



1 September, 2016

TAFE Queensland North's aspiring wheelchair maker

TAFE Queensland North student, Tom Sharpen is upskilling to help other people in wheelchairs.

"I am a qualified painter by trade but after my motorbike accident I can't do that anymore.

"I decided to do welding instead because I would love to make wheelchairs that people can afford to buy; as they are too expensive," he said.

Mr Sharpen, 26, said TAFE Queensland North has been supportive of his ambition to learn.

"I like this course, especially the practical side of things, as I enjoy getting hands-on.

"My teacher has been great, he even built a special bench so that it would be at the right height for my wheelchair," he said.

TAFE Queensland North Metal Fabrication Teacher, Laurie Cox said Mr Sharpen is doing really well in class.

"I fabricated a new work station that is at a good height for people in wheelchairs and it can be used for many of the tasks that Tom will need to complete this course.

"I can make or modify any tooling that may be required by people with a physical impairment to allow them to participate in a course that is delivered at the Bowen campus," Mr Cox said.

"It is really good to be able to get that extra support. I was a bit nervous in the beginning but that all went away after the first week," Mr Sharpen said.

"I would say to other people like me that upskilling is definitely worth it, especially if you're bored or not enjoying what you're doing," Mr Sharpen said.

TAFE Queensland North Executive Director, Susan Kinobe said the education and training provider is committed to providing equal learning opportunities.

"We will work with students with a disability, where necessary, to modify assessments to suit their individual learning needs so that they can achieve their career dreams.

"I urge people to register for our NDIS Webinar which will be taking place on Thursday, September 22.

"During the session we will discuss the available support options in more detail, as well as the training that TAFE Queensland North can offer potential students who have a passion for working with individuals with a disability," Ms Kinobe said.

To find out more about the TAFE Queensland North webinar visit www.tafenorth.edu.au/ndis