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28 November 2022

Launceston's Melissa Sutczak said now there's a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Australians with disability are much better placed than ever before to be supported in the workplace and to enjoy more fulfilling careers.

The wife and mum of one, who is deaf, is sharing her experience ahead of International Day of People with Disability (December 3). Melissa says the supports she's received through her NDIS plan and inclusive employers has been life-changing, personally and professionally.

"From my experience employers are willing to adapt their workplaces. I think the tide is turning. That's why I'd like to encourage people to see what supports the NDIS can offer so they can fulfill and progress their careers goals," she said.

"I did and it meant for the first time I had reliable hearing aids which connected to my iPhone. I could take calls and even connect with family long distance.

"I also received other devices through my NDIS plan and each employer I've had has been happy to accommodate my needs. My experience has been amazing."

Melissa said her biggest goal was to keep working full-time and now she feels she can.

"If I take my hearing aids out, I am profoundly deaf so the technology I've received has just been life changing," she said.

"Prior to the NDIS I couldn't even make phone calls. I avoided them. I hated them with a passion. Now it's so easy my hearing aids connect to my iPhone. I just press a little button at the side and say "Hi. Mel speaking" and away I go."

Melissa also has a Roger Pen. It's a small device she can hold, wear, or place in the centre of a meeting table. It picks up a person's voice sending it straight to her hearing aids, removing background noise so she can clearly hear what's being said.

Prior to the NDIS Melissa faced several challenges without the right equipment.

"When I first started work there was no funding for me. Money was scarce. I had no other choice but to take out personal loan after personal loan to pay for my hearing aids and other equipment to support me to work," she said.

"My hearing aids would constantly break to the point they weren't doing their job so I'm so grateful my NDIS funding covers the cost and any repairs now."

Able to progress her career with the right supports, Melissa loves her current job.

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“I’ve gone from waitressing back in the day to a support worker. Now I’m a Multicap Tasmania team leader, supervising many staff and participants in the Community Access Tamar Street Hub in Launceston,” she said.

“I love working in the disability sector. My colleagues and clients are great and the support I’ve had from management is second to none.

“I really want to emphasise I’ve come across several inclusive employers, so if you’ve got the skills and knowledge, and you’re upfront about the supports you need to do the job in your interview, you may be pleasantly surprised.

“I remember years ago I went for a waitressing job. I was very forthcoming in my interview. I had the experience, but I was hard of hearing, but I explained how good I could be at the job and how as an employer, they could support me to do the job.

“I explained I had a pager I could wear on my belt at work. Then if they paged me from the kitchen or installed a light to go off above the kitchen door, it would work. I knew what I needed to help me do the job. They were open to it, so they hired me,” Melissa said.

“Now when I assist with interviews, I prefer people to be upfront about their support needs so as an inclusive employer, we can properly support them.

“People need to remember your disability doesn’t define you, it’s your skills, knowledge and you as a person and if you’re the right fit for the job, you’ll get it,” she said.

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