

A journey of strength & purpose

Lived experience, lasting impact

Nick, 28, spent his early life in government care, starting at the Gilles Plains Assessment Unit at 12 and remaining in care until transitioning to supported independent living with Cara at 18.

Throughout his childhood and teen years, Nick found that he thrived on routine, which helped him adapt to the structure within care. With an Asperger's diagnosis, he has continued to develop independence and skills after transitioning out of state care, focusing on his personal growth, and building a fulfilling routine in his adult life.

Often the instigator of hugs, many that know Nick know he's coined the phrase "Hugs with open doors." Having grown up without the loving and comforting home that many

"Nick is an amazing, resilient, caring young man who is an absolute inspiration to us all!"

Jessica Berney
Senior Client Engagement Coordinator,
Cara Connect

experience, he deeply values the role of trust and communication in nurturing meaningful relationships.

Through the encouragement of one of his Cara support workers Nick was introduced to his current workplace - a connection that boosted his confidence and set him on a fulfilling path forward.

Employed at Barossa Enterprises in Nuriootpa, Nick spends two half-days a week in the woodworking shed. He helps dock wood blocks, trim, finish, and create pallets and custom transport boxes. He takes pride in crafting quality products and contributing to the team.

Outside of work, cars are a huge passion of Nick's - they're not just a hobby but a favourite pastime that brings him both joy and satisfaction. Working toward his 2025 goal of getting his beloved Falcon back on the road, Nick is often found at his local U-Pull It wreckers yard, tirelessly hunting for and sourcing parts to keep his various cars in top shape.

As a car enthusiast with broad knowledge, working on his cars and helping others with advice gives Nick a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Nick also has a keen interest in mechanics, electronics, and gaming. He hopes to soon have the opportunity to explore a virtual reality (VR) program, which will complement his own purpose-built PC tower that he constructed himself. The VR setup will provide Nick with the chance to create a personalised sensory room - a virtual space tailored to his preferences, offering him a unique, immersive experience that combines his love for technology with his desire for a calming and engaging environment.

As a testament to Nick's resilience and genuinely compassionate nature, rather than being deterred or jaded by his personal experience growing up in state care, he devotes much of his spare time to helping others. With support and encouragement from his Cara team, Nick helps mentor and advise foster kids and young people transitioning out of care through various volunteer and consultancy roles, where he feels he has truly found a sense of belonging.

He holds a dual role with the CREATE Foundation, where he helps organise events, seminars, and workshops, while also serving as a Lived Experience Consultant as part of the 'Young Consultancy Program.'

Last year, Nick had the opportunity to sit on the Board for the inaugural Leaving Care Expo, South Australia's first-ever expo of its kind. He is also a panel member for the Dame Roma Mitchell Grant, helping to guide grant decisions providing opportunities for young people who are, or have been, in care.



Additionally, Nick is a Lived Experience Consultant for Relationships Australia SA (RASA) and is part of the GOM Central Project, where he co-facilitates group discussions with young people transitioning out of care. GOM Central, created by RASA, focuses on offering advice and tools to help young people navigate the challenges of independent living - tools Nick wishes he had when undergoing his own transition.

Through his work with both organisations, Nick is committed to sharing his knowledge and experiences to empower other young people in care.

Nick is fortunate to volunteer alongside his best friend and 'sibling by circumstance,' Brooke. Having grown up in care together, they now continue to strengthen their bond through their work at RASA and CREATE, while making a positive impact in their roles.

Cara supports Nick in working toward and achieving his goals in several meaningful ways. His core support workers - Katrina, Arianne, Lauren, Yen, Pauline, Chloe, and Marilyn (to name a few) - have become more like friends than support workers.

Over time, they've developed a strong relationship, built on trust and mutual understanding. Their shared sense of humour and knowledge of Nick's strengths, likes and dislikes allows them to support him in ways that feel natural and empowering.

Emotional support is one of the most important aspects of Nick's well-being, as he thrives on meaningful conversations and interactions.

His support workers not only help him maintain a tidy and comfortable home in a way that works for Nick, but more importantly, they provide a safe and supportive environment where he can truly be himself and openly share his thoughts, worries and wins. Beyond their practical support, they play a vital role in Nick's life, nurturing his continual personal growth.

We are so proud to be counted amongst Nick's friends as he shows us what is possible if we are willing to make the effort and work together.