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People near and far have been in awe of local Bendigo artist and NDIS participant Paul Harrington’s latest exhibition, The Mystery Unfolds.

The 56-year-old, who has an intellectual disability, has painted an array of colourful abstracts on canvas, also featured on silk, inspired by the world around him.

His unique visions are proving popular at his exhibition, recently on show at the Bendigo Visitor Centre in its Living Arts Space.

'Painting gives me pleasure and I’m happy people are enjoying my work,' Paul said.

His Golden City Support Services support coordinator Yvonne Reither couldn’t be prouder of Paul and how far he has come, and attributes his success to the NDIS.

'Paul has been doing art and photography for many years, but this is the first time he’s got into this space, and it’s really only due to being able to have funding for one-on-one supports.

'Otherwise I don’t think all this could have happened,' she said.

'Last year and Easter just gone, Paul was supported to exhibit in the Rotary Club of Bendigo’s Annual Easter Art Show.

'He loved it and some of his artwork sold there.

'Now he’s exhibiting at the Bendigo Visitor Centre where lots of tourists come through.

'It’s a mainstream place and to have other artists without disability visit and recognise his art and talent, then to sell more, it’s just been fantastic.

'Even at the exhibition’s opening we never expected Paul to give a speech, but he did.

'He talked about various pieces and his inspiration.

'We were so proud to see with all this extra support his confidence had grown.

'It brought his mum Ann to tears and the rest of his family were just elated.'

Yvonne said when it came to discussing Paul’s NDIS goals they looked at various ways he could market and sell his artwork.

'Exhibitions were one way, but then we thought why not set him up with a support worker to help him one-on-one to set up a system online where he could sell his artwork.

'Two years ago Paul started at Donut Studios, a community-focused space supporting people with disability, personally, socially, and creatively to grow.

'Paul just needed a safe place to do his art.

'Since then his skills socially and as an artist have really developed and it’s due to the support he’s been able to receive.'

Yvonne said Paul also attends Access Australia where he does art too, and through his NDIS funding he was supported to travel to Melbourne to visit the Victorian Art Gallery.

'Paul loved it.

'He saw the Picasso exhibition and then saw Van Gogh’s exhibition at the Lume.

'He’s taken all that inspiration back.

'Now he is exploring different techniques.

'It’s helped him to mature as an artist,' she said.

Donut Studios team leader, Rachel O’Dowd said she couldn’t agree more with Yvonne.

'Paul has just gone from strength to strength, and I’ve loved watching him grow, explore and develop, socially and professionally,' she said.

'Paul is prolific.

'His artwork is amazing, and he has a very strict work ethic.

'He loves to paint all the different kinds of things he sees around him – people, trees, flowers, fish, or he’ll just do a straight up abstract drawing. He’s incredible to watch.'

Rachel said since Paul started at Donut Studios they have connected with the council and community groups to support him to hold exhibitions in and around Bendigo.

'The Rotary Club and the Bendigo council have been really supportive,' she said.

'Paul has another exhibition at the council’s Exhibit B art space in early July.

'He’s really starting to turn heads in the art world, so I’d encourage people to come and view his work.

'It is truly unique and quite remarkable,' Rachel said.

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