**Every student with disability succeeding vignette transcript –**

**Brisbane School of Distance Education – Transition to post school – Alice Pegler**

- I'm Jo Pegler and I live near Eromanga, which is in far South West Queensland. We have a daughter Alice, who is in Year 12, almost finished school, we have ten days to go. She was diagnosed with Asperger's and an intellectual impairment, and I've taught her at home here through Distance Ed for quite a number of years.

So, Alice started out at Eromanga State School through until about Year 4 and then we changed to Longreach Distance Ed for schooling at home which worked out really well for her. We did Longreach Distance Ed until Year 10, when we had to shift then to Brisbane Distance Ed, and that's been our journey through to until Year 12 now. Brisbane Distance Ed's been really supportive, as was Longreach, with the whole journey, just really good at finding ways to help Alice learn the best she can but also making her feel comfortable in what she's doing.

- I'm Maria Lavery from Brisbane School of Distance Education, I'm Alice's teacher. Alice has significant learning needs and she's also selective mute. Alice has lessons with me with another student every week and that's been a wonderful opportunity for Alice to have experience of city life, because the other student actually lives in Brisbane. And so, we sort of compare Alice's life in very remote Queensland with the city life, and so it sort of benefits both students, and actually helps her communication, because the other student does have fairly good communication skills, so it's a good role model for Alice.

Alice is currently in Year 12 at BSDE, and so she's actually working towards receiving her Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement at the end of Year 12. Alice will be coming to our formal. We have a senior formal at BSDE. And she'll also be coming to graduation, and she's been nominated for an award for her artwork. Alice is an accomplished artist who has exhibited at many different art competitions both in the local community and even in Brisbane. And she's actually, with her mother's help, set up a small business of selling her artwork, which has been made into sets of cards, greeting cards. Her artwork is continuing to expand and she recently was invited by the Quilpie Shire Council to have an exhibition of her own, which will be fabulous. So, at the moment, Jo's preparing Alice to create more art pieces in line with this exhibition next year.

- So Alice started doing some art, they had a tutor come in, an artist, at Longreach Distance Ed. Took the kids for a couple of days and she came home with a picture of her dog, her Border Collie, and it just blew us away. It was really good, compared to what she'd been doing. So with a bit of support, she's kept doing workshops for her art, a lot of it through the Quilpie Cultural Society in town, have different artists. A local artist runs workshops, and just shows people how to go about creating works of the local area, which is what makes it easier, if you're painting what you know, so I think Alice can draw on that.

This year one of the local artists in Quilpie asked Alice if she would like to have an exhibition at her shop, at the coffee shop in town, which is a gallery, so Alice took ten works in there that she had ready and she ended up selling eight of the ten works, which was amazing, and it was pretty special for her, I think, quietly just going in there and seeing her paintings on the wall was quite a buzz for her. Just thinking of long-term, with the transition, and long-term with her trying to earn a little bit of money for herself, we've reproduced those artworks as cards to sell, and she sells them. Some of them have gone to Ireland and New Zealand, all sorts of different places, so it's great for her to see that, and to get that feedback from that art that she's sharing with other people. And she's just improving her skills all the time, which is really good.

From Year 11, the focus was always in the background about transitioning and, you know, the end of school's not the end of learning, and where to go to from there. So a lot of what she's learning has been based on getting her out and in society to be functioning in society safely, really, you know, whether it's paying for something and getting the right change back or getting to an appointment on time, with support obviously, but a lot of the lessons have that practical side to things.

- Recently, they've discovered dinosaur bones in their property and neighbouring properties. They've actually set up an Eromanga Natural History Museum, which has been fantastic for Alice to do work experience in her transition to post-school. She's involved in preparing the fossils, ready to be put together. She varnishes the numbers and she sets up the guest rooms for people that come and stay at the museum. So visitors that actually come and stay, she'll set up all the bathrooms and towels and everything.

- She's been involved in that project with us all the way through but for this year her work experience component has been going there one day a week and they've been extremely supportive of giving her the opportunity to do work experience. Which has been really, really good. And she knows and is familiar with everyone in there, and they've been so supportive that we see as an ongoing thing that hopefully she can keep that contact as a volunteer, so that she has a purpose to her week. Because you know, certain days, she might go in there and they save jobs for her to do which is great, makes her feel really, really happy with what she's doing.

As we come to next year without those regular on-air lessons, life will be quite a bit different. In one way, we won't be tied to those times in the classroom and we'll be a bit more flexible with what we can do and keeping her life skills improving all the time. We'll be able to do that. She'll come out in the paddock with us a bit more, we'll be able to be more flexible in that way. But it is also a little bit daunting to lose that support from the school, especially being in a remote area, but I'm sure we'll find ways of drawing on people to help.

We're just coming up to her formal and graduation, so we're looking forward to going down to that. And that's another part for her, it'll be great to be part of that community down there as an ending to her schooling years, something, you know, a good full stop rather than just no more lessons anymore, so that'll be pretty special. And I think, just quietly, to herself, she's a bit excited about it.

(Link: <https://mediasite.eq.edu.au/mediasite/Play/431d3dc9de1a4aa5b941e2afa747c5771d>)