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Mountain Creek resident, Peter MacPherson, received NDIS funding to purchase an Omeo mobility device and said it’s been life-changing now he has his independence back and he doesn’t have to rely on others.

“That’s the thing with having an acquired disability, it’s so hard to come to terms with having to rely on people, so when you get a piece of assistive technology, like the Omeo, you get your freedom back to do things by yourself again,” he said.

Peter, 65, was diagnosed with Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia (HSP), type SPG7, a form of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) at 52.

This type of MND means as Peter’s condition deteriorates he may lose the use of his arms, but he said he’s not phased because with a flick of a switch he can still control the Omeo just by shifting his bodyweight in the direction he wants to go.

“For me, as far as independence goes, it doesn’t matter if I lose the use of my arms, I will always be able to go off on my own and I won’t have to rely on others.

“It’s just fantastic. There’s no doubt it is revolutionising the wheelchair!”

Peter said the Omeo goes “pretty quick” and it has the capacity to travel a 50km radius.

"I really enjoy riding it up to shops without having to take the car, and I go to Maroochydore and back at least two or three times a week,” he said.

“It takes me about two hours. In the car it would take 15 minutes, but what I’ve found is I like being able to get out in the sun and see people, and if I want to stop and have a yack I can. I find it’s more personal.

“When I’m in the car it’s just me in a sealed box. Yes, it gets me from A to B, but as a person with a disability, I found my life had become smaller because things had become more difficult, so the Omeo has me out among people again and it’s expanded my world.

Peter said he’s also pleased he can now do activities with his grandchildren.

“My youngest grandson, Riley, is in the Nippers, so now with a hoist installed in the back of my car I can load the Omeo in, then hoist it out, change the wheels to wider tyres myself, then ride it down to the beach, over the soft sand, to be with Riley.

“I understand it’s hard for people with acquired disabilities to get their head around getting supports, but when you finally arrive at ‘It is what it is’ you start to realise supports are really

good.

You can still get things done, but you just have to do it a different way.

“At the end of the day, we are so lucky to live in Australia.

The NDIS is a fantastic system and it’s really transformed my life,” he said.

Please note: The OMEO is a personal mobility device and is not sold as a wheelchair. Users should follow the advice and training from the supplier for safe use, and make sure they take care when around other people and property, and consider appropriate personal liability insurance.

It is generally not suitable for indoor use, for people who may struggle to transfer or who don't have good trunk control. This is considered a higher cost assistive technology under the Assistive Technology Operational Guidelines, so you should discuss your appropriate mobility solution with your AT assessor.

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