

# Aurora Internships with UTS build Indigenous midwifery workforce

By Mark Houston



UTS Bachelor of Midwifery student Narelle Brown, a proud Gundungurra and Yuin woman, is taking part in a part-time clinical placement at Waminda, the South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation.

Courtesy of the Aurora Internship Program, which places Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students and graduates in internships at Indigenous-focused organisations, Narelle will be working in the Birthing on Country program from early June.

Combined with the UTS (University of Technology Sydney) Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health's ambition to provide their students with real-world learning experiences and a commitment to Closing the Gap for the Indigenous community, the Aurora Internship presents a fantastic opportunity for Narelle to add to her education through an immersive cultural experience.

"The centre is extremely motivated to build the Indigenous midwifery workforce," said Dr Deborah Fox, senior lecturer and



Narelle Brown is a first-year Bachelor of Midwifery student at UTS.

clinical coordinator for Midwifery. "Providing culturally appropriate placement experiences in organisations where we hope our graduates will work in the future will support our students to thrive."

Narelle's opportunity at Waminda ticks both boxes.

The placement in Nowra on the NSW South Coast, which started on June 8, will allow Narelle to fulfil her first-year clinical requirements for the spring session of her Bachelor of Midwifery degree.

Additionally, the strong history

of retention of Aurora interns at host organisations, with many seeking to extend their high-quality interns long term or permanently, offers her a great chance of securing a full-time position at the completion of her internship and building the Indigenous midwifery workforce.

"My first university assignment was on Closing the Gap and working towards reducing the higher morbidity and mortality rates of Indigenous women and babies.

"As I studied, my passion grew

and I knew I wanted to contribute to the vital work being done to address the gaps in care," Narelle said ahead of starting the internship. "Being able to learn from Aboriginal midwives and working with Aboriginal women and families means I am beginning that journey before my career starts."

Dr Bec Coddington is the Nursing and Midwifery Specialist at UTS' Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Learning and has been instrumental in setting up the partnership with Waminda.

"We're really excited about UTS' new clinical placement agreement with Waminda – it's so important that students feel culturally safe on clinical placement," she said. "This opportunity means our students will not only be culturally safe but will also be exposed to best practice midwifery care for Aboriginal women."

The focus and determination to offer students rich cultural experiences while also contributing to Indigenous health is one that flows through the midwifery discipline at UTS, as Professor Kathleen Baird, Midwifery Discipline lead, explains.

"Our long-term vision in the

midwifery program is to improve outcomes for mothers and babies, and this objective aligns with the UTS vision of being a university of social change and transforming communities through education, research and practice," said Professor Baird.

"Being involved in the groundbreaking Birthing on Country program, research from which I have used in my studies, is very exciting," Narelle added. "I'm also looking forward to learning about maternity services in a regional area and the impact they have on the lives of the community."

The midwifery academics at UTS are part of the Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health (CMCFH) which is a UTS Centre for research, comprising academics and clinicians who work in this field.

In addition to supporting cultural opportunities like the Waminda internship, other Indigenous-focused activities include research on new models of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in WA and a study of Indigenous students' perspectives of being taught Indigenous content in Faculty of Health courses.

*This story was first published by the University of Technology Sydney.*



Jumbunna Pathways Program

It's never too late to go to uni



## Apply for uni today, start next year.

**Future Students: UTS Alternative Entry**

Whether you're a current school leaver, (with or without an ATAR), a recent school leaver or mature aged, you can apply for entry to undergraduate degrees at UTS.\*

Our Jumbunna Pathways Program offers you an opportunity to show your capability for higher education through an online application, assessment and interview process.

Contact our Outreach Officers for more information: [atsirecruitment@uts.edu.au](mailto:atsirecruitment@uts.edu.au) or call (toll free) 1800 064 312

To apply visit: [jumbunna.uts.edu.au](http://jumbunna.uts.edu.au)

# Jumbunna