

# New home gives Darren hope

BY ELLIE FINK

AFTER suffering from several strokes, Darren Cassidy's life changed dramatically, forcing him to live in an aged care home in Cardwell.

Spending four years far away from his family, community, and Country, the 56-year-old struggled with living in an aged facility.

However, at the time, his sister Viv Edwards didn't know what to do, until they learned about MiHaven specialist disability accommodation (SDA).

"I was unable to provide full-time care for him and had to move him to an aged care facility in Cardwell when he was just 56 years old, far from his family and local connections," Viv said.

"It wasn't the right thing to do, but it was my only option."

SDA housing has become a focus for MiHaven, allowing eligible participants under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to receive support while living independently in a home suitable for them.

When Viv heard about MiHaven and SDA housing, she decided to investigate the option

to help bring her brother closer to his family and community in Innisfail.

"MiHaven visited Innisfail, and I attended an information session about SDA. I thought this would be a great opportunity to have Darren closer to family and support," she said.

"So, we submitted an expression of interest to start the process, having a vision and hoping that MiHaven would build in our community."

Already being on an NDIS package, the process from there was simple, with Viv and Darren working with their support coordinator and occupational therapist to build a house suitable for Darrin.

Viv said the entire process took a total of 12 months from when they submitted an expression of interest, but Darren was able to move into his new home on December 16, 2022, and host his very first Christmas dinner.

"We had Christmas as a family in his own home with the carers and support around," Viv said.

"The benefits of this now complement his NDIS funding, and he is meeting his goals of living independently with 24-hour support and care, being closer to family, and being on Country.

**"We had Christmas as a family in his own home"**



Viv Edwards and MiHaven CEO Sarah Mort with Darren Cassidy, who is able to live independently thanks to SDA housing.

"He has access to ongoing therapies, including speech and physio, as well as the opportunity to connect with family by visiting us or having us drop in to visit him in his own home."

As Darren begins a new chapter of his life living independently in SDA housing, he and his family are grateful he is no longer living in aged care and is enjoying the great pleasure of life.

Viv encourages anyone with high physical support needs to look into the benefits of MiHaven housing.

"Darren was fortunate to have me, his other sister, who works in the area of NDIS. Even for me, it was a journey to make his goals a reality," she said.

"It's an ongoing process, but the benefits have been tremendous, and we have seen so many positive changes in his goals."

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