

## NDIS Submission

13 years ago I was 19 years old, and while going for one last summer swim with mates before heading back to university, I thoughtlessly took a deep dive into what turned out to be very shallow water. I completely severed my spinal cord, leaving me a high-level quadriplegic.

Instead of going back to the Australian Defence Force Academy to continue pursuing my dream of being a pilot in the RAAF, I spent the next eight months in hospital and rehab before coming home to Tasmania to live with my father.

Dealing with my accident was comparatively easy while in rehab, it was only on returning home that reality truly struck. Notwithstanding the devastating effect on my own life and future, it was the realisation of the burden I would be placing on my family for the rest of my life that was the hardest aspect to deal with.

As an uncompensated accident victim I was reliant on whatever hours were available from government programs, which while very welcome, were insufficient to live independently from my father, and mother who lives nearby.

Through technology I can be relatively independent during the day when in my wheelchair and with access to my computer. However when something goes amiss, or I have a medical problem, I need help, sometimes extremely urgently. My mother worries about me and spends most afternoons with me to be here if I need anything, and to be my hands for all of the thousands of little jobs that I'm unable to do otherwise. This impacts her ability to work and she is financially much the worse off for it.

The hours that I get funded for carers only covers my basic needs of getting up in the morning, lunch and getting put to bed at night. My father settles me for the night and answers my buzzer throughout the night if I get into difficulty. It is rare that I need him but when I do it can be very urgent. My dad is getting older and won't be able to provide the night-time support for too much longer, I worry that adequate government funding probably won't be available to replace the care that he provides and that I may be destined to live in a nursing home in the future.

I get two hours per fortnight for community access. I would love more, I get sick of staring at the four walls of my unit, but my only other options for getting out are asking a tiny number of friends (that now mostly have young families and have very limited time) or asking my parents, which only adds to the guilt I feel of being a burden.

I have attempted to study several times over the years, but find having to study by distance very difficult. I'm the kind of person that does much better attending classes in person, but that isn't an option for me because the care hours and support are not available. Going on holidays is also extremely difficult because of the large number of care hours that are involved and the expense of paying for multiple aircraft seats/hotel rooms etc for carers.

My world has become quite a small place and I feel trapped due to my situation. I can only hope that the proposed NDIS, if implemented, would go some way to expanding my horizons. To take some of the burden off my parents. To enable me to pursue study options and hopefully one day find work. And to get out in the community more and feel like I'm living life instead of watching it pass me by.

Thank you for your consideration of my submission.