



A passion for midwifery

From as far back as she can remember, Katrina Bon has always wanted to become a midwife.

"My mum says I was five when I first told her I want to do that job, helping women through childbirth," says Katrina, an Australian Catholic University (ACU) student and proud Torres Strait Islander.

"Then, when I was around 12, my cousin was having a baby, and because I wanted to be a midwife they asked me to go in with her, thinking that it might scare me out of it. But seeing her give birth just made me more eager."

Now aged 29, Katrina is in the first year of a Bachelor of Midwifery degree through the Away from Base (AFB) program, a national scheme that allows Indigenous students to live in their community while studying online, with two intensive residential study blocks each semester.

As a busy mother of four young children, studying from home is a juggling act for Katrina – but one that she thoroughly enjoys.

"When my partner gets back from work in the afternoon, I go off and study until late at night," she says, adding that the residential blocks at ACU's Brisbane Campus are a great opportunity to put theory into practice.

"I like studying at home here on



Katrina Bon: A proud Torres Strait Islander who is following her dream to become a midwife.

Thursday Island where my family and community is, but I also love going down to Brisbane two times a semester because it makes it feel more real.

"Going into the labs, practising all the things you've been studying, it gives you a different perspective and it's so valuable."

Katrina has also enjoyed spending time at ACU's Weemala unit, an on-campus hub that provides Indigenous students with a culturally safe space that promotes positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity.

"That's where we all catch up

for yarns," she says. "We come back to Weemala after class and yarn about our families or what we're learning, and I've found that really nice, to have a welcoming space where we all get along."

One of Katrina's main driving factors in enrolling to study midwifery is the shortage of Indigenous midwives on Thursday Island. It's a trend that is replicated across Australia, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people underrepresented in the maternity care workforce.

Her dream is to work as a midwife in her community, ushering in a new generation of Torres Strait Islanders.

"To have more Indigenous midwives here who know what it's like to live in our community, who speak our languages and understand our culture, I think that's really important," says Katrina, who hopes that her foray into university study inspires others to pursue their dreams.

"It took me 12 years after leaving school to enrol in a degree, and it was only my older sister graduating from nursing that made me finally take that step.

"So when I speak to younger kids who went to the same school as me, I say to them, 'If I can do it, you can do it, too.'"



ACU student Katrina Bon and family.



On Country. On campus.

Our Away from Base program gives mob the chance to remain in community while studying.

Combine face-to-face learning on campus with online study and our Indigenous Higher Education Units will support you to succeed.

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- Bachelor of Business Administration (NSW)
- Bachelor of Midwifery (Indigenous) (Qld)
- Diploma in Educational Studies (Tertiary Preparation) (NSW)
- Bachelor of Education (Primary) (NSW)

Learn more

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