



# TOTEMS

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022 EDITION

## LEIGH'S CAREER HITS THE RIGHT NOTE

Coming from a single-parent home in Darwin, Leigh Chui-Clark's mother worked two jobs to send him to boarding school in Brisbane to ensure he got the best education possible.

Watching his mother make countless sacrifices made Leigh, an Indigenous student from the Wadjigan Tribe, more determined than ever to repay her efforts through academic success and hard work.

"I was fortunate to study at a prestigious school from Year 7 and have worked harder to show my mum that what she's done for me was worth it," Leigh said.

"While at boarding school, I got involved in live sound production within the audio and visual industry as an extracurricular activity, studying a **Certificate II in Music** (CUA20620) in my final year.

"While at school, I got involved in the Audio Visual Club which gave me work experience opportunities assisting with school events, festivals, musicals, formal dinners, concerts, live streams, and many other types of events," he said.



Leigh Chui-Clark

After Year 12, Leigh enrolled in a **Diploma of Music Sound Production** (CUA50820) at TAFE Queensland's **South Bank campus**. To support his training, Leigh was one of 100 Queenslanders awarded a \$5,000 **TAFE Queensland Scholarship**.

"Applying for the scholarship was easy. When I opened the email telling me I'd won one, I was so relieved. It's a significant amount of money and it helped me pay rent and buy equipment for my studies," he said.

Through his diploma training, Leigh is learning techniques to arrange and compose musical pieces, as well as how to record, edit and mix audio using the same facilities and equipment used in the industry.


"My teacher is highly experienced and brings years of industry experience and passion to each class. He still works in the industry and gives the class guidance to prepare for a career. I'm learning things like microphone techniques and polar patterns, which I know I'll use when working in the industry," Leigh said.

"Everyone in class is like-minded, so when we complete group work, we solve problems, testing our knowledge simultaneously. And because my classmates come from different backgrounds, I'm picking up more things.

"One day, I hope to own an audio visual company that goes global and gets sponsored by big brands," he said. 🎧



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# CULTURAL CONNECTIONS CREATE A BETTER COMMUNITY



Paula Dewis

Paula Dewis is following in her father's footsteps by teaching the next generation of community service workers.

“Both of my parents were involved with the community ever since I was a little jarjum (child) and growing up I observed my dad create the Kozan Housing Co-operative in Cairns,” Paula said.

“Back in the late 60s and 70s, when you see your parents’ struggle trying to prove themselves under certain government policy, you understand the struggles and the importance of the battle to improve things for yourself and your community.”

Seeing her father George achieve so much for his community despite overwhelming odds galvanised Paula’s desire to follow his lead and support community members who needed help.

“He was also the first board member on the Torres Strait Regional Authority Board in the Torres Strait, and he implemented the Torres Strait Islander Media Association on Thursday Island,” Paula said.

“To help more people, he enrolled in a course through TAFE Queensland to become a tutor and teach Torres Strait Islander people English when he returned to Thursday Island.

“He then travelled around the islands for the Australian Electoral Commission to enrol people to vote and teach English, helping them improve their opportunities,” she said.

Fast forward to today and Paula has a career in education that spans over three decades. Her focus has been the same as her father’s – using her culture, knowledge, skills and experience to help people improve their opportunities.

The Wuthathi (Aboriginal) and Dhoeybau (Boigu Island, Torres Strait) woman has been teaching certificate and diploma level courses in community services, mental health, youth work, and child, youth and family intervention.

“With community services being an important part of my personal and professional life, I can bring my knowledge, passion, skills and experience to TAFE Queensland to train the next generation, and I love being an educator here,” Paula said.

Her dedication to helping students graduate ready to help those who need it shines through as she guides and mentors her pupils to be tomorrow’s best possible community workers.

“Every semester I see my students’ skills and knowledge growing and excelling, and I love seeing those light bulb moments when a student understands what we’re teaching them,” she said.

A key component of Paula’s teaching is her involvement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups that aim to improve the everyday lives of First Nations people, particularly young people, by enhancing their ability to take advantage of every opportunity.

“I’m involved with several community-controlled organisations – Murrigunyah Family and Cultural Healing Centre, Gunya Meta, Keriba Mabaigal Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Logan First Nation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – where I interact with First Nations people, which allows me to bring cultural values and practices from the wider community back to the classroom,” Paula said.

“I’m able to inform students, who may have never interacted with First Nations people, about the concept of First Nations people, who they are, how they got here, and the issues that have affected and impacted for generations.

“Then I watch my students develop a deeper understanding of how to work and interact with First Nations people using culture-based empathy, respect and knowing how to communicate to be successful,” she said.

**Her focus has been the same as her father’s – using her culture, knowledge, skills and experience to help people improve their opportunities.**

TAFE Queensland’s competency-based training environment is a major key to Paula’s students learning the rules and norms for interacting with diverse groups of people, including First Nations.

“I provide real-life scenarios throughout the course because of my industry connections. My students can participate in the community, bring learnings back into the classroom and align them to what we’re teaching, giving them insights into what they might experience when on a vocational placement,” she said.

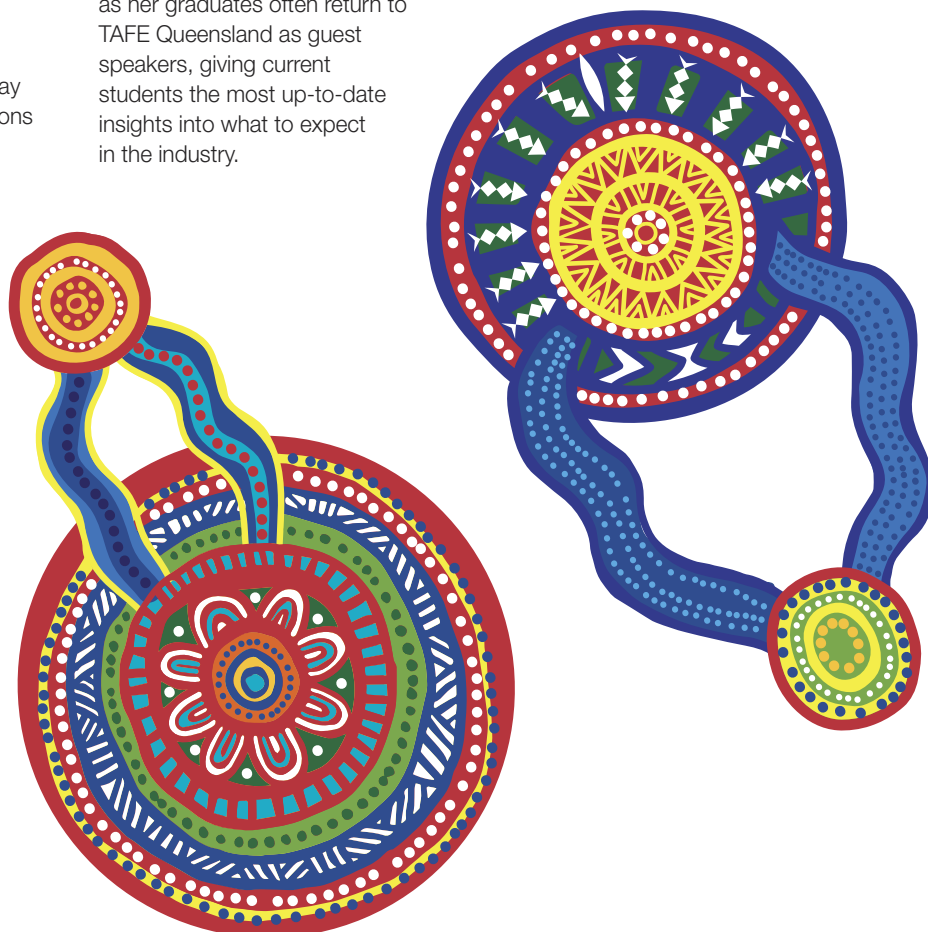
Paula’s industry connections aren’t just limited to her volunteer work as her graduates often return to TAFE Queensland as guest speakers, giving current students the most up-to-date insights into what to expect in the industry.

“A former student who secured a position within the Benevolent Society came back to work with 40 of our current students during Reconciliation Week, which saw them collaborate with a community-controlled organisation,” Paula said.

“This gave our class a deeper understanding of the industry by bringing the community together and engaging in genuine consultation. It went a long way to helping them understand what working with First Nations people and other diverse people in their community was all about.”

Paula’s career has taken her interstate through several tertiary institutions, inspiring thousands of students to follow their passion and help people thrive in their communities.

“The opportunities of studying and working in an industry you’re passionate about will lead to real career satisfaction and achievement for yourself and your clients. Working in this sector is challenging but fulfilling, and there are many career opportunities where you can help people maintain a better quality of life,” Paula said. 🌐



# A TEACHER AND A MENTOR

**Russel 'Rusty' Warde is a proud Aboriginal man, carpentry teacher and First Nations mentor at TAFE Queensland's Bracken Ridge campus.**

Russel has committed his life to teaching, from his days as a boxing coach through to now as a much-revered teacher, and has supported young Indigenous students all the way.

Russel is passionate about his culture and growing his own and others' knowledge of the history, traditions and art of Indigenous people.

"I am a descendent of my grandfather, a Bangerang Aboriginal man from the Murray River region," Russel said.

"My grandfather was from the Stolen Generation and he would often share his stories with me about our family and our culture. As a young boy with white skin and white hair, hearing his stories, he would say to me that being Aboriginal is a culture not a colour."

Russel particularly enjoys helping young Indigenous students find out more about their own culture and where they come from.

"Most of them will know their mob at least, but not the details about their cultural art and its meaning or the traditions and rituals of their mob," Russel said.

"I always make a point to not judge, I think that's why I've been a good mentor across my time. People feel safe to talk to me and let me help them out because no matter who they are I treat them as my equal," he said.

Russel bases this on the idea of a yarning circle, something Indigenous people have used for thousands of years to resolve conflict and have respectful discussions between individuals and groups.

A yarning circle is the act of coming together and having a discussion in which there is no hierarchy, all parties are equal and will be respected when they speak. Russel has plans to initiate a yarning circle at the Bracken Ridge campus.

The planned yarning circle would provide students an area to sit with themselves or with others, including Russel as the Indigenous mentor if they wish, to encourage students to celebrate their culture. Hand carved artwork will also encourage group discussion.



Russel Warde

"The yarning circle would be a reminder of Indigenous culture and an invitation to respect and participate in that. With the design in mind, you won't even have to be meeting with somebody to feel the energy of the yarning circle, the carvings and totems in the area will achieve that for individuals as well," he said.

Russel pictures the planned yarning circle as an incredibly spiritual place,

one which imparts on a visitor energy of respect and learning whether there is a discussion happening at that time or not.

Having spent almost five years travelling the country and learning from Indigenous people, Russel has built a wealth of knowledge about the similarities and differences between mobs (markings, totems, styles of art and storytelling).

"I feel very proud that as a trade teacher at TAFE Queensland, I have been able to continue this role as a mentor and role model, passing

on my knowledge about Aboriginal culture to all students and staff," he said.

"I have also had the opportunity in my role to be able to teach Aboriginal cultural art in prisons, which has included making didgeridoos, boomerangs and shields. Through these classes, students were able to learn more about their heritage and ancestors and where they come from by learning traditions such as carving, painting and wood burning.

"I hoped this would enable them to be proud of who they are and positively influence how they see themselves. I also hoped this would inspire them to create a better future.

"These opportunities were only made possible through TAFE Queensland's commitment to closing the gap and ensuring that First Australians are afforded the same opportunities for learning and prosperity that everyone enjoys in Australia," he said. 🌀

# ELISABETH'S BUILDING HER FUTURE

Elisabeth Matters is a confident young Torres Strait Islander woman who knows her way around a workshop. Elisabeth knew from an early age that she wanted to pursue a trade career.

“I have always liked to build and create things. When I was younger, my dad used to have hobby projects and I used to always help him. It was really fun and sparked an interest in carpentry for me,” Elisabeth said.

To make sure she was on the right path and to get a taste of the industry, Elisabeth completed work experience in Year 11. The work experience was a success and, with no doubt in her mind, Elisabeth took on a school-based carpentry apprenticeship.

Undertaking trade training alongside her high school studies was no small feat, but the decision resulted in Elisabeth gaining more industry exposure and a career head start.

Elisabeth's confidence increased throughout her **school-based apprenticeship** as she began to master the basics of her trade. Elisabeth was earning a wage in an industry she loved and her training would ultimately shave study time off her apprenticeship, which she transitioned into after finishing Year 12. Elisabeth is accessing free **apprenticeships for under 25s** to complete a **Certificate III in Carpentry** (CPC30220).

“Being able to access free training is very beneficial for me as it reduces financial stress. I have the opportunity to save up for a work vehicle and some tools instead of having to pay for my education,” she said.

Elisabeth's training is delivered via blocks at the **Townsville Trade Training Centre (Bohle) campus**.



Elisabeth Matters



“The thing I most enjoy about TAFE Queensland training is that I get to meet new people and new apprentices who are learning the same trade, so we can conjoin ideas and I can get a new perspective on something I might not know,” Elisabeth said.

“At TAFE Queensland, my teachers have been very friendly and helpful, and my training is helping me complete my work tasks. For example, my teachers taught me about working at heights and I've been able to use those skills to complete roof checks at work,” she said.


Elisabeth works at Ausco Modular and said her employer was incredibly supportive of her career development.

“As an apprentice carpenter, I've not only been able to work in the factory constructing modular buildings, I also get to head out of the factory, installing them on-site like in Bamaga, Gladstone and Barcaldine. I never thought I would be able to travel everywhere, it's pretty fun and it's really exciting that I get to see new places,” she said.

Elisabeth is making her mark in her industry and has her sights set on one day giving back.

“In the future, I see myself completing my apprenticeship, being a fully qualified carpenter and maybe that will lead to me being able to teach other apprentices coming up and maybe doing a supervising job.”

Elisabeth is passionate about her industry and she hopes her trade journey inspires other women to consider a similar pathway. Elisabeth is a rarity on job sites, with women making up just one per cent of the national carpentry workforce.

“If a young woman or a girl wanted to do a trade career, I would tell them to go for it and be brave. In today's world we have programs and support networks helping women break into trades,” Elisabeth said. 



Scan the QR code to watch Elisabeth in action and hear her advice for anyone interested in pursuing a trade career.



# STEPHEN'S HELPING OTHERS

**Stephen Hamilton is a passionate support worker who's encouraging more people to consider a career in Indigenous healthcare.**

**B**orn and raised in Sydney, Stephen spent his childhood with family by the water.

"My dad grew up on Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory and could speak the local Anindilyakwa language.

Growing up, dad used to take us spear fishing using traditional spears around Calabash Bay in Berowra Waters in northern Sydney," Stephen said.

Throughout the years, Stephen's work-life has been adventurous. He's been employed as a deckhand on a fishing trawler, has worked as an infantry soldier, did a stint as a construction worker, was a Telstra technician and also a train guard. His spirit to give anything a go saw him relocate to the sunshine state and enrol as a mature-age student at TAFE Queensland.

"I moved to Townsville in 2018 from Woy Woy in New South Wales. I needed a new direction and decided to do a **Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care** (HLT30113). The course was delivered at the **Cairns campus** in block mode which was a flexible option that suited me. It meant that I travelled to Cairns six times a year to complete two-week-long training blocks," he said.

Stephen, 62, said his training immediately paid off.

"When I completed my certificate I was able to secure employment as a support worker with NDIS provider We2Care."

Stephen said the organisation offers him an excellent work-life balance.

"We2Care is a great company and is a proud multi-cultural organisation that employs people from varied cultures. It's a very flexible workplace which allows me to choose my work hours. I like to take a three to six-hour shift on days that suit me."

Stephen's flexible work roster, coupled with his enthusiasm to learn more saw him return to TAFE Queensland.

"I enjoyed the certificate III course so much I decided to continue my training. I received a **TAFE Queensland Scholarship** and completed a **Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice** (HLT40213)," Stephen said.

"Completing the certificate IV course allows me to seek registration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practice Board of Australia. The registration can open up more employment opportunities working with a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health provider," he said.

Stephen said his TAFE Queensland training had been a valuable experience.

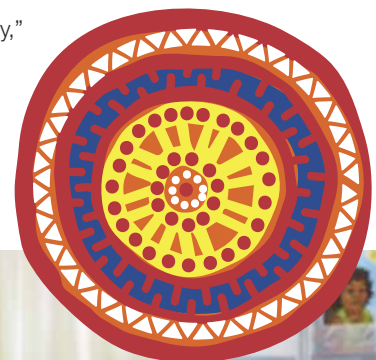
"My teachers were really inspiring and helpful. During the certificate IV training,

my teacher Mac McKay was very supportive. It was excellent to have a teacher who had so much knowledge and experience in Indigenous health. He was also a great communicator who liked to tell yarns about some of his experiences which related to the training we were doing."

Stephen said being a support worker was very rewarding.

"As a support worker, I work with Indigenous clients, but not exclusively. My work responsibilities vary, depending on the client's interests and needs. Some days I'll drive to a client's house and pick them up and take them to appointments or to social outings. I could also help clients write their shopping lists, shop for food, prepare meals, and give clients diet and healthy lifestyle advice," Stephen said.

"It is rewarding to help members of our community who require assistance with everyday needs and to help them overcome some of the difficulties they face taking part in daily activities which are often taken for granted in our society. It is rewarding to know that I am valued and that my skills are helping improve the lives of others in our community," he said. 🌐



Stephen Hamilton with Natalie Thaiday

# SARAH'S ABORIGINALITY IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP



Sarah Johns



**Six-year-old, fair-skinned Sarah Johns was specifically told not to tell anyone she was Aboriginal because she would be treated differently and wouldn't be able to get an education.**

Now, many years later, Sarah is a proud Wodi Wodi woman from Dharawal country who is determined to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of Indigenous students at TAFE Queensland.

"This deficit thinking about my people caused me to feel unworthy of having the educational opportunities offered to me by my hardworking parents. I felt invisible and erased," Sarah said.

"I was denied of my cultural traditions and practices. I didn't enjoy learning, I didn't fit in. I felt that I had no place," she said.

Sarah's turning point was at 15-years-old when she decided it was time to proudly show the world that beneath her skin runs a rich and proud Indigenous heritage.

"It hasn't been an easy ride being a fair-skinned Aboriginal woman and a few

years ago the guilt of white privilege set in. This has been a long and deep learning journey to accept, live with and move forward," Sarah said.

Since then, the mother-of-three has developed an insatiable passion for improving the educational opportunities and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. And as a TAFE Queensland Indigenous Support Officer on the **Gold Coast**, she can do just that.

"Through my role at TAFE Queensland, I am able to encourage and empower Indigenous students and staff to embrace and honour their identity and support them through connection," Sarah said.

"I also assist Indigenous students with access to services such as learning support, counselling and effective communication with their teachers, while providing Indigenous perspectives to staff that will help student learning and engagement," she said.

Sarah holds regular yarning circles for TAFE Queensland staff and students to come together as a community, where

everyone can connect, learn cultural practices and discuss issues that arise for Indigenous people.

"These yarning circles allow for a check-in, to develop a further understanding of the Indigenous histories and traditions and have a positive impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and staff," Sarah said.

"Connection means so much to me. Connection comes from deep within my soul and I can feel it. Connection to family and Country. Lived experiences are relationships that join and link us to each other, to the land, the sky, waterways and animals. Most of all, connection to our dreaming and ancestors guiding me through life," she said.


Ultimately, Sarah's goal is to increase enrolment rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at TAFE Queensland and provide a safe space for their learning.

"I want all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to feel welcome, safe, supported and empowered to complete their higher education journey, and ensure the Indigenous community is a part of the decision making of education for their students."

While working full time, Sarah is also studying a Bachelor of Education. However, she started her tertiary education journey at TAFE Queensland

in the early 2000s and said it set her up for a lifelong love of learning.

"If it wasn't for TAFE, I don't believe I would be in a position to learn to become a student and develop a whole-hearted love of learning. Through higher education, I have developed

a true appreciation of the value of learning," Sarah said. 

**"Most of all, connection to our dreaming and ancestors guiding me through life and traditions."**

# FAMILY IS AT THE HEART OF LARA'S ART

Badu Islander Lara Fujii blends family stories with natural elements to create acclaimed cultural artwork. Lara, 52, is from the Argan Tribe in the Torres Strait and recognises the Thupmal (golden horn stingray) as her Totem.

Lara has always been creative and remembers fondly how her artistic journey started.

"In Year 11, I saved up my pocket money and when I had enough for a bus ticket, I ran away from boarding school in Rockhampton. I travelled to Cairns to attend art school at TAFE and I was there for two years," Lara said.

Despite her rebellious act, Lara said her mother was always supportive of her artistic endeavours.

"My mum had always encouraged me to do art. I started by making jewellery and chimes from natural elements I found in the bush or at the beach. Every lot I made, mum always bought a piece," she said.

Lara went on to start a family and, despite being a busy mum-of-six and working other jobs, she continued to build her art portfolio. She showcased her work at markets, sold jewellery to Australian museums as well as the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island, and exhibited work at UMI Arts in Cairns.

Despite her artistic achievements, Lara wanted to step outside her comfort zone and return to TAFE Queensland for more training. She enrolled at the **Cairns campus**, travelling from her home on Badu Island to undertake not one, but two qualifications, a **Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Cultural Arts** (CUA30520) and a **Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts** (CUA40620).

“As I looked at the sand on the veranda I realised I could use it to represent coral babies, so I created **Kazil Imaik (child is born).**”



Lara Fujii

"I wanted to refresh my skills and to work with new mediums to see if I liked them. I got to try linocut, etching, block printing and work with canvas. The training really gave me the boost I needed. It's one of the best things I've ever done."

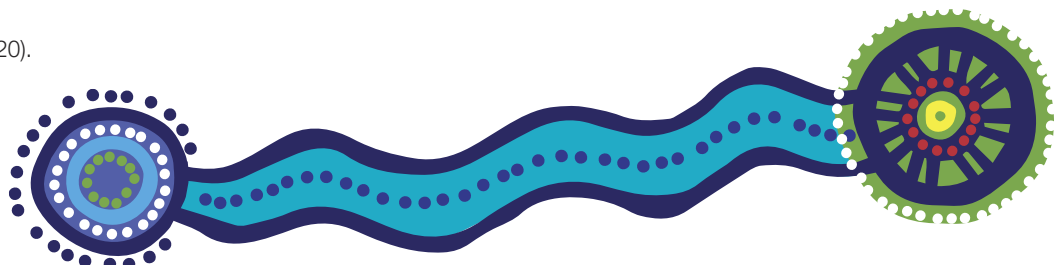
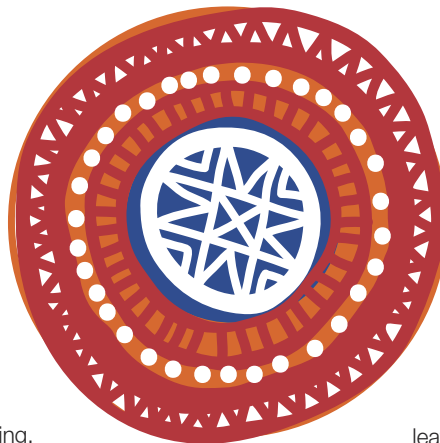
For Lara, her art practice is strongly connected to her family life.

"My work is often inspired by my sons who are all cray divers. They will come home with shells or other natural items for me to use in my art. They also tell me their stories about seeing hammerhead or tiger sharks which inspires my work," Lara said.

"I also enjoy collecting natural resources myself which have washed ashore or are from the bush. Every piece I have has a story or place or memory attached to it, whether it be driftwood, shells, dried sponges, leaves or bark," she said.

During her training, Lara was encouraged to display work at one of Australia's most prestigious art events, the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair. Lara said a mess created by her kids was the stimulant she needed to inspire the work she would later exhibit.

"One day my sons came home and they were covered in sand and it went all over the back veranda. Then my sons started telling me about their time at sea and that the coral was spawning. As I looked at the sand





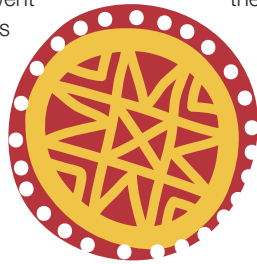


Kazil Imaik (child is born), Lara Fujii, 2022, natural earth pigments, galyuwin (bloodwood sap) and synthetic fixative on canvas, 77cm x 61.5cm, Badu Art Centre.  
Photograph by Michael Marzik, courtesy of the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.

on the veranda I realised I could use it to represent coral babies, so I created Kazil Imaik (child is born).”

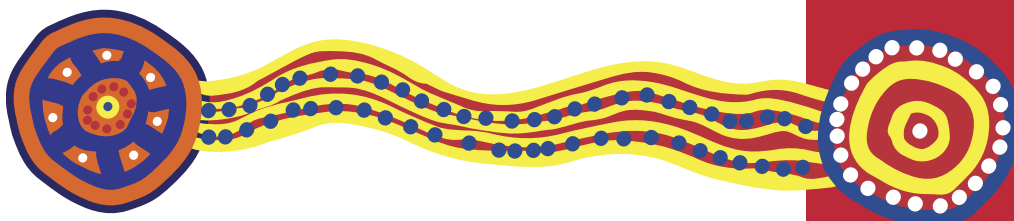
Lara’s work on canvas resonated strongly with visitors of the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and it went on to win the 2022 People’s Choice Award.

“Winning the award hasn’t really sunk in. It is a great achievement, as it was the first time I had ever entered work into the art fair. Winning has motivated me to create more art and to keep entering and displaying my work. Winning this award has been a real eye-opener, as it has shown me the new skills I’ve learned from TAFE are broadening my horizons.”



Lara, who is an artist at the Badu Art Centre, said it’s never too late to learn something new.

“No matter how old you are, if you have a passion for art, the TAFE training is the best thing you could do. I’ve learned new skills and new ways of doing things which I’ve been able to apply to my art. Because of my training, I now have more courage and confidence to speak up about my work,” Lara said. 🌀



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# CODY THRIVES IN SCHOOLTECH

**For Cody Graham, a proud Aboriginal man from Palm Island, the opportunity to do high school differently has changed his life.**

“SchoolTech was recommended to me by the Clontarf Foundation which helps young Indigenous men to attend school, finish Year 12 and enter employment. While I was in Year 10, Clontarf recognised that I was struggling to adapt to the traditional school environment, but noticed I achieved in the workplace and with hands-on learning subjects,” Cody said.

SchoolTech is an innovative, award-winning initiative in Cairns between TAFE Queensland and Woree State High School. The program allows students to study for their Queensland Certificate of Education as well as two vocational education and training qualifications while at high school. Through SchoolTech, Cody gets the chance to participate in work and trade opportunities while completing Year 11 and 12.

“This structure definitely suits me better than five days straight in a classroom!”

Cody has completed a **Certificate II in Engineering Pathways (MEM20413)** and is also studying a **Certificate II in Maritime Operations (Coxswain Grade 1 Near Coastal) (MAR20321)**.

“Studying engineering at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus was great. The teachers were good and I got to use excellent equipment. I really enjoyed welding and the chance to make a fire pit. The course gave me the opportunity to try stick, tig and mig welding,” Cody said.

“With the coxswain course, there is so much to learn, it’s more than just driving boats. I undertake maritime training at the **Great Barrier Reef International Marine College** which has a boat simulator, a fire simulator, navigation and radio rooms, a workshop for us to pull outboard motors apart and a pool where we deploy a life raft and do all of our lifesaving activities,” he said.

SchoolTech has partnered with Shoreline to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the chance to follow in the footsteps of Elders and look after Country. Cody said he has greatly benefitted from the initiative.



Cody Graham, photo courtesy of the Queensland Training Awards

“I have always felt a connection to the sea and the idea of working on a tourist boat really interested me. I get to spend a few days a week working as a trainee on an Experience Co tourism vessel,” Cody said.

“Through my traineeship, I have gained skills in rope splicing, tying ropes, navigation and driving vessels. I am grateful for my traineeship with Experience Co, as I have been given the chance to embrace my culture in the workplace which has helped me gain confidence.

“A typical work day for me starts at the marina at 7am. I fuel up the boats early in the morning and by about 8.30am I welcome the tourists on board. I take care of the ropes before we leave and then I do the lifesaving demonstration.

After that, I am then on deck watch and chat to the tourists about the cultural aspects of the land and sea.

“Once we get to the reef, I usually drive the glass bottom boat and point out the different coral sites, the names of a variety of fish species, as well as how Green Island was made. At work, my level of maturity has helped me take on a leadership role and I enjoy the opportunity to support younger trainees.”

Cody’s dedication to his studies and traineeship put him in the spotlight.

“I won a regional **Queensland Training Award for School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year**. I am so proud of this achievement, as is my family, and I now feel more confident to help younger students who look up to me,” Cody said.

“When I finish Year 12, I plan to continue working with Experience Co. I will also remain in the Shoreline program, meaning I will have support to further my career. My passion is to keep training until I can become a skipper.

“When I finish high school, I would like to become a member of the Junior Shoreline Board and mentor young Indigenous

trainees. I would like the opportunity to give back and visit schools to talk to students about this fantastic pathway.

“Before I started my training, I knew very little about the maritime industry. The training has also improved my general life skills and my attitude towards school and work.

“I am always telling others of the great opportunity I have been given through SchoolTech. I’m influencing younger cousins and younger Aboriginal kids to come to TAFE. Others can see that I thrive at what I do and that I put all my effort into studying and getting my trade certificates so that my future is positive. Finding my passion and talent has changed my life and made me a more positive person,” he said. 🌀

# IN A LEAGUE OF HER OWN

Congratulations to refrigeration technician and TAFE Queensland graduate Jennah Halley who has been named the state's Harry Hauenschild Apprentice of the Year at the 2022 Queensland Training Awards.

Jennah, a proud Aboriginal woman who grew up in Far North Queensland, completed her **Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration (UEE32211)** at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus.

Jennah 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," Jennah said.

"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," she said.

Jennah, who works at Messina Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, hopes more women feel empowered to



become apprentices and pursue their training and career goals.

"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," Jennah said. 🌀

Jennah Halley, photo courtesy of the Queensland Training Awards



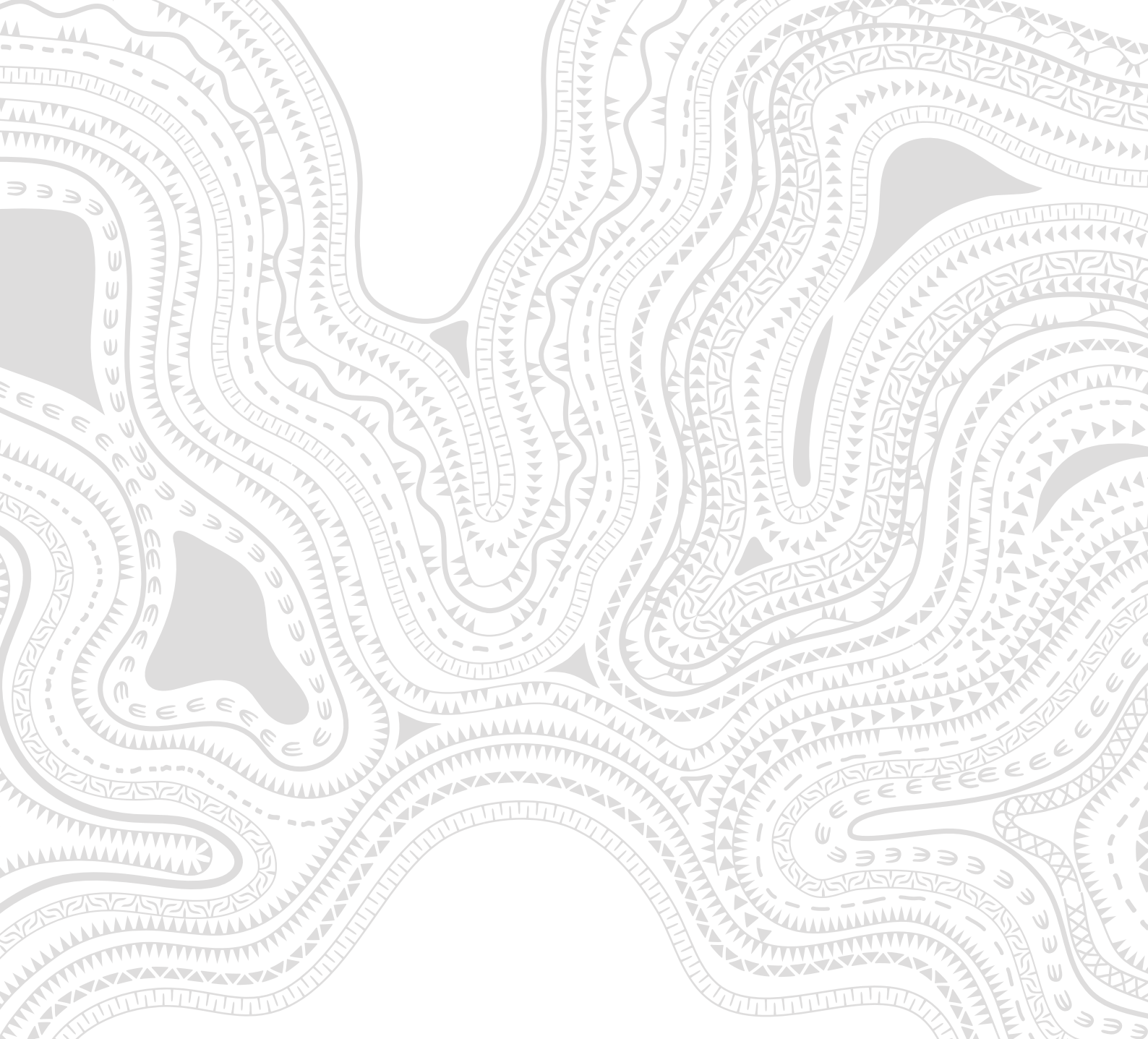
If you are considering an apprenticeship, scan the QR code to hear Jennah's advice.



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](https://tafeqld.edu.au/rap)





We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which TAFE Queensland operates. We recognise the continuing connection to land, waters, culture and kin that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples uphold. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, who give us strength, inspiration and guidance to deliver great training outcomes for all Queenslanders.

Information is correct at time of printing, October 2022. For the most up-to-date information refer to our website at [tafeqld.edu.au](http://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](http://tafeqld.edu.au/rap) to view the Reconciliation Action Plan.

**1300 308 233**

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