



From mum to mentor

By ROB FABINY



FROM the remote outskirts of Geraldton to the front of the classroom, proud Nyamal woman Shanae Clohessy has turned her dream of becoming a teacher into a powerful reality.

Thanks to fierce determination, a toddler in tow and the life-changing support of a CQUniversity scholarship, the recent Bachelor of Education (Primary) graduate committed deeply to her studies, even bringing her daughter to every tutorial from when she was just eight days old.

"My university journey hasn't been easy, especially over the past two years as I've worked to balance family life, study and parenting," Shanae said.

"But with strong support from my lecturers, classmates and family, I was able to persevere and stay focused on my goal."

After graduating high school in 2019, Shanae wasn't sure what she wanted to do – but she knew she didn't want to move away to study.

Her ATAR also didn't meet direct entry requirements for university, but she successfully completed CQUniversity's Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) program through Geraldton Universities Centre, paving her way to a degree.

A significant part of Shanae's success came from the support of a CQUniversity scholarship from the ARC Infrastructure corporation through the Kate Mullin Association.

Beyond easing financial pressure and enabling her to attend every tutorial,

Shanae said the scholarship had a profound impact on her confidence and sense of belonging.

"When I applied, and was selected, it gave me a massive boost in confidence," Shanae explained.

"It showed me that other people believed in me and recognised my potential – even when I sometimes doubted myself."

Shanae said the scholarship team's regular check-ins, encouragement and genuine support reminded her that she wasn't navigating her academic journey alone.

"The scholarship helped me feel seen, valued and capable. Knowing that someone was in my corner made all the difference, especially on the hardest days," she said.

"I'll always be grateful for the opportunities it gave me, not only to succeed in my studies, but to grow in confidence as a mother, student and future teacher."

One of Shanae's proudest accomplishments is that she never gave up. She continued full-time study while raising a young child, overcoming every challenge to finally reach her dream: to help shape young minds and be a strong role model for the next generation.

"It's been a tough four years, but I can now proudly say: I did it – and I gave it everything I had."

She is now incredibly excited to be teaching her very own class.

CQUniversity celebrates Shanae's incredible achievement and her inspiring dedication. Her story is a powerful reminder of how support and perseverance can lead to achieving ambitious goals.



CQUniversity Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Nick Klomp with graduate Shanae Clohessy.

See it. Be it.

You're not the first to feel unsure. To wonder if university is for you. But many First Nations students have walked this path before you—and found the course, support, and community they were looking for at CQU.

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