

Living the life you dream of: Scholey's story

Scholey came to UnitingCare Community's Disability Employment Service with a goal in mind - to gain a job as a trolley collector at his local shopping centre.

"I had seen trolley collectors around centres when I was shopping and I wanted to have a go at that type of work. I wanted a real job where I could participate and feel included as part of a team," Scholey said.

Scholey, who is 18, and has been in foster care for most of his life, has been diagnosed with an intellectual disability which impacts on his cognition, independence, and social interactions. He requires significant support to assist him to live independently.

Due to his level of intellectual impairment and the support Scholey requires, the Disability Employment Service was aware that Scholey's dream of being a trolley collector was an ambitious goal, but definitely not unachievable.

UnitingCare Community arranged a meeting between Scholey, his carers and the employer to discuss the position, risk management requirements and the support strategies that needed to be implemented to support the placement. After meeting with Scholey and being made aware of the support that would be available from both the Disability Employment Service and his supported care provider, the manager of the trolley service confirmed that he would give him an opportunity to work as a trolley collector.

Scholey was accompanied by a worker from Disability Employment Service on his first shift and he was helped to become integrated into the workplace environment and learn his duties. Part of this process involved assisting him to understand worksite risks and required work practices.

"I love working as a trolley collector and I can't wait to start each shift, I wake up at 5am and get dressed and ready for work by 6am, but my shift doesn't start until after lunch," he said.

Scholey has benefitted greatly from the opportunity to participate in open employment. Since commencing

in his role, his self-confidence has increased significantly as has his communication skills, social interaction and work productivity. He will continue to be supported by the Disability Employment Service to develop further independence and increase his employment participation.

"I love feeling part of the team and now have friends at work. I like going to work and am working hard at saving for a new phone that is a touch phone. I hope to be working here for a very long time, like when it is time for me to retire," he said.

