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In a remote Northern Territory community, Ngukurr, with a population of 900, NDIS participant, Peatra Robertson has achieved her goal of gaining paid employment and has started work as a NDIS Community Connector.

A respected community member, Peatra's role is to visit and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, people with psychosocial disability, and ageing parents or carers of children with disability.

Having experienced a cerebral haemorrhage four years ago, leaving the now 38-year-old paralysed down her left side, Peatra said it's her lived experience of disability she has on her side, and she is looking forward to sharing her NDIS learnings with her mob.

"My sister, Glenda and possibly another fella, will job share with me because I still have trouble doing some things," Peatra said.

"Glenda is really good at translating English to Kriol and between the three of us we can make sure the community understands the NDIS and how it can help them.

"The community trust us. They can see how the NDIS has helped me. We also have a few cousins on it, but we want to help support others who need it; tell them all about it; help them fill out the forms; get them started and support them through it," Peatra said.

Sunrise Health Services NDIS program manager, Jane Bean said Peatra is a true leader in her community.

"Peatra has really set an example in her community, particularly for other women participants like her cousins," she said.

"Peatra has shown her community what you can do with NDIS support, and to be brave and not afraid.

"There's a lot of community members who are really shy and too scared to leave their community, but Peatra is showing them you can do it and what you can achieve."

Jane said it was a big community event in Ngukurr when Peatra achieved one of her NDIS goals, to travel to Geelong to see her favourite AFL football team, the Geelong Cats, play.

"Peatra just loves the football, and it was her dream to see Geelong play so I called the club's Community Liaison Officer who was absolutely fantastic and we made it happen.

“Peatra was so excited. She had never flown to Melbourne before, but with no hesitation she hopped on the Bodhi Bus (the local four wheel drive bush bus) with her support worker and sister Glenda and together they travelled 310 kilometres to Katherine.

“Then Peatra took the Greyhound bus another 300 kms to Darwin where she took her very first flight to Melbourne. She and Glenda then travelled another hour down to Geelong.

“Peatra got to meet Geelong’s Community Liaison team and she joined the other fans who formed the guard of honour for the players on the oval as they ran out.

“Everyone in Ngukurr was so excited about her big trip,” Jane said. “They all had their TV’s tuned, hoping to catch a glimpse of Peatra on the ground. It was such a huge event.”

Jane said it is Peatra’s self-determination to achieve, which will help her get the NDIS message across to her community.

“Her self-determination and her willingness to leave her community and try new things is just so motivating and uplifting for others, and she can lead by example,” she said.

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