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30 August 2019

Going to the beach is a standard pastime for any Gold Coast local, but for Helensvale's Matthew Kuhne, a recent visit was life-changing.

"I've been able to go to the beach with the kids for the first time in 11 years. It's little things like that that are giving us experiences to live a normal life.

The 31-year-old is a former professional motorbike rider who travelled the world in his teens for events, but at the age of 19 was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him quadriplegic.

In the 10 years that followed, Matthew was without any formal support. Before he joined the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) 12 months ago, his family had to pay for Matthew's care.

"My equipment needed urgent replacing; one of the wheels on my wheelchair was locked forward and I was sitting on towels instead of a proper cushion," Matthew said.

The father-of-two received funding for a new wheelchair, shower chair and cushion, tracks to allow him to go on rougher surfaces, and a SmartDrive – a wheelchair attachment that powers him up hills. "I couldn't afford to purchase any of that in the past," he said.

"The kids love the theme parks but my wife couldn't push me and the pram around. The new equipment has given me independence, and I can go to the theme parks myself. We're able to do more family things now.

"That's probably the biggest thing: more access to the kids to be there for them, instead of sitting on the sidelines watching them. I'm actually involved in the stuff they do now.

Matthew also receives funding for physiotherapy to improve his strength, and support workers, who provide support at home and help him get ready in the mornings.in the home.

"I couldn't get the smile off my face on my first day," he said. "They've got me in a standing frame; that in itself should help with my strength and getting to be as independent as I can."

Matthew and his family are currently living with his parents, but have a goal to one day move out as a family and live independently- a goal that could be a reality thanks to the NDIS.

"I couldn't praise the NDIS any more; it's been a godsend to me. It's almost too good to be true.

"I didn't ask to be in a wheelchair but words can't describe how fortunate I feel that I live in the country that I do, with the assistance that is there for us.

“I’m beyond fortunate.”

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