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# Disability scheme opens a whole world of opportunity **NDIS a stunning success**

**DUNCAN ABEY**

TWO years after the National Disability Insurance Scheme kicked off in Tasmania, Frank Gunn's family are still pinching themselves.

On the second anniversary of the scheme's trial run in the state yesterday — which coincided with cake-baking for Frank's 17th birthday — mother Megan Gunn described the effect of the NDIS as nothing short of life-changing.

Ms Gunn said the self-managed NDIS model she had chosen, which gave her full control over who worked with Frank and how they were trained as well as supported

with transport and equipment, had provided a level of control and flexibility previously unimaginable.

"It has just been so significant for us — it has changed Frank's life, and it has changed our life as a family," Ms Gunn said.

"Frank used to spend time in respite care, but now all his support happens at home.

"And because he is at home full-time, his development has been exponential, and the things we wanted him to achieve have been made possible by the consistency of

highly trained staff."

But for Ms Gunn, it is the independent social life that her music-loving son now enjoys that has been the most obvious benefit of the NDIS, the scheme introduced under the Gillard government in 2013 and whose full rollout begins next year.

Frank's first-hand enjoyment of local cafes, the Hobart Aquatic Centre, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and even Falls Festival at Marion Bay are all experiences that would have been impossible before a full-time carer came into his life.

"Last month Frank went out to Dark Mofu one night, and I stayed home and went to bed, which was really lovely," Ms Gunn said.

"The carers have been wonderful and the outcomes have been fantastic."

An NDIS progress report revealed Tasmania, which has 924 participants, has one of the highest satisfaction ratings in the nation.

A spokeswoman said the full roll out of the program would begin in 2016 and was expected to be complete by 2019.



**TWO YEARS ON: Our front page on May 3, 2013**



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**INDEPENDENCE:** Frank Gunn makes the icing for his 17th birthday cake with one of his support workers, Alex Lamont, of St Giles.

Picture: RICHARD JUPE |