
Embargoed til Tuesday 18 June 2013

Aboriginal students encouraged to follow their passions

Engineer Thomas Farren will encourage Aboriginal students to follow their passions when he gives the keynote address at this year's SACE Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference this afternoon. *(Speech to be delivered at 1.45pm)*

The conference is an annual event for senior secondary school students in South Australia, showcasing study, training and employment opportunities.

Thomas achieved his SACE before completing a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil and Structural) at the University of South Australia. He's now working for Santos, project managing pipeline installations and well head connections.

Thomas advises Aboriginal students to study subjects they enjoy and not be influenced by what others are doing.

"When I was at school I wasn't sure what engineering was, but I enjoyed maths and science," he said. "I attended a few events like the pathways conference and that made me think about my future and life after school.

"My parents and a summer school program helped me focus on an engineering pathway.

"Students should never rule out any career option, as there are many different pathways that can lead to your ultimate goal.

"I have always been proud of my origins and strive to succeed for my family and my people.

"I'd definitely recommend engineering as a pathway - it is interesting work that's always changing, and engineers are needed for many different industry roles."

The SACE Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference at UniSA's Mawson Lakes Campus provides opportunities for students to speak to representatives from universities and TAFE SA.

SACE Board Chief Executive Dr Paul Kilvert said in 2012, 180 Aboriginal students received their SACE, compared to 145 in 2011.

"It's encouraging that more Aboriginal students achieved their SACE last year than ever before.

"Achieving the SACE opens up opportunities for students to pursue further education, training and employment, and the conference is a great chance for Aboriginal students to explore future options."