



BELLARA RESIDENT NAMED AS FAMILY CARER WINNER IN QUEENSLAND STATE FINALS

William Sheehan has been selected as the winner in the Family Carer category in the Queensland state finals.

William Sheehan cares for long term friend Bill and together they're now living in Bellara on Bribie Island, having moved there from Victoria chasing the warmer weather.

Bill is a survivor of polio and permanently in a wheelchair with a need for full time care.

Friends for 30 years after working for many years in business together, William and Bill ran a makeup and hair-dressing school in Adelaide. These days William supports Bill to do everything he wants to do in life, including volunteering, travelling and all the activities of daily life.

Bill said with their interest in supporting Polio Australia, they have made many new friends and William extends his generosity and support to others whenever the opportunity arises.

"He provides care, transportation and assistance to at least two other friends regularly when needed. He has provided full time care for me since 1997 and has often generously invited other people along on our holidays and also cared for their every need while we've been away.

Through his care, William has allowed Bill the opportunity to continue to take a place in the community as a lecturer, speaker and advocate of people with polio.

"As a team, we have helped out during public fundraising events, and social activities. I can do some of the organising, but William does all the heavy lifting, literally," Bill said. "His support has allowed me to maintain a high level of independence and to be included in the community in a way I could not be without him."

Although he never complains, William says everyone has to give up something in life at times, and there are times it's a hard road but he said supporting his friend gives him direction.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to make a contribution by helping others in the community, especially other people with disability including those living with polio. "

Bill said the unique relationship they have developed after 30 years of care has been life changing for them both and they've established a deep friendship.

“He’s amazing and he is wonderful – and not just to me! Others in the community have also achieved more in their lives because of what he has done for them too.”

William says life has moved him in different directions than he may have expected, but it’s important to keep thinking forward about the future.

“One thing for sure is that you can’t go back, and there is still a lot more that we want to do with our lives and in my case, why not do something that’s really worthwhile.”

ENDS