



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023 EDITION

KIARA'S QUEST TO CONNECT WITH HER ROOTS

Kiara Wallace had always felt a deep sense of longing to connect with her roots and culture. Her great grandfather was part of the stolen generation and, as a result, her family's history was erased from the records. This weighed heavily on Kiara's heart and left her feeling disconnected from her heritage.

However, Kiara did not give up hope. She began investigating her ancestry and eventually discovered her tribe, the Minjerrabah (North Stradbroke Island) Quandamooka people, and her identity. This realisation was a turning point for Kiara, filling her with a new sense of purpose and the determination to use her education and skills to make a positive impact on the lives of Indigenous children.

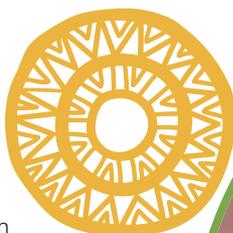
When she was younger, Kiara faced many challenges at school. Putting a traumatic education experience behind her, Kiara enrolled in TAFE Queensland's **Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC30121).

Kiara found a safe haven at TAFE Queensland where she overcame her fears and regained confidence in a learning environment.

"TAFE Queensland welcomed me with open arms and provided me with the support I needed to complete my studies. With TAFE Queensland's support, I was able to do face-to-face, in-person classes again," she said.

In the future, Kiara hopes to move to Cape York or the Northern Territory and work as an educator in an Aboriginal community. 🌍

“ There is something so beautiful about being able to be part of milestones and the journey of children as they are growing up. ”



Kiara Wallace

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CONTRIBUTING TO THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Jessica is passionate about ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience positive learning environments.



Jessica Addo

cultures. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children love seeing people from their own culture work in classrooms because they connect naturally.

Having a teacher who can speak their language makes a positive impact and creates close relationships.

Before enrolling, I was working a full-time job and did not have the capacity to study. But I was so determined to follow my goals that I resigned and found part-time employment so I could start my training. This routine allows me to study in the mornings and work in the afternoons.

Sometimes you need to make sacrifices – it all comes down to how badly you want something and the belief that your hard work will pay off!

I am happy I chose RATEP because I received full support, both professionally and personally. Through hard times in my personal life, my teacher coordinators were there for me. During my studies, I went through Sorry Business unexpectedly. RATEP allowed me to take time off and I was able to continue studying when I was ready to return. There was never any pressure and the staff were very understanding – I received full support from everyone.

RATEP was very hands-on. I completed a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (10751NAT) and a Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (10753NAT). I was awarded a Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) Scholarship while studying my diploma. Having access to a VET Student Loan and securing a scholarship through QTAC made a difference as it helped cover the cost of things like books and stationery.

On top of assessments, I also undertook 200 hours of practical

work in a classroom to complete my qualifications. My training provided me with the skills required to be successful in a job. Before completing my studies, I gained a permanent role as a coordinator in an outside school hours care service. Since gaining my diploma, I have been able to transition from an administration role into a service manager position.

At work, I care for children aged between five and 12. I engage with parents, supervise children and plan their programs. I also manage the day-to-day duties of the service and I am responsible for the staff. What I love most about my job is creating close relationships with the children and their families.

At TAFE Queensland, I gained new skills and knowledge and I found RATEP to be very supportive and flexible. If anyone is considering the program I would encourage them to give it a go. The RATEP staff are amazing and they support you the whole way through to graduation. I am proof that life-changing job opportunities arise when you complete your training.

I am excited to be continuing my studies at university and I was recently awarded a Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarship. It provides me with financial assistance to complete my university studies, in addition to guaranteeing me an opportunity to gain a teaching position in a Queensland state school when I graduate. The scholarship is named in honour of Dr Pearl Duncan, an Aboriginal teacher who dedicated her life to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in education. I feel very honoured and grateful for this opportunity.

I can't wait to see where my degree will take me when I finish. I have always had a passion for the bush lifestyle – it's part of my culture and I want to experience teaching in remote schools. In the future, I hope to relocate to work in a remote community, either in Weipa, the Torres Strait or the Northern Territory.

“ I am 30 years old, I have a daughter and I was born and raised in Cairns. I identify as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. From my mother's side, our family is connected with Yarrabah and I have family on my father's side at Mornington Island. My deepest contact with community is through my grandmother at Mapoon.

When I heard about the RATEP Indigenous teacher education program at TAFE Queensland, I knew I wanted to enrol. RATEP provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with the opportunity to gain hands-on classroom skills and a qualification as a teacher assistant. Students can then choose to pathway to James Cook University to study a Bachelor of Education.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators bring valuable community and cultural knowledge to education settings. These educators play a significant role in their communities because they have a deep understanding of the local context, languages, histories and

THE TRADE GENE

For Mark Akiba, 30, becoming a tradie was a gene he was born with.

Growing up watching his father and grandfather working with their hands was all the inspiration the proud Torres Strait Islander needed to follow in their footsteps.

“My dad is a plumber and when I was really young, I became interested in carpentry. As a child, I would watch my grandad work on carpentry projects and he inspired me to pursue the trade,” Mark said.

In his early 20s, Mark set out to gain an **apprenticeship**.

“I applied for a position but I didn’t make it,” Mark said.

“I asked the employer what I should do to help prepare for applying again and they told me there was a **Certificate II in Indigenous Housing Repairs and Maintenance** (10897NAT) course starting in a few weeks. I completed that training and

waited four years to apply for an apprenticeship with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. Everything worked out in the end because I never gave up on the job I wanted to do.”

Mark enrolled in a **Certificate III in Carpentry** (CPC30220) and undertook his training in blocks over four years, leaving his home in the Torres Strait to study at the **TAFE Queensland Cairns campus**. Mark said he was grateful for the opportunity to gain new skills.

“I have made some great mates who also attend TAFE in Cairns from Cape York. I enjoyed every single part of block training and I looked forward to any classes I went to because I knew I would be learning something new. It was also really great to learn from teachers who were very knowledgeable and friendly.”

When he returned home from each training block, Mark was able to use his new skills straight away.

“I have worked on a number of upgrades and extensions. Some of the most memorable include construction work at a police station in my first year and then later helping to build an accommodation unit for a health centre on Warraber Island,” Mark said.

“Because of my apprenticeship, I have been able to visit and work on islands in the Torres Strait, some I had never been to before, and I have made connections I hope will better my future employment.”

Just like Mark was inspired by his dad and grandfather to pursue a trade, his young cousins now look up to him for career guidance.

“I hope my completion of this apprenticeship encourages others to apply and shows how great this opportunity was – every day you learn new stuff. My advice is to never give up. If you keep moving forward you will achieve what you want to do in life.” 🌀



Mark Akiba

Image supplied by
Torres Strait Island Regional Council



MELBOURNE STORM FOOTY RECRUIT GETS THE BALL ROLLING ON HIS CAREER GOALS

Ipswich local and Kutjala man Stan Huen is kicking goals on the footy field while keeping his eyes firmly on his future career goal of owning his own barber shop.



Stan Huen



After graduating from Ipswich Grammar School in 2022, the talented footy player has been contracted to play for the Melbourne Storm Academy as a pathway into the National Rugby League (NRL).

“The end goal is to hopefully make it in the NRL and open my own barbering business – so my fan base from the NRL feeds into my barber shop business,” Stan said.

“I have a backup plan, and it’s a pretty good backup plan if you ask me. Everyone is in need of a haircut. With barbering, I’m not going to be out of work.”

Stan undertook a **school-based apprenticeship**, studying a **Certificate III in Barbering** (SHB30516) alongside his senior high school studies.

“I worked one day each week during the school term, and then during holidays I would do a block of training

at the **TAFE Queensland Ipswich campus** for a week straight,” he said.

“I basically doubled my hours just over the holidays and I was working every Saturday. I didn’t think of it as work though, I just thought of it as having fun and spending time with my mates.”

Balancing his school studies and footy training with his school-based apprenticeship, Stan felt supported and encouraged by TAFE Queensland’s industry-experienced teachers.

“They’re very flexible, fair, and they go the extra mile if you need help. What I’ve enjoyed the most about TAFE Queensland training is that when I come in I don’t need to bring any equipment or anything, everything is here. It’s a beautiful barber shop.”

Stan said he enjoyed his hands-on training and socialising with other students.

“I’ve learnt techniques to make fading easier, as well as how to do tracks and zigzags or anything free design, whatever the trend is, plus meeting new people,” he said.

TAFE Queensland’s **Certificate III in Barbering** (SHB30516) provides students with hands-on experience in modern barbering techniques, as well as insight into the essentials of successful salon operations including stock management, building and retaining clientele, and processing financial transactions.

Across the state, TAFE Queensland operates several on-campus hairdressing and barbering training salons that are fully equipped and replicate real-life salon environments.

TAFE Queensland Ipswich hairdressing teacher Lisa Moore is an advocate for the benefits of school-based apprenticeships and is encouraging of other high school students who are considering kick-starting their career in the industry.

“Doing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship is a great way to get started,” Ms Moore said.

“School-based apprentices can earn while they learn, gaining hands-on experience in a real job – meaning that school-based apprentices are a step ahead when they graduate high school and transition into full-time employment.

“Stan is a wonderful ambassador for barbering school-based apprenticeships, and it’s been great to see him successfully combine his two passions: footy and barbering.”

For those considering a career in the industry, Stan has some encouraging words of advice.

“If you really want to pursue a dream and make it a reality, I’d really encourage you to come to TAFE Queensland, because all the teachers have your best interests at heart. They always push you and always motivate you to achieve your best potential.” 

LITTLE ONES BRING TELEAH BIG MOMENTS OF JOY

They say it takes a village to raise a child and Teleah Laffey is up to that honourable task. For as long as Teleah can remember, she's been told she 'was born to do it'; looking after and nurturing our littlest minds who are lucky enough to be in her care.

A proud and resilient Aboriginal woman of the Kabi Kabi people, Teleah was born in Gympie and moved to Bundaberg at the age of 13.

After having already successfully completed a **Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC30121) in 2020, Teleah was motivated to further her career options by continuing her studies with TAFE Queensland.

Despite facing personal challenges and setbacks along the way, Teleah excelled in her **Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC50121).

"Ever since I was little, I've always been drawn to being around and looking after children – there's just something about their nature that brings out the best in me," Teleah said.

One of the key reasons behind Teleah's decision to return to TAFE Queensland to study for the diploma course was due to it being offered online.

"That definitely was a big plus as it meant greater flexibility in my life and also allowed me to continue working in my job at Acorn East Childcare Centre while I was studying."

During her studies, Teleah was confronted with devastating news when her mum was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. To further compound the pain, Teleah broke both her kneecaps when she fell over while working.

"Both of these things were such a personal blow to me and I don't know that I would

have gotten through my course last year without the incredible support and understanding of my family and friends and my teacher Jody Richter," Teleah said.

"Things became quite difficult for me, especially after the operation on my knees, and this is where TAFE Queensland and my teacher Jody were such a blessing.

"Jody's understanding and flexibility in allowing me to work through my studies at a different pace, given my situation, gave me the confidence and belief in myself that I could reach the finish line."

Due to her injury, Teleah was unable to attend graduation at the TAFE Queensland Bundaberg campus at the end of 2022. She faced a slow three-month recovery process but remained positive and excited about her future as a professionally certified childcare worker.

"I just decided that after all mum and I had been through and the year that we had been dealt, there are some things in life that we need to be grateful for and there are some things you just have to let go," Teleah said.

"I personally couldn't wait to get back on my feet – literally – and return to what I love most – working with children. And best of all, I'm just so grateful that mum is recovering really well from her diagnosis."

Today, Teleah is a highly valued member of the team at Acorn East Childcare Centre where she is known for her passion, dedication and positive attitude in helping the 130 children enrolled there to flourish and develop.

"My future goal is continue to learn and grow, work with children and maybe one day, go to university to do more studying." 🌱



Teleah Laffey

HISTORICAL MEMOIRS INFLUENCE NEW GENERATION OF LEARNERS

When early childhood educator Nicola Johnston was tasked with developing the content for a new core unit, she never expected the journey to be such an emotional experience.

For more than 20 years, Nicola has been involved in early childhood education and care – commencing her career at just 17-years-old in Bundaberg. After taking on lead roles in the industry, it was time to share her experience with the next generation of educators. For more than a decade, Nicola has been an educator at TAFE Queensland, and recently added curriculum development to her résumé.

This is where Nicola's story takes an emotional turn, and we introduce James (Trakka) Daisy and his late mother Janet Daisy, an inspiring Wakka Wakka woman who was born in 1937.

Tasked with developing the content for Encourage understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures (CHCECE054) to be delivered as a core unit of **Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC30121), Nicola looked no further than Trakka (her mother's partner) to help her create an authentic learning experience for students.

As part of the journey to reconciliation in Australia, the unit CHCECE054 was developed with a focus on embedding Australia's cultures into the early childhood industry in a culturally safe and sensitive way.

Instead of an interview, Trakka produced some typed memoirs from his mother Janet who, after a difficult childhood as an Aboriginal girl growing up in the 1930s and 40s, wrote from the heart her story of hardship, prejudice, loss of culture and later acceptance.

“ I wanted to do something fresh and new but most importantly I wanted it to be authentic. ”



Trakka Daisy and Nicole Johnston

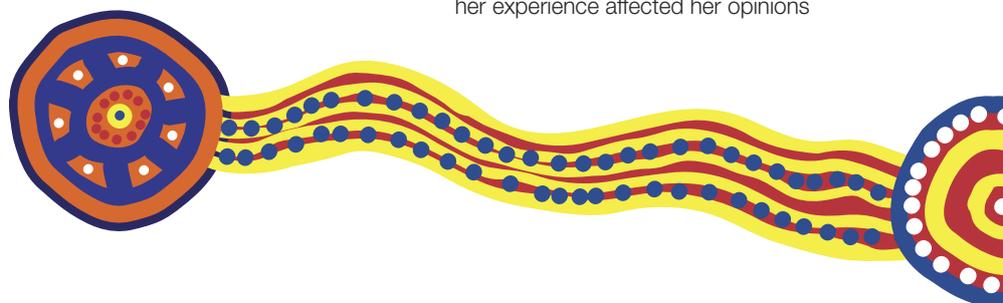
Now, years after her passing, these memoirs form the cultural learning for every student who enrolls in **Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (CHC30121) with TAFE Queensland, and will influence generations of Queenslanders to come.

“When I was writing the unit I wanted to try and do something different that is both interesting for the students to do and interesting for the teachers

alike. I wanted to do something fresh and new but most importantly I wanted it to be authentic,” Nicola said.

“The unit is about learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures, embedding that into early educational settings and creating culturally safe environments.”

Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in Janet's story to develop an understanding of how her experience affected her opinions



and behaviours, with the curriculum designed to trigger a response of cultural understanding and acceptance.

Nicola said the journey with Trakka has been exceptionally emotional and a time of immense personal growth for herself.

“It has brought us closer together, and my cultural knowledge and acceptance has improved. For him to say he is proud of me is very emotional. It has been a journey.”



TAFE Queensland students began enrolling in the new core unit in mid-2022, with both educators and students expressing gratitude for the genuine and personal content. The core unit is also being rolled out into other TAFE Queensland programs including **Certificate III in School Based Education Support** (CHC30221) and **Certificate IV in School Based Education Support** (CHC40221). 



Janet Daisy

Who was Janet Daisy?

Janet was born in the Aboriginal community of Woorabinda in 1937. Moving to the tiny community of Gayndah as a small child, the first few years of her formal education were at an Aboriginal school – an experience she spoke fondly of.

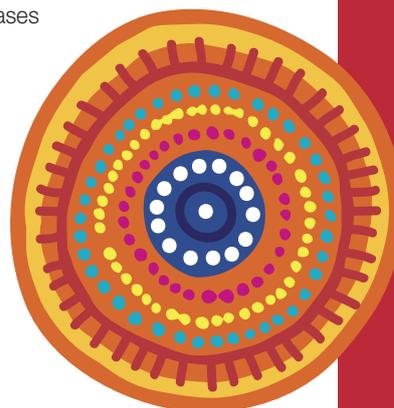
Later, the school closed and so began Janet’s exposure to racism and prejudice from the school community, including recollections of being kicked to the gutter by the mother of a little girl she was friends with.

Sadly, the abuse and discrimination she experienced as a small child formed the views and opinions she carried with her throughout her life.

After marrying and having two children (including Trakka), sadly Janet succumbed to a period of alcoholism. After hitting rock bottom, and entering a period of reflection, she realised that she must accept her past, face her biases and find ways to move on from them to improve her own emotional and mental wellbeing. In the process she wrote incredibly powerful stories that others are now able to learn from.



Scan the QR code to hear Trakka and Nicola narrating a piece of Janet’s writing.



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COMING FULL CIRCLE

For Morgan Cotter, TAFE Queensland was where it all began, and now she feels privileged to be able to help First Nations students get the most out of their study journey.

Morgan recently took on the role of Indigenous Outcomes Officer for TAFE Queensland's Brisbane region. It's a move that she describes as coming full circle after first stepping through the doors as a teen studying her senior school certificate and in desperate need of motivation and guidance.

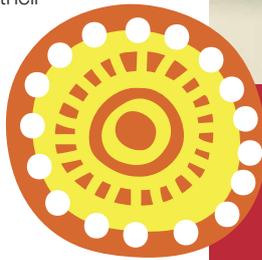
"If it wasn't for TAFE Queensland, I wouldn't have finished school. It gave me a real sense of pride," Morgan said.

Morgan went on to gain qualifications in community services and is now thriving in her new role where she gets to help her mob achieve their study and career goals.

"I want to show what's possible. I do know what people are going through and that it is possible to change their circumstances," she said.

"The first step is scary but once you rip the band-aid off, the support for our mob at TAFE is pretty good.

"I have an open door policy, come in and have a yarn and know I'll always have your back." 🌀



Morgan Cotter

ABOUT MORGAN

“ I was born and raised on Quandamooka Country. I have strong blood lines leading their way onto Gamilaraay Country from my mum, grandparents and great grandparents. Mum was taken from Pop at a young age and was raised the white way. Because of this, she didn't connect with her dad until two weeks before his passing. I hope to reconnect with family and country someday soon. ”

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LUKE BREWS UP A LEADING ROLE



TAFE Queensland graduate Luke Cooper is thriving as a lead brewer with pioneering non-alcoholic craft beer company Sobah Beverages.

Luke, a Wailwan man, joins founder and director Gamilaraay man Dr Clinton Schultz at the First Nations-owned and led brewery at its Burleigh Heads headquarters on the Gold Coast.

A 20-year liquor industry veteran, Luke decided to switch from retail in a major chain to brewing beer after meeting members of the industry at the Royal Queensland Beer Awards.

"I was working as a steward at the 2019 awards and I loved it. I met people from the industry and knew it was what I wanted to do. And with COVID impacting my job at the time, I decided to take some long service leave and study," Luke said.

"In 2020, I worked at the awards as an associate judge and met the course's teacher Steve Henderson (Hendo), and he encouraged me to apply to study the **Certificate III in Food Processing (FBP30121)**. Fortunately, I was accepted, and as there's only room for 14 students at a time, you've got to be there for the right reasons."

Luke experienced hands-on training, learning the whole process from cleaning to recipe design and brewing in the BrewLab's state-of-the-art equipment, all the way through to entering into competitions.

"We were brewing from scratch. Our first beer won a bronze, it was terrific, and working with other passionate people and passionate teachers made it a great environment," Luke said.

"Everything about TAFE Queensland sets you up for success. They've invested in the BrewLab, created a great learning environment, and employed teachers from the industry – it was awesome for learning, and my skills improved so much.

"I know other states are doing brew courses, but I don't think it's at the level of BrewLab – there's nothing else like it in the country."

Having met Clinton during his retail career, Luke reached out to him to discuss the Sobah story with the class, as non-alcohol is an important and growing part of brewing.



Luke Cooper

"We had a Zoom call and everyone was a bit surprised because Clinton told us how he makes non-alcohol beer with specialty yeast and pasteurisation. But that's Clinton; he's honest and open."

"Clint then reached out to me and invited me to have a yarn about joining Sobah, and the rest is history. Since graduating, I've been brewing his recipes and I'm about to release two of my own nationally.

"I'm also overseeing the contract brewing that we do for our core lines, running pilot brews and trying different ingredients and organising the building of our new brewery, so it's been a whirlwind."

As well as the opportunity to work in one of Australia's very few First Nations breweries, Luke was also attracted to

Sobah for its sustainable credentials and the support the company gives the community and environment.

"We source native ingredients from around Australia. We get pepperberry from Tasmania, lemon aspen from Far North Queensland and finger limes from Northern New South Wales, all to flavour our beers and raise money for the environment where we can," Luke said.

"For example, \$4 from every 16-pack of our Tropical Lager goes to the Coral Sea Foundation. A fund that helps the Sea Women of the Great Barrier Reef, a marine biology training program that supports First Nations women to act as guardians for the Great Barrier Reef in their communities.

"We're also getting B Corp certified, which is about being responsible and sustainable. Our entire social and environmental impact is being measured, which is very tough, but it's something that we're striving for."

While Luke's brewing career is based on the Gold Coast, he has plans to take Sobah global following a recent visit to London.

"Seeing and understanding their market, we saw an opportunity to export our products, so we're building relationships to distribute there in the future."

For anyone thinking of studying brewing, Luke has some sage advice.

"You've got to have a passion for it because to be a brewer, you're 90 per cent a cleaner. But when you're working with other passionate people in a collaborative industry, the hard work that goes with it doesn't feel that hard. This is the most supportive industry I've been a part of and it's full of people who will help you succeed," Luke said.

"By studying with TAFE Queensland, I got hands-on training at the BrewLab that built my knowledge and skills. And I never thought I would be as excited and passionate about yeast as I am – it's an amazing little ingredient." 



Leanne Bell and Queensland Police Service Assistant Commissioner Brett Schafferius

FIRST NATIONS PATHWAYS TO POLICING PROGRAM

A new program is underway at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus, aimed at increasing the number of First Nations people working in law enforcement agencies.

The First Nations Pathways to Policing Program is a collaboration between TAFE Queensland, the Queensland Police Service, the Australian Border Force and the Australian Federal Police.

TAFE Queensland Director of Education and Training Services and the Arts for North and Far North Queensland Leanne Bell said the program was the first of its kind to be rolled out in the state.

“The First Nations Pathways to Policing Program is an exciting initiative aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion on the frontline,” Ms Bell said.

“Students are developing their language, learning, conflict resolution, critical thinking, team participation, fitness and digital literacy skills.

“The program also provides students with an opportunity to explore and learn more about their culture, as well as strategies to express their identity,” she said.

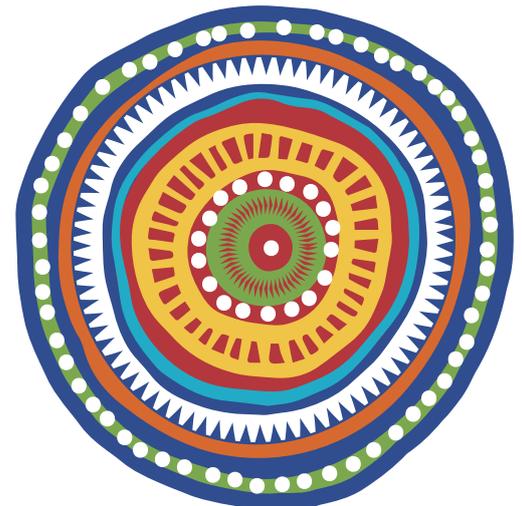
Ms Bell, a proud Ganggalida and Birri Gubba woman, said the program was being taught by skilled trainers who have experience working in law enforcement.

“The students will also tour law enforcement workplaces and they will gain valuable industry insight by working closely with a mentor from the Australian Federal Police,” Ms Bell said.

“When students complete the 24-week-long course, they will have the skills they need to confidently enter

a law enforcement academy program, empowering them to pursue careers on the frontline.”

Upon graduation, First Nations Pathways to Policing students will receive a **Certificate III in Vocational and Study Pathways for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People** (11036NAT). 



CONGRATULATIONS
to TAFE Queensland graduate
Jennah Halley
who has been named the
APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR
at the Australian Training
Awards.



Jennah Halley

TOP APPRENTICE

Jennah is a proud Aboriginal woman who studied a **Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration (UEE32220)** at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus.

The mum-of-four said finding her passion and completing an apprenticeship changed her life. "The confidence I've gained, the empowerment I feel to be able to fix things is incredible, and I am a contributor to my family's financial security."

Jennah was named the Harry Hauenschild Apprentice of the Year at the **Queensland Training Awards** before taking out the **Australian** title.

Jennah, who works for Messina Air-conditioning and Refrigeration, hopes her success inspires more women and girls to pursue a trade career.

"Seeing is believing. Growing up I didn't have anybody who looked like me doing what I'm doing," Jennah said.

"The more we see women working in a trade, the more it becomes a reality for other girls and women who will think 'hey I can do that too'." 🌐

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





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, April 2023. 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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