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From sought-after movie extra to art gallery volunteer and aspiring plus-size model, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant Tara is using her supports to maximise visibility for people with disability in advertising and social media campaigns.

The 21-year-old from the Gold Coast, who lives with Down syndrome, has been celebrating many successes since joining the scheme as an 18-year-old.

In just three years, Tara's list of achievements include completing a Certificate III of Screen and Media at TAFE, becoming a visitor support officer at Home of the Arts (HOTA) Gallery, joining a theatre group and starting a modelling career.

Extending her talent to the global stage, Tara is spreading her wings through film and television, after being chosen to appear in the Joe vs. Carole series, a scripted adaptation of the 2020 podcast Joe Exotic: Tiger King, which premiered worldwide in March.

"I do theatre and am involved in the Gold Coast Film Festival," Tara said.

"I've also been in Young Rock (season two). I was a fan girl, cheering during the fighting and wrestling scenes."

Tara recently volunteered at the opening night of the Gold Coast Film Festival, and the upcoming movie and TV extra is "happy and excited" to be involved in Queensland's burgeoning film industry.

Recently setting up an Instagram account to showcase her brand, Tara, who receives assistance in implementing her NDIS funding through Carer's Queensland, was recently one of the first NDIS participants to take part in their Be Your Own Boss (BYOB) workshops.

With the program aiming to empower, educate and support people with disability to create or grow their own microbusiness, Tara's mother Louise said her daughter had originally become involved in BYOB to learn how to further develop her modelling and acting career while promoting and selling her artwork.

However, Louise said business planning during the workshop had proven very helpful, as was information about managing social media platforms effectively.

"During the process, what we came to learn from the mentors is that it was better to focus on doing one thing well rather than doing lots of things badly, find a niche, and that's been a part of Tara's BYOB learning journey," Louise said.

“Because of the advice we received, we’ve taken the focus off her artwork. It’s still featured on Red Bubble, to concentrate on her building her social media presence and film and modelling work.

“For example, we’re approaching active wear brands for larger people in the hope they will realise the benefits of campaigns that show society that you don’t have to look a certain way.

“There’s a lot of old stigmas still around of what people with disability should do or where they belong. Tara is doing what she loves, whether it’s acting, horticulture or becoming a barista, people with disability should be able to follow their passions.”

Helping people at HOTA on the Gold Coast, Tara gives tours, welcomes guests and also helps during citizenship ceremonies, as well as at events such as Kids take over HOTA and Bricktionary.

“I do all different kinds of things, looking after people, showing people around, telling them not to touch the art and where they can and can’t go,” Tara said.

With her NDIS supports in place and her list of passions and pursuits growing and a long-term goal of living independently, Tara is looking forward to a bright future where she is able to choose what she wants to do in life.

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