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Persistence was the key to NDIS participant Andrew Ned working in his Northern Queensland outback community, driving My Pathway and NDIS participants to and from their appointments.

Leila Siufanua, Andrew’s NDIS Local Area Coordinator, said the 21-year-old Doomadgee local, who has an intellectual disability and a hearing impairment, now has paid employment, driving the My Pathways bus 10 hours a week and he just loves it.

“I enjoy picking up people, dropping them off home, taking them wherever they want to go – I’m 100 per cent proud of myself,” he said.

Leila said Andrew showed up every day at the My Pathways office.

“Staff were so impressed with his attitude and reliability they soon offered him a volunteer role there,” she said.

“Initially, Andrew was cleaning and tidying up around the office but staff said they soon realised he was capable of much more.”

In Andrew’s NDIS plan, one of his goals was to learn to drive and Leila said with NDIS supports, he was able to achieve it.

“I was so proud of him,” she said.

“Now My Pathways employees him 10 hours a week to drive its bus, providing transport for people in the community to get to their appointments.”

“Since joining the NDIS, Andrew’s confidence has grown and so has his social participation,” Leila said.

“He’s joined the Doomadgee Men’s Group, and recently he participated in a special ceremony where he presented t-shirts to community members in support of women’s safety.”

Leila said Andrew is really thriving in his role and he loves the responsibility and the social interaction his bus driving job brings.

“Andrew has also spread the NDIS message with his mob,” she said.

“He has brought about 20 people, a lot of them relatives, to see us to test their NDIS eligibility. He’s certainly kept us busy,” Leila added with a laugh.

Looking to achieve another new NDIS goal, Andrew has spoken to Leila about training as a support worker.

“Andrew has had support workers in the past, and he knows what they do – how they come in to your home and help you. He wants to do exactly the same,” she said.

“I said to him, ‘You are actually doing it already – picking people up, having conversations with them and helping them to have a better day!’.

“Andrew is just an amazing person in his community, and it’s clear a lot of people look up to him. He has some really deep connections in his town and it’s lovely to see,” Leila said.

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