

Support brings new zest for life



Graham Childs, left, with support worker Rey Ngoro. He says his life has turned around since he joined the NDIS.

Picture: CHARLIE BLISS

BERRY Springs resident Graham Childs once shut himself away from the world, but he is now thriving thanks to the additional support he has received from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

More than 20 years ago the 58-year-old local was diagnosed with schizophrenia, anxiety and depression and has been on a disability pension ever since, but his conditions coupled with a series of past personal tragedies meant he struggled to cope with everyday life.

Since Mr Childs joined the NDIS last year, however, he has made a remarkable turnaround that has seen him reconnect with family, learn how to use a computer and participate in numerous activities in the community ranging from fishing to cooking.

Mr Childs said the sense of connection he had gained through his NDIS plan, after a long period of isolation and hardship, had given him a new lease on life.

"It's given me a reason to live and enjoy life," he said.

"I don't feel down or depressed as much, I don't feel much anxiety any more."

"I have a reason to get up in the mornings because of the NDIS."

Mr Childs said he had formerly lived a "hard life" to the point where he "didn't have a life and (he) didn't know how to go out and meet people".

He had been unable to work and had difficulty relating to others since his diagnoses, and had also been physically and emotionally abused by a former carer who has since died.

Mr Childs said the extent of support he had received from mental health service provider TeamHEALTH under the NDIS – including support at home, to access community activities and for occupational therapy – was helping him to face the future with optimism.

"The NDIS has helped me not to be anxious, it has helped me to be brave, more confident in going out and meeting people, to go overseas if necessary," he said.

Today is the International Day for People with Disability, aimed at increasing public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people living with a disability and celebrating their achievements and contributions.

Hoffmann 'almost ready' to plead

THE brother of accused Darwin gunman Benjamin Hoffmann is "almost ready" to enter a plea after being charged with disorderly behavior.

Clinton James Hoffmann was excused from appearing in the Darwin Local Court yesterday.

He was still seeking instructions as to whether his client would dispute the prosecution's facts.

"The matter's almost ready for a plea," he said.

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