Blind Para-cyclist champion says NDIS makes life easier - on and off the track

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World champion blind Para-cyclist Kieran Murphy, who is training to compete at next year's Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, says he isn't sure he would opt for a cure for his rare eye condition, even if it were available.

Kieran, who won silver and bronze for Australia at the 2017 UCI Para-cycling Track World Championships in Los Angeles, says he doesn't need to see any better than he can because he is so well supported by the NDIS.

> Australian tandem cycling duo Lachlan Glasspool and Kieran Murphy, World Championship Medallists Australian Champions 2017

"People ask me if there is a cure, would I get it? And the straight up answer is no," said Kieran, who also works as a support coordinator for NDIS provider My Ability Australia, helping people to access supports and make the most of their NDIS plans.

"What I've learnt and been able to do for people because of my own disability is something I wouldn't have if I was sighted.

"I've travelled the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, America. If I were sighted maybe I wouldn't have those opportunities; if I were sighted, maybe I wouldn't be able to help people in the NDIS space as much as I can right now.

Kieran, 27, lives with a rare genetic degenerative eye condition, retinitis pigmentosa, which means he has been slowly losing his eyesight since he was born and will eventually lose all his vision.

His cycling training involves him riding about 500 kilometres a week, which is achieved with the help of an NDIS-funded support worker who pilots his tandem bicycle.

"You need someone to ride on the front of your bike to be able to train," he said.

"To find someone to commit, who wants to go for a bike ride with me for four hours every day, before the NDIS, that was impossible, so I did most of my training indoors, which just isn't the same."

The NDIS supports Kieran to live an independent life and to achieve his goals, not just on the elite cycling track, but in every aspect of his daily life, including supporting him to work fulltime, learn new skills, go on holidays, socialise with friends, and keep fit at the gym.

NDIS support workers help Kieran to get around the city, travel to and from work and other events and take notes at meetings. One support worker is now helping him to achieve a life-long dream.

"My whole life I have wanted to learn magic and I've never been able to do it and now I'm able to because of the NDIS," he said.

Kieran says his life has improved significantly in a myriad of other ways too.

“I could never have gone away on a holiday by myself without the NDIS because I can’t navigate any places, I can’t read menus, I can’t jump on and off public transport like everybody else can, so the ability to go away now with support is so great,” he said.

“I used to have to rely on friends to help me, but now I can go with a support worker. Everything shifts because all of a sudden I feel just as valuable because I can go camping with my friends.

I can actually enjoy myself more in social situations because I don’t feel like I’m a burden on everybody.”

Kieran joined the NDIS two years ago and believes so strongly in the benefits of the Scheme that he has since helped set up two registered NDIS providers, My Ability Australia and Autism Adelaide, to help other people with disabilities improve their lives.

Kieran’s story showcases the impact we can all have when we see people for who they are and the things they can do.

To help celebrate the day you can download the IDPwD pack including a social media pack, poster, virtual meeting background and email signature block on the IDPwD page.

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