being seen on stage and valued for their talents

[Award-winning dancer Michelle Ryan back at WOMADelaide, with support from NDIS](#)

8 March 2022

Louise Sauvage reflects on journey for International Women's Day

[Champion Australian Paralympian says regardless of difference, we all have a part to play in society](#)

6 March 2023

21-year-old Zac Lloyd has moved out of home to start leading his own independent life.

[Zac moves towards greater independence](#)

18 October 2021

[More stories and videos](#)