

## **Voiceless Journey brings words to life**

Born with cerebral palsy, Tony Summerville spent the first 28 years of his life “trapped in his own mind”.

Unable to verbally or physically communicate with his family or carers, it wasn't until Mr Summerville's support team introduced him to an alphabet board that he was able to share his feelings and thoughts and express his level of intellectual understanding with others.

Proving that anything is possible if you put your mind to it, Mr Summerville is now preparing to release his first published work, *Voiceless Journey* - a collection of poems and short stories he wrote with the assistance of his communication partner Darren Bowles and the alphabet board.

Mr Summerville, who has worked for almost seven years to strengthen his muscles and learn to point to the letters on the alphabet board to form words, said the three-year journey to bring the book to life had been both a challenging and rewarding experience.

“Before I could control my movements enough to point at the letters, I had to have an awful lot of therapy,” Mr Summerville said. “This helped me to better connect my thoughts to my movements. I still struggle with this, but not as much as the early days.”

While Mr Summerville said *A Warriors Tale* and *A Boy and Boat* were two of his favourite stories, he said he had a strong personal connection to each of the tales featured in the collection.

“As this is my first book, I did find that it just came together. Often, I would start writing a story based on an idea I had, and the story would go where it wanted to,” he said. “Now I am working with a writing tutor to try and write stories with more structure and discipline. My mum is my biggest supporter and also a tough critic when I need her to be. Without my alphabet board, none of this would have happened. I would still be trapped in my own mind.”

Mr Summerville is set to release his book on December 2 – the day before International Day For Persons With A Disability which this year incorporates the theme ‘break barriers, open doors for an inclusive society for all’.

Reflecting on Mr Summerville's unwavering dedication, his mother Thea Summerville said she, her husband Ian, and Tony's sister Jenny are “enormously proud of what he has achieved and how far he has come”.

“He doesn't take no for an answer, he really does try to push the boundaries,” Ms Summerville said. Described by his support workers Cathy Ziebell and Adam Fisher as a “trooper” and “cheeky”, Mr Summerville has encouraged others to “stay focused on what you want to achieve and don't allow yourself to be brought down by the critics”.

“Remember that a disability is only a disability if you allow it to be,” he said.

*Voiceless Journey* can be purchased for \$12.

For more information, email Thea Summerville at [voicelessjourney@gmail.com](mailto:voicelessjourney@gmail.com).

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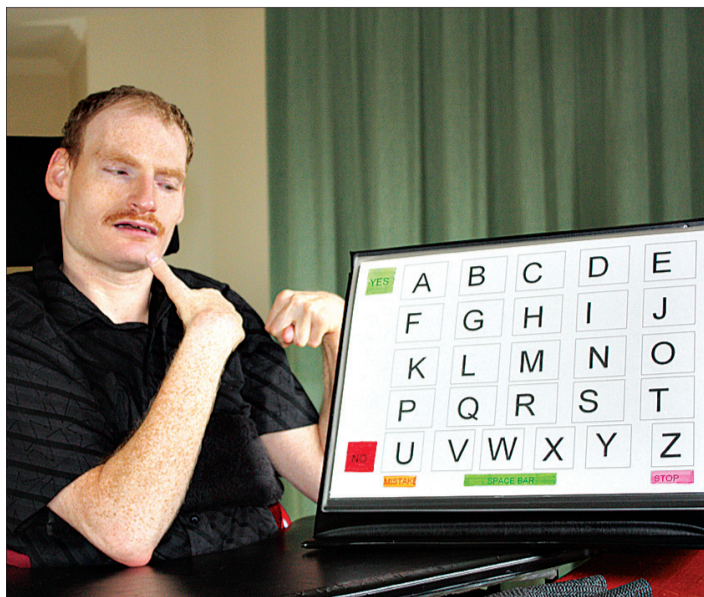
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**Tony Summerville is set to celebrate release his book *Voiceless Journey*. Mr Summerville, who has cerebral palsy, wrote *Voiceless Journey* using his alphabet board.**

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