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Brisbane's Cassandra Grey says having access to the NDIS has been "absolutely life changing".

"It's scary to think what my life would have been like without the NDIS," she said.

"I wouldn't be about to graduate from my law degree next year; I wouldn't be as active as I am; I wouldn't be living in my own home; I wouldn't be able to dream and plan for my future and I wouldn't be achieving my full potential," she added.

At 21, Cassandra, now 23, said her disability came about from a pull to her back muscle on Christmas Eve, 2017.

"On Boxing Day I went to emergency. To relieve my pain they gave me IV medication and my nervous system had a damaging reaction to it," she said.

"Initially, I had no movement from my neck down, but once the medication was out of my system I got the use of my arms and core back until about T12/L1 where function stops.

Left with a neurological disorder, Cassandra said it has the potential to affect "every single bodily function" and occasionally she goes through periods of severely reduced function.

"There is no anatomical damage to my nervous system," she said. "The medications affected the pathways to my brain so signals don't go through or they go through incorrectly."

Cassandra said prior to the NDIS, she was completely reliant on her family and the hospital system because her home wasn't wheelchair accessible.

"I had only brought my house six months prior, and there I was totally reliant on people to do everything for me.

"My house was double-storey; the ground floor was split level, and it had a steep driveway. It wasn't safe to live there. I kept falling and injuring myself so I had to move out," she said.

Looking for solutions to support her disability and to become more independent, Cassandra attended a Disability Expo where she learnt about the NDIS.

"I found joining the NDIS incredibly simple. I had an Access Request form posted to me. My GP filled it in, attached supporting documents from my specialists and sent it in.

"Two weeks later I got a letter to say I had been approved and I cried with relief," she said.

"Then a few days later I had my planning meeting. It was such a positive experience.



"For the first time in my life I had support available to me I hadn't had before. My planner listened to me and I got the most amazing first plan, which I feel has set me up for life.

"I was so overwhelmed at the possibilities. The stress was gone. I could tell my life was going to improve exponentially and it has."

Cassandra said her goals in her first plan were to increase her independence, live in her own home and to drive again.

"I achieved all these goals during my first plan," she said. "I was referred to LifeTec, who specialise in assistive technology (AT) and they came and did an assessment of my house and the AT I needed, and provided a report to the NDIS.

"Katie (from LifeTec) was amazing throughout the process. It was big task given the house has a small footprint, but now I have a fully accessible bedroom and wet room bathroom in what was my garage.

"I've also got a stair-lift so I can manage the split levels between my kitchen and lounge, and I have a ramp in my front yard so I can leave home when I like, independently.

"I was also funded for a power assist wheelchair, which means I can get out of bed every morning and go about my day – go to Uni, to the gym and just live my life.

Cassandra said she's also grateful for her vehicle modifications. "I can drive my car again!" she said. "I can go shopping when I want to, and go see my friends without someone driving me.

"My family is over the moon with the support I've received from the NDIS because now I'm 99 per cent independent in my own home and I can do most things myself.

"I'm mostly back to how I was pre-disability, and it nice to know it has made their lives and mine much easier given I'm no longer reliant on them 24/7," she said.

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