



“I like turning shit into strawberry jam”

How a tailored, client-centric model of care gave Steve the choice & control he wanted.

In many ways, his quote is a true analogy of how Steve “Chillers” Childs approaches most scenarios - making the best of every situation no matter how adverse or challenging, including managing his life, farm and businesses as a quadriplegic.

Steve had always lived by his own mantra - **“If you’re not living on the edge, you’re taking up too much space”**, it was a blueprint for how Steve approached life and how he managed his highly successful farm and wider business enterprises. But in June 2018 the good times came to a devastating end when a bit of four-wheel-driving fun went wrong. While out in the paddock with his nephew the vehicle flipped, landed on Steve and broke his neck resulting in quadriplegia.



What followed was 40 days in intensive care and then months of rehabilitation. The reality of life in a wheelchair set in, but even in his darkest hours Steve remained focused on and committed to a single endgame - **to get back to his beloved farm and “my island.”**

McArthur Community Care has a strong reputation for going the extra mile to support individuals in remote areas. When the funding body raised concerns about the challenges of supporting Steve in such an isolated location, they asked if we’d be willing to meet with him. Andrea (Andy) Sherratt, McArthur Community Care National General Manager, first met Steve at Hampstead Rehabilitation Unit in October 2018.

“It was an important opportunity for Steve to meet with potential providers and decide who would best meet his unique needs once he returned home to Kangaroo Island.

During our first meeting, Steve made one thing absolutely clear—his only goal was to get back to “my island.” A large print of an aerial shot of his expansive property stood prominently, a visual reminder of what he was fighting for. I certainly had my doubts about the logistics of attracting workers in such a remote and isolated setting, but it was Steve’s determination to get back to the Island that captured my heart. I wanted to really honour and do everything possible to ensure his vision was actualised.”





CHALLENGES

The initial brief was to explore the possibility of supporting Steve with just over 40 active hours per day of high intensity support with highly skilled support workers on Kangaroo Island, but various challenges and roadblocks were soon evident and forced the McArthur Community Care team to think outside the box.

• Local Workforce Limitations

There were limited people on Kangaroo Island that worked within the care industry and the workers based on the island also had responsibilities with their own properties or farms and couldn't commit to many shifts.

• Geographic Location and Travel Logistics

The island can only be accessed via a 30 mins flight from Adelaide or a 45 mins ferry journey from Cape Jervis on the South Australian mainland. In addition, both modes of travel were open to the vagaries of South Australia's weather - particularly ferry services. In addition, once on the island Steve's property is a further 1.5hr drive from the ferry terminal.

SOLUTION

We knew that with the complexity and large amount of shifts and hours Steve required, a **bespoke model of care which blended flexibility and creativity** was essential if Steve was to enjoy sustainability and continuity of care.

Due to the complexity and volume of shifts and hours, there were up to 15 people rostered on any given week, especially when Steve went active overnight with two people.

Steve's 24/7 care team comprises 50/50 local support workers and mainland-based SW's who commute by ferry and are accommodated on the island during their rostered shifts.



OUTCOMES

- Our unique model of care has given Steve the levels of choice and control he so wanted;
- The 24/7 McArthur Support Worker team ensure that Steve can live his best possible life on his beloved farm;
- By maintaining ongoing and regular contact with the funding body we have a strong relationship built on trust and this has allowed us to overcome many challenges including the potential 'burn-out' of Support Workers.

Most importantly, Steve continues to enjoy his strawberry jam!

McArthur
Community Care