

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## CHALLENGE AND DRIVE SEES ALICIA SHINE

Alicia had worked part-time for an Australian Disability Enterprise for five years since her two daughters were old enough to go to school, but the 39-year-old from Lismore always believed she was capable of more.

When she met Social Futures Local Area Coordinator (LAC), Laura Boorman, who helped to prepare Alicia's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan, her key goal was to find work better suited to her interests and abilities.

Alicia, has cerebral palsy which affects her physically, but not intellectually.

"Because of my disability, every day I am in pain. Something is sore every day and some days are worse than others," Alicia said.

"I'll have random leg spasms or tightening of the muscle – some days it's hard just to get out of bed. And then if my whole back goes into spasm – that's just ... awful."

Through her NDIS plan, Alicia now accesses therapies including hydrotherapy, osteopathy, and treatment through NeuroMoves, who, based at Southern Cross University, are specialists in exercise physiology for people living with a neurological condition.

"They actually get people out of wheelchairs and walking," Alicia said.

"It's inspirational to see. They cater for the individual and they do tests every six months so they can reassess and ensure you're improving."

"From where I started – I have come a long way. Even with hydrotherapy. That has helped a massive amount, especially with the back pain.

"I'm exhausted afterwards, but it really does help."

With her therapies locked in and physical health improving, Alicia and Laura focused on Alicia's primary goal of finding a new job.

"I knew I could do a lot more if I just had the opportunity," Alicia said.

Alicia wanted greater challenges and a position that felt meaningful. She found it in 2020 with Let's Get Support, an organisation that supports NDIS participants to manage their plans.

Business Owner Michelle Garret employed Alicia part-time as an administrative assistant but intends to help her through plan management training.

"When Michelle told me she wants me to do plan management training I said, 'are you serious?', and she said, 'yes. I am, you're quite capable'," Alicia said.



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“Michelle has got me doing all of the admin and invoices, so I now see the NDIS from the other side.”

Alicia will be trained to help NDIS participants to activate their NDIS Plan and write up notes to help support plan reviews. She currently undertakes administrative duties including reception work and scheduling.

“Now I actually like going to work because I have a purpose,” Alicia said.

“I get to help people with disabilities achieve their goals and I'm really looking forward to doing training in plan management in the future.”

Michelle has offered Alicia flexible hours, allowing her to continue accessing her therapies and work from home if it better suits her.

“My new employer is amazing - I want to go to work... I enjoy going to work,” Alicia said.

“The NDIS has given me a better purpose in life. To have the support there that I've never had before.

“Laura, my LAC is fantastic – she's a Godsend. She listens and she understands.

“Life before the NDIS was pretty crap. You just survived basically. Having the NDIS has given me more opportunity to make my goals, to do what I want to do, to actually better my life.”

Social Futures is a social justice organisation delivering Local Area Coordination services for the NDIS across more than 50% of regional NSW.

To talk to a Local Area Coordinator about the NDIS, or to find out how your school can take part in inclusion awareness programs, email [lac@socialfutures.org.au](mailto:lac@socialfutures.org.au) or call our LAC Hotline on 1800 522 679 (Mon-Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm).

## ENDS

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**Photo credit:** Social Futures. Alicia and Laura.

### Note to editors:

Social Futures is a community service organisation based in Northern NSW. We have more than 40 years' experience as a regional leader, advocating with the communities we work in; working in partnership with others; and providing services that promote inclusion, fairness and social justice. Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability, community sector support, professional development, and systemic advocacy.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.



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