



Nathan Sagigi received a Geoffrey Huey Sattler Indigenous Scholarship, which is awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who experience financial hardship.

Giving back to community: Nathan's scholarship story

Receiving a UQ scholarship gave Nathan Sagigi, a Bachelor of Clinical Exercise Physiology student and a Daurareb and Wakaid man from Murray Island and Badu Island in the Torres Strait, the support he needed to move to Brisbane and follow his dream of giving back to the community.

Nathan is on a circular journey – one he hopes will lead back home to Thursday Island, where he can help improve the lives of his family and friends.

"I saw in my community that there was a lot of chronic disease and within my family and friends as well," he says.

"That's where I found the passion to help people who had chronic disease and help prevent people from getting chronic disease."

His Bachelor of Clinical Exercise Physiology can help him achieve this dream, and Nathan's UQ scholarship is what made studying the program possible in the first place.

Nathan's path to UQ

Nathan attended primary school on Thursday Island before moving to a boarding school in Cairns – an experience that started preparing him for the even greater transition to Brisbane.

"I made a lot of lifelong friends, many of whom are still my friends in Brisbane now," he says.

Those same friends are the rocks Nathan leaned on when he felt overwhelmed by moving

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to Brisbane and beginning his studies.

"Meeting new people and a new place – a bigger place, a bigger city – was a very nerve-racking experience for me, but it helped knowing that a few of my friends were also coming to UQ and were going to be at the college with me."

What led Nathan to exercise physiology?

Like many people, Nathan didn't have a simple path to discovering his passion.

"I wasn't 100% sure of what I wanted to do when I was in high school – I sort of chopped and



changed a bit," says Nathan.

"I decided to do physiotherapy because I had a lot of experience with injuries from playing a lot of sport."

As an active fitness fan with a mother who works in healthcare, physiotherapy seemed like an appropriate track for Nathan, though he soon realised it wasn't quite the right fit for him.

"Halfway through that course, I didn't see myself going down that career path," he says.

"I've always been into my fitness and the gym setting, playing a lot of sport – I wanted

to share my passion and my enjoyment of exercise with other people and share all the health benefits involved with exercise."

Clinical exercise physiology is giving Nathan the opportunity to put that passion into practice.

Nathan's greater goal is to play a part in reducing health inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"I'd also like to help close the gap in health between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people," he says.

"That's something I'm really passionate about."

Has the scholarship changed his life?

Getting his scholarship was a fantastic event and a sigh of relief for Nathan.

"I felt like a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders, just because it meant I was able to better afford coming down to Brisbane," he says.

"Coming down to a big city from a small community is not an easy thing – just a lot of new things I had to take into consideration like paying bills."

Nathan's UQ scholarship means a lot to him because it gives him the freedom to fully invest his time and energy into his university experience and assignments.

Nathan's advice for other students

Nathan wouldn't hesitate to encourage someone to apply for a UQ scholarship if they were considering it. He believes that easing the financial strain is well worth the time it takes to complete an application.

He also hopes that his story might be an example to students who are on the fence about giving university a go.

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