



Brighter Futures Scholarship recipient
Bachelor of Psychological Science/
Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice

How Griffith student Brooklyn Whitmore is working to close the gap

After witnessing the impact left by an epidemic of youth suicide as a child in Pine Creek, Brooklyn Whitmore became determined to change healthcare in remote Australia for the better.

She remembers countless smoking ceremonies and funerals with parents paralysed by grief—and the silence and shame that rose in its wake.

Trying to make sense of the senseless, Brooklyn found no one within the community that was willing to talk about what was happening.

The stigma of reaching out for help among her peers and elders was suffocating and left a deep impression. It became the foundation for her motivation to study.

Brooklyn's initial plans to change the system by studying law didn't go as planned but opened her eyes to the importance of health and

'The scholarship has made a huge difference to my wellbeing. I can afford my own textbooks and the specialised software we use for statistics'

wellbeing.

The eldest of seven and a proud Dharug woman, she is the first in her family to go to university.

But Brooklyn's path to studying her double degree in psychology and criminology and criminal justice has been one of significant struggle. At times, she could barely afford her textbooks.

A scholarship from Griffith University gave Brooklyn a lifeline and allowed her to focus on studying. The scholarship fund offers students facing financial hardship or educational disadvantage grants of \$5,000 to offset the increasing costs of living.

"The scholarship has made a huge difference to my wellbeing," she says. "I can afford my own textbooks and the specialised software we use for statistics. I'm not constantly fretting about how I'm going to pay for things I need."

"With the financial pressure off my shoulders, my head can think straight. My mind isn't constantly fretting about how I'm going to pay for this, or how I'll get through that situation."

But scholarships are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Griffith's support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

With the largest Indigenous student population of any Queensland university, Griffith has a range of dedicated services available for its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort.

Pathways

The GUMURRII Student Success Unit has provided higher education pathways for students in a culturally safe learning environment for several years, from tutoring to networking and mentoring.

GUMURRII staff can assist with everything from enrolment and orientation right through to graduation, supporting undergraduate and postgraduate Indigenous students at all stages of their academic journey.

With a presence of each of Griffith's campuses, GUMURRII is dedicated to strengthen Indigenous student retention,

progression and success at university.

With Griffith's support, Brooklyn has been able to take up an identified cadetship with the Way Forward program, operating out of Metro South Health's Addiction and Mental Health Services unit.

She's now working to close the gap by helping to deliver informed, culturally safe healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

As she progresses towards graduation, Brooklyn's future is looking brighter than ever. As for what's next, the standout student says she's eyeing a gig in musical therapy research after completing her undergraduate studies.

"I want to eventually have my own multidisciplinary team—and travel to remote communities, delivering culturally appropriate, high-quality healthcare," she says.