



UniSA's Aboriginal Pathway Program: Mother and son study duo

Mother and son Lavinia 'Lovie' Richards and Zac Nelson-Richards have shared many moments in life together but never thought studying at university would be one of them.

After completing the University of South Australia's Aboriginal Pathway Program (APP) earlier this year, Barnjarla Elder and Port Lincoln local Lovie, 66, and her son Zac, 26, celebrated their achievements at UniSA's Whyalla graduation ceremony.

The APP is a one-and-a-half-year program to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students embrace university study. It is designed for people who don't meet standard university entry requirements, such as students without an ATAR.

The APP is offered through UniSA College and is taught in five locations across SA – Adelaide, Ceduna, Mt Gambier, Pt Lincoln, and Whyalla.

Students who successfully complete the APP can transfer into any degree at UniSA either



Lavinia 'Lovie' Richards, left, with APP Regional Tutor Barbie Clutterbuck and Zac Nelson-Richards. Picture: Lauren Shivvaan.

in-person or online.

APP Director Dr Nazz Oldham says the APP's focus is on preparing First Nations students to succeed at university.

"Whatever the students' background, the APP provides a culturally safe and supportive environment for them to build the necessary academic, literacy

and numeracy skills to prepare them for their undergraduate degrees," he says.

"We spend time showing students how uni works, what they need to do and even how to get financial support to build their confidence and make uni a lot less frightening."

Lovie was made aware of the APP when her cousin explained the program to her. Frustrated with continual knock backs from potential employers, she decided to explore study options at university to boost her education and employment opportunities.

"I was quite amazed at what UniSA had to offer through the APP and the possibility of further study," Lovie says.

At the same time, son Zac had always dreamed of attending university but had not completed Year 12. The APP gave him that option.

"Studying with Zac has been very inspirational," Lovie says. "Zac being a computer whiz helped me in the areas I found difficult, and I was able to encourage him in other areas he

was not sure about."

Zac and Lovie are now both studying undergraduate degrees at UniSA. Zac has commenced a Bachelor of Design (Illustration and Animation), while Lovie has begun a Bachelor of Arts (Creative Writing and Literature).

Zac says the best phrase he heard during his time in the APP was "you're never too old to study at university".

"It was strange at first to go back to studying after dropping out of school a few years ago," Zac says. "I am a bit of a slow starter, so I struggled in the first stages, but once I started to understand the subjects, I found myself getting through my work quickly."

Zac hopes to one day pursue a career in animation. Lovie has plans to become an author.

Through the APP, students can develop the skills, knowledge and confidence that sets them up for success in their future studies and beyond.

For more information, visit unisa.edu.au/app or email app@unisa.edu.au.

UniSA's ABORIGINAL PATHWAY PROGRAM

Our unique, fee-free* program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students could be your pathway to university.

Build your skills and confidence for undergraduate study in 18 months. Benefit from a supportive and welcoming environment with mentoring, small class sizes, and in-person or online study options.

Available in Adelaide, Ceduna, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln, and Whyalla. Access accommodation and travel support, and our Wurringka Student Services while you study.

Unleash your unstoppable career with UniSA.

unisa.edu.au/app

*Students are not charged course fees but may be required to pay Student Services & Amenities fees as determined by the Australian Government.



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