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For Adam, making a stand against the odds delivered more than three decades worth of joy.

The Mullumbimby-based NDIS participant, 50, who had a stroke at 11, marked a magic moment recently after standing by himself.

“It was something he hadn’t done in 36 years,” Adam’s father, Brian said.

“Previously, he’d had no movement, so it was quite miraculous, the big goal is to have him walking independently by the end of the year.”

Praising the NDIS as a “godsend”, Brian said access to supports combined with Adam’s drive and determination led to the milestone.

However, belief at times had wavered following the stroke which changed Adam’s life forever.

“It was a big shock,” Brian said.

“He’d had a couple of incidents and had trouble breathing, but the doctors didn’t pick it up. He was left with no physical ability, but was intellectually intact.

“One specialist told us the best thing we could do was put him in a home, but we said ‘no’.

“He made the decision he wanted to live and we did the best we could to care for him.”

Beginning a Doman-Delacato program prior to joining the NDIS, Adam had volunteers to assist with movement. Assisted swimming in the afternoons provided some freedom, but Adam lived with painful cramps and lost a lot of weight.

“He was just in so much pain every day,” Brian said.

“We wanted him to have a life, but we got to the point where we just accepted that was how it was going to be.”

The family moved to Northern New South Wales in 2001, settling on two acres to provide Adam with a better environment.

“Everything was meant to be with Mullumbimby,” Brian said.

“It’s a lot easier for him to swim and get out and about.”

The move was followed a number of years later with an introduction to the NDIS, from which Adam receives Local Area Coordination (LAC) support through Social Futures, and the support has been crucial.

With access to specialists, Brian said Adam's improvements had been possible through support from his Gold Coast-based physiotherapist.

"Adam's physio assured us that although Adam had dead parts of his brain, all the pathways remained in some form, so, we resumed treatment to retrain his brain," Brian said.

"Adam gained better use of his hands, started to kneel and balance, and then he stood. Adam and his physio have such a brilliant rapport, I believe anything is possible."

Adam has also connected with chiropractors, carers, and support workers, and uses assistive technology such as a bed which rises and reclines, to watch television or sit up for a story.

"The NDIS has been amazing… that financial support, independence and chance to follow through on things is just so amazing.

"From our perspective, it's just been brilliant."

Adam engages in a drama class taught by Brian, heads to the movies, has engaged with kick-boxing therapy and loves the water.

"Another goal now is looking at regaining some of his speech," Brian said.

"We have never given up hope, and his courage, determination, and love of life inspires us every day."

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