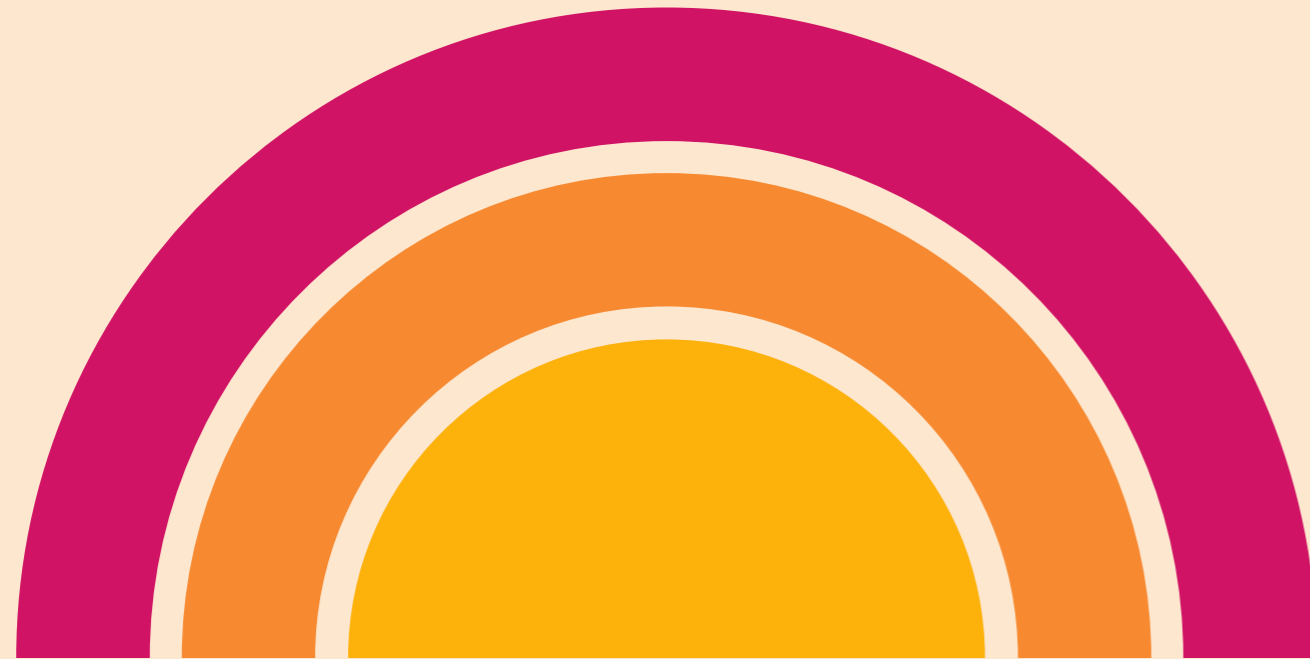


FINDING THE LIGHT



Kirsty, a talented artist, hasn't looked back since she moved into her new SDA apartment in Adelaide during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How did it feel when you received the news that you would be moving during a pandemic?

I was afraid it would be a disaster - that no-one would be there to help, and there was the worry of many hands on boxes, where boxes had come from and that I couldn't control how things were packed.

United Communities run this SDA apartment - they organised and paid for the removalists for me. I was amazed, the removalists came and packed up my unit - I sat there in the middle while the flat was packed around me.

I caught a cab with the cat who meowed all the way and didn't stop until we got to the new apartment.

The removalists unloaded and put my furniture where I needed it. Support workers came that evening and set up my bed and we started unpacking. I'm slowly getting the house set up the way I want.

Moving in the middle of a pandemic was actually a lot better than I thought it would be, I was pleasantly surprised.

How did the first night in your new home feel?

I felt like I had come to stay in a hotel, it just didn't feel like it was my home. It's taken me a little bit to feel this is my home, this is it.

The bedroom I've decided to stay in has a floor to ceiling window that has a view out to the sea. I lie in bed and look at the sky, I wake up and watch the moon, in the morning I get the reflected light from the clouds. In the evening I've been drawing the sunsets.

The place is so quiet and the triple glazed windows trap the heat in so it is very warm.

The natural light coming is enough to light the way, I don't need lights on. The living room and whole patio is 7 metres long and is all glass with a beautiful view.

My old unit was very depressing but almost straight away my spirits lifted and I started smiling again - my energy has lifted just by having sunlight - natural light.

“ I still don't believe it - I think I have that feeling because it is so big and beautiful, much more expansive than a person in a wheelchair could wish for. ”

How do you feel now?

I still feel like this can't last - like somebody will say it's a mistake - it's just too beautiful.

I spent so long not believing it was going to happen - it took a year from when I engaged SDA services [consultant], Greg, to help me write the SDA report and find this location. When we saw this apartment he said "yes this is the apartment we will apply for if it's the one you want". Almost a year to the day I got here.

Even now I'm living here I still don't believe it - I think I have that feeling because it is so big and beautiful, much more expansive than a person in a wheelchair could wish for. A disabled person is not used to having something so beautiful, people with disability are used to being treated as less than a normal person.

I had a friend visit in a wheelchair and we were both able to just be here and move around freely, yeah it was just easy.

I rarely had conversations with people who I lived near before. Now the community I'm living in is with other people in wheelchairs but other people as well. I see people in the lift all the time and they are so lovely to me and they chat, everybody who gets in and out of the lift is just so friendly. It is a nice community.

What is the best part of your new home or the location?

The location is the best part because my favourite place in Adelaide is Central Market and now I'm right opposite. I can just nick there, go and get a coffee and come back.

My studio is 9 minutes away, I can get there in my wheelchair really fast. I'm contemplating moving my studio here (apartment), it's so beautiful to work in such a sunlit space.

The Concierge is beautiful - they come up to help me if I drop this on the floor or take my jumper off. It's really great to have them there.

It is perfect, I'm so happy here. It is life changing, my friends are nearer, I'm going back into a community I already know, and am already connected into, so my social networks are much better, my psychological [health], my emotional [health], everything has lifted, everything is in a better place because of moving.

“ ...almost straight away my spirits lifted and I started smiling again - my energy has lifted just by having sunlight - natural light. ”

