

From Napranum to the national stage

Kyezaya Namai-Sabatino knew starting his career early was a smart move and his decision to study at TAFE Queensland ended up changing his life.

Kyezaya, 18, lives in the Aboriginal community of Napranum, a remote coastal town in far northern Queensland, and knew from a young age that he wanted to pursue a trade career.

"I have always had an underlying passion for diesel fitting," Kyezaya said.

"Growing up, I was fascinated by big trucks hauling bauxite from mines and wondered what it would be like to work on trucks and see them up close."

Kyezaya jumped at the chance to complete work experience at a mine which triggered his decision to start his career early.

While still in high school, Kyezaya began a school-based traineeship, juggling his senior studies with a Certificate II in Engineering (MEM20105) at TAFE Queensland.

"I knew taking on a traineeship would help set me up for life after school and it has led to some wonderful opportunities."

Kyezaya's dedication to his training earned him a swag of awards in 2023.

He was named the best School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year at the Australian Training Awards, as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trade Student of the Year at the TAFE Queensland Cairns Trade Excellence Awards.

"Completing my traineeship has allowed me to pursue my dream of working on trucks, and it has given me a platform to show my people in my community that there are wonderful opportunities in vocational



education and training (VET)."

"The award recognition fuels me to keep excelling and kicking goals to better myself and encourage others to learn more about VET pathways and the opportunities available."

After completing Year 12 and his certificate II studies, Kyezaya gained credit towards

an apprenticeship and began a

Certificate III in Engineering - Fixed and Mobile Plant Mechanic (MEM31419) using free apprenticeships for under 25s funding.

"My training provides me with in-depth knowledge and understanding of how the big machines operate and work along with all the little mechanisms that help the machine run efficiently," Kyezaya said.

"I like how my practical training is specific to my work tasks, this allows me to be

familiar with new jobs I may face in the workshop.

"My TAFE Queensland training has also improved my social skills, taught me how to succeed in team environments, equipped me with the ability to adapt to change, and built my resilience to overcome challenges."

With a few years of working on trucks under his tool belt, Kyezaya is as passionate as ever about his career path – even if it means waking up before the sun for a 12-hour shift.

"My typical workday starts at 4am getting ready and travelling to the mine workshop for a 6am start," Kyezaya said.

"I have a wide variety of tasks on any given day, whether it be scheduled services or breakdowns out in the field.

"I look forward to working on any machine in general and familiarising myself with all the tasks undertaken in each service or component changeout.

"What I love about my industry is that people from all walks of life meet up and you never know who you will encounter or what friends you will make.

"In the future, I want to obtain an auto electrician apprenticeship to become a dual-traded tradesman and work wherever I can while travelling and building a portfolio of investment properties.

"I want to show my community and others that there are no limits to what you can do and, no matter your background, everyone has the power to achieve their greatness."

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