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After a stroke, Doomadgee NDIS participant, Edward Walden said he's grateful to the NDIS and remote disability provider, My Pathway, for supporting him to get back to country so he can heal physically and spiritually.

Identifying as a proud Gangalidda and Garawa man, with connections to the Waanyi tribe, the 51-year-old said a year ago he woke up in Townsville hospital only to discover his stroke had paralysed the entire left-hand side of his body.

"I was told my heart stopped twice, but I pulled through. Doctors said I'd never walk again, but after six months all up in hospital, and three months of rehab, I started to walk again. I proved them wrong. I'm a fighter, and before I knew it I was ready come home," he said.

"The NDIS and My Pathway play a big part in my healing. When I came home I was wondering how I was going to get back out into country for bush medicines… to get things like sandalwood and healing water to make herbal tea, but My Pathway organised trips to help me do these things.

"This means I can still get into country and carry on these traditions for future generations. We need that balance. If we have that balance we can heal much faster and be close to what we were before."

Edward said through his NDIS plan he receives 11 hours of support a week, where five indigenous support workers from his community support him at various times.

"There's a lot of work at home I need support to do so these support workers come in and do things, like help me to clean my house and do my laundry," he said.

"I've also got people who come around to my house and they do a lot of yarning with me to help build my confidence up. We talk about how I'm feeling and what I want."

Edward said he also attends weekly cognitive therapy.

"My therapist put some good activities on my phone that I can do at home, like word searches and block games – ones good for the brain," he said.

"I also do a lot of things with my main support worker, Mark, like upper and lower body exercises, and we are walking twice a week for about one and a half kilometres.

All together we are doing around three kilometres there and back.
"I'm walking with a cane, but sometimes I put the cane down and I can walk for a certain amount of time without it," Edward added proudly.

“I’m also very confident I’m going to get some movement back in my arm. There’s a little bit of movement there now. I just need some more so more work needs to be done.”

A respected community member, Edward said he and his brother have always been “pretty good” role models to their family members culturally so he’s glad to still be here.

“We’re like mentors. Young ones look up to us and come to us for advice, so God had a reason for me to stay. My work hasn’t been completed here on earth yet,” he said.

“I’m so grateful to the NDIS and My Pathway because it’s good for us to have connection to our country, when we do it heals us.

“It’s our spirits inside which needs to be healed you know. If we can heal our spiritual body, our physical body will come together.”

“That’s how I feel, but I’m very thankful for everything. For all the blessings I have had here every day. It’s made life easier for someone like me who has had a stroke,” he said.

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