

## Resilience and flexibility hallmarks of thriving SACE learners in 2021

Embargoed until 6.00am Monday 13 December 2021

**In a landmark result, students have demonstrated their resilience and ability to thrive, despite the challenge of completing their SACE journey entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

While contending with the disruption of COVID-19 and the flow-on effects within schools, a record number of 15,644 students have completed their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) this year.

SACE Board Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell acknowledged the outstanding efforts of SACE students as they successfully navigated their way through considerable change.

“The Class of 2021 has had more to contend with than any other cohort over the years, and yet they have risen to the challenge,” said Professor Westwell.

“This year we have seen the highest level of retention through to final SACE completion than ever before.

“Students have demonstrated that they have developed their personal capabilities and have adapted, drawn upon their resilience and continued to find solutions and thrive.”

The flexibility of SACE allowed Gabrielle Lipinski to include Vocational Education and Training (VET) as part of her SACE, so she could work towards becoming a veterinarian nurse.

The Encounter College student faced several challenges including an almost 200kms drive to get to her VET course every week.

Gabrielle faced other challenges too, having to manage her low working memory and low processing speed. That was not about to stop her though, as she proactively adapted the approach to her learning.

She became a strong advocate for her learning journey. Part of managing that process effectively involved knowing when to reach out for support from her teachers.

“I wanted to quit so many times, but I knew that finding a way to overcome that, by making sure my learning and needs were prioritised, would lead to the outcome I wanted. I rang my Head of School and she helped me speak to TAFE,” said Gabrielle.

Originally from South Sudan, Akoul Garang began Year 10 classes at St Dominic’s College and initially found it difficult as the classes were all taught in English, a language she had only been learning for a couple of years.

“Everyone talked so fast, my English wasn’t that good, and it was hard to understand everyone.

“My wonderful friends would tell me what the teacher was talking about, so it wasn’t that bad.

### Media Contact:

Victoria Goodyear, Media & Communications Officer, SACE Board of SA  
8115 4812 or 0448 671 050 | [victoria.goodyear@sa.gov.au](mailto:victoria.goodyear@sa.gov.au)



There were more challenges for Akuol to overcome than just becoming proficient in another language.

"I didn't even know how to use the technology like the other students did. I lost a ten-page assignment because I didn't know how to save my work properly and had to stay up all night to finish it.

With the right support from her teachers, Akuol became a thriving learner.

"My teachers have helped me work out a pathway to get into law and it would be my dream to make that happen.

Akuol's advice to SACE students is to keep persisting, despite the challenges.

"If you try harder, then things will be better than expected."

Professor Westwell suggested students also remember that SACE is only one step in their learning journey.

"Remember that SACE is one moment within your whole life. It is not the end, but a beginning. Think of your results as the start of your learning journey.

"Keep drawing on your capability for resilience. I can promise you, as you follow the learning pathway throughout your life, it will lead you to explore worlds filled with fascinating ideas and stories."

Students can access their SACE results from the SACE website via Students Online portal from 8.30am on Monday 13 December 2021.

ENDS

**Media Contact:**

Victoria Goodyear, Media & Communications Officer, SACE Board of SA  
8115 4812 or 0448 671 050 | [victoria.goodyear@sa.gov.au](mailto:victoria.goodyear@sa.gov.au)