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Sue-Ellen Lovett wants the world to know, ‘Vision is much more than seeing and we all need to look for the ability in disability’.

‘There are so many people out there who are overlooked or put in a corner,’ she said.

‘I have never been told I can’t do something, and I strongly believe this day is a time for people with disability to show the world what they CAN do, and for people to stop focusing on what they can’t do!’

Photo credit: Meg Rosenbaum

Insightful words from a woman who is ‘totally blind’ and has achieved more than most.

Some of Sue-Ellen’s achievements include author, Australia Day ambassador, public speaker, advocate, fundraiser and cancer survivor. In 2024 she was also awarded an Order of Australia Medal for service to horse sport and to the community.

A self-starter, Sue-Ellen credits her success to support from her family, friends and others.

Growing up on a 21,000-acre property in Mudgee, NSW, Sue-Ellen said she loved being outdoors with horses, mustering with the help of her father, who she calls her ‘hero’.

‘My mum is also totally blind; my sister does have the same hereditary condition as us, Retinitis Pigmentosa, and my brother is an amputee,’ she said.

‘My family believed in living life without limits. We all just got on with it, we weren’t given excuses.

It wasn’t tough love, it was about living the best life possible,’ she said.

Meeting Matthew and marrying the couple moved to manage his family farm. Excited to start their new chapter, Sue-Ellen said she soon discovered some unexpected challenges.

‘Living on a farm with a husband who works, I lived my life indoors and spent much of my time on my own,’ she said.

‘Even going out the front door could be dangerous because of brown snakes or other hazards I couldn’t see.’

Since accessing the NDIS and engaging disability provider Social Futures, Sue-Ellen’s world has reopened, and she couldn’t be happier.

‘Before the NDIS I never went out. I couldn’t afford to pay people to take me places and do things with me, so it’s been a real game changer in so many ways,’ she said.

‘The NDIS has given me a life and a quality of life I didn’t have before.’

With the help of support worker Raylene, Sue-Ellen is now out with friends, going shopping, tending her garden and growing her own public speaking business.

‘Before the NDIS I couldn’t do any of that, none of it! When you sit at home you have time to think and dwell.

It gets pretty dark and horrible, and you can’t always see a way out, so the NDIS has just been incredible,’ she said.

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