



TOTEMS

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022 EDITION

REFRESHING NEW CAREER



Jennah Halley

Refrigeration technician Jennah Halley is making her mark in a male-dominated industry. Jennah wants her kids and women to feel empowered to stand out from the crowd and pursue their goals.

Jennah, a proud Aboriginal woman who grew up in Innisfail, admits she accidentally fell in love with her trade. What began as helping out her refrigeration-technician-brother soon turned into an apprenticeship and a fulfilling career.

“I love fixing things and making things work, whether it be a brand new install or a breakdown. There is always problem solving and fault finding involved in my job, which means that I never stop learning. I started five years ago now and it’s just been awesome, it’s a great career,” Jennah said.

“My typical day can be anything. It can start with routine maintenance and end up on the roof of a shopping centre on an emergency breakdown. I’ve literally worked on everything from domestic boats to commercial rooftops.

“My job is incredibly rewarding because I get to help people, whether it’s my workmates, my customers or my family. Living in Far North Queensland we all need air conditioning and refrigeration, so it’s nice to be able to help people.”

The mother-of-four said beginning an apprenticeship in her 30s was a learning curve.

“There’s nothing that I can’t do that the guys can do at work...”

“Coming back to school was harder for me. I hadn’t been at school for about 20 years, so it was a little bit different. But the TAFE Queensland teachers just walked me through and I never ever found that I couldn’t ask for something to be explained differently. Then it was just about tailoring my study to the way I needed to learn.”

Jennah’s dedication to her **Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration** (UEE32211) training earned her a Cairns Trade Excellence Award for Female Trade Student of the Year.

“My TAFE Queensland training has helped me in the workplace. When I first started, I worked on very basic domestic jobs, but coming to TAFE Queensland for training improved my knowledge and skills. At TAFE Queensland I got a taste of the range that my industry covers, it opened my eyes to the whole scope of works.

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MAKE GREAT HAPPEN



So when I arrive at jobs, I now know how to approach basic domestic work all the way up to top-end commercial work," Jennah explained.

"I am lucky to work in one of the well-paid trades. As an apprentice, you're getting paid to learn. Learning a trade takes hard work and dedication, but you're gaining a lifelong career. I am lucky that I found something I love and I get paid to do it."

Women are underrepresented in the air-conditioning and refrigeration sector, making up just one per cent of the industry's national workforce.

Jannah said forging a career in a male-dominated industry allowed her to provide for her family in more ways than one.

"My children are my biggest cheerleaders. I have three daughters and one son. Every year for Mother's Day, I get a card and it says 'My mum knows how to use tools', 'My mum fixes everything', 'My mum fixes

people's air-cons'. It's about teaching my kids they can do anything and they know that mum's doing what dads do, so that's a big thing to my kids."

Recently married, Jennah said her partner was a daily source of inspiration and support.

"My husband is also a refrigeration technician and he's been in the industry for 18 years. He literally held me accountable the last year of my apprenticeship by talking shop. He made wiring boards so I could fit in extra training and he helped me learn more about fault finding. He even borrowed a coolroom on wheels so I could practise at home ahead of my final assessment. Anytime I doubt my ability he's the one who corrects me and boosts me up."

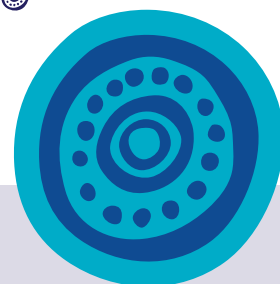
Jannah is a passionate advocate for women in trades and she wants to break down stereotypes.

"I believe that being a female in a trade is a great thing and I get great feedback

from clients. There is this thought, particularly among young women and some men, that if you work in a trade you must not be feminine and that's just not true. When I'm not at work in my uniform I love wearing dresses, heels and makeup."

Jannah, who works at MAE Refrigeration, hopes more women feel empowered to become apprentices and pursue their training and career goals.

"I want to say to all the young girls or women, I'm 37 so I'm not a young girl anymore, go and do it. There's a lot of my job that I have to improvise to do, the strength side or the height side of things. There's nothing that I can't do that the guys can do at work, and probably my biggest supporters are my workmates. So if you can find that crew and that support, go and do it because it's rewarding and it's empowering as a female and as a woman and a mum." 🌀



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Everyone's journey is different and sometimes you need some extra support. We're here to help.

Our student support services are available for all of our students, making your learning experience just that little bit easier.

Student Support Officers can offer advice and help on topics, including:

- career options and employment opportunities
- choosing the right course or pathway
- enrolments, financial assistance, Centrelink ABSTUDY enquiries, and funding opportunities
- accommodation, travel and welfare
- government department, community service providers and advocacy services referrals
- learning and study support
- enrolment into 'Away from Base' courses

Counselling Support

Short-term counselling services are available to all students. Counselling sessions are free and completely confidential.

AccessAbility Support

If you identify with having a disability, our staff can work with you to develop a support plan.



RESIDENTIAL BLOCK TRAINING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students don't need to live near one of our campuses to study a course with us.

Depending on your location, TAFE Queensland north region and south west region deliver a number of courses via residential study blocks. These courses are registered as Away from Base courses, which means you may be able to have your travel, accommodation and a meal allowance paid when you attend residential blocks. Students must be registered with ABSTUDY to be eligible for Away from Base funding.

LIBRARY SERVICES

All students are able to access the TAFE Queensland library network. The library network offers a range of physical and digital services and resources to support you throughout your study.

library.tafeqld.edu.au

CONTACT US

For more information on the range of student support services available

or to make contact with a Student Support Officer, visit tafeqld.edu.au/student-support-services

STUDENT OF THE YEAR LANDS DREAM JOB

To a huge round of applause Garth Simpson Jnr became the first Nurunderi Student of the Year in late 2021 after completing a **Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community)** (CHC33015) at TAFE Queensland. Garth, 32 and a father of three children, is now working full time for an NDIS provider in the South Burnett.

Garth said violence, alcohol and drugs held him back early in life.

“Fear had a huge impact on my life and it distracted me from learning, and not believing in myself forced me to miss out on a lot of opportunities and doing things in life. I’ve had a lot of disappointments, set-backs and hang ups. I didn’t excel at primary school, I didn’t graduate high school or pursue a career in my young adult life, but what I did do was not give up on myself,” he said.

Garth said education is so important in life.

“It helps people become better citizens, gives us better paid jobs and at the same time helps us grow and develop skills, learning, knowledge, values, morals and habits.”

In early 2021, Garth walked into TAFE Queensland and enquired about studying.

“I was unemployed at the time and was linked to a job agency, Max Employment. They told me about an individual support course and they told me it was about working with aged care and people living with disabilities. I liked what I heard and I spoke to the teacher and then enrolled. Two weeks later, I started the course,” Garth said.

“At TAFE Queensland, they were so supportive of every step. Every challenge that I had, they were there with me and they walked me through it – not just my teacher, but other staff and students as well.

“I was scared and questioned whether this course was for me. But I did eventually grow a passion to work with the elderly and people living with a disability.”

Garth said it felt great to gain his qualification and secure full time



Garth Simpson Jnr

employment as a Disability Support Worker with an NDIS provider.

“I am so fortunate to have this job. I like elderly people and the reason why I like them is because they have obtained wisdom from their experience in life. When I talk with an Elder, they’re able to teach me something because they’ve been through what I’m about to go through in life. That’s the reason why I like my job,” Garth said.

“Having a job and reaping the rewards is good, but what really excites me is that I am able to make a difference in a person’s life.”

Garth said a strong support network helped him pursue his goals.

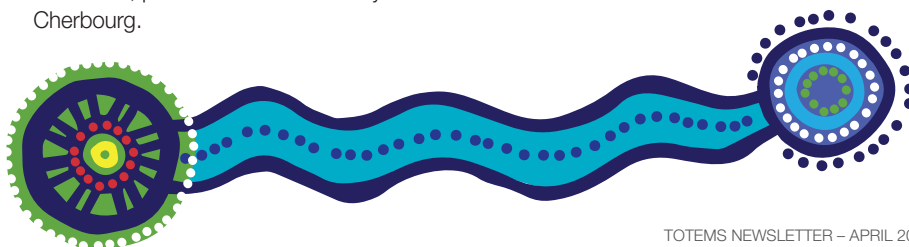
“Having parents that have always been available for me throughout my whole life – and other role models like grandparents, uncles and aunts with the stories they’ve shared about their life, the struggles and overcoming the personal challenges they’ve faced – has had a huge impact on my life.”

Garth said he wanted to be a role model to his kids, peers and his community of Cherbourg.

“I want to inspire and encourage them and remind them that they can do anything. Just give it a go and don’t give up. It’s never too late. We make mistakes but we get back up again and we just keep going and don’t look back. Don’t worry about what we’ve done in the past, just keep going forward,” Garth said.

“We all have gifts and abilities – let us use them to make our community a better place. It is all about being brave. You never know what skills and abilities you have, and you never know what passion you have in your heart. Just go out and have a go. Find out what you like and what you’re good at, and then pursue it.”

Garth’s study was made possible thanks to **JobTrainer** funding. JobTrainer funded courses help provide skills that Queensland needs for effective recovery from the pandemic. The program targets growth areas and those hit hardest by the pandemic, helping fill existing skills needs or assist in reskilling. 🌐





Tyrone Murray and Darrie Lea

WHEN DREAMS DO COME TRUE

For Tyrone Murray and Darrie Lea, 2022 is certainly the year when a lifetime of dreams are all coming true.

Since both graduating from TAFE Queensland in late 2021, the committed parents of eight children are both working hard, as well as becoming valued role models in their tiny central Queensland town of Murgon.

Darrie completed a **Certificate III in Community Services** (CHC32015) thanks to **JobTrainer** funding and has her sights set on becoming a disability support worker. While Tyrone travelled to Toowoomba to complete his **Certificate III in Barbering** (SHB30516) and has since become the first Aboriginal person to own a business in Murgon.

Named Crow's Barbershop, after his grandfather, the whole town turned out for the official opening of Tyrone's business earlier this year.

An emotional Tyrone told the crowd at the opening that he had promised himself he would be the first Indigenous man to have a shop in the street.

"That promise has come true today as I open my shop," he said.

Both Darrie and Tyrone agree that 2021 was chaotic, but the support and

encouragement from TAFE Queensland and each other helped keep them on track to reach their dreams.

"Yes it was, wow; it was crazy, but I think we like to be busy. We don't like to sit around and do nothing," Darrie said.

"I pushed and pushed him to keep living his dream because he was going to give up at one stage. I said, 'No, you just keep thriving for what you want'."

Tyrone didn't give up and has big plans to further his education and possibly even become a teacher himself.

"Hopefully one day I could be a teacher at TAFE and just try to mentor a lot of young people to try to get into courses," Tyrone said.

"I'd tell them about my little journey and what I went through to get where I am today. I'm just so proud that I came this far and got my certificate. It just makes me feel really good."

As well as studying in 2021, TAFE Queensland offered Tyrone a salon space at the Nurunderi Campus where he spent two days a week offering

barbering services to people at Cherbourg Aboriginal Community.

"It's really good. I enjoyed working there too. I'm just trying to get a lot

more young fellas to do barbering. It's just the way I started off just cutting people's hair at home. I just tell them it's best to come to TAFE so you can get some training you can go a long way," Tyrone said.


"It's really good to come to TAFE Queensland because you'll learn a bit more skills and you'll find a lot of teachers are really good too."

While the couple now consider themselves positive role models, Darrie admits it

wasn't always that way.

"We have lived here all our lives and we see the change and everything that happens here and we just try to do our best. We weren't perfect at one part, but we changed our lives and turned it around for the better, for our children. We just want to show them that you can do everything if you just set your mind to it," Darrie said.

And Tyrone agreed.

"You've got to do the sacrifices to get to where you want to be. TAFE can help you. TAFE will help you get there." 

He had promised himself he would be the first Indigenous man to have a shop in the street.



GABRIELLE HELPS EDUCATE FUTURE GENERATIONS

Proud Kamilaroi woman Gabrielle O’Keeffe is doing everything in her power to help children in Cairns achieve their full potential, with **JobTrainer** funding enabling the former youth worker to develop the skills she needs to transition her passion to the education sector.

Gabrielle O’Keeffe grew up on Bundalung Country (Northern Rivers) in New South Wales and after finishing high school in 2013, completed a **Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC30113), followed by a **Certificate IV in Community Services** (CHC42015). It’s a path that initially led her to the Northern Territory, where she supported young Indigenous teenagers as a residential youth worker in the remote Aboriginal community of Wadeye.

“I felt drawn to explore Indigenous culture beyond my local area. Living and working within a remote Aboriginal community was an invaluable experience,” Gabrielle said.

“The personal growth I attained there has definitely influenced my determination and shift towards education as a career.”

Keen for a change in scenery but unable to travel due to COVID-19 restrictions, Gabrielle decided to move to Cairns in early 2020, where she continued to work as a residential youth worker with teenage girls from remote Cape York and Groote Eylandt who were required to live away from home in order to access secondary education. Having worked closely with the girls and observing them enthusiastically embrace opportunities to learn, Gabrielle jumped at the chance to become an education officer for Indigenous teens at her organisation.

“Being a part of children and young people’s educational journey is a privilege and something I’ve always felt passionate about being involved in,” Gabrielle said.

“I view education as a key component in contributing to the quality of life and life outcomes for our children and young people.”

Committed to being the best she could be for her students,

Gabrielle enrolled to study a **Certificate III in Education Support**

(CHC30213) online through TAFE Queensland under the joint State and Federal Government **JobTrainer** funding. Gabrielle said the funding was a key factor in her return to study.

“After moving interstate to Cairns — having to start fresh with nothing but what could fit in my car, all during a rental crisis — there’s no way I could have afforded to study without JobTrainer. I am so grateful for this financial support,” Gabrielle said.

“This course has prepared and assisted me to be capable within my role. It has assisted me in understanding the theory and the ‘why’ behind all that teacher aides and education support staff do.

“I’ve enjoyed the flexibility of studying with TAFE Queensland the most. By studying online, you can be in charge of your own education journey, and being self-paced I can juggle work, study and home life, and find the right balance for myself.”

Although Gabrielle is not set to graduate until later in 2022, the 26-year-old has used her new skills to transition even further into the education sector. She is now working full time supporting the next generation to create a strong foundation for learning as a teacher’s aide for prep students at a local Anglican primary school.

“I enjoy playing an influential role to students who are in their first year at school. It’s a time in their lives where you can really impact a child’s experience and their attitude towards school and education,” Gabrielle said.

“My goal is to complete my study and grow within my role supporting and influencing children and young people. Supporting the education journey of students is such an honour — I would highly recommend this rewarding, fulfilling and enjoyable career avenue.”

According to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, employment for education aides is projected to rise 14.6 per cent by 2025, providing plenty of opportunities for people who, like Gabrielle, are passionate about giving children and teenagers the support they need to learn and succeed. 🌱



Gabrielle O’Keeffe



Jeremy Keevers

ENGINEERING APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORTS INDIGENOUS LEARNING

Jeremy Keevers, a proud Bundjalung man, is excited to have finally found his passion in an apprenticeship that not only has great career opportunities, but also contributes to important educational and medical work for Indigenous Australians.

After completing a **Certificate II in Engineering Pathways** (MEM20413) at TAFE Queensland, Jeremy was successful in obtaining an engineering apprenticeship at the Translational Research Institute next to Brisbane's Princess Alexandra (PA) Hospital.

He now works within the Australian Centre for Complex Integrated Surgical Solutions (ACCISS), using innovative 3D-printing to create replica kidney models used to educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about kidney transplants.

In his role, Jeremy prepares coloured replica models to be used in PA Hospital's Outreach Renal Transplant Workshops which service remote areas

of Queensland. In conjunction with the National Indigenous Kidney Transplant Taskforce, the models are assisting the travelling team to educate potential transplant recipients and increase awareness about kidney disease.

"I am definitely enjoying the role so far, I get on the bus to come to work and I don't even think about it as a job. It's more getting up in the morning to go do your hobby," Jeremy said.

"I feel pretty proud to be honest. My family think it's amazing and they're very supportive of the work I'm involved in."

After completing high school in 2015, Jeremy worked at a powder coating company and other odd jobs but had dreams of securing an apprenticeship. After his work dried up and the COVID-19 pandemic took effect, he decided to enrol in a TAFE Queensland pre-vocational course which teaches students the basic skills needed to secure an apprenticeship.

Jeremy was also able to access the Queensland Government's **JobTrainer**

subsidy which provided him with fee-free training.

"I wouldn't have been able to complete the course without the JobTrainer subsidy. It was a massive help because I didn't have any other source of income apart from the government subsidies I was receiving."

Jeremy said an individual student's success in the pre-vocational course really depends on their own commitment.



“If you treat it like a joke then you’re not going to be able to get a job because TAFE works directly with employers. So I treated the course as if it was my job and I just tried my best to do really well at it.”

Having become aware of Jeremy’s enthusiasm and professional approach to his studies, both TAFE Queensland Engineering Business Manager Kevin Roos and Student Services Team Employment Outcomes Officer Kellie Richardson referred him for the apprenticeship position at the Princess Alexandra Hospital that was specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

“Kellie Richardson was very helpful. She is the one that brought the actual opportunity up with me and helped me apply for it. She helped me through the whole process and guided me when I wasn’t sure what to do,” Jeremy said.

“She’s been in very close contact with me and a really big helping hand. After I got my apprenticeship I know I can still call her if I have questions about my TAFE training which is great.”

Jeremy’s manager, Doctor Michael Wagels, is a Staff Specialist Plastic

and Reconstructive Surgeon at Metro North Health and Metro South Health. Dr Wagels said that Jeremy is an outstanding colleague.

“He was a perfect fit for our workplace and we are so pleased to have him working at ACCISS. He has an eye for detail and seems inspired by the types of clinical problems that we deal with here. He relishes the clinical challenges we are presented each day,” Dr Wagels said.

“It warms my heart to see someone young who is driven not only to do things well but to do them for a noble purpose: the benefit of a patient who needs our help.”

Jeremy is now studying a **Certificate III in Engineering – Technical** (MEM30505) and is looking forward to completing his apprenticeship, which will be fast tracked due to credits he received from his pre-vocational course. He also has aspirations to further his studies and is considering possible university pathways.

“For now I am just focused on finishing my apprenticeship, but after that I was thinking about going to university and studying medical engineering as

I do believe that every hospital should have a facility like the one we have at the Princess Alexandra Hospital,” Jeremy said. 🌀

“My family think it’s amazing and they’re very supportive of the work I’m involved in.”



STAGE YOUR COMEBACK

FREE AND LOW COST TRAINING

Our JobTrainer funded courses are for school-leavers and job seekers looking to develop new skills.

Over 70 free or low cost courses available*.

Visit tafeqld.edu.au/jobtrainer for the variety of study areas.

*Eligibility criteria applies for students to access funding. Training is delivered by TAFE Queensland and jointly funded by the Australian Government and Queensland Government.





Brendan Bishop

BRENDAN'S ALL SET TO HELP INDIGENOUS START-UPS

In a training first, eight local small business owners are playing a vital role in supporting and developing a sustainable future for Indigenous businesses in Queensland after graduating from the Advance Queensland – One Business program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in 2021.

Funded by the Queensland Government and delivered by TAFE Queensland, the eight participants were the first Indigenous small business owners in Queensland to graduate as qualified One Business Trainers.

Proud Aboriginal man Brendan Bishop is one of the first TAFE Queensland trained Indigenous business facilitators and is looking forward to coaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to further strengthen their businesses.

"The One Business program is important to me because it creates a strong network of Indigenous business start-ups that can work together to achieve great things," Brendan said.

"Having support during your business start-up stage is a great contributor to businesses being successful during the first three years of operations."

A descendent of the Kamilaroi people of South-West Queensland, Brendan was the founder of The Alarm Guys

Pty Ltd, the first Indigenous-owned and operated Electronic Security company in Australia, which he built from the ground up and then sold.

Because of this business knowledge and expertise, Brendan became a highly sought-after Indigenous business mentor, coach and facilitator. It's an area that he's deeply passionate about.

"I have been facilitating Indigenous business and economic development programs since 2012. It's immensely satisfying knowing that I can contribute to the next generation of Indigenous business owners," he said.


In 2017, Brendan established Indigenous Business Builders with the aim of providing Indigenous business and economic development services across Australia. Since then, he has delivered hundreds of workshops across the country, and has assisted many more businesses during their start-up, growth and expansion stages.

"I hope to achieve Indigenous economic independence through entrepreneurship," Brendan said.

"By working with the next generation of Indigenous business owners we are creating our own economy and access to many more employment and training opportunities for local Indigenous people."

Brendan has a suite of qualifications, but he believes it's what he's learned on the job through his own Indigenous business experiences and his board representations that is most valuable to the Indigenous economy.

The One Business program gives Indigenous business owners and innovators an exceptional opportunity to learn from the expertise of established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs. The program is creating more pathways for First Nations people to innovate and build robust and successful businesses by exploring targeted opportunities for business growth. The first cohort of One Business participants are leading the program's training and coaching advice on creating new local jobs and maximising Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan.

The program is available to all Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who are innovators, entrepreneurs and/or own a micro to small and medium-sized business. 



RIDING A ROUGH WAVE TO SUCCESS

Hitting rock bottom and realising that this was his do or die moment, Brendan Larcombe began to cling to any bubble he could find to rise to the top.

The proud Goreng Goreng man and father-of-three is now drug and alcohol free, employed full time as a Residential Boarding Supervisor at AFL Cape York House, and doing his best to influence a new generation of First Nations youth to aim for the stars.

As a young man growing up in the Minjungbal Bunjalung (Tweed Heads/Gold Coast) region, Brendan fell into a spiralling cycle of drug and alcohol addiction until the age of 35.

“By the age of 13 I was drinking, smoking drugs at 14, by 16 I was a full blown drug addict and alcoholic and I went on a downhill spiral. There was a couple of prison stints, suicide attempts, I split up with the mother of my children, and I was homeless,” Brendan said.

After his second round of live-in rehabilitation, Brendan enrolled in a **Certificate III in Sport and Recreation** (SIS30015) at TAFE Queensland’s Cairns campus.

“I was trying to change my circle of friends and circle of influence but I did relapse and I was back on the drugs for two years. Then I was homeless, living with a bag of clothes. Suddenly, it was a switch inside me. I woke up one morning and thought, ‘I am going to die.’ The thing that popped into my head was rehab so I walked from Redlynch straight to rehab and started a few days later,” Brendan said.

“This time I was doing it for me. And while there are still some times when I struggle and have to take a shower to help myself refocus, I know I will never go back down that path again.”

Returning to TAFE Queensland, Brendan enrolled in a **Certificate III in Community Services** (CHC30215) with a goal to give back to the community. Though struggling to gain a Blue Card, he successfully completed the course in 2021 and became an encouraging and motivational employee at AFL Cape York House.

Receiving support and excellent feedback from his teachers, Brendan also became an inspirational speaker at the annual Closing the Gap event at the Cairns campus.

“The teachers were awesome. They could see how badly I wanted it. I still have a connection with them – I still go to them for guidance now,” Brendan said.

In March, he returned to TAFE Queensland to celebrate the launch of the **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2021–2023**, and share with the audience his story of success.

TAFE Queensland’s RAP is a framework for the organisation to influence and support reconciliation. Improving educational outcomes for First Nations people is a key strategy within the plan, with education being a key factor to improving quality of life for Indigenous Australians.

“Someone once said to me ‘knowledge is power’. If you have the right support, anything is possible. I am always telling these kids to go to school or TAFE to learn – that is a step on the path where you want to go. Life is about steps,” he said.

“We need Indigenous people learning and in teaching jobs. I always say if you want to change the wheel then you need to be part of it. I am just a spoke in the wheel. Education is what gets us in the wheel. It is great that TAFE

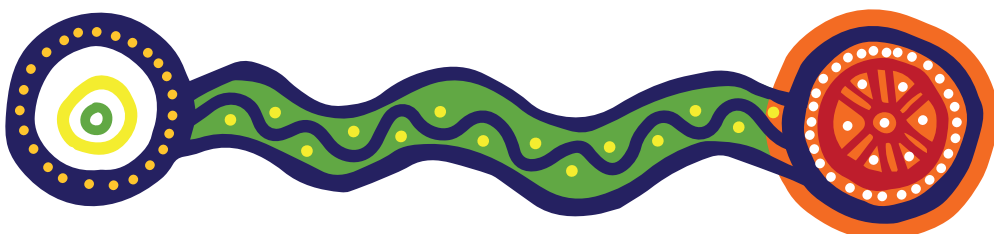


Brendan Larcombe

Queensland is taking real and measurable steps to ensure education is accessible for everyone.”

Brendan says more study is definitely on the cards in the future, which may include a venture into the wellbeing and mental health space.

“People keep telling me I would be good at that because I’ve been there, I’ve hit rock bottom, I know what it is like and I chose to live. It’s been difficult but I have learnt that every feeling will pass – you just need to ride the wave until it does.” 🌀



A HOMECOMING FOR JO SAVAGE

Supporting the vocational education and training goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been Jo Savage's mission at TAFE Queensland for more than two decades.

Through hard work, determination and passion, Torres Strait Islander woman Jo rose through the ranks and ensured that giving back to her community was at the heart of her every move.

Jo, the youngest of 11 children, grew up on Thursday Island and first came to TAFE Queensland in the 1990s for training.

"I studied business administration, had two babies and then returned to TAFE to study IT, as computers were coming in hard and fast," Jo said.

Using her new skills, Jo was able to secure a job with TAFE Queensland in Cairns.

"I jumped at the opportunity and started my career at TAFE 22 years ago. I was working with and assisting my people in the education space and I loved it," she said.

"I took every education and training opportunity offered to me over the years to work my way up from an administration officer to a project manager."

Jo's most recent appointment as Head of Campus of TAFE Queensland's Thursday Island and Northern Peninsula Area campuses meant a homecoming was on the cards.

"Being the Head of Campus for Thursday Island is so special because it's my home and where my life journey started," Jo said.



Jo Savage

"I will use my years of experience in the vocational education sector and my existing networks and relationships to ensure that vocational education and training is accessible to my people of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Region.

"I will work closely with my TAFE Queensland colleagues from across the state to ensure we provide quality and meaningful training that empowers and creates sustainability."

Sustainability is a major focus for Jo in her role as TAFE Queensland's Principal Project Officer for the **Torres Strait Maritime Pathways (TSMP) Project**, which she manages alongside her head-of-campus duties.

"The TSMP Project assists the region's commercial fishermen and women to acquire their Coxswains Grade 1 near Coastal Licence and be compliant to work in the maritime, tourism and transport industry," Jo said.


"The initiative has been operating as a joint partnership between TAFE Queensland and Torres Strait Regional Authority, with UAV Industries as a sub-contractor.

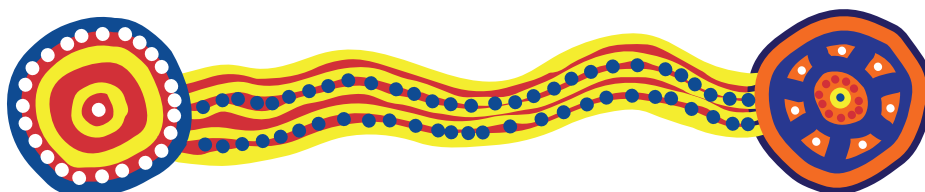
"As the Principal Project Officer, I've had the opportunity to visit and work on islands I've never been to before and I've been able to reconnect with and create new networks.

"At the start of each program I would arrive on an island and I was 'the lady from TAFE'. But by the end of the program I was known as Sis, Aunty, Aka or even Mama Jo, it's been an incredibly rewarding experience.

"It has been wonderful witnessing the change this initiative has made to people's lives and seeing the smiles and reactions of the graduates when they are presented with their awards and licences," she said.

Jo said it's never too late to improve your education and pursue your career goals.

"Acquiring new skills and knowledge is empowering. If you are looking to change jobs or just make a change in your life, contact your nearest TAFE Queensland campus to investigate the best training options available to you. You can even make an appointment with an Indigenous Student Support Officer or Student Counsellor." 



WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE

INFORMATION ABOUT VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19

The COVID-19 vaccines are now available for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 years and over.

COVID-19 vaccines remain our best way out of this pandemic as they can help keep you from getting really sick and needing to go to the hospital.

The vaccines are most effective when you've received two doses of the same vaccine within the recommended timeframe. The first dose of your vaccine will begin to build up a protective response against COVID-19 in your system.

The second dose will boost your immune response to give you long-term protection against COVID-19. Without the second dose, your body will not be able to fight the virus as effectively.

At your first vaccination appointment, your healthcare worker will tell you when you should book your appointment for your second dose.

COVID-19 vaccines are just one part of keeping the community safe and healthy. People and communities should all continue keeping COVIDSafe by regularly washing your hands and keeping two big steps away from others.

You can access the vaccine at Queensland Health locations across the state, or from your local General Practitioner or pharmacy.

Go to health.qld.gov.au/vaccinelocations



Adam Goodes

Adnyamathanha | Narungga, dual AFL Brownlow medallist and the 2014 Australian of the Year



ADAM GOODES

"I think it's very important that all of us here in Australia should get vaccinated to protect our family and friends.

To my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters, it's just as important for us to know the risks of COVID-19 but more importantly the benefits of being vaccinated and the benefits to our mob and all of us going out there and getting that jab."

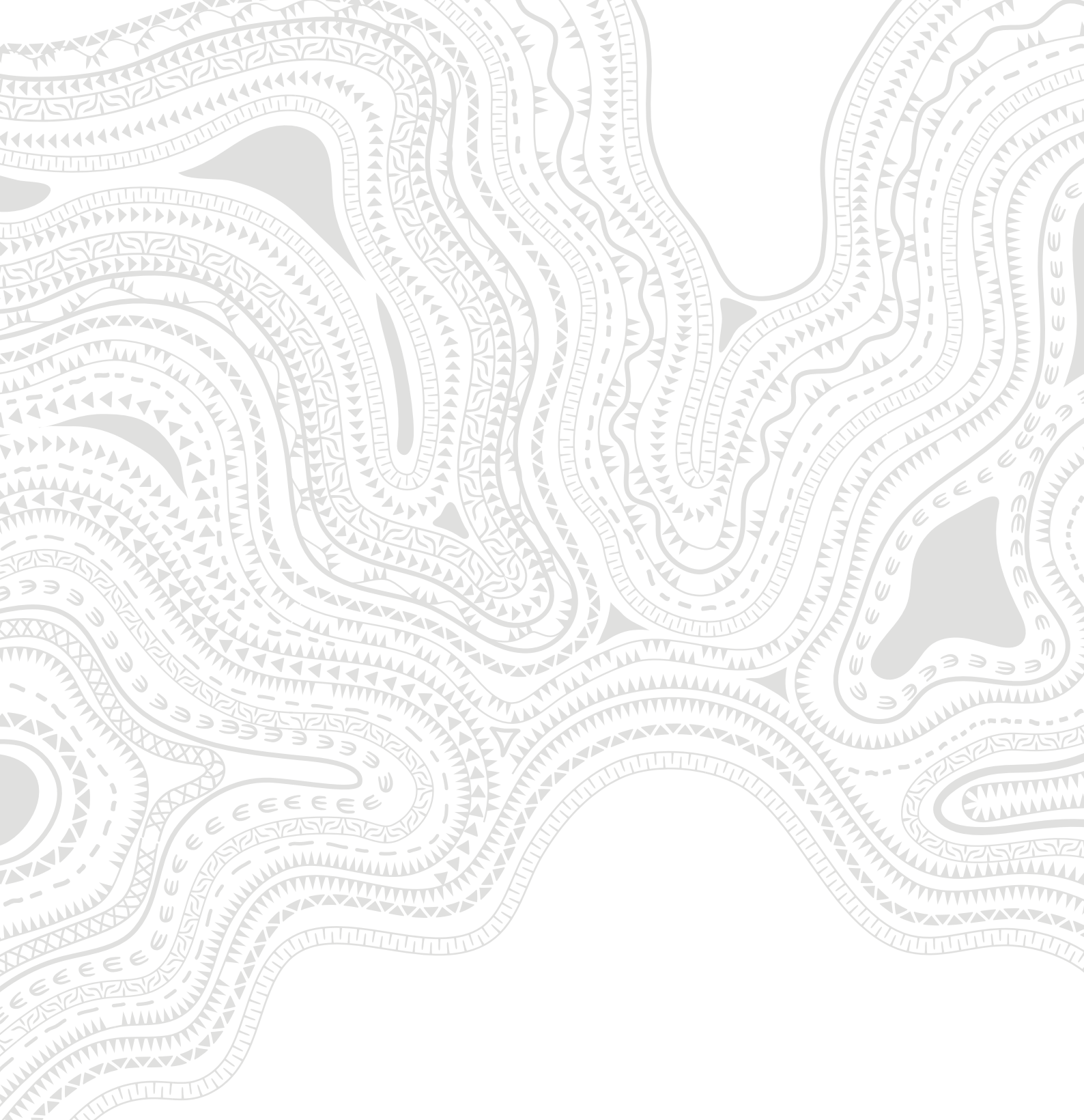
Sourced from the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination real people stories (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) resources and materials.



Our **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)** demonstrates our commitment to closing the gap to ensure our first Australians are afforded the same opportunities for learning and prosperity that everyone enjoys in Australia.

Our RAP can be viewed online at tafeqld.edu.au/rap





Information is correct at time of printing, April 2022. For the most up-to-date information refer to our website at tafeqld.edu.au.

In many areas of Australia it is considered offensive to publish photographs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are deceased. Readers are warned that this publication may inadvertently contain such photographs.

Artwork elements from TAFE Queensland's Reconciliation Action Plan artwork 'Connecting Knowledge – Connecting Cultures' by Riki Salam, We are 27 Creative. Visit tafeqld.edu.au/rap to view the Reconciliation Action Plan.

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