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Ky Lovell is hitting all the right notes as he follows his dream of becoming a professional musician and disability advocate for the music industry.

After graduating with a Certificate II in Music from the Queensland College of Music, Ky has landed a rare spot in an inclusive radio training program.

A National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant since 2019, Ky is one of 20 people in the country chosen to be part of the Audio Ability Project.

This federally funded project mentors, trains and creates work placement for people living with a disability in community radio and other creative industries.

Ky, 20, from Redcliffe, north of Brisbane, has profound autism and has difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication.

However, his mother Tee says Ky communicates through music.

“He had quite profound delay in his speech as a toddler,” Tee said. “We weren’t sure if he would ever be verbal.

“But then his first words were saying the names of different instruments, like ‘saxophone’.

“Ever since he could sit up, he was beating out tunes with his hands.”

By the time he was 7, Tee bought Ky a professional drum kit after a visit to the music store proved a revelation.

“Ky was sitting at this drum kit while the store owner eyed him off probably thinking, ‘what the heck is this little kid doing’,” Tee said.

“Then the next minute, Ky’s playing something amazing. It blew everyone away.

“The store owner said that would normally take someone about 20 years to learn to play.”

From there, his music therapist discovered Ky had perfect pitch – the ability to hear and reproduce a musical note.

He even plays the guitar left-handed, with the strings upside down.

A popular figure in his community, Ky has formed a strong bond with his support worker, mentor and musician, Damon Joel.

Damon is helping Ky with the Audio Ability Project, recording podcasts at Team Musicare, a local recording studio created to help people with a disability access music.

“I’m inspired by Ky and a little bit jealous too,” Damon said.

“I wish I had half his passion when it comes to music. He’s incredible.

“Whenever I see him play, I am so envious. I want to feel what he is feeling all the time.”

As part of his NDIS plan, Ky accesses a range of supports, including yoga therapy to help improve his balance and movement.

“Before the yoga therapy, Ky had trouble just getting down the stairs,” Tee said.

“He would have to slide down and worry about falling over. The difference now is extraordinary.”

Ky received assistance to apply for and implement his NDIS funding through NDIS local area coordination partner, Carers Queensland.

His other supports include speech therapy, occupational therapy, drama lessons, a dietician and sailing.

Carers Queensland will screen a documentary about Ky’s life as part of International Day of People with Disabilities celebrations on 3 December.

Among thousands of entries, the doco made it in the top 5 in 2020’s international Focus on Ability Film festival.

Tee says Ky plans to use his talent to find work in the live music industry as a disability access consultant, so people of all abilities can enjoy live shows.

That’s when he’s not on stage himself, of course.

“Ky has a really profound disability but, with the right supports, the possibilities are endless,” Tee said.

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