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During the past 20 years, Gold Coast NDIS participant and lawyer, artist and fashion designer Carol Taylor has refused to let stumbling blocks stand in her way.

After the car accident, which left her instantly paralysed and a quadriplegic at the age of 34—newlywed and desperate for a baby—Carol persevered with IVF for 8 years only to conceive naturally and give birth to a healthy son, though doctors had told her she would never have a child.

When Carol decided to return to her career, she found the world she'd left reluctant to welcome a woman in a wheelchair who couldn't use her hands and needed flexibility.

So, Carol set up her own law firm.

Carol began painting after her accident to help with depression and post-traumatic stress. When her first attempts at painting failed, Carol found new ways to hold the paintbrushes, and has since won several art prizes, including a $10,000 award with Access Arts Queensland.

When she found herself frustrated every time she shopped for clothes because there was nothing in the shops that fit the altered body shape of a permanent wheelchair user, Carol took matters into her own hands and started designing clothes.

"I'm a born problem solver," said Carol,

"I couldn't go to the shops and buy what I wanted because your shape changes, your muscles atrophy. Shopping is such a sad experience. "I always loved fashion, becoming a quadriplegic didn't change that so I designed my own clothes."

In 2019, she was invited to design an inclusive collection for the Mercedes Benz Fashion Festival in Brisbane.

Now, she hopes to create her own fashion label with a difference. Not only does she aspire to design inclusive clothes for people of many shapes and abilities, her designs will be a canvas for her own art, as well as the art of others with disabilities.

"I believe I am the only quadriplegic in the world designing clothing," said Carol. "But I don't just want this to be about practical clothes, I want the fabric to be a vehicle to showcase the beautiful artwork of people with disabilities.

Carol agrees she's an over achiever, but she says she couldn't do any of the things she does without the support of her devoted husband Rob, son D'arcy, and the NDIS.

“It wouldn't be happening without the NDIS,” she said. “There's no way I could do without that support, everything I do is because of the support I have around me through the NDIS. It would all come to a full stop if I didn’t have that.

“Before I joined the NDIS, I relied completely on Rob for all my care. He and D’arcy can now have boy time together because there is a support worker at home to care for me.”

Carol has NDIS funding for transport assistance and assistive technologies, including a powered wheelchair and accessible car modifications. Support workers help her with all her personal care and daily activities six days a week.

“I get support in the office, I get support in the home, I get support to help me with my art,” she said. “I can’t squeeze a tube of paint, I need help with that. So I mean it’s everything. They help me with everything. The NDIS has been completely life-changing for me.”

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