Posted on:
19 April 2023

Tua Hunt has suffered hardship, pain, and loss.

But now the creative and determined 56-year-old Sydney musician is creating a happy life, with support from the NDIS.

The proud and soulful Polynesian woman is preparing to release her first recording: “I’m still standing up”.

'It’s about struggling and feeling defeated but making the choice to live my best life and not feel sorry for myself,' Tua says.

'I’m in constant pain.

'That can be depressing, but thanks to the NDIS I have the opportunity to do what I love.'

Tua lives with dystonia, associated with Parkinson’s disease.

Her chronic pain, which sometimes causes tremors and cramps, is partly managed with medication.

Music is Tua’s release.

'I’m floating on clouds when I sing,' she says.

'It makes such a difference to how I feel about myself and my life.'

The NDIS supports Tua’s musical journey with funding towards her community, social, and recreational activities.

Tua’s music is more contemporary than the singers who have influenced her; Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holliday.

But Tua is making her own tunes now, and it’s having a huge influence on her wellbeing.

'I love making music.

'It puts me on another planet, another level,' Tua says.

Tua sings and plays all the parts on her first track.

'My goal was to create professional sounding music in a studio.

'Thanks to the NDIS I’m achieving that goal,' Tua says.

Tua’s journey towards a better life has not been easy.

A few years after Tua’s diagnosis in 2017, her relationship broke down and she lost her job.

Then she became homeless, living in crisis accommodation and transitional housing for 7 months before being offered social housing.

During this time, her mother passed away.

When her friends suggested she apply for the NDIS, it was a turning point.

'Prior to getting on the NDIS I was in a really bad way.

'Now I see life differently because I’m able to do the things that improve how I feel,' Tua says.

Tua’s support workers enable her to do those things, and she is grateful that they are positive and encouraging.

'I consciously choose people who want to walk with me on my journey.

'They care, and that’s important.

'They’re like mates.

'I’m very lucky,” she says.

Soon after accessing the NDIS, one of Tua’s support workers talked to her about choice and living her best life.

'I choose to do what makes me happy, like music, and now I’m also doing art.'

Tua also has NDIS funding for a chiropractor, physiotherapist, and an exercise physiologist who runs a Parkinson’s Warrior Program, focusing on movement, balance, and fall prevention.

'The Parkinson’s Warrior Program has been fantastic.

It has improved my balance and coordination,' Tua says.

Tua believes her physical improvement is linked to the way she feels about herself.

“I have improved because my mental health is better,” Tua says.

“The recipe for happiness is to choose to do what you love.

'The NDIS has given me the opportunity to make those choices.

'Even though I can’t change my Parkinson’s, everyday when I wake up, I’m happy to wake up.'

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