Posted on:
29 May 2023

Looking out over the lush landscapes of her rural Tatura, Victoria property , Marli’s love for nature combines with creativity to shape a vision of the life she wants to lead.

Like growing a flourishing garden, the NDIS participant, Marli Kelly, who lives with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), is cultivating the life she wants.

Building a world enriched by bringing together women and celebrating their creative flair, Marli’s journey since being diagnosed with MS in 2018 is one of success.

'I’ve always been really creative, always had a project on and I just started collecting bits of stuff and putting them in jars and I thought, "oh, that looks pretty",' Marli said.

'Then I held a mini wreath party.

'It just took off and there’s something special about bringing women together.

'I just think there’s something really primal about it, and I just love listening to the laughter in the room.

'Honestly, I was going to write to the NDIS and just say, "look, I’m a success story because you’ve given me back my life".

'I’m able to now go and do something I didn’t know I love.'

While Marli didn’t know she loved collecting, creating and sharing through the now established women’s group, growing up, the seeds were already planted through a connection with nature.

Through exploring the great outdoors and enjoying family trips to places like Victoria’s Grampians, the call of the bush has always been strong.

Balancing that love while chasing her dreams and wanting to change the world was always central to Marli’s story.

After heading to Melbourne for university at 18, Marli studied behavioural science, before ending up in public relations and media.

Eventually leaving the city for greener pastures, Marli made her way to the Mornington Peninsula, before finding her forever home in Tatura.

Marli had made the changes she needed. However, physical changes in what started as tingling, would change her life forever.

'I’d noticed changes for 18 months and noticed tingling in my feet coming up my leg.

'I kept hearing this voice say, "go to the doctors, go to the doctors",' Marli said.

'So, I went to the GP, and he ordered an MRI.

'I think this was when I grieved the most… it came back and lit up like fairy lights.

'I don’t think I’ve ever felt comfortable in my own skin, and I’ve had to get comfortable through a lot of pain and tears.

'It started to progress quite quickly, and then I was like, "well, the NDIS, is there for people like me".'

An NDIS participant for 3 years, Marli can indulge her passions while having the support she needs in life.

Through NDIS-funded home modifications, Marli’s home has ramps and railings, and a specially fitted out bathroom.

Marli also accesses assistive technology (AT) supports such as a walking frame, and a specialised bed, which has been “huge” for her.

Practical supports see Marli access exercise physiology, and support workers for everyday living, who pitch in around the home and assist Marli in accessing the community.

'The exercise physiology support has been huge, and the support coordination for everyday living… that’s when people become my arms and legs,' Marli said.

'I have a carer, Bree, and I have my support worker, Steph, who help me do a whole range of stuff.'

'It’s important to get the right people because they almost become an extension of you.

'I get emotional about them because they’re literally my little angels.

'They give me my dignity too, which is really important.'

With her symptoms continuing to increase, Marli knows she has a long road ahead.

While her challenges are ongoing, Marli takes comfort in the knowledge she’ll be supported by the NDIS into the future.

Where that leads her, Marli’s unsure, but in indulging in her creative passions and surrounding herself with other creative women, her cup is full.

'It’s so beautiful to get so many different women in a room, from so many different personalities and backgrounds,' Marli said.

'It's just a great atmosphere.

'To see what people come up with when they start creating is just amazing, really.

'It was unexpected, but it just started to evolve and who knows what the future holds now.

'But the NDIS has helped me get my life back, and that's the thing that I probably do find the most emotional, because I didn't know what my life was going to look like.

'So yeah, the NDIS supports have helped me rebuild really and brought my angels here to help.'

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