

# Ned's Story

We acknowledge the courage and generosity of local people with lived experience of homelessness and housing crisis in the sharing of their stories so that we can improve housing outcomes for our community.

In mid-2020 Homeshare Melbourne (now called Bridge It) started working with Ned and his family. Homeshare Melbourne matched people who needed housing with owners with bricks and mortar, bringing together housemates to live together and then supporting them to find rental housing.

"In our case, this is what happened. My son Ned is in his 20's, lives with Down syndrome, and is a resident of Castlemaine in Central Victoria, where he has lived since childhood" says Ned's Mum Jo Middleton.

Ned wanted to move out of home as his brothers had already done. He needed support to live out of home and wanted to stay in Castlemaine, but didn't want to live with other people with disabilities. Ned also didn't want to live in a group home, with paid staff and some restrictions on the lifestyle he was seeking.

So Homeshare Melbourne got to work and explored what Ned wanted and then with Ned, advertised for and interviewed two great housemates who have lived with him for the past 18 months.

In return for being supportive housemates, including cooking evening meals, helping Ned get to his dance class, and generally hanging out together as housemates do, they effectively receive free rent and bills. The NDIS supports the arrangement, and this set-up costs much less than the equivalent of Ned living in a group home with paid staff.

The role of Homeshare Melbourne was pivotal in starting off the arrangement and removing the need for Ned's parents to make all the arrangements themselves. Ned's parents are still involved but the independent organisation provides both parties with reassurance in case of problems arising.

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