

Recall puts Mark ahead in music

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A PARTIALLY blind Sutherland resident with superb recall for music chart statistics is the subject of a new documentary on Asperger's syndrome.

Mark Boereabach, 38, said his life had taken a 360-degree turn since filming began for Rainman Goes To Rockwiz.

The documentary follows Mr Boereabach's audition in Melbourne for the SBS music trivia program, and takes its name from the movie Rain Man in which Dustin Hoffman played an autistic man with a gift for mathematics.

Asperger's syndrome is an autism disorder that affects how the brain processes information.

Sufferers have excellent factual memory for their chosen field of interest. In Mr Boereabach's case, he can recall the top hits on the Australian music charts for any given week over a roughly 15-year period.

The documentary is being made privately by GyMEA TAFE music teacher, Russell Kilbey and his partner, Southern Sydney Autism Support Group leader, Amy Scully. They have a son, 9, with Asperger's syndrome.

Russell is the brother of Steve Kilbey from 1980s supergroup The Church.

They wanted to help Mr Boereabach after reading in the Leader last year about his struggle to find paid work in the music industry.

"We went: 'Geez, wouldn't it be nice to help Mark somehow?' And then he turned up a couple of months later as one of my students," Mr Kilbey said.

"I sent off an email to Rockwiz on a whim because I love the way Mark would just reel off the top five hits of any week of the year for about 15 years."

Mr Boereabach said auditioning for the show built his music contacts and raised awareness of Asperger's.

"Having people support me, it's a complete 360-degree turnaround from what my life was like this time last year. Life was quite solitary, very empty. Now it's enjoyable and busy," he said.

GyMEA TAFE students helped raise the money to fly Mr Boereabach to Melbourne and Mr Kilbey said he had the support of staff and management.

Readers can follow Mr Boereabach's progress on his blog www.thereal30.com. He also has an online radio station. Details: www.2prfm.com



Star of the show: Mr Boereabach and Russell Kilbey said the documentary aims to highlight the positives of people with Asperger's Syndrome. Picture: Jane Dyson