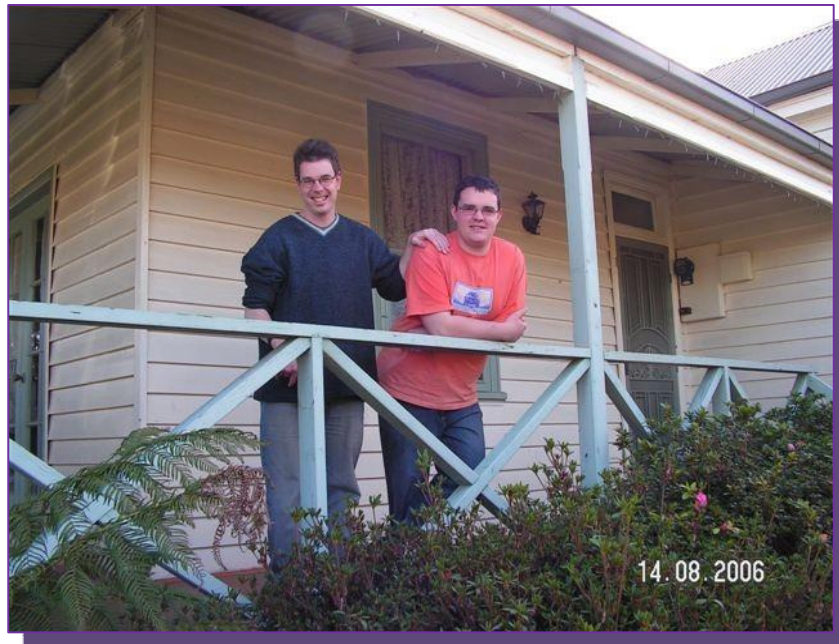


*Escaping Mum and Dad and
Sharing with a Housemate!*

Cameron Skinner

One Person at a Time Conference, PLA, 2008



Cameron with one of his Housemates Brian!

Hello ladies and gentlemen my name is Cameron Skinner and I am speaking today about independent living and my story. It all started when myself Mum and Dad and a lady called Deb Rouget from Personalised Lifestyle Assistance, had a meeting about what I wanted to do in the future.

I told Deb that I wanted to live in my own house with a friend and to have a proper job, but we didn't know how to go about this.

A few months later when we got the money from the Department of Human Services to help us we started to look at finding a house and a housemate



and someone to help me find a job. The first house we looked at we got and I lived there for 2 and a half years. Then we found a housemate who lived with me for 1 year. We then looked around for another housemate and we got Brian, he is a baker and we get on really well.



After about twelve months my landlord, Murray, who has become my friend needed his house and Brian and I had to move out. Murray helped us find another house and it is just across the road from Murray's house.



I have a support worker called Denise who helped me find a job. It took us nearly a year to find my job which was a traineeship at the beginning but is now permanent. I am a receptionist at a company called the Jerimiah Group. I love my work and I have been working at Jerimiah for 3 years.



I work part time for 4 days a week I answer the phone, see people when they come in to the office and some data entry into the computer. My job is ongoing as everyone is happy with my work. I work with 10 people and we get on really well. When ever I need help with things they are happy to help me. During the first 12 months Denise, my support worker, would come in and help me, but now she rarely has to assist me.



I have had two housemates since I moved into my own house. My first one encouraged me to be more independent, not to rely on her for the things that Mum and Dad had always helped me with. I learned to make my own decisions without always asking if it was OK.





Brian and I have shared for nearly 3 years now. We get on very well, Brian has a great sense of humour and makes me laugh. We sometimes go the movies or out for a meal, but since he met Amy his time has been taken up with her. Sometimes we do things together. Brian's family and also Amy's family have become my friends. I get invited to things that they are having like BBQs or parties.



I'm really glad that I moved out of Mum and Dad's into Warragul, there are more things to do. I go to the gym three times a week, visit friends, walk my dog Monty every day, I am a very busy person.



A couple of years ago I organized my 30th birthday party. I did it all by myself and we had a terrific night. My friends from work came as well as my family and other friends. There were over 60 people. My work friends gave me a Collingwood jumper and the next week they asked me to bring the jumper to work to show someone. I didn't know but they asked Dale Thomas the Collingwood player to come in and meet me and sign my jumper. That was the best surprise, he gave me his autograph and I had my photo taken with him. I am a one eyed Collingwood supporter.



A few weeks ago I decided that I needed a new television because mine was very old, I got it second hand when I was about 16. I had been saving up for a while and wanted to get a big screen. I asked my cousin Mat, who is a television technician if he could help me and we went out and chose a Samsung. After I bought it Mat installed it for me. Mum and Dad were very pleased that I did this on my own without having to ask their advice.



In February Brian and his partner Amy are getting married and moving into their own house. Mum and I will look for another housemate as I like to





share my house with someone. I am not sure how we are going to do this but mum will tell you a bit more about this.



So to people with a disability and their parents and the people that work with them I say have a go, work out what you want in your life and make it happen. You can be like me and escape your mum and dad.

