

## Transition to Independence

### Marley, 20, studying Early Childhood

*What does independence mean to you?*

What worked well for me transitioning in to independence was definitely the carefully laid down steps of guidance that I got to use along the way. I got to have people around me (the normal people in life who were supposed to teach me those things that couldn't) and I finally had them for once. Transitioning to independence was hard but it wasn't as hard as what it could have been without them.

*Who supported you?*

First of all there was Life Without Barriers, which is a fantastic organisation. They use semi-independent living services that transition young people (like myself) in to houses and circumstances that they wouldn't usually experience to give them a taste of what life is actually like, what it's supposed to be like. Having a home, having a family, circumstances that mimic having those normal situations, that was Life Without Barriers. Now I'm using Next Step Support, which is the next step after because the journey doesn't stop at 18, it keeps going. Next Step Support have been there all along the way. If we were to go through all the different agencies there are hundreds. Just to name a couple there is the Magic Moments Foundation, the Youth Business Leaders and Summit was a great factor in my early teenage years, Super Camp with Heather Yelland (she's amazing by the way, shout out to Heather, thank you for all that you did). The companies that were provided to me along the way did everything that they could and more, to provide me with the kind of life that I was supposed to have.

*What could have worked better for you?*

There were a few things. I believe that the structure of authority could be a little more set in place. There could be more "set in stone" rules that aren't changed or dictated a different way by another person or a change of management. I believe there could be more individual support, more one-on-one time if you're not open to be able to reach out or have people reach out for you. To be honest, the only thing that I can really think of that's true for me that could have worked better was myself. I could have worked better. The system, especially Life Without Barriers, is set up 100 percent, it's set up for you to succeed. It's there for you to make whatever you want of it, it's what you make of it. The only thing that could have been different, was I could have been different. I could have done more.

*Who inspired you?*

School friends and youth workers, foster carers and people along the way, teachers and people who care. People who cared about me, inspired me, because they showed me at the end of the day that I'm worth something and I can become something. The obstacles earlier on in life don't have to stop them. Just to name a few, Phoebe Millan who is the manager and coordinator of Life Without Barriers, I'm sure she's now moved on to Next Steps Support, Heather Yelland which was Super Camp, Tony Robbins (even) with Magic Moments he was a great inspiring factor growing up. And all those people along the journey that really cared about me that showed me that life is worth making something of it.

*What are your hopes for the future?*

My hopes for the future are bright, definitely. I hope that I'm going to keep on accomplishing all these things that I have been. Keep on staying on the pathway of security and comfort knowing that my life is taking on the direction it should be. It should be going really well and it is. Schooling, working with children is what I want to do, at least for now. Maybe a few years down the road I might get sick of kids and want a couple of my own. My hopes for the future are just to continue what I've been doing with the support behind me that set me up to succeed.

*What advice would you give to workers trying to help young people?*

Be strong, be strong. We can be difficult and we can be hard. We can have attitude that would make you want to hurt us sometimes. Underneath all that attitude and underneath all that disrespect that might come your way, no matter what, there is someone inside who cares about you and thanks you for all the hard work that you put in to making one life better and that's an accomplishment in itself.

Thank you

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## **Contact for enquiries**

For enquiries or further information about this video, please contact the QFCC.

Queensland Family and Child Commission  
Level 22, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane  
PO Box 15217, Brisbane City East QLD 4002  
Tel (07) 3900 6000  
E-mail [info@qfcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@qfcc.qld.gov.au).  
[www.qfcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au).