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As Bill Nolles reflects on his life, he knows all too well how it can be perfect one minute then terrifying the next.

The 48-year-old former Ipswich resident was happily married with children, had a great job as a groundsman for 15 years then he started to notice changes in himself, physically and mentally, to the point where he found himself homeless, without a job, living on the streets.

Thankfully, an impromptu hospital visit saw local NDIS provider, Open Minds, connect with Bill. Staff were able to assist him to access a range of supports, like appropriate housing, assistance to apply for the NDIS and the Disability Support Pension, so he could get back on his feet with the right supports.

“Open Minds and the supports they been able to give me saved my life,” Bill said. “If I didn’t have their support, I wouldn’t be here today,” he added.

“They got me a place to live and helped me to apply for extra financial support. It meant I was able to pay rent, buy food regularly and get equipment to suit my needs.

Bill was also diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) – a condition where nerve cells break down, causing muscle weakness, which eventually leads to paralysis.

Now, as Bill moves into this next phase of his life, he realises how fortunate he is to live in a country with a NDIS where as his condition deteriorates, he can use his funding to engage support workers and buy suitable equipment to cater to his changing needs.

One of the senior transition support workers assisting Bill, Rose Cresswell, said Bill is so much happier and more hopeful.

“Bill is such a wonderful man,” she said. “He just gets on with it each day, even when his life is changing. He’s like the Energiser Bunny – he keeps on going, trying to do things he knows will improve his situation.”

Rose said it was ‘an honour and a privilege’ to help Bill get back on track.

“I think the NDIS support he is able to receive will make a world of difference to him,” she said.

“In Bill’s plan he has support coordination with a specific Neurological Support Coordinator and Open Minds will provide home help, social supports and help with every day activities.

“Bill will also be linked in with the appropriate therapeutic services, and this includes regular physio and occupational therapies,” Rose said.

On reflection, Bill said he wishes he had taken more notice of his MND symptoms as they initially started to affect him, and if he did, says his situation may have been quite different.

“After about a year and a half, I really started to notice the changes in my body, and then I came into contact with Open Minds.

“They helped me find a place to live on Bribie Island, which got me off the streets. I was starting to feel much happier but I could feel my body becoming weaker,” he said.

Dedicated to supporting Bill and other people with disability, Rose said she is confident Bill will now live out his life to the best of his ability, comfortably, with everything he needs.

“Now Bill is on the NDIS he can engage the right supports and as his condition deteriorates these supports will grow exponentially. It means Bill will have the highest amount of assistance he has ever had,” she said.

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