

Persistence pays off for SACE completer Cheyanne

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A student who fell agonisingly short from achieving her South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) four years ago has shown that persistence really does pay off by completing the world-class certificate – and embarking on an exciting career pathway.

Former Oodnadatta Aboriginal School student Cheyanne Bailes was 20 credits short from the 200 credits needed to complete her SACE in 2013.

But four years later and a ‘never give up’ mentality has seen the 24-year-old achieve a Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care – worth 110 credits – and gain enough credits to complete her SACE.

“I was in Year 13 at school and worked so hard during my SACE, so being 20 credits short from completing my SACE was really tough to take,” Ms Bailes said.

“After leaving school I went to work at the Pink Roadhouse for four years and I did some youth work, before applying to be an engineer in the army.

“At the last minute I got accepted to do a Certificate III in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care so I put my army application on hold.

“The certificate offered a good career path so I wanted to give it a try. The course was really interesting, I studied in Adelaide for one week and then I did my work placement at the local Health Service.

“It was a big challenge, at times I thought ‘I can’t do this’ but I told myself to never give up and make the most of the experience.

“The community really helped me through during the last 12 months, they kept encouraging me and told me to keep going. It’s a relief to have finally completed my SACE, I don’t have to worry about it anymore and I am super proud of myself.”

Now Cheyanne is enjoying her career – working as an Aboriginal health worker at Oodnadatta Health Service, where she undertook her placement.

“I’m really enjoying my job, I’m learning new things all the time and I really like helping other community members through my work, it’s so rewarding.”

Cheyanne, who is planning to take a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, had this advice for other SACE students.

“I would encourage students to keep going, even when the going gets tough; focus on your future and don’t give up on your dreams. If I can do it then so can you, it’s all worth it in the end.”

SACE Board of SA Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell said he was thrilled by Cheyanne’s achievements.

“Cheyanne has demonstrated real resilience and tenacity to complete her SACE and is to be congratulated,” Prof Westwell said.

“More students like Cheyanne are persevering with their studies and completing their high school certificate because they know it is valuable and worthwhile to do so, and it’s heartening that the community supported Cheyanne and recognised the value of students completing their SACE.

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"Her achievements highlight the flexibility of the SACE in which all abilities and aspirations can achieve success, and that the SACE can open doors to new and exciting futures."