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Forging a new path

For Kenyah Hura, finding the right professional path took time. The twenty-eight-year-old fourth-year Bachelor of Youth Work student said good advice from her Dad helped shape her career path.

"He told me to stay curious and keep busy. I always made sure I was doing something, whether it was studying Law at TAFE, or Psychology which I studied for a year when I was living in Perth."

Kenyah explored different areas to find out more about her own skill set and ensure her study path aligned with her professional and personal values. "About three years ago I sat myself down and wrote out a plan to help discover what I wanted to dedicate myself to. For me it came down to a desire to advocate for young people and make a positive impact on the world."

A phone conversation with a Victoria University (VU) course adviser outlined a possibility she'd never considered.

Studying Youth Work at VU has honestly been the best decision I've ever made. I absolutely love the course.

In 2023, Kenyah was awarded a New Colombo Scholarship to travel to the coastal city of Visakhapatnam, India. For two weeks she worked with staff at the Catherine Public School, supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"I taught a course on mindfulness and well-being to about 40 girls aged between 12 to 15 years old. It was an amazing experience. It was a fantastic opportunity to put my youth work into practice, to make mistakes in a supportive environment, collaborate with other students and make great friends."

Kenyah accessed the VU First Nations Fund to help with airfares and study support. Without the generosity of the VU First Nations Fund, she wouldn't have been able to take up the opportunity and have such an invaluable experience.

The VU First Nations Fund was created in 2022 and has provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with

opportunities to study at VU across various levels. The Fund has been instrumental in supporting students to access enriching experiences related to their studies, including attending conferences, sporting competitions and assisting with research costs. The generosity extended by donors is life-changing and provides support for students working towards achieving their professional goals.

Along with her busy study schedule, Kenyah has also taken part in several internships at Oxfam, arranged by CareerTrackers' Indigenous Internship Program. "I did my first one in 2023 working in the Program Quality and Development team."

One of Kenyah's professional and personal goals is to create positive change, especially for First Nations peoples. Her Youth Work studies have led to an interest in working towards changing policies around the incarceration of First Nations youth, particularly the incarceration age of children.

Kenyah's grandmother is part of The Stolen Generation - she was forcibly removed from her family as a young child and taken to Tasmania. "We didn't know about our heritage on my Mum's side until my

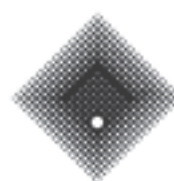
grandmother, who has now passed, started to share her story with us. My Dad is Māori, so that is the heritage we embraced growing up. Our family are still trying to find out where my grandmother came from."

VU's Indigenous Academic Unit, Moondani Balluk, situated on the lands of the Wurundjeri, Woiwurrung and Bunurong people of the Kulin nation, has also supported Kenyah and her many achievements. "It's great to drop by Moondani Balluk to meet new people and learn about where they come from. I don't have a lot of history about my own family, so I've really enjoyed learning about other people's history. My identity has been lost but I'm proud of where we come from and hopefully one day, I'll be able to put a name to it."

Later this year, Kenyah will be a qualified Youth Worker,

seeking new opportunities to share her skills. "I'm so excited to get out there and explore how the ways Youth Work can help different sectors. I've had such positive experience at VU but I'm also looking forward to whatever happens next."

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