



## From chaos to calm

Tyler\* came to Safe Places for Children after a series of unsuccessful placements that did not meet his needs. He was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), global developmental delay, anxiety and encopresis.

Throughout his childhood, Tyler was exposed to various levels of domestic violence, and, as he grew older, his behaviour became more aggressive. This resulted in Tyler displaying a high level of property destruction and sexualised behaviours.

Tyler's behaviours continued to be challenging for his carers as he would charge at them when they tried to interact with him. He found it difficult to engage in day-to-day life and retreated into a fantasy world as a safety zone. He had an alter ego who would present through various characters. He would imitate and take on the aggressive behaviours of sharks, dragons and dinosaurs.

He would run away from his carers and lock himself in his bedroom, not engaging with them, and instead would live in his fantasy world. He would often headbutt (causing whiplash and concussion to his carers) and bite, hit and kick them.

Due to his aggressive behaviours, Tyler was regularly separated from his classmates in school and was often suspended from school (a high-support-needs school) due to his aggressive behaviours towards staff and other students.

### Setting up a tailor-made routine

Resilient, compassionate and strong, Tyler's specialised ASD carers was able to make significant progress with a tailor-made routine that allowed him to feel understood, allow his needs to be met and assisted him to feel safe and secure.

This included all his chosen activities with a focus on his interests, as well as daily participation in school. With a regular and consistent team, reassurance and a tight daily routine, Tyler's behaviours reduced dramatically. His aggression towards staff and others significantly decreased and he became warm and

friendly. He reduced the time he spent inside his fantasy world and engaged in activities outside the placement.

Tyler visited his family weekly and began to grow a strong relationship with his sisters and extended family. He engaged in swimming twice weekly, horse riding, travelling on public transport, played with dogs at the local park, attended the library twice weekly.

In 2019, he travelled from Western Australia to Queensland for a five-day holiday supported by his care team to visit his idol Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo. While there he purchased a Crocodile Hunter uniform, which he wears on the weekends and aspires to be a Crocodile Hunter when he leaves school.

### Transitioning from school

At school, Tyler transitioned from the high-support unit to the low-support class where he was integrated into the mainstream building and able to socialise with other students. He also attended an overnight Bush Rangers camp twice, staying away from the placement with his classmates and teachers for two nights. He was so well behaved that he was invited to attend his end-of-year formal, travelling in a limousine



\* Name changed to protect privacy

with his classmates and winning the Best-dressed Award on the night.

When Tyler turned 18 years old, his Safe Places team moved him into his long-term home and his transition went well. Safe Places celebrated his 18th birthday with him, having a 'Crocodile Hunter' -themed birthday party. Tyler will continue to have 24-hr wraparound care for the remainder of his life.

Tyler's carers are extremely proud of the excellent progress he has achieved during his time with us. We wish him all the best in the future.

*Taking Tyler to Queensland for a five-day holiday has been the highlight of my career to date. Seeing the enjoyment he got from this once-in-a-lifetime trip is something that I will remember forever. He has made me extremely proud.*

Safe Places staff member and one of Tyler's former carers

## About Safe Places for Children

Founded in 2005, Safe Places for Children provides children and young people in care with individualised therapeutic residential services in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Our talented and passionate team is skilled and experienced in guiding young people towards a better future. If you'd like to help transform a young person's life, contact us on 1300 993 483 or [mycareers@safeplaces.com.au](mailto:mycareers@safeplaces.com.au)