After 15 years, Michael moves out of aged care and is happier and healthier

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After a motorbike accident left him with a significant brain injury just before his 27th birthday, Michael Daniells spent 13 months in hospital before moving into residential aged care.

Michael spent the next 15 years living in a place he didn't really belong.

"I didn't want him there, but I knew I wouldn't be able to support Michael myself, and there was nothing else available, we weren't given a choice about where he could go," Michael's mother Kay Keevers recalls.

Michael's accident left him fully dependent on others. He could no longer eat, talk, or move by himself.

He needed feeding through a tube and a tracheostomy to breathe. His injury also triggered epilepsy and he needed round-the-clock care.

Kay moved close by to visit Michael as often as possible. But seeing her young adult son in aged care was distressing.

"There was nobody his age there, the older people didn't really want to talk to him or interact with him at all," Kay says.

"I would take him out as much as I could, but I knew he wasn't happy. Michael is non-verbal, but we can tell how he's feeling from his facial expressions.

A lot of the time, he would just make out he wasn't there – he'd just close his eyes."

Today, thanks to support through the NDIS, Michael's life is transformed.

He has moved into Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) where he lives with people his own age and receives specialised care and support to live his best life.

"Michael's life has changed immensely, and it would not have been possible without the NDIS," Kay says. "He's in a place now that's appropriate for his age and there's plenty of staff that interact with him.

"He doesn't have to hang around with his mother all the time now. He's happier and getting everything he needs. He has a good life where he's living, and support workers take him out every day during the week. It's really a huge relief and we are very grateful."

With NDIS support, Michael, now 42, lives at WesleyCare Jindalee where he has round-the-clock care in an accessible environment, designed to cater for his complex needs.

Kay says she has noticed a huge change in Michael's appearance and demeanour since moving into his new home.

"You can see he is so much happier," she says. "He's been going ahead in leaps and bounds with everything. He's more alert, he's responding well. He's out in his community. We've got everything we ever wanted for him really."

Michael has his own bedroom, equipped with a ceiling hoist, and an adjoining accessible bathroom.

Through Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, Michael has support workers who help him with all his needs, including eating, dressing, bathing, and transfers.

He enjoys watching TV, sharing mealtimes with other residents and has access to shared outdoor green spaces.

"He's in a really nice environment that's light and refreshing and a lot more age-appropriate, it's so much better for him," Kay says.

Since moving into WesleyCare, Michael has also been spending a lot more time in his community doing things he loves.

"Michael is very social, and loves all outdoor stuff," Kay says. "He loves to go out, and he spends most days out with his NDIS support worker," Kay says.

"He's getting outside, he's getting sunshine, doing things he enjoys, like fishing, he loves fishing. He used to be so pale, now he's got a bit of a tan again and he looks so much healthier. He really looks forward to going out."

Kay says Michael's NDIS support has helped him become happier, healthier, and safer.

"We didn't feel he was safe where he was before," she says. "He was in his own room isolated and we were always worried in case he had a seizure. It was always a big worry. Now, we don't have to worry anymore."

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