



# feature: simon & gabriel

Opportunity amongst change.

**W**e have seen many excellent outcomes while supporting our clients to maximise their support under the new the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). These outcomes have been achieved by working closely together with our clients and their family and carers.

Jeanne Poustie, Spectrum's Manager, Disability Services says, "It is important that we welcome and support the person, not defined by their background nor what they can't do. Rather more, our practise is informed by their life experience, and the services we provide, are defined by our shared goal of their hope and vision for their own future".

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## The Challenge

Over the course of 2016/17 the team at Spectrum have observed first hand, the challenges facing people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds when engaging with the NDIS, and transitioning to the new system. Language and cultural barriers can affect successful engagement with and transition to, the NDIS.



**21.9%**

*of NDIS participants should come from a CALD background, estimates the National Ethnic Disability Alliance*



**4.0%**

*of participants with approved plans were classified as CALD, in the NDIS Quarterly Report 30 June 2016*

## What we're doing

Our team has been very active, reaching out to people to encourage them to begin working with Spectrum before their NDIS Planning Session, and do great pre-planning.

Spectrum works with our clients in the longer term to strengthen their ability to co-ordinate their supports and to continue to participate in their community. We're helping to resolve moments of crisis and strengthening networks to help people thrive in whatever they love to do.

We work together to understand people's goals, develop a personalised plan tailored specifically to their needs, and monitor over time.

## Simon's Story

Simon moved to Specialist Disability Accommodation (a group home for people with a disability) in mid 2017. This was a long-awaited dream for Simon and Gabrielle, who is his mother and primary carer and a lot of effort was made to achieve success.

### Chapter 1.

#### **Simon**

Simon is a 44-year-old, wonderfully vibrant man from a Lebanese Arabic speaking background who loves to dance, gets a regular chiropractic treatment and adores going out for a drive.

Simon was also born with a severe level of disability impacting on his physical and neurological function. He has lived in his family home all his life and enjoys attending his day option five days a week.

Simon started to participate in Spectrum's individual support, funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Simon received personal care and home care mainly on weekday mornings and community access support mainly on weekends provided by from Spectrum's support workers while he is at home. He regularly accessed short term accommodation on weekends so his parents could have a break.

#### **Gabrielle**

Simon's parents became older and started to have multiple health conditions. They also have a family responsibility to look after their elderly parents.

Gabrielle wanted Simon to enjoy his own life as independently as possible, however it was not possible until the NDIS came to him in December 2016. He had been on a wait list for Shared Support Accommodation for almost 20 years.

#### **Hiroshi**

Hiroshi Mitsui is a Support Coordinator with Spectrum who supports 32 clients whose services are covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Hiroshi, for whom English is a second language says, "All my clients come from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds. Each client has a unique story in how they reached community-based disability services and how challenging it has been for transition from the old system to the new one."



## Chapter 2.

### **Simon, Hiroshi and Gabrielle**

Transitioning to the NDIS was undoubtedly a period of some uncertainty and concern for Simon and Gabrielle.

As Support Coordinator for Simon, Hiroshi started to coordinate transition of all the supports he had before. There was much to be done – assessment, planning, referrals, reporting to NDIA, budgeting the coverage and linking our internal financial department and Simon’s external plan manager.

After a 20 year wait, the most important task was to assist Simon apply for Shared Supported Accommodation.

An option presented itself through DHHS, and Hiroshi worked with Simon and Gabrielle to apply. Collectively it was intended to trial it. However, it turned out to be a significant turning point. After further communications, an offer of a permanent accommodation finally came through.

Hiroshi remembers “There are some wonderful days in my job, and the day I was able to call Gabrielle and Simon to let them know that the application had been successful was definitely one of those. Gabrielle and Simon were just so happy when I called to tell them.” They happily accepted the offer as soon as Gabrielle took Simon to the accommodation as both loved it.

Of course there was much to be done behind the scenes to ensure a smooth transition.

However, after all the hard work and effort, Simon moved in!

Simon has settled well in the new environment, with five housemates all receiving support. He still attends day activities on weekdays and goes out on weekends with Christine, who is his favourite support worker from Spectrum.

Gabby says “Simon is loving the house he shares!”

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