



Educational dream realised

An unknown culture, single motherhood and an unfinished high school education may mean forgotten dreams for some, but a collision course with long-lost great uncle Eddie Mabo meant a whole new trajectory for Katrina Chippendale.

Currently studying a Bachelor of Psychological Science at CQUniversity's Bundaberg campus, Katrina also serves as a member of the Student Representative Council as the Indigenous Representative and Deputy Chair.

That journey started as a mature-aged student via CQUniversity's Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) program.

Katrina is now living a realised dream as she prepares to graduate at the end of this year, as the first in her family to attend university.

"I always knew I wanted to attend university, but I did not complete high school and spent 20 years raising my four children alone," Katrina explained.

Reuniting with her culture and family brought her dreams to life.

"Growing up I was not educated about my Torres Strait Island heritage and never got to experience the family connections and community values which are ingrained within my culture," Katrina said.

"When I was young, I only wanted to fit into mainstream Australian society, but this changed when I was 10 and my family travelled to the Torres Strait to live on Murray Island and I was fortunate enough to meet a



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great uncle of mine, Eddie Mabo."

"As a teenager I became interested in the Mabo court case and read the whole hand-typed court proceedings, and I had dreams and aspirations of going to university."

Katrina is now only months away from completing her lifelong dream.

"After nearing the completion of my studies at CQUniversity I am passionate about sharing the benefits of university education. I would love to continue studying psychology and with a GPA of 5.5 I am considering applying to do honours, at the end of which I would endeavour to accomplish my Masters. Thus, enabling me to begin working in regional communities, striving to address the educational barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, in the hope of increasing successful pathways."

Katrina said she believed education was the key to success in life.

"I would enjoy a career which empowers people by granting them the opportunity to achieve whatever aspirations they have. After completing some First Nation units I became interested in residential care work in juvenile justice, but realistically I would just enjoy having a career which allows me to help people be the best version of themselves that they can be," she said.

"Coming from a low socio-economic family to being the first in my family to graduate university, I am just thankful that I get to share my story and hopefully inspire others to achieve their dreams."

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