



BOND  
UNIVERSITY

# Bond University

Indigenous Student's Stories



A portrait of a young woman with long, dark brown hair that has blonde highlights. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a black top. The background is dark and out of focus. The entire image is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a background with a black and white wavy pattern.

## Student in Focus: **Bethany Allen**

2015 Indigenous Scholarship recipient, Bethany Allen, is now in her second year of a double degree in Law and Arts. We recently caught up with Bethany to see how she's enjoying her Bond experience.





From left to right: Narelle Urquhart, Bethany Allen, Jenaya Keats and Angela Hansen.

For Bethany Allen, Bond has become much more than a place to study. It's a lifestyle. It's her second home. In fact, with her mother now working on campus in the Student Business Centre, it's practically family.

While Bethany has a full schedule tackling a double degree with majors in International Diplomacy and Media Studies, the former Benowa High student has maintained the spirit of community involvement that distinguished her scholarship application.

She is involved in the Bond Indigenous Awareness Society and, through that, the Jingerri barbeques, Corrigan Art Tours and cultural immersion days. She's active in the Bond International Relations Student Association, looks after Promotions and Events for the Drama Society and mentors local Indigenous high schoolers through the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME).

Like many of Bond's Indigenous students, Bethany has made the Nyombil Centre her base of operations. She's there from 8am most mornings; staying until late in the afternoon, regardless of her class schedule.

Aside from the obvious benefits of being a place to forge new friendships, the Centre has had a significant impact on Bethany's connection with culture.

"My parents raised me to be proud of my Indigenous heritage but that's been strengthened so much more for me since coming to Bond," she says.

"I feel much more confident speaking out. We have discussions at Nyombil all the time about cultural issues and family histories and the tensions a lot of that stuff has caused.

In my family, my father was never allowed to say he was Indigenous because, in his parents' day, that would have meant you couldn't go to school.

It's very different now. I love seeing Indigenous children getting involved in didgeridoo lessons and traditional dancing at school, and learning the old languages. Here at Bond, I get the opportunity to share Aboriginal culture and histories with students from all over the world at the Jingerri barbeques and through the art tours and other BIAS events.

We still have a long way to go but I'm really proud to be part of that process.

The Indigenous scholarship has completely changed the future I am able to see for myself. Bond has given me the tools I need to build both a career and a community, and has even strengthened my cultural ties. Without the scholarship, I might never have been able to come to Bond and have the opportunity and community that I am so lucky to have."



A portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a white polo shirt with a small, dark polo player logo on the left chest. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with vertical light patterns. The entire image is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a larger background with a black and white wavy pattern.

## Student in Focus: Jordan Kilcoyne

Meet Jordan Kilcoyne - one of our newest Indigenous Scholarship students who has just finished the first semester of his Diploma of Legal Studies.





Bond University team at the Indigenous University Games  
- Jordan is in the back row, fourth from the right

Late last year, Jordan Kilcoyne was in his maths class at TSS when a message came through on his phone.

"I said to my teacher: 'I think this might be really important'; so she let me go outside to return the call.

"It was Bond University, telling me I'd been granted an Indigenous Scholarship to study a Diploma of Legal Studies. I walked back into the room with the biggest smile on my face and told the whole class. I couldn't keep it in - it was just one of those moments."

Jordan has had quite a few of 'those moments' since he started at Bond in January.

Like when he travelled up to Abergowrie with the Bond Indigenous Awareness Society to work with the boys at St Teresa's College.

"There were a lot of kids there from the Torres Strait Islands and some from Saibai Island where my grandfather's family came from. "As soon as I said my granddad's name, all these kids from Saibai came up to me - it was almost like meeting family.

"They have a dance group at the college so I got to sing and play music with them and to make these cool traditional costumes and to learn the moves.

"I remembered these songs from when I was really young and would visit my grandparents when they were living at Seisia near Cape York.

"It was just the best experience - like getting back in touch with my roots."

Then there's been the opportunities Jordan has had to meet successful Indigenous professionals through the Nyombil Centre. "Growing up in Townsville, I didn't really have any Indigenous role models apart from football players," he said.

"I told myself I just had to be my own role model - I was the first in my family to get a scholarship to go to a private school; the first one to go to university.

"But here at Bond, I'm meeting Indigenous people who are making a difference in business, law, health and other areas.

"It motivates me to follow in their footsteps; knowing that I can aim to be that successful as well."

With his first semester exams completed, it seems Jordan is certainly on the right path to emulating his new role models.

"I reckon I killed it," he says of his first exam experience. "I achieved great marks, so I was stoked!"

Jordan hasn't yet decided which branch of law he'll pursue but he lists Business Law and Contemporary Law as his favourite subjects so far.

"It's really interesting to see how law works in business and that your case relies on how well you can argue it," he said.

"Contemporary law is more about how the law was formed so those two subjects have been like looking at two sides of the coin."

When he's not in class or joining in with the Indigenous Awareness Society activities, you'll most likely find Jordan on the rugby field or out in the surf.

"I love my sport! I'm not a real star or anything but, after a full day of classes, it's a good balance to get outside and run around at training."

As part of Bond's first-ever team to enter the Indigenous University Games, Jordan had a go at a few other sports as well - touch football, volleyball, basketball and netball.

And he tries to get out for a surf every morning.

Jordan was hooked on the idea of studying Law at Bond from the moment he stepped inside the moot court on a campus tour last year.

"I'd checked out a few other universities and they didn't have anything that came close to this," he said.

"I was determined to do whatever I could to get to Bond but, financially, I knew we couldn't afford it.

"The scholarship was my passport and I think it's fantastic that Bond has all these partners who are giving Indigenous kids like me the opportunity to study at a prestige university.

"I want to say a huge thank you to all of the supporters who made it possible for me - if I was there in person, I'd give them a big hug! "I also want to say: Please keep on doing what you're doing because it is making a huge difference in our lives."





Alumni in Focus:  
**Jessica Singh**

This is the  
Jessica Lee Singh  
on the authority of the Council of Bond University  
and having fulfilled all the academic requirements  
is admitted to the degree of  
**BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**  
Head of the University





Jessica Singh at Parliament House

Iris Clayton grew up on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River at the Darlington Point Police Paddock Aboriginal Reserve in south-west New South Wales.

At 13 years of age, she was taken from her extended family by the Welfare Board and placed in the Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home where she was prevented from seeing her mother and punished for speaking her Wiradjuri language.

At 15, she was sent to Canberra as a domestic servant. It would be another three years before she was reunited with her mother. Driven by these early experiences, Iris went on to become an outspoken champion of Aboriginal rights – a researcher, writer, historian, poet, story-teller and activist – whose ashes were scattered at the Aboriginal Embassy in front of Parliament House when she died in 2009.

"What I remember most about my grandmother is her determination," says recent Bond University graduate, Jessica Singh.

"She would never let anyone be treated unjustly and always supported autonomy.

"I loved that she would speak her mind, especially when it came to Indigenous issues and how to overcome the challenges being faced. "She propelled me into the world of politics and really being passionate about my culture; and she's a big part of the reason why I decided to study Social Science."

Jessica is the second of Iris Clayton's granddaughters to complete a degree at Bond University. Her older sister, Sinead, became the first person in their family to complete a university degree, graduating with a bachelor and master's degree in International Relations in 2015, and going on to join the Department of Defence in Canberra. A year later, Jessica completed her Bachelor of Social Science studies and is now working for the Attorney General's Department in Canberra.

"I was definitely influenced by my sister's positive experience at Bond.

"Our mother, Narelle Urquhart, was also working on campus as the Indigenous Cultural Support Officer at the Nyombil Centre so it was very much a family affair.

"But what really stood out for me was the respectful nature of everyone who works at Bond. It's one thing to have a multicultural campus but Bond really goes the extra mile by actively pursuing ways to make people feel welcome and comfortable.

"The Nyombil Centre gave me an opportunity to connect with other young Indigenous people from all different clans and tribes so you get to experience your culture in a different way.

"Even though the cultural connections have always run deep in my family, I found that building a support network with other Indigenous students really helped to strengthen my own sense of identity.

"The Nyombil Centre also gave us a platform to share our culture with non-Indigenous students from around Australia and all over the world. Between events like the Jingjerri barbeque which is held on campus every semester, and the amazing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks on display in all the Faculties and offices, Indigenous culture is very much a part of everyday campus life at Bond."

Like her grandmother, Jessica is committed to improving the lives of Indigenous people.

"Education is definitely the key," she says.

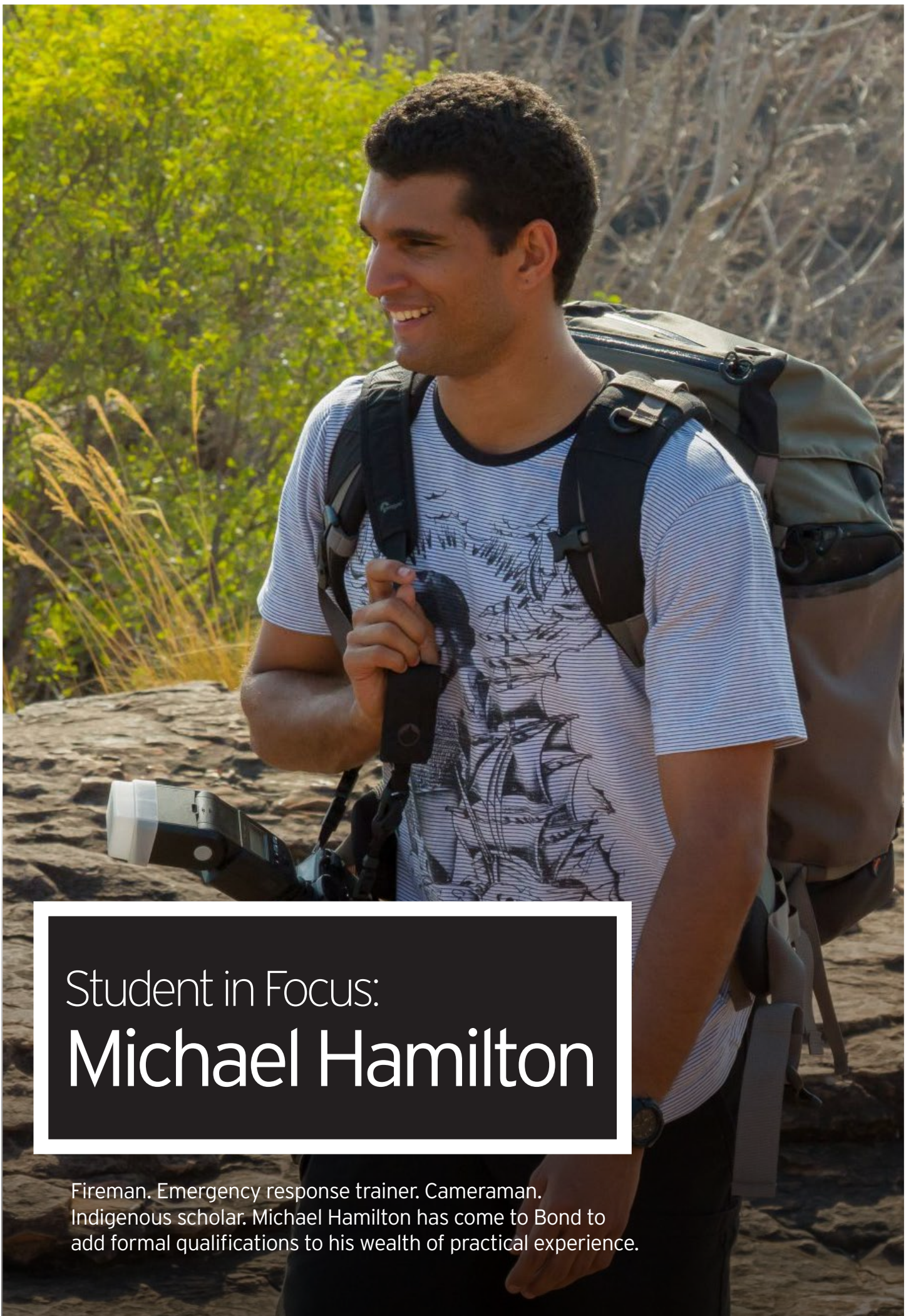
"During my time at Bond, I learnt that I can have anything I work for. My tutor, Caitlyn, taught me this in the hours she spent pouring over my assignments, editing my work and encouraging me to keep going.

"I make no excuses for myself anymore. I know I can always work harder and do better."

Jessica also hopes to follow in Iris Clayton's footsteps by steering social change – albeit using the advanced technologies of big data modelling.

"I didn't get to spend as much time with my grandmother as I would have liked but the most important lesson she taught me was to always be myself and to never let others define my identity." After undertaking a research cadetship with CSIRO in the final year of her Bachelor of Social Science, Jessica was selected for the Policy stream of the Graduate Program at the Attorney-General's Department in Canberra.





Student in Focus:  
**Michael Hamilton**

Fireman. Emergency response trainer. Cameraman. Indigenous scholar. Michael Hamilton has come to Bond to add formal qualifications to his wealth of practical experience.





We like to believe that every Indigenous student who comes to Bond lights the fire of ambition for someone else. It may be a sibling, a cousin, a school friend or a neighbour who watches them achieve and thinks 'I can do that'.

For 28-year-old cameraman and emergency responder, Michael Hamilton, it was his younger brother Daniel who sparked the flame. "I'd been out of school for 10 years working as a cameraman, then in the fire brigade and as an emergency response trainer," says Michael.

"I always wanted to go to film school. As a kid, I worked on the cameras at the turf club on a Saturday and when I left school, I got a filming job with one of the big production houses in Darwin. I worked there full-time for three years and still do some freelance jobs for them.

"So I've got a lot of practical experience and on the job training but I'd never had the opportunity to learn the basics; to get that more rounded perspective of all the different aspects of the film and television industry."

But then his younger brother Daniel received a scholarship to study International Relations and Law at Bond University.

"I came down from Darwin to visit him and he took me through the film labs and studios. I also had a couple of mates who'd come to Bond and they spoke pretty highly of it - and then my girlfriend enrolled here in her Master of Clinical Psychology.

"I realised it was now or never. If I didn't take time out now to get a formal qualification, I probably wouldn't do it at all."

Now four semesters into his Bachelor of Film and Television, Michael admits that it's been challenging to return to full-time study after 10 years away from the books, but he's found a network of support on campus through the Nyombil Centre.

"When you come to uni, everyone just expects you to know about all the online stuff, submitting assignments and that sort of thing," he says.

"The Nyombil Centre has been really good in terms of helping me work all that out. There's always someone here you can ask."

When he's not studying or playing for the Bond AFL team, Michael has become a semi-regular fixture in the Centre, working on assignments, firing up the barbeque and participating in various activities such as the annual cultural visit to the Tweed Indigenous community.

"Growing up in the Northern Territory, my parents ran a student hostel for Aboriginal kids in Katherine before we moved to Darwin where, again, there's a large Indigenous community, so culture has always been part of my life.

"But it's great to learn more about different Indigenous communities, like the Tweed guys and the other students from all over Australia that I've got to know through the Nyombil Centre."

Graduating in April next year, Michael plans to complete the special training program being offered at Bond to qualify for work with the Commonwealth Games broadcasting team.

Beyond that?

"The plan is to go back to Darwin where I know I can get work," he says. "Ultimately, it's all about contacts. It's one of those industries where you make friends with people and friends employ friends. If you're good at your job, people will want you."

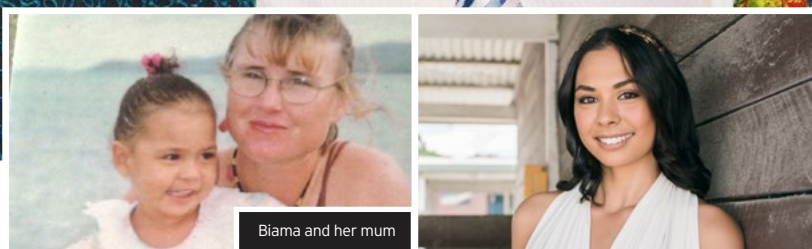
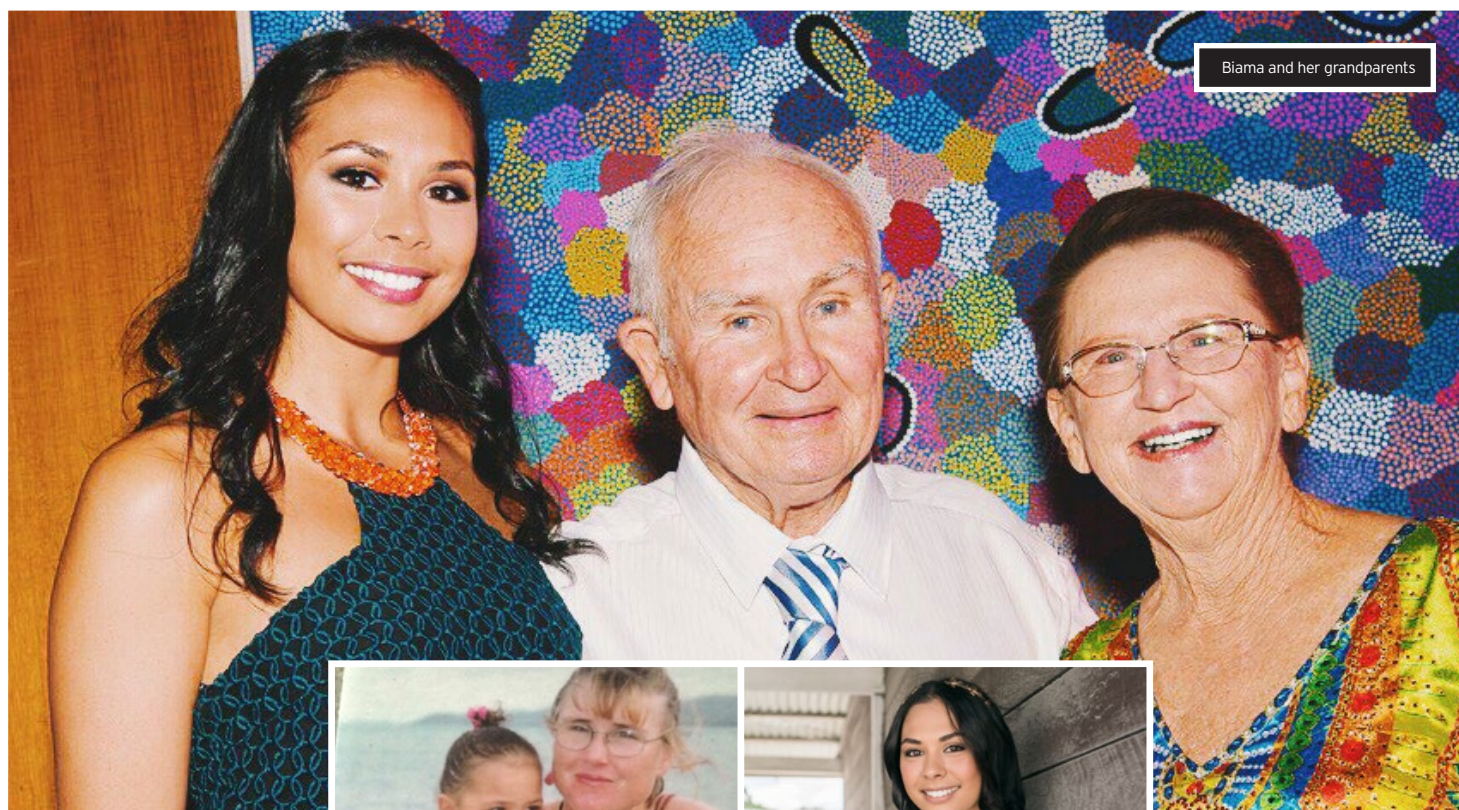
And hopefully, his success will inspire another budding filmmaker to follow in his footsteps.





Student in Focus:  
**Biama Nona**





## “ Going away to boarding school in Year 10 was my ‘sliding doors’ moment. ”

As a teenager growing up on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, Biama Nona would do everything she could to lighten her skin. She avoided going outside in the sun and, if she did have to go out, she slathered herself in sunscreen.

“I didn’t want people to know I was Indigenous,” she says. “I just hated it... because I got bullied for it.”

But that wasn’t Biama’s first challenge in life. Born on Thursday Island, Biama was just three years old when her mother – a much-loved PE teacher in the Torres Strait community – committed suicide as a result of post-natal depression.

“She suffered from it when I was born but it was much worse the second time around when my brother was born – and I guess the health services in such a remote area were really lacking at the time.

“To make things worse, my dad was going down the wrong track with alcohol and not being a very responsible father, so my grandparents – Mum’s parents – took my brother and I under their wing.

“My grandmother was a teacher as well, and knew that education was everything, so we moved down to the Sunshine Coast when I was in primary school.

“In Year 7, I transferred to a small private school that wasn’t very multicultural and I felt really uncomfortable. I hated standing out and would do anything to go under the radar. I had no confidence at all.”

It’s hard to believe that painfully shy youngster has grown into the beautiful, self-assured Bond Business graduate who now wears her Torres Strait Islander heritage with pride.

This is the same girl who co-hosted the 2015 Bond Indigenous Gala in her first year at university, who served as President of the Bond Indigenous Awareness Society, who joined Indigenous leaders and educators on a panel discussion program broadcast nationally on NITV, who modelled for Carla Zampatti and Fiji Fashion Week.

“Going away to boarding school in Year 10 was my ‘sliding doors’ moment,” says Biama.

“I remember the day my grandmother picked me up from school and asked if I’d like to board at Pymble Ladies College in Sydney. My first thought was that I’d done something wrong; that I was being sent away because I’d been bad!

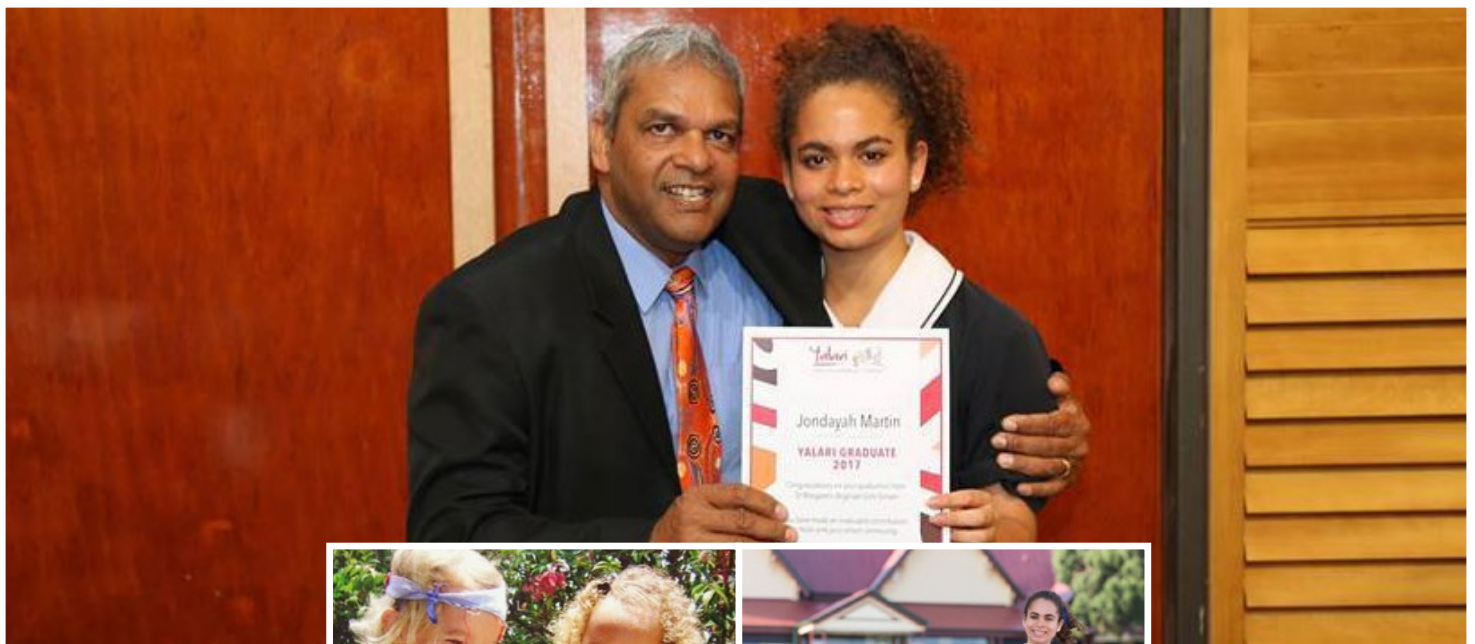
“When I got home and googled PLC, I was so excited. The range of subjects and co-curricular activities on offer blew my mind so I started straight away on my application for an Australian Indigenous Education Foundation Scholarship.”





Student in Focus:  
**Jondayah Martin**





## “ EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD. ” - Nelson Mandela

Jondayah Martin was used to doing well at school.

Growing up on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait as the daughter of a teacher, she earned high marks all through primary school – especially for English.

It's one of the reasons why she received a Yalari Scholarship to attend one of Queensland's best boarding schools – following in her mother's footsteps to St Margaret's Anglican Girls School in Brisbane.

“It was a huge change,” says Jondy, “from running around barefoot on TI in a singlet and basketball shorts to a mainstream city school where I had to wear brown polished shoes and a panama hat every day.

“But the memory that really stands out is the day I got my first mark back from my English teacher: It was a ‘C’.

“I was shocked. I'd gone from being one of the smartest kids in my class to someone who was struggling academically.”

Jondy's mother, Michelle Martin, runs the Montessori program at Tagai Primary School on Thursday Island. She was the first woman in her family to go to university and was determined to set Jondy on that same educational pathway. You can almost hear Michelle speaking through her daughter as Jondy relates how she refused to let that disappointing English mark define her.

“I wasn't going to let that ‘C’ be the measure of how much potential I have or what I can achieve,” says Jondy.

“Having a mother who works in education – who always talked to me about having a ‘growth mindset’ – made me realise that this is one of those situations where you really have to push yourself.

“And so I reached out, asked for help and got involved in all the opportunities that St Margaret's offered.

“I signed up for debating; I played hockey and basketball; I ended up on the School Council; and went on a student exchange to live in Japan for a few months.

“By the time I reached Year 10, I'd pushed my grades up to a comfortable A / B average and was confident in my ability to articulate what I wanted to say and do what I wanted to do.”

The other challenge for Jondy was to stay connected to her culture.

“Culture is part of everything in the Torres Strait,” she says. “It's embedded into the school curriculum and part of everyday life. Even at church, we sing Islander songs in language.

“It also extends to respecting our Elders and being surrounded by family so it's a very comfortable way to grow up.

“As a teenager in Brisbane, it was easy to get caught up with the latest trends and what was happening at school. When I'd go home, my friends would see the change in me. They'd say, ‘You're not Torres Strait Islander anymore’.

“It was really hard – and I realised that if I wanted to hold onto that cultural connection, I'd have to fight for it. It has been a process of learning to walk between two worlds.”

Jondy's transition to university life has been a lot easier. She commenced at Bond at the start of the year after receiving one of Blue Sky Alternative Investments' Indigenous Scholarships to study Communication.

“I've only been on campus one semester but I've already got a really cool group of friends here,” she says.

“There's a strong feeling of family – that we're all empowering each other and that one person's accomplishment is an achievement for all.

“Most importantly, we all have that crucial drive and ambition; we're all here because we know that the only way to get what we want is through education.

“I'm so grateful for the opportunities that St Margaret's and the Yalari Scholarship gave me and now the generosity of Blue Sky Alternative Investments.”

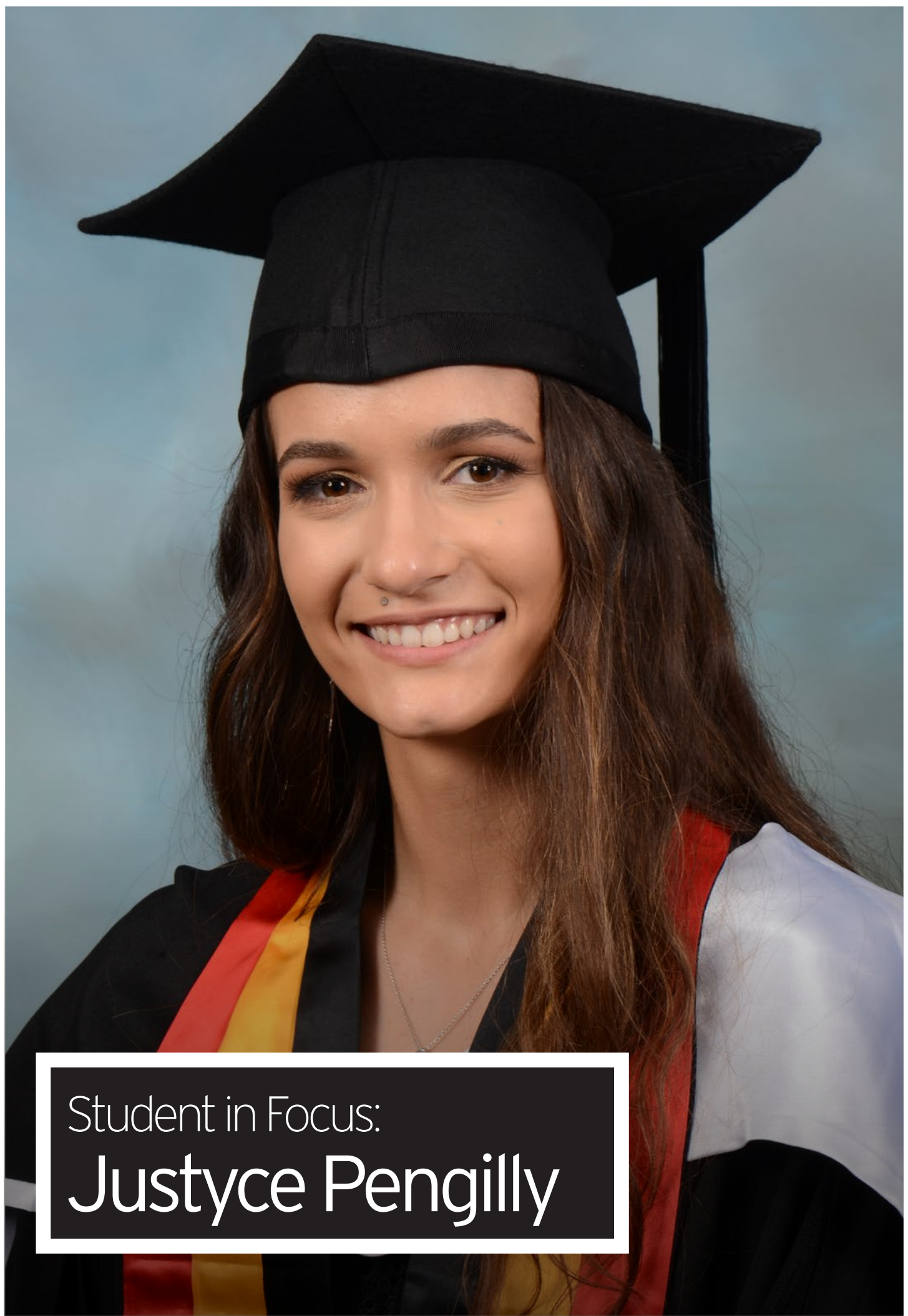
As for a highlight of her first few months as a Bondie? That's easy...

“I came first in class in two subjects and received a Dean's Award for Academic Excellence!

“I didn't even know if I could go to university but here I am, loving every minute of it, studying something that I'm passionate about... and topping my classes.

“I never expected that would happen, and it was a really big deal for that little girl who was so upset when she got a ‘C’ on her English paper.”





Student in Focus:

**Justyce Pengilly**





Justyce with her Mum and Nan

## PAYING IT FORWARD

Scholarship recipient, Justyce Pengilly, is inspired to help others.

"Growing up, I saw a lot of people struggling with mental health issues. I found myself wanting to understand it and to be able to do something about it.

"I thought the best way to do that would be to make a career out of it."

Justyce Pengilly recently graduated from a Bachelor of Psychological Science and is on the cusp of completing her Honours year in Psychology at Bond.

"One of the biggest problems is that there aren't many Aboriginal psychologists - trained therapists who really understand our culture and the way we live ... our relationships ... our deep connection with family.

"As with anyone who reaches out for help from a psychologist or counsellor, you're looking for someone who understands what you're saying and where you're coming from.

"It can be really hard for Aboriginal people to find that right fit."

It's hard to believe that Justyce is just 20 years of age and not yet three years out of high school. She is quietly spoken but she speaks with a deep understanding of cultural dynamics.

One of the highlights of her Bond experience, she says, is seeing those dynamics at work during an internship with Marumali Consultations - one of the very few Aboriginal owned and run psychology services, based on the Gold Coast at Tallebudgera.

"It really changed the game for me," says Justyce. "At the end of last year, I was questioning whether I'd chosen the right career path and this opportunity came along out of the blue to work with two Indigenous psychologists, right here in the local area.

"Once a week, I tagged along with them as they conducted workshops, cultural competence training with large companies, and other projects, and I came to see how they maintained their integrity in their culture within their psychology practice.

"It answered all my questions and showed me that this is the career I want."

Another highlight of Justyce's Bond experience has been expanding her circle of Indigenous friends at the Nyombil Centre.

"At my high school in Brisbane, I was one of only two Indigenous girls in Year 12. Here at Bond, there is a big group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, so it means that I have a much larger circle of Indigenous friends from all over Australia.

"It's nice not to feel out of place and it's great to be part of this whole generation of Aboriginal Australians who are getting tertiary qualifications and planning big careers.

"It's something that didn't happen two generations ago."

With the end of her Honours year in sight, Justyce is planning to take six months off before returning to study her Masters of Psychology at Bond in May.

"It's all part of a six-year plan I set out in Year 12," she says.

"It's surreal to think that I'm so close to achieving the goal I dreamt of when I was 17. I know I won't have any trouble finding work in my chosen field and it will be exciting to see what happens next."





Student in Focus:  
**Timakoi Bowie**





## KEEP GOING, DON'T GIVE UP

Timakoi Bowie hears the words echoing all the way down from the Torres Strait. They drive him forward, even as the goalposts he worked tirelessly towards for almost five years have moved.

Timakoi, 19, is studying towards a Bachelor of Business at Bond University on a Blue Sky Alternative Investments Indigenous Scholarship. Originally from Badu Island, 60km north of Thursday Island, he moved to Cairns at the age of five.

Rugby league was always a passion but Timakoi caught the eye of a rival code after moving to AFL Cape York House, a boarding facility and mentoring program for Indigenous boys while they complete high school in Cairns.

"I got into AFL after a footy camp with the Cape York Crusaders," he said. "I was benched a lot at the start but got better and better and in my first year I ended up being chosen for the Queensland Under 16 AFL team. It was pretty weird going from one sport (rugby league) to the other and then being picked for a state team."

State selection put Timakoi on the Gold Coast SUNS' radar but, as he approached Year 12 at St Andrew's Catholic College in Cairns, he was also thinking about his academic future. "One of the other boys (from AFL Cape York House) had been to Bond and he had a little chat with me. He said it had a really strong Indigenous program."

Timakoi enrolled in a Diploma of Business at Bond University College which put him on a pathway to the bachelor program.

His football career was also on a fast-track. He joined the SUNS' Under 18 Academy and was taken under the wing of SUNS' star and fellow North Queenslander, Jarrod Harbrow.

Timakoi aimed to make the AFL draft at the end of last year - but it was not to be. That's when the words came to him. "Whenever I go back to Badu my family tells me, 'keep going, don't give up,'" he said. "It was disappointing not to make the draft. I'd played for the SUNS all year. But that's business, you've just got to move on. I still hope to make it into the AFL as a mature age player."

In the meantime, Timakoi is pushing ahead with his studies and will this year play for the Southport Sharks which has been a reliable pipeline of talent for the AFL, producing the likes of Dayne Beams (Collingwood), Dayne Zorko (Brisbane Lions) and Lachie Weller (Gold Coast SUNS).

Having the support of Blue Sky Alternative Investments is both comforting and motivating, he said.

"It feels like someone is encouraging me and supporting me, kind of like my parents would. I've got people standing behind me on my journey."

Timakoi has settled into Gold Coast life - "I like the beaches - no crocodiles!" - but misses diving for crayfish with friends and family on Badu.

He has discovered a passion for marketing and if a career as a professional sportsman does not eventuate, a job in the marketing department of an AFL team would be a goal.

Timakoi is on track to graduate next year and would be the first in his family to hold a university degree - something his mother had hoped to do herself. "She went to uni but she didn't finish because she had me," he said. "So doing this (graduating) would be like paying her back."





Student in Focus:  
**Maya Johnson**





Top left: Maya at St Patrick's College  
Bottom left: Maya with her family  
Right: Maya on the Abergowrie Social Justice Trip

## PARTNERS LIKE YOU CHANGING LIVES

helping students like Maya achieve their potential

Bond University's award-winning Yarning Up program is an invaluable initiative that allows our partners and potential partners to experience first-hand the impact that their support can have on Indigenous communities and most importantly individuals like Maya Johnson.

Maya's life changing story started when St Patrick's College Townsville Principal Paulina Skerman visited the Torres Strait Islands as part of the 2015 Yarning Up cohort. Ms Skerman then selected a group of her students to travel down to the Gold Coast for that year's Indigenous Gala at Bond University.

Among her group of wide-eyed teenage girls from Far North Queensland was 15-year-old Maya who, in Year 10, was just starting to think about her career options.

"The Indigenous Gala was totally amazing," said Maya. "We saw Christine Anu singing on stage and sharing her story; and one of the Indigenous students was co-hosting the Gala and talking about how her Bond scholarship had changed her life."

Fast forward almost four years and it's Maya who is now inspiring high schoolers to dream bigger dreams.

Since receiving a Bond Indigenous Scholarship in 2018, she has taken advantage of every opportunity: serving as President of the Student Society for Indigenous Awareness, Treasurer for the Journalism Students' Society, and an intern with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME).

"The internship involves helping to organise the five AIME program days we host on campus each year, as well as going into the local high schools to tutor Indigenous students," said Maya.

"The message I really try to pass on is about the opportunities that will be available to them if they finish Year 12 and go to university or study for a trade.

"It's really about helping them to believe in themselves and realise how much potential they have."

Maya's realisation of her own potential has been an ongoing process since she left the idyllic, family-centric surrounds of Magnetic Island at the end of primary school to board on the mainland at St Patrick's College.

"As the traditional owners on Magnetic Island, everyone knew who we were and we were just part of the wider community; colour was never an issue.

"But, at St Pat's, I met girls from remote Cape York communities and villages in Papua New Guinea and islands in the Torres Strait - places that I'd never heard of. After the lights would go out, we'd sit around sharing our stories.

Armed with the knowledge she has gleaned from those shared stories of life in Australia's most remote Indigenous communities, Maya has set her sights on a global career.

She has already completed work experience rotations with ABC Radio and NITV and, in July, she will travel to Osaka to be part of the Japan English Model United Nations Conference.

"I will be part of the journalism digital stimulation team, pairing up with other student journalists to collaborate, explore, engage and create digital and traditional media content for the conference," she said.

"The trip also involves a 10-day study tour across Japan where we'll learn about the language, culture and history."

The next step after her Bachelor of Journalism will be a Master of Arts, which Maya hopes will lead to work as a foreign correspondent.

"One of the things I realised from those late night story-telling sessions in high school was that a lot of young people don't have the opportunity to reach their potential simply because they live in remote communities without access to good jobs that offer a career path," she said.

"Ultimately, one of the main reasons I decided to study journalism was so that I could be their voice."