

Hi, my name is Penny and I am 20 years old. Mum asked me what the NDIS has helped me to do, and I told her using the communication device I got when I first joined the NDIS. Before then my old device was broken, so it was a bit hard to be heard!

The NDIS got me a new wheelchair because my old one was very old and didn't fit me properly any more. I use it to help me stand which makes me feel better. It's good to stretch! Here is a photo of me in my new sit to stand wheelchair. I was a bridesmaid at my friend Mandy's wedding! That was a very special day.

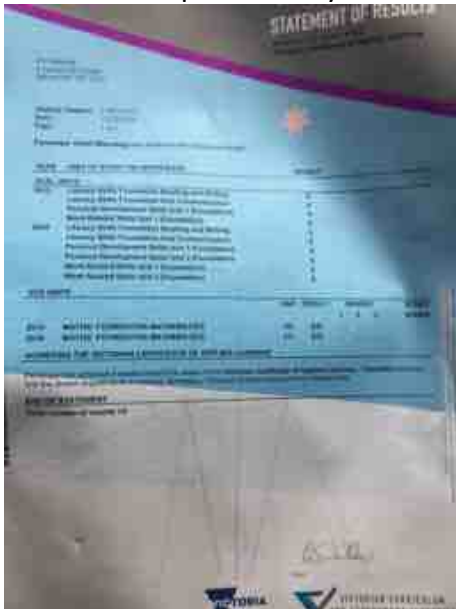


Last year I finished High School at Belmont High. The NDIS helped me do VCAL. It was great! Here are some photos from my Year 12 graduation.





And here is a photo of my VCAL certificate. Mum and Dad were so proud!



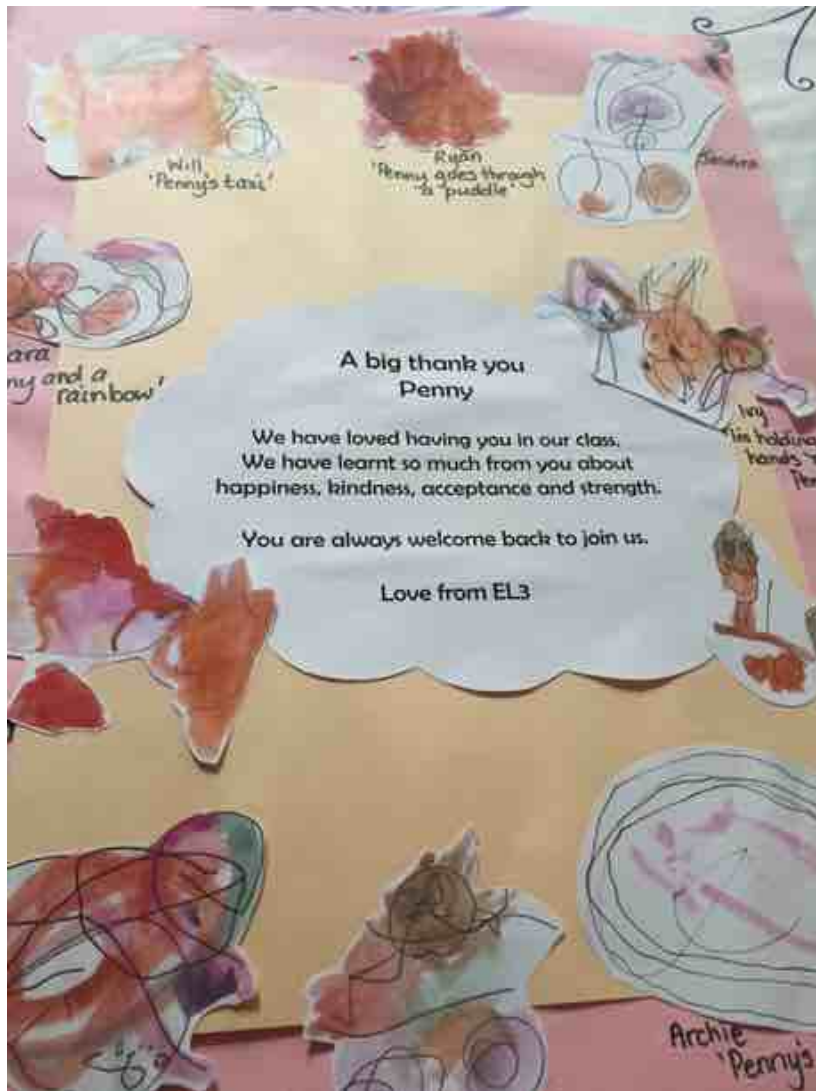
After I graduated I went away for a week for schoolies with some friends – we made some cocktails, mostly green ones.



On my 18th birthday I went to Beav's bar with friends and got my photo into Social Pages VIP on Facebook!!

In year 11 VCAL I did work experience at a 3 year old ELC. I loved it, it was so much fun to help look after the little kids. I won the Belmont High School Blue house award for "most likely to be the best and most lovely childcare teacher"!

Here is a picture of the card the ELC children gave me when I finished. The teachers have invited me back! I am going again as an adult volunteer worker next term.



I also did some volunteering at an aged care facility in years 11 and 12. I asked a nice elderly gentleman questions about his life, and made him a life story board to put on his wall. He was very happy. We found out that my family used to live next door to his grand kids when I was very tiny!

Now I have finished school I am going back to the same aged care place as an adult volunteer worker. The residents were so happy to see me back! Last week I showed them some photos of my graduation. They were very proud of me and gave me a beautiful

necklace to say “well done”. They are very nice people. I help with morning tea and talk with them.

I was busy last week making dog biscuits for my first market stall last Sunday. I do every step. I have a Facebook page called Penny’s Doggy Treats – I have already sold some packets! Every dog that has tried them has loved them, including my family’s dog Princess, who likes dog biscuit making days because she gets to sample every batch! If you want to buy some you can go to my FB page **Penny's Doggy Treats**



I’m planning to do some business skills training this year, and a Cert 4 in Community Service through Diversitat next year. The NDIS is supporting me with this as well, and I am helping Diversitat check the accessibility of their new site!

The NDIS has also made it possible for me to go to a speech/social group with some friends. Last year we wrote and illustrated a book called *Sarcastic Blue Diarrhoea*. We won the Scope Group Writing Prize!! We are planning to get some more copies printed so you can order a copy if you want to. It’s

‘A gripping tale of a florist in Fiji who meets happy monster on a beach. They soon come across a pink gnome who has been living in a flower shop. Read what happens to each of these cheeky and funny characters.’

We have also made a dance video to Taylor Swift’s song ‘Shake it off’



Here's a photo of me with a finger puppet I made in a Spotlight competition, with the sewing machine I won. Now I am making Doggy bandanas to go with the Doggy Treats.



Mum says that in the old days people might have thought I couldn't contribute to society, but that would be because they had an impoverished view about what contributes to a good and happy society. She says they should have been able to come and talk to the teachers at the ELC, or the old people I visit, or my friends and family, or my customers at the market!! (By the way, my FB page has had 1000 views so far, in only a couple of weeks!!) I am a valued part of my community.

The NDIS has helped make all these things possible. I have suitable equipment, and helpers to help me do stuff everyone else can do. They love their jobs because they get to hang out with me and do cool stuff. Some of them are uni students paying their way through uni!!

Dad says the ability to self manage my plan has made all the difference, letting mum, dad and me be innovative in how I lead my life, meet my goals, and who I want to work and be with. Mum says the NDIS has also made things easier for her and Dad, and my 3 brothers.

Dad has to be away from home a lot for work this year. He's in the air force. I facetime him all the time! If I didn't have all my helpers, either he or mum would have to leave their jobs, and this would make them sad. Mum got a teaching award last year! It would make me sad too. My brothers would miss out on things as well.

I love the NDIS. It has opened up my future. Thank you

Penny and her mum.

Penny's actual words:

I was able to write and illustrate a book that was published.

I am able to attend volunteer work at Kalkee Aged Care with a helper.

I have helpers come to my home and help get me out of bed and they help me have a shower.

I am able to develop my own business with making and selling Penny's Doggy Treats

I am able to be independent.

I am able to live my own life and not have to rely on my parents.

I am able to go on camps and holidays.

