

## **Peta's circle inspires self confidence and contribution**

*Laurel Lambert*

Peta is a very active working woman, living independently with a housemate. She has a number of interests and important connections and relationships in the community. She is self-motivated and likes to take on a challenge, especially if she is told she can't do something. Peta also has people around her that have been able to encourage her to fulfill her potential and who have provided opportunities for her to build a rich and fulfilling life.

Peta has a circle of support that includes people of different interests and experience, who are joined in their commitment to facilitate a good life for Peta that is meaningful and varied. They are also able to look out for her as they have a general understanding of the things that are happening in her life and are aware of things that need attending to or problem-solving.

Getting more people involved in the life of a person with disability can lead to each playing a part in enriching the life of that person in their own unique way with the skills and expertise they have. Peta benefits from the input of the people who care about her in a range of ways. One of Peta's sisters coordinates the circle of support, another helps Peta to learn about numeracy and budgeting. A friend and workmate provides moral support in achieving her personal goals. Her ninety year old Aunt has taught her some sewing skills so she can mend her own garments if she needs to. Another member has legal expertise and has helped with drawing up a will.

This is all helpful and one of the great outcomes of the circle is the confidence it has given Peta in herself. Her mother says that being the focal person of the circle has brought Peta out front. She is no longer in the background or subordinate to others in the family, which can sometimes happen for people who are not as confident as others. She has a new appreciation of herself. She is now talking, sharing and driving the agenda more and more at meetings. Peta has grown to appreciate that she is an equal with others. She is able to assert herself more and express her opinions and preferences. Her family and friends welcome and enjoy her new confidence and self awareness. They have been inspired to learn just how much Peta can do.

In her many roles of employee, volunteer, fund-raiser, housemate, tenant, neighbour, student, friend, social facilitator and sportswoman, to name a few, Peta also has the good experience of making a valuable contribution to the lives of others.