



Queensland
Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Foundation

Newsletter

Issue 4 - Term 4
2017

QATSIF

Building tomorrow's leaders

Congratulations QATSIF Scholarship Graduates

Graduations have been uppermost in our minds as we congratulate and farewell Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in the 2017 QATSIF cohort.

The Graduation ceremonies in Mackay, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Cairns and the Gold Coast reflected the expansion of the QATSIF QCE Scholarship Program and were opportunities to share culture and talent. We thank and congratulate all those students who took on the role of MC, danced, sang, played the Didgeridoo, shared speeches or performed drama. You brought colour and life to our gatherings.

QATSIF is immensely grateful to those who hosted our Graduations:

- CQUniversity at Mackay and Rockhampton
- University of Queensland in Brisbane
- Peace Lutheran College in Cairns (This will be at James Cook University in 2018)
- Bond University Gold Coast

The developing partnerships with Universities open the door for QATSIF Students to consider University as a real option and to feel comfortable with the possibility. The University of Southern Queensland hosted two significant events earlier in the year at Toowoomba and Springfield, James Cook University hosted the Townsville gathering and early in 2018 Australian Catholic University will host the Round 9 New Recipients' Gathering.

As this is the last newsletter for me, I take this opportunity to thank the QATSIF Board Chair Professor Cindy Shannon and Members of the Board of Advice, Aunty Ruth Hegarty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, the Public Trustee of Queensland, the Universities in partnership with QATSIF, the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, families who support the QATSIF students and QATSIF secondary schools throughout Queensland where Principals, Senior Executive Staff, Teachers, Indigenous Liaison Officers, Teacher Aides and Community Education Counsellors work with the QATSIF Team to make the scholarships a bonus for students and families.

The QATSIF Team initially consisted of two of us - Andrew Dillon and me for some time and now working as your team are Tiana Brockhurst, Billy Neagle, Oleana Gaydarenko and Sonia Norbido. It has been a great journey!

Thanks to the Queensland Government, the journey continues at least until 2021. We look forward to Round 9 joining the journey in 2018. We are hopeful of being able to announce the Round 9 outcomes within two weeks.

Finally, I wish all of you the very best for the future. May that future for all QATSIF students be rich in opportunities, achievements and blessings.

It has been a privilege to walk with you for the past seven years.

- Narelle Mullins

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Please forward this Newsletter on to your QATSIF students and families.

A look back on our QATSIF Graduations

Mackay Graduation Celebration

This year QATSIF extended its celebrations to include students from schools in the Mackay Region. CQUniversity kindly offered their Ooralea Campus as the venue to congratulate close to 40 students at this first time event. This celebration would not have been the success it was without the talents of Mackay State High School and Pioneer State High School students performing traditional dances and Mackay North State High School student Alla-Shisha Kanak sharing her speech about "Youth Stereotyping."

Stereotyping – something that is extremely easy to do but can have disastrous effects on the person on the receiving end. Imagine you're the blonde who is always dumb, imagine you're the person who wears glasses who is always a geek, imagine you're the male dancer who is always labelled as gay. This is stereotyping. According to the Macquarie Dictionary, stereotyping is defined as "having pre-conceived ideas generally about a group of people." Stereotyping commonly leads to biased attitudes and beliefs which in turn leads to biased actions and behaviours.

When we consider the stereotypes that are stacked against the indigenous people of Australia, we can list many. What types of things do we constantly see in the media? They're lazy, alcoholics, violent and unfortunately the list continues. There was a study conducted by Beyond Blue in 2014 that unveiled some quite alarming statistics. It seems that the desire to reduce discrimination against indigenous Australians may still be a long time coming. It suggests that almost half of the people surveyed believe that indigenous Australians are given unfair advantages by the government, 37% believe indigenous Australians are sometimes lazy, and another 31% believe indigenous Australians should behave like 'other Australians.' What does that really mean – what is a true Australian? Someone who likes meat pies, wears thongs and a singlet and watches the footy while drinking a stubbie? Oh hang on....more stereotypes!

In the same study, one in five of the people surveyed, said they would discriminate or stereotype Indigenous Australians in some way. One in five people said they would move away if an Indigenous Australian sat beside them, one in five said they would watch the actions of an Indigenous person in a retail situation. Both of these examples are problematic in themselves – people are stereotyping what an indigenous person is supposed to look like in the first place. Clearly it is obvious that the motivation to improve behaviour for some people is quite low. The fact that most of these behaviours are the actions of adults. What is it that they are teaching young people?

What are the images that young indigenous people constantly see? The incredibly dangerous thing about stereotypes is that the more people see and hear them, the more they are believed. Young people can be incredibly naïve, innocent and easily led. If the images of indigenous people are always negative, then this can influence the images young



indigenous kids can have in their minds. If you keep getting told that things should be a certain way, or that Indigenous people behave in a certain way, then it's easy to understand why young people question their identity.

Marcia Langton, Chair of Indigenous Studies at the Melbourne University states, "The most difficult relationship is not between black and white people but between white Australians and the symbols created by their predecessors." It is incredibly important for Indigenous role models to keep breaking down the barriers of stereotypes and reinforcing the positive images of indigenous culture. People like Cathy Freeman and Johnathon Thurston from the sporting field, House of Representatives politician Linda Burney, and NAIDOC award winners, constantly stand up and represent Indigenous culture with integrity and responsibility. These are the positive role models who we, as Indigenous youth, need to look up to. These are the positive role models who constantly reinforce the positive stereotypes that we need to follow.

So what can we do as leaders? What can we do as the next generation? We need to change the perceptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with our actions and not what others say and think. We need to believe in ourselves that we can achieve and follow our dreams. We have the right to have a positive identity. Let's all, here today, make a promise to ourselves, that we will aim high!! Let's change the perception of our mob and create our own success!!

- Alla-Shisha, Mackay North State High School



Next year I would like to attend university to study Exercise and Sports Science. I have always been passionate about sport and would also like to coach junior rugby league and enrol in the police force. Recently I have received an email of acceptance for a scholarship at Bond University in my chosen field of study.

What I find most challenging about school is maintaining my grades and juggling sport, school and work. The QATSIF scholarship has helped me financially and I would just like to thank them for the opportunity.

Many challenges face Indigenous students in small towns, such as the amount that complete year 12, transition into the workforce and also financial concerns. I see myself as a role model for younger Indigenous students as I have a strong commitment to my studies, clear goals, ambition and a strong work ethic. The QATSIF scholarship has helped me to stay in school, get into university and has provided the support necessary for me to succeed and for this I will be forever grateful.

- Zayiesha Morsch-Ivey, Proserpine State High School



I stand here today a proud recipient of the QATSIF Scholarship and acknowledge what an honour it is to have received this scholarship knowing that it has come from the hard work and injustices experienced by our ancestors.

Throughout my senior studies I have held the knowledge of where my support has come from closely and strived to do the very best I can to honour its source and make the most of the many opportunities that come to me that were not there for my ancestors.

Receiving this scholarship has given me the opportunity to focus my attention on my studies, to work hard for myself and for those behind me to achieve success for a brighter future. It has also inspired me to share and bring to the attention of my school community the importance and richness of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Schooling is always a challenge but for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students there comes special challenges. Some of us come from backgrounds that do not fit the social structure expected. For some of us being of Aboriginal and /or Islander heritage in our schools we are a minority, challenges we face can be as significant as questioning if our culture is being recognised and if so is being embraced and accepted within my school community. Is there an understanding of the painful history of our people?

Sometimes the most important challenge can be if we are being provided the opportunity to engage and grow in our cultural identity and do those educating me understand the importance of what this means to me.

I feel a special pride in my Indigenous heritage, it will always be at the centre of my identity and I thank QATSIF, my school support networks and my family for the support given to me to help me achieve success in my education and in my future.

Thank you

- Elleni Williams, St Patrick's College Mackay



Rockhampton Graduation Celebration

After its sucuss last year, the QATSIF Scholarship Graduation Celebration for Rockhampton took place again at CQUniversity. Nine schools attended the celebrations with Burnett State College and Moura State High School making great efforts to join us. Each school eagerly made a contribution to the ceremony including Rockhampton State High School's winning ATAP Competition drama "The Proper Way," St Brendan's College Traditional Dancers and Glenmore State High Schools Year 7 Dancers.



My hope for after school is to be accepted into my courses at Griffith University in Brisbane. I am hoping to study either Law, Criminology and Criminal Justice or Teaching.

The challenge I have faced during my high school years is time management. However, I have had a lot of support from friends, family and teachers at school to keep me on track.

By receiving the QATSIF scholarship, it has given me motivation to be able to achieve goals that I have set to complete my assessments and to continue my learning into university.

I believe the major challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is the 'shame' factor. This word stops us from believing that we can achieve amazing results and stops us from using all the opportunities like the QATSIF scholarship, AIME and other extra help that is provided to us from mentors, teachers and peers.

There is no shame in your culture, so why should there be shame in education. My generation and years to come is and will continue to be filled with opportunities that will help us reach higher than ever.

We are blessed to have such things like this in our lives. In conclusion, I wish everyone the best and hope you all achieve your goals no matter how small or big.

*Thank you
- Maria Mitchel Lawton, Emmaus College Rockhampton*



Cairns Graduation Celebration

QATSIF wishes to thank Peace Lutheran College for hosting this year's QATSIF Graduation for schools in the Cairns region. Around eighty students from twelve schools were able to attend and watch the many talented performers the college had to offer.





The Cairns ceremony also included a special segment acknowledging the hard work CECs and Indigenous Liaison Officers do for their students. Krystal Taylor, CEC was invited to share her journey and through her speech QATSIF is able to shine a line of appreciation for all CECs throughout Queensland schools who play such a significant role in the lives of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.



I am a descendant of the Wuthathi people from Shelburne Bay, Moluccan Island from Indonesia and Mabuiag Island in the Torres Straits from my mother's side. On my father's side I am a descendant of the Gubbi Gubbi people and Vanuatu Heritage from Ambrym and Tanna.

After graduation my goals are to hopefully enter University and study a double degree in Bachelor of Arts and Business. By studying these degrees my aim in the future is open my own business to help Indigenous people to gain confidence and skills in achieving their own aspirations while proudly expressing their Indigenous heritage and culture. I would also hope to continue these studies by joining the Australian Air Force in 2019 as they offer many career opportunities and skills in leadership and responsibility.

Being on the QATSIF scholarship for the last 2 years has helped me with many challenges throughout my schooling. The QATSIF scholarship has helped our Woree students financially allowing them to pay for important school events enabling them to focus on their studies and gaining confidence to do the best to our ability so we can complete Year 12. QATSIF has made us take a positive outlook on becoming an Indigenous Leader and has opened many doors for employment opportunities.

Thank you QATSIF for giving us this opportunity.

- Sade Bin Garape-Minniecon, Woree State High School

When Narelle asked me to share my story, I was a little hesitant, you see I like to fly under the radar, stay out of the limelight and hide in the shadows. I am not a fan of speaking in public or to big crowds, but I had to give myself a small reality check and thought... I need to practice what I am preaching here, what would I tell one of my students in this case? The answer to that... You've got this! Do NOT let your fear paralyse you because most often the scariest paths often lead you to the most exciting places... so here I am about to share a little of my story with you.

I was Born in Brisbane and lived there until my family moved to Aurukun when I was five and a half. I am of Aboriginal heritage on my father's side, but it was not something that my Grandfather celebrated. Our move to Aurukun not only gave us new lifelong friends and the most amazing childhood adventures, but it was an opportunity for us to be immersed in one of the oldest cultures on earth and although our great grandmother is from South east Queensland, it allowed us to get in touch with and acknowledge our heritage. The Wik people, our "Kampan ngatharam" – new family gave us the opportunity to learn culture and traditions. The families who adopted us taught us to speak language, to weave & make artefacts, dance and hunt. We also took part in many ceremonies and celebrations with family.

Back then, we didn't have computers, internet or iPads. We had bikes, Shanghai's & the great outdoors. We would disappear into the scrub for hours on end only to immerge covered in mud carrying t-shirts full of geese eggs & dragging swap turtles home by the neck. This was my life until I turned 10; my parents were then strongly encouraged to move me back to "Mainstream" schooling before I got to high school. It broke our hearts to leave, But my parents did what they felt was right for my education. I was devastated that I had to move back to the city and all because of school, but my biggest concern was what would happen to my friends? Why was no one telling their parents to move or send their kids away for better schooling? Local parents had the option of a few boarding schools but were too afraid to send their children away to be cared for by strangers. The kids didn't want to go because that would mean moving away from kin and country, even though it was in their best interest.

So at the end of 1994, my Family packed up and relocated to the sunshine Coast, where I completed primary school and then on to finish year 10 in 1999. On a holiday back "home" in the august of 99, I was heartbroken to find that only 6 of the 25 kids I had shared a classroom with had gone on to high school. Two of my sister-girls had had babies by the age of 15, several others had found themselves in and out of juvenile detention on more than one occasion and the rest...well, they just existed.... in community without any real purpose. It was then that I realised how blessed I was to be able to leave and gain a higher education. At the end of the holiday, I cried all the way from Aurukun to Musgrave station. I didn't want to leave; my heart was still in Aurukun, so was my parents'. It was then as a family, that we decided that at the end of the 1999 school year we would return to Aurukun. At the end 2001, I completed year 12 by Distance education and went on to take up the position of registrar at the local school. I saw this as my opportunity to give back to the community that had given me so much; it was my chance to help the next generation gain access to higher education.

With the secondary department of the school becoming obsolete, it became part of my job to assist families with the application and enrolment process for Boarding schools. Than In 2004 the Transition Support Unit was born. It was a service that assisted students from Cape York communities to gain positions in boarding schools throughout Queensland. I had found my passion, my purpose, and in 2006, that passion saw me transfer to Cairns to take up the position of support officer with the Transition Support Service. This meant I was on the ground supporting secondary students like yourself, access a higher education & support networks that would help them reach a potential that might not have been realised if those students had not left their communities.

Throughout my career, there have been many occasions where I have wanted to give up. Majority of these moments have occurred when students have had the most amazing opportunities handed to them but have knocked them back because they gave in to peer pressure, or been too "slack" because it sounds too much like hard work. Because they have decided they are too grown for school and have stayed in community because of a new relationship, or they have doubted themselves because the "white kids" could do it better! Thankfully, I didn't throw in the towel but stuck it out. I looked for the rainbows beyond the storms & now I can sit back and name a long list of young Adults that I supported when they commenced their high school journey way back in 2004, that are now studying to be teachers, who are qualified Nurses, Naval Communication officers, Heavy Machine operators and Law students.

It was not always smooth sailing. Together the students and I faced many hurdles, but together, we tackled them too! All these young people and their families made sacrifices, they struggled, but they pushed through, they succeeded, and are now reaping the rewards and I am so incredibly proud of each and every one of them. Not only are they continuing to make themselves and their families proud, but they are also amazing role models for the next generation in their home communities.

SO! If I can offer a little advice to the graduates of 2017, it would be to chase your dreams, never EVER doubt yourself, work hard and make it happen. Sometimes, all you need is 20 seconds of insane courage and I promise you... Something great will come of it because life begins at the end of your comfort zone.

Thank you!

- Krystal Taylor, CEC Peace Lutheran College



Brisbane Graduation Celebration

The rainy weather this year did not deter the forty-four schools from both the north and south of the city who came together to celebrate at the University of Queensland. MC for the ceremony, Kyle Ryan and performances by Laidley State High School were just the distraction needed from the day's wet weather. Special mention must be made of Chinchilla State High School and Burnett State College who both made the four hour plus journey to be with us. And we will never forget the inspirational speeches of Clairvaux MacKillop College School Captain, Jayden Ruska, Albany Creek State High School Graduate, Laine Jeston-Fenton and tearful words by Woodridge State High School Graduate, Cedella McGrady.



As a Quandamooka-Noonuccal young man of north Stradbroke Island, I am so proud to be standing here as a descendant of Oodgeroo Noonuccal. As a recipient of the 2016 QATSIF Scholarship, I never saw myself pursuing a position in leadership. But a year and a few speeches later I have become the leader I am today.

Having some amazing opportunities such as Be Brave and Shave, and being able to partake and Emcee the 'Powerhouse of leaders' Expo, held by Brisbane Catholic Education, were some of the highlights from my final senior year.

I hope to attend University next year, possibly studying Law or Sports Sciences. I have always had a passion in sport and instinctually defend others. With the guidance of some spectacular teachers I have been able to strive for the best possible results in school. Currently having a part time job, I hope to continue working to gain the real-world experiences that each of us graduates are beginning to grasp.

The personal struggles I have endured have been less influential than most, with many people supporting me throughout senior schooling and other aspects of life. Being a student who changed high schools between grade 8 and 9, settling into a new school was the hardest part that I can recognise in my schooling life. But with a welcoming community and a great indigenous program at CMC, it made the process all the more simple.

I am privileged to receive this scholarship in comparison to those who are less fortunate than I am, and I hope to help those less fortunate in the future through my career path and continue aiding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth of today to lead lives which they deserve.

Finally, I would like to thank the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation for the opportunity to complete my senior education at Clairvaux Mackillop College. Being a recipient of the QATSIF scholarship has increased my life opportunities more than I ever could have expected.

Thank You
- Jayden Ruska, School Captain, Clairvaux Mackillop College





It is an honour and a privilege to be able to share my story, my aspirations, and hopes for the future of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and communities and make my family proud. I, Cedella McGrady am a proud descendant of the Gunggarri people located on the Marinoa River and the yugarapul people located in the Ipswich region. I am the aboriginal ambassador at Woodridge State High School and proud to be representing our school community today. I congratulate all QATSIF recipients for completing their Senior Schooling and being able to therefore celebrate together at today's 2017 QATSIF Graduation Ceremony. I would not only like to thank the QATSIF Scholarship Foundation and the Board Members but to also pay my respects and acknowledge Aunty Ruth Hegarty and other Elders from the Stolen Generation that not only had their wages stolen but their family, culture, livelihood and education. I would like to show my sincere appreciation to them for giving me the capacity to have a fully supported education while completing my senior school years, allowing me to have the benefit of participating in all aspects of school life.

2017 has definitely changed me as a person during this year I've had to overcome many hurdles the biggest being was the sudden passing of my mother. This left me with a huge hole in my life. I lost everything that I knew as 'normal'. She was my go-to person for everything. After her passing I went down a bad path for a little bit and I stopped coming to school. I lost contact with my true friends and family and I completely isolated myself. This affected my education to a point that I was at risk of not completing Yr 12, also not having a stable place to live made it harder to pick myself back up again but I did. I now live in crisis accommodation and have got my schooling back on track. While most of my peers are

supported by their families, I have to support myself in order to survive and achieve my dreams. This journey has defiantly been a struggle but these are the things that have made me stronger as a person and now I know I can get through anything that gets thrown at me.

On completion of my senior schooling at the end of this year my hopes for 2018 are to attend University and study a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Marketing. I have chosen this career as it allows me to be creative within a competitive world and have the opportunity to travel and gain experience and knowledge of cultures and communities around the world. Studying a Bachelor of Business will open doors into a global world of employment opportunities. In reality, as an ambassador of my Gunggarri and Ugarapul people I will be able to then teach those I meet to pass on some cultural knowledge and enrich their lives.

Thanks to QATSIF I have had the financial support to pay for my uniform, school stationary, essentials, school and formal fees. I was able to go on excursions, camps and field trips. Without this financial support, my life would have been very different and the chances of me graduating would be very low. As well, I thank my school community for their support and encouragement throughout my time at Woodridge State High School.

I would like to take this opportunity to stand in front of the QATSIF Scholarship Graduating Class of 2017 to inspire, encourage, and challenge everyone here today when faced with difficult obstacles that weigh us down, to create moments in life rather than wait for those moments to happen. Just know that you are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait origins, you were born strong, you were born a fighter, so lift yourself back up and chase your dreams!

- Cedella McGrady, Woodridge State High School



My name is Laine Jeston-Fenton and I'm a Koori girl from Kamilaroi country and the Indigenous Ambassador for Albany Creek State High School. Today I am here just to say a couple of words about how the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation has helped me throughout the last two years.

Without the financial burden of school requirements like uniforms and school fees it has afforded me the opportunities to focus on my studies.

But, QATSIF has not only assisted me financially through my senior schooling but has also impacted on my own self identity. Growing up on country I always had ties to the land and the community but when I moved to Albany Creek I had to encounter a few people who did not necessarily regard me as Indigenous purely based on the colour of my skin. This was really, really tough but being able to proudly say that I am apart of this incredible support network and wear this little QATSIF badge on my tie everyday is a reminder of my robust goal for tertiary education. And so for that, I am just so very grateful to QATSIF and everything the Foundation does.

- Laine Jeston-Fenton, Albany Creek State High School



Gold Coast Graduation Celebration

Realising the large number of guests our Brisbane celebrations attracted in the past, QATSIF has introduced another venue to cater for Gold Coast and Southside schools. Bond University offered to host this celebration where nine schools were in attendance. Beenleigh State High School and Groves Christian College students performed traditional dances to set the dignified spirit of the occasion and Marymount College graduate, Tom Weatherall treated the audience with interpretive dance.



My name is Thomas Weatherall, I am a Kamilaroi man and a Year 12 student at Marymount College.

Like most of you here today, my high school journey has been one of ups and downs, highs and lows, and I'm definitely ready to begin the next chapter of my life. If all goes according to plan, in 2018 I will take the first steps on my path to becoming an actor, writer, director and filmmaker. Now, I know what you're thinking, and believe me, I've heard it all before: acting's not a real job, I'll never make any money, and I'm wasting my intelligence. But the criticism that struck me the most is, "how is that going to help your people, don't you want to be a role model?"

That made me stop, made me think, made me wonder, "Were they right?" It made me wonder, could I really inspire future generations by ignoring the nay-sayers and following my dreams? Because today there is such a big push for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to pursue high level professions in health, law, business, science – which is fine – but not everyone wants that, not everyone is cut out for that, and not everyone needs to do that.

We need to teach future generations that it's okay to follow their dreams instead of somebody else's, that their dreams are good enough, their dreams are worthwhile, and through their dreams they can be a role model, they can help their people and they can make a difference.

To my fellow graduates of 2017, I urge you to follow your dreams, whatever they may be, and I wish you all the very best on your journey towards making those dreams a reality.

Peace and blessings.
- Thomas Weatherall, Marymount College



My school journey so far has led me on a path to becoming a Chef and I am currently completing an apprenticeship with a local café which I hope to continue this after school. I found that the more skills you learn within hospitality the more likely chance you'll have of maintaining employment within the industry. I also intend to travel and have found out through others in my profession that Europe is a large food loving area that is constantly looking for Chefs.

To sum up in one word, the type of schooling adventure I have had is 'eventful'. Finishing assessments with barely any time to spare, having troubles getting up each morning and teachers sometimes being the bane of my existence. For me getting the QATSIF scholarship has helped me become more focused on my work because I know my mum isn't worrying about the dreadful school fees.

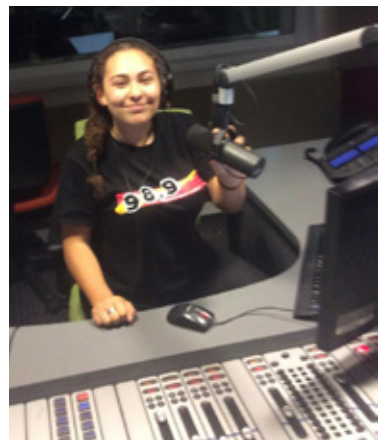
Being Aboriginal has had its challenges, especially when I was in primary school. After telling my peers about my background, I was bullied like no tomorrow, getting pushed around and being segregated from group activities. Having to experience this, I know that I am not the only person that has or is still facing segregation and discrimination. For me to make a difference, I want to be more included in my communities around Australia and help in any way possible, even if all they want is delicious food from my future restaurant.

Thank you
- Rhys Davies, Southport State High School



QATSIF Student News

As part of her school-based traineeship, Round 9 QATSIF Scholarship Nominee **Mikayla-Haze Adams-Houston from Lourdes Hill College** has been participating in the on-air brekkie show with 98.9FM



radio announcer Jamie Dunn. Her experiences in this industry have led her to exciting opportunities such as interviewing celebrities, working with Steven Oliver from Black Comedy and doing voiceovers for the Deadly Choices advertising campaign.

The Peter Doherty Award for Outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Senior STEM Student Awards have been announced. QATSIF would like to congratulate Round 7 Recipients;

- Wayne Cawthorne from Townsville State High School



- Lucinda Colbert (Left) from Forest Lake State High School and
- Jordan Hall (Right) from Springfield Central State High School

Round 7 Recipient, **Wonie Yusia from Wavell State High School** was a joint winner for the Indigenous Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy in the category of 'Exceptional Indigenous QMEA Student' 2017.

QMEA is designed to encourage students to enter careers in the minerals and energy sector and we wish Wonie well in his Engineering path when he graduates this year.



Stanthorpe State High Schools Round 7 Graduates Harley Brien, Ethan Wenban, Taiesha Combo and Round 8 recipient Isabella Baronio, with Taylah Wenban (Yr. 7) attended the recent Constitutional Convention for the first time at Parliament House. Their commitment to school and culture is why they were picked to represent their school.



While completing the heavy workload of their senior studies, one day a week, Taiesha has been doing a Traineeship at Wine College (USQ) while Ethan and Isabella undertook Traineeships with NAB. Harley has been a star student with their trade centre as well as being a school House Captain.

Round 8 Recipient, **Nathaniel Te Tau from Wavell State High School** has been elected School Captain for 2018. After delivering an outstanding speech to peers, it is the first time an Indigenous student has been appointed this position at their school. This leadership role was awarded to him after he was firstly elected as a Prefect and performing as lead role



in their school play 'Bugsy Malone'.

Joining him as School Prefects are Round 8 students **Tiara Villarin and Shequera Boyd.**

The QATSIF office welcomes news of present and past QATSIF students. Please email us, enquiries@qatsif.org.au or sonia.norbido@qatsif.org.au along with a short story and photo.

Garma Festival 2017

Each year, St Columban's Caboolture undertakes an Immersion Trip of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff plus Non-Indigenous students and staff to the Garma Festival in the Northern Territory. This is an excellent model for Reconciliation and primarily the work of Leon Ramage who previously worked in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education at Mt Isa. This immersion trip is in addition to their significant occasion at the start of each year where St Columban's invites Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (including QATSIF) to speak about what each offers in terms of support for the students.

The photos speak for themselves.



GARMA Festival and Northern Territory Immersion Trip – Highlights!

On the 3rd August a group of 50 traversed up to the Northern Territory. There were 10 staff and 40 students in total. The team of staff included myself, Raechel Fletcher (coordinator of the trip), Maree Maitland, Nicholas Kelly, Leon Ramage, Angela Woodriff, Riley Brown and Darren Freeman. We also had two staff from Mt Maria Petrie, Markus Ebeling and Susan O'Connor with 6 of their students. A full itinerary included attending the GARMA festival, day trips in Darwin to the Military Museum and the Wave Pool, a day trip to Litchfield National Park, Melville Island and for eight lucky people on the trip our first two night stay on Bathurst Island. The purpose of the trip was to immerse staff and students thoroughly into Indigenous and TIWI culture. The theme of the GARMA festival was Makarrata and the whole GARMA experience at the festival was imbued with a sense of people from all walks of life, coming together to reconcile differences. The significance of the appearance of both the Prime



Minister and Leader of the Opposition to attend and be a part of GARMA did not go unnoticed by all who were in attendance. To be there amongst it all, to hear the Prime Minister speak to the Indigenous People on their land and in their language, felt like we were all witnessing an important moment in the history of Reconciliation of Indigenous Australians. Both sides of politics stood united on this issue and were prepared to listen. Each side realising the importance of "Makarrata" and the vital role they have in sharing that message with all Australians. In 1967, Indigenous Australians were granted the right to vote; in 2017 the message was that Indigenous Australia needs to be heard with a guaranteed voice in the constitution. The law needs to be the vehicle of freedoms protected and guaranteed and not oppression. There were many important messages over the whole of GARMA which were framed around the theme of Makarrata. The take home message from one of the Elders was to see Indigenous Australia as a gift and not a problem or an issue to contend with for our people.

To see the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition be a part of GARMA and demonstrate leadership was important formation for our students. St Columban's College is a leader in educating the students on Indigenous matters. Because of this, there were many opportunities afforded to our students to demonstrate their leadership and understanding of Indigenous matters. Denzel Borthwick represented



our College and Indigenous students speaking to an adult forum. Public speaking is daunting for anyone but he handled himself with great maturity. Holly Baxter and Ashleigh Johnson also demonstrated courage and great maturity as they were part of the Channel 2 ABC Q&A rehearsal. Others took part in radio and television interviews.

There were many times where our students demonstrated initiative, resilience and courage – all qualities of leadership. The trips to Bathurst Island and Melville pushed students out of their comfort zones as they lead activities and interacted with TIWI students. They showed a willingness to learn about Indigenous culture and came to a realisation of their responsibility to share what they have learned about the gift that is Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander culture.

The trip to Bathurst Island was a very engaging time - we assisted in the primary school class rooms, played games with secondary, visited Art Centres, wonderful tour of a museum for which our donation was very appreciated and our school named on a plaque, enjoyed Mass in the old Church with priest Fr Pat, hosted superbly by Sr Anne, visited water holes and beach nearby, imbibed in a lovely dinner with Tiwi friends resulting in an eye opening life changing experience for all!

It was an absolute pleasure to see the group of 50 respond to the challenges and highlights of the GARMA experience. This trip was successful because of the efforts of St Columban's Community: the shoebox donations, those who participated in our fundraising initiatives such as Golf Day and Trivia Night, Museum donations, the support of the P&F, the donations of tooth brushes and toothpaste have all contributed to the impact of the trip. There are Indigenous children living in remote regions of Australia who because of your efforts, have more incentives to attend school. I look forward to sharing another GARMA experience next year and see the next lot of leaders develop and mature on this trip and help find their own identity in the world. Lastly, I would like to thank all the staff for taking time from their own families



and loved ones for the benefits of our students. Thank you to Raechel and Nick for all their work in making this trip happen.

I would like to leave you with some insights from our students, who were a group highly commended by the Yothu Yindi Foundation.

"I think the major thing I learnt on this trip is to appreciate everything, especially the little things. The other thing I learnt is the massive socio-economic and health gaps between Indigenous lives and our lives and how much that needs to be closed. The Constitutional change needs to be reached so that everyone feels welcome." Georgia Hyland

"I would like to improve by Australia acknowledging & owning our history & being proud of our indigenous history and to hope to use this life changing experience as a way to grow & move forward as a nation." Ashleigh Johnson

"Having the privilege to stay with Sister Anne on Bathurst Island, learn about the land, experience new things, EVERYTHING. My trip highlight was to have the opportunity to be chosen to go to Bathurst Island and experience TIWI culture, the whole experience was astonishing. It was a privilege to be able to listen to the Prime minister's speech on the first day at the Garma festival - I felt like I was witnessing an important moment in history." Eboney Butler

"I've learnt ways on how we can settle our differences (Makarrata). I've also learnt some words in their language and how to walk on a tight rope. The highlight of this trip was experiencing different cultures and exploring Litchfield." Campbell Nass

"My highlight was being on Bathurst Island, but more



specifically, going down to the beach both afternoons and watching the waves and allowing time to think. Being a sentimental person, it was something that I really loved. Also going out to the waterhole with some awesome people from the community was something else that I really enjoyed. The overall vibe of the trip was very positive and the 8 of us who went got along really easy and I will never forget that experience." Cindy Ford

"One of the challenges I faced was hesitancy. I felt completely out of place because the GARMA festival was a whole new experience and I felt myself holding back. Towards the end of the festival, I was becoming more comfortable and was adapting to my surroundings, but it was soon over and we were in a new place again. I made a conscious decision to show little to no hesitancy, however Sister Anne did make a comment on the last night about how she noticed slight hesitancy in me when I stepped off the plane, but had grown a lot more comfortable throughout our stay. So I'd like to say that I conquered my



challenge." Cindy Ford
 "I learnt that as a nation, we know so little about our Indigenous history, which is a crucial step in the process of reconciliation (understanding through education) If I were not to have attended GARMA, my outlook on the Indigenous populations of our nation would still be one of misunderstanding " Charlotte Scott

QATSIF Leadership Badges - The lucky last for 2017

This year QATSIF presented 70 leadership badges to students from schools all over Queensland. The extra effort these students made was great encouragement and inspiration for all.

Here are the final few for 2017 that QATSIF has learned of and would like to congratulate;

St Monica's College

- Zareth Sam – Sports Captain
- Georgia-Rose Edwards – Arts Captain

Pioneer State High School

- Ayesha Thaiday
 – Indigenous Ambassador
- Shyain Mye
 – Indigenous Ambassador

QATSIF reminds all schools that badges will continue to be given to those who take on school executive leadership roles next year.



Holiday Wishes from the QATSIF Office

As 2017 draws to an end the QATSIF office would all like to say a huge "Thank You" to QATSIF school staff members for your support over the year. Your hard work contributes significantly to the great results and achievements we have been able to share.

We hope you all enjoy the Christmas holiday break and remind all schools that;

- Round 7 Semester 4 & Round 8 Semester 2 Claims are due for submission
- Round 7 Acquittals are now active for you to

complete via application.qatsif.org.au

- Notification about your Round 9 nominees should arrive via email in the next month and
- Accepted schools will have access to their Round 9 Agreements by the end of next month via application.qatsif.org.au

To ensure your school has a fresh start to the new year, we are encouraging all schools to complete their Round 7 Acquittals and send us your school's Round 9 Agreement signed by your Principal and a witness during the holidays.

The QATSIF Office will remain open for assistance and enquires up until the 24th of December and re-open on the 2nd of January 2018.



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DRAFT QATSIF Dates for 2018

Please take note of when we will be celebrating and recognising significant dates for 2018. The dates listed are proposed and updates will occur.

February 22 nd 2018	Round 9 New Recipients' Celebration and Morning tea at Australian Catholic University 10:30am
May 15th 2018	Preliminary advice for Round 10 will be sent to schools
May 25th 2018	QATSIF/National Sorry Day Gathering 10:30am
May 30th 2018	QATSIF/Reconciliation Week Gathering 10:30am
June 20th 2018	Applications for Round 10 opens
July 19th 2018	QATSIF Cluster schools Laidley State High School 10am
August 1st 2018	QATSIF Cluster schools Townsville at James Cook University 10:30am - 12noon
August 24th 2018	Round 10 applications close Unfortunately because of tight timelines for the Board and Public Trustee there can be no extensions.
October 10th 2018	Mackay Graduation Celebration at 10:30am
October 12th 2018	Rockhampton Graduation Celebration 10:30am
October 17th 2018	South Brisbane Graduation Celebration 10:30am
October 18th 2018	North Brisbane Graduation Celebration 10:30am
October 19th 2018	Cairns Graduation Celebration 10:30am
October 24th 2018	Gold Coast Graduation Celebration 10:30am