

10

celebrating

years of CQU+TAFE



TEN YEARS OF CQU + TAFE

On 1 July, 2024, CQUniversity celebrated 10 years since it merged with CQ TAFE, establishing Queensland's first and only dual sector university and becoming the official public provider of TAFE in Central Queensland.

A decade on from the history-making merger, CQUniversity has expanded its vocational and higher education study options and now delivers 250 plus courses from Certificate to PhD level to more than 30,000 students. The University has also built new partnerships with industry and invested more than \$80 million in new and upgraded training facilities in Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay and Rockhampton.

CQUniversity's TAFE offerings now include short courses and Certificate I, II, III and IV courses and apprenticeships and TAFE diplomas. Study areas include Allied Health, Community Services, Project Management, Information Technology, Nursing, Safety, Fitness, Horticulture and Science, Trades, Business, Education and Childcare, Legal and Justice Studies, Hair and Beauty, Hospitality and Cookery and Visual Arts.

There are currently more than 11,000 students enrolled in a TAFE qualification at CQUniversity, representing about one-third of the University's total student population.

In this special publication, we've assembled stories of past students and current staff whose lives have undergone profound transformations since the merger. We invite you to explore the extraordinary narratives of triumph, growth, and discovery that echo the diverse paths paved by education.

The following stories were produced by CQUniversity's Corporate Communications team.



MERGER GROWS OPPORTUNITIES

Ten years at CQUniversity means a double milestone for Mackay's Jackie Campbell.

The vocational education advocate first spent 10 years at CQ TAFE leading business development, before CQUniversity merged with CQ TAFE on 1 July, 2014.

Ms Campbell is now the Mackay Ooralea Campus Leader for CQU's School of Trades and has spent two decades driving big projects to support students, apprentices, teachers and employers – and she's seen opportunities grow across CQU's TAFE training.

Her proudest achievements include CQUniversity's partnership with BHP Operation Services (OS) to deliver training in its FutureFit Academy - and supporting trainees and apprentices to compete in WorldSkills competitions locally and nationally.

"It's been incredible to see how much has changed over 20 years, and some of the big projects we've been able to get across the line," she said.

"BHP OS's FutureFit Academy, where CQU is the Registered Training Organisation that oversees training in their purpose-built learning centre in Mackay, was made possible because we had teams across CQUniversity working together."

Four years into the award-winning partnership, CQUniversity has helped train 428 BHP OS trainees and apprentices, including 122 Indigenous participants.

"We've been able to help a large organisation to realise a dream, to train their people in their own environment – and that's a brilliant outcome for all participants."

Working with teachers and students daily at the busy Ooralea campus, Ms Campbell said supporting young people was a

highlight of her job.

"I love being on the ground, being involved with our apprentice and trainee groups and helping them realise the support that's in place for them at CQU," she said.

"At our annual events like University Mental Health Day and RUOK Day, we connect students with our wellbeing team and Indigenous support, and services like Mates in Construction, to really make mental health a priority," she said.

"Working at CQU, studying at CQU, you realise people never stop learning and being able to help with that journey means a lot."

The proud mum of a TAFE-trained tradie, and a life-long learner herself, Ms Campbell says she's got plenty of practical advice to share.

"In the past few years, I've done CQUniversity's Graduate Certificate in Management, and in Authentic Leadership as well – they've helped me a lot in this role actually!" she said.

"We do a lot of campus tours for young people who are thinking about trades careers, and at the start the thought of four years in an apprenticeship can be overwhelming – but I've seen my son go through it, and so many others now."

Since 2021, she's also been Central Queensland Coordinator for WorldSkills Australia, part of a global competition to showcase apprentices and trainees across the spectrum of trades.

"We've got more than 20 regional events this year, ahead of the nationals in Brisbane in 2025 - from bricklaying to hairdressing, electrical, plumbing and heavy vehicle - it's thrilling to see our students challenged to be their best," she said.

"Being part of CQUniversity, we can also connect vocational students with broader opportunities – for instance, some of our

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trades apprentices are also juggling engineering degrees, and they're able to complete all their studies on the one site here in Ooralea.

"For me, it's about young people and growth within themselves, and letting them know that there are a lot of people at CQUniversity here to help."

CQUniversity is Queensland's only dual-sector university, offering both higher education and vocational training.

In Mackay, the merger paved the way for development of the \$46 million Trades Training Centre and \$16.6 million Engineering Centre at CQU's Ooralea campus, as well as the \$10.2 million Mackay City campus refurbishment.

Ms Campbell said she was proud to be part of growing opportunities for local people.

"Working at CQU, and studying with CQU, you realise people never stop learning – and being able to help with that journey, it means a lot."

— By Mary Bolling



CQUniversity

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Sherrie Price and
Danielle Robertson

TAFE AND TRESSES EMPOWER SHERRIE'S CAREER

Sherrie Price brushed up her skills and styled her career with CQUniversity's Certificate I and II in Information, Digital Media and Technology.

After completing the CQU TAFE courses in 2021, Sherrie secured a role with DMR Hair Residence hair salon where the Mackay resident utilises her skills to support client services.

As Sherrie lives with down syndrome, the courses helped support the 31-year-old with fundamental knowledge and digital literacy in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

"I really love my job. It's great,"

Sherrie said.

"I want to be the best Salon Assistant ever. CQU has helped me to always be the best I can be."

DMR Hair Residence owner Danielle Robertson said Sherrie had become an invaluable part of the business, bringing her a unique blend of warmth and technical expertise.

"Sherrie has brought a spark of life into my business I didn't know it needed. My clients are obsessed with her and most days they are more excited to see her than myself," Danielle explained.

"All my clients love having a chat with her while waiting, which gives Sherrie confidence also to communicate with clients."

"With Sherrie's help around salon, she has given me the passion back to focus on creating hair. She truly is my life saver. I don't know how I did it all without her."

**"I want to be the best
Salon Assistant ever.
CQU has helped me to
always be the best
I can be."**

"Every day I write Sherrie's jobs on a list out the back on the fridge. Her regular tasks include washing and sorting client towels and capes, resetting cutting stations after a client has left, greeting and asking the clients if they would like a beverage, plus providing it, unpacking stock, organising and cleaning retail shelves.

"On a rare occasion she is baby whisper or puppy sitter!"

Sherrie's employment was facilitated by Mylestones Mackay Disability Employment Services alongside her

Disability Support Worker (DSW) Gerri Kissner, who have been instrumental in setting her up to succeed in the workplace.

"I was lucky enough that Sherrie's disability support worker, Gerri was a long-term client of mine and suggested her for the role," Danielle said.

"I believe we should all have the same opportunities in life regardless of whether a disability is visible or not. Success is so much more meaningful when you are giving it back to your community."

"Once you show Sherrie what to do and she does it a few times she is capable of operating on her own. Very rarely will she need prompting or help from a DSW to carry out a task."

Having worked with Sherrie for nine years, Gerri said she was proud to see her progress both in her studies and in her role at the salon.

"The course at CQU definitely developed Sherrie's confidence and self-esteem," Gerri said.

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"I will often remind her how she was scared to do anything at the beginning of her course but with practice she can master anything."

Sherrie also receives support from her additional disability support workers Veronica and Jeneane.

Sherrie's mother Judie Price said she too was grateful for everyone who had championed for her daughter's success - from her teachers at CQU, to her support workers and colleagues and clients at DMR.

"She is so lucky to be surrounded by so many people who support and encourage her to learn and grow and be the best she can in everything she does," Judie said.

"Sherrie has always been a social person and this position is so suitable for her."

Sherrie said she hoped to continue doing what she's doing.

"It's nice to spoil clients by making them tea or coffee, and chatting to them. I like doing all my jobs, tidying and cleaning and making things easier for Danielle. It's always a happy place too."

— By Tiahna Fiddling



TAFE HELPED JEZ COOK UP A CAREER

In 2015, while learning English at CQU TAFE, Jezzare Anteza started an apprenticeship as a chef - despite only having the use of one hand.

Now, almost 10 years later, he's still defying the odds. CQUniversity caught up with Jez in Rockhampton as part of the 10-year anniversary celebrations of CQU merging with CQ TAFE to see what achievements he's made since his training.

Originally from the Philippines, Jez showed an aptitude for cookery while undertaking the Adult Migrant English Program, and then chef teacher Tim Wade helped connect him with local restaurant, Cloud 9.

"I worked at Cloud 9 until late 2019 when I decided to work at the mining camp in western Mackay for a year as a chef," he said.

"It was a great experience, but it was quite challenging for me to live away from home (Rockhampton).

"It was also challenging because the working hours were longer and busier."

Following a change in management at Cloud 9, Jez was rehired as a chef and worked there for a few more years, while also working as a chef at the Coffee House Café.

"Early last year I decided to commit to one job, which is the Coffee House Café. I enjoy working there as a chef and it's been a privilege to work as a full-time employee."

Jez said he often calls upon the training he received in the Willby's Training Kitchens at CQU's Rockhampton City Campus.

"(The English and Hospitality training) helped me to apply and gain knowledge and understanding towards my apprenticeship and career in hospitality," he said.

"Despite my condition, I have managed to work my path and settle into a career. As a permanent full-time chef this has been a great achievement for me."

"CQU TAFE gave me the opportunity to continue my passion in cooking, and all the support that I received from the teachers and instructors helped me develop my confidence and skills."

Jez encouraged others to not let disadvantage or disability hold them back from pursuing their goals.

"Focus on your abilities, make realistic goals and keep on trying and moving. Let not our present circumstances and incapacities hinder our hope."

"CQU gave me the opportunity to continue my passion in cooking, and all the support I received from the teachers and instructors, helped me develop my confidence and skills."

— By Greg Chapman



Jezzare Anteza with then Cloud 9 manager Don McLeod and former CQU TAFE teacher Tim Wade in 2015



KIM'S DECADE OF LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

Since CQUniversity became Queensland's first and only dual-sector university in 2014, Kim Harrington has seen firsthand how providing comprehensive educational opportunities has changed lives in the Rockhampton community.

As Associate Vice-President for the Rockhampton and Central Highlands Regions, Ms Harrington has been a key influence in the University offerings, championing courses to meet the skills needed in the region.

"Being a dual-sector university, we offer everything from a Certificate I to PhD. This makes us a one-stop shop for all training and educational needs, including short courses and research – it's our point of difference.

"CQUniversity is exceptionally good at giving low socioeconomic and first-in-family individuals training and educational opportunities," Ms Harrington said.

"To me, this is key to what we do and why; for more than a decade, I have woken up every day happy and excited about going to work.

"I know we make a difference for individuals and in turn contribute to economic development."

Over her 12-year career with CQUniversity, Ms Harrington has served in many positions, firstly as the Director of Business Development during the CQ TAFE merger. Bringing a wealth of expertise and resources to the amalgamation, Ms Harrington said her experience at TAFE Queensland allowed her to contribute across different capacities.

"TAFE Queensland as an employer helped me to grow from

a teacher to middle management, senior management, and to undertake projects at a local, state, national and international level," she explained.

"Before I joined CQU I managed a World Bank-funded program for establishing a polytechnic vocational system in Mongolia.

"I distinctly remember applying for the role of Director of Business Development with CQU from a Soviet-era barrack building in Govisumber, only one room had an internet connection."

It was this strong background in curriculum, governance, and pedagogy that led to her appointment as the Director of Academic Unification pre-merge once the TAFE merger was approved – expanding her portfolio to include the Director of the Mining School (VET) and Manager of RPL.

Later that year Ms Harrington became the inaugural Associate Vice-Chancellor for the Rockhampton region where her responsibilities continued to expand to include VET International.

"It has been an asset to stay in education while changing sectors within the profession," she said.

"When I reflect on where I first started my career as a teacher in 1991, I learnt to really understand the power and importance of education. I even remain registered with Queensland College of Teachers just in case I go back into the classroom one day!

"I genuinely believe education changes the lives of individuals, their families, and their communities. I have

"As a dual sector university, we offer everything from Certificate I to PhD. This makes us a one-stop shop for all training and educational needs... it's our point of difference."

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seen countless situations where large families band together to financially support one member in undertaking further education, demonstrating the value it has.” Looking back on what has been achieved over the past 10 years, Ms Harrington expressed her enthusiasm to build on the foundations laid by the merger with CQ TAFE. “Vocational education is critical to the success of Australia. In Central Queensland, we need a skilled workforce that is developed through apprenticeships and training.

“The future holds opportunities for innovation and collaboration which is formed through establishing relationships. This is a key priority in my role,” she said. “Organisations and companies place importance on VET skills and are willing to offer job opportunities and increased salaries as a result. By staying responsive to industry needs and technological advancements, we can ensure that CQU’s TAFE remains a cornerstone of workforce development.”

— By Tiahna Fiddling



NAOMI NURSES A STRONG CAREER IN HEALTH

In the 10 years since she completed her training at CQUniversity Naomi Mallinson has fostered a very healthy career as one of Rockhampton Hospital's rising theatre nurses.

CQUniversity caught up with Naomi as part of its 10-year anniversary celebrations of CQU merging with CQ TAFE to see what she's achieved over the past decade.

In just 10 years, Naomi has battled through the COVID-19 pandemic, raised three children and taken her Diploma of Enrolled Nursing and Bachelor of Nursing degree even further.

"Since graduating from CQU in 2015, I managed to complete a post graduate certificate in Perioperative Nursing while at the Mater Private Hospital in Rockhampton where I worked full-time," she said.

"Upon completing my post graduate certificate, I felt I had found my niche. I stayed with the Mater for another six years, building skills and knowledge in theatre nursing. After this I reached a point where my I felt my experience was stunted and I needed to expand my skills in theatre trauma."

It was in February 2021 when Naomi made the decision to work at the Rockhampton Hospital where she was able to pursue her dream of being a trauma theatre nurse. Although the COVID-19 pandemic initially put a dampener on her pursuits, she persevered.

"We all did what we had to do as nurses and continued to care for people and protected ourselves and families from the virus," she said.

"It was definitely hard to deal with at times, especially with having to home school children and wearing masks pretty much 15 hours in the day and night, at work and in the community, but we were all going through it together and no matter what, I had to do the best job I knew how to get through the tough times, so getting vaccinated to keep my job, to put food on the table for my children was what I had to do."

Now Naomi is working in the operating theatre as an Instrument/Circulating Nurse and as a Clinical Nurse in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. She's also started further studies as part of her long-term goal to specialise in perioperative services.

"Being a Clinical Nurse in the operating theatre, my experience and knowledge is shared with the junior nurses and my co-workers where we work together to ensure



patients receive the best possible surgical outcomes," she said.

"Working alongside a whole team of theatre staff including anaesthetists, surgeons, operational services staff, registered midwives, registrars, central sterilising nurses and medical representatives is such a fantastic experience.

"I love my role so much and I love the people I work with. I feel very blessed to have a job that I'm so passionate about."

She said her role as a mum is equally as important as being a nurse.

"My children are pretty much grown up, with my eldest now a third-year electrician working in the mines, whilst my other 17-year-old son and my 15-year-old-daughter are at Emmaus College completing Year 10 and 11," she said.

"They are very proud of my achievements, and I feel this drives them to want to do well at school so as they too can have good career opportunities when they finish school." Looking back on her time at CQU TAFE Naomi encouraged anyone thinking about studying nursing to "just do it".

"You're never too old and there is never a right time. As long as you have a genuine interest in your field of study you can achieve results," she said.

"I often think back of when I first studied at CQU TAFE and completed my enrolled nursing and how happy I was to have achieved a Diploma. But to then to go on to study university for a Bachelor's degree was my long term goal.

"My hard work has paid off, and I couldn't be happier."

— By Greg Chapman

DUAL MILESTONE

As CQUniversity commemorates the 10-year anniversary of merging with CQ TAFE, Rockhampton-based staff member Sara Barnbaum is celebrating her own milestone.

Ms Barnbaum began her career with CQU as a project assistant on 1 July 2014, the day of the merger, where she worked on the Academic Unification project between the two institutions.

"I was a small cog in what was a huge undertaking for the University, involving multiple project teams," Ms Barnbaum explained.

"I worked across a number of projects established to help coordinate the 2014 merger process alongside supporting Project Director Kim Harrington and providing secretarial duties for the Academic Unification Committee."

As a staff member new to the University, Ms Barnbaum provided a fresh perspective to the project which was primarily focused on integrating Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education (HE) curriculum and governance processes.

"It was an exciting time to join the University and be part of what was an historic change in establishing Queensland's first dual sector university.

"Through my role with the Academic Unification project, I was able to meet and engage with a broad cross-section of University staff, from both the HE and VET spaces," she said.

"There was understandable apprehension from some staff about what the merger would mean, but also a great deal of enthusiasm for the longer-term benefits that a dual-sector model would deliver for students."

Ms Barnbaum's passion for growth, innovation and a steadfast commitment to educational excellence has proven to be the backbone of her career, supporting the University through various projects roles and responsibilities.

"Work on the project continued well beyond the merger date, providing an opportunity for me to continue to work for Kim Harrington when she was appointed Associate Vice-Chancellor for the Rockhampton Region.

"A recent highlight of my career has been working with Flexible Learning and Innovation Projects (FLIP) on the Be Different project and the establishment of the University's first hyperflexible course, the MBA (Leadership).

"It has been a privilege to be involved with this innovative project from the earliest days of building this online course, managing the pilot cohorts, and enrolling our very first fee-paying students."

The project led Ms Barnbaum to her current role as a Project Officer with the Learning Design and Innovation (LDI) Directorate.

"Having started with the Academic Unification project to now working with the LDI Directorate is a full circle moment as LDI supports staff across the whole of the University.

"I joined the University because of the opportunity to work in a diverse and dynamic environment which has proven to be true. I've remained because I genuinely believe in the value of education and how it can change lives."

Associate Vice-President for the Rockhampton and Central



Highlands Regions, Kim Harrington said Ms Barnbaum is a testament to CQU's ethos.

"Organisations are about the people, and it is our people that make the difference. We are all one team, working for one university, towards one goal.

"Sara's work on the Academic Unification project helped to establish new pathways that seamlessly integrated vocational and higher education offerings. This revolutionised our educational approach by creating a culture where our VET teachers and academics work together," Ms Harrington said.

"At CQU, we are uniquely positioned with our education offerings to suit everyone – no matter what stage of their study journey they are at. Our curriculum and articulation allows a student to begin with VET in a Certificate I, and who knows, in decades to come they could be graduating with a PhD."

— By Tiahna Fiddling

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PAVING THE WAY TO A VET CAREER



For Daisy Brown, a unique connection with animals has paved the way to a career in the veterinary industry. In 2023, Daisy completed CQUniversity's Certificate II in Animal Studies through the Start TAFE Now (STN) program.

The STN program allowed the teenager to combine her high school studies as student at Charters Towers School of Distance Education, with CQU TAFE's vocational education and training (VET) course.

Having been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in primary school, Daisy's mother Gillian Brown said they struggled to find an education pathway that was right for her.

"CQU gave Daisy the opportunity to combine her love for animals with her academic pursuits in an inclusive and adaptive educational environment, tailored to her needs.

"Daisy has always had a very special relationship with animals, particularly horses and dogs," said Gillian.

"They have been the gateway to helping her communicate and gain confidence in a world that is often confusing and scary for her."

With the support of her family and educators, Daisy has demonstrated how accessible education can cater to all backgrounds and abilities

"We used Daisy's high school years to explore employment opportunities and create a seamless transition from Year 12 to working life in a job that is a perfect fit for her," Gillian explained.

"The hands-on training and placement opportunities even provided valuable skills for greater employability."

After a successful work experience placement at a local

veterinary clinic, Daisy was offered a Saturday morning job which evolved into an ongoing position of 17 hours a week.

"Tasks at work include bathing dogs in the hydro bath and providing laser treatment, pre and post-operative care, and general animal care," Gillian explained.

"Her dream is to become a vet nurse and she is well on her way to making that dream a reality."

The Certificate II in Animal Studies is a prerequisite for vet nursing, proving a pathway for Daisy to continue her studies in a Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing.

Gillian said Daisy's story is a testament to CQU's VET pathways in helping anyone achieve a fulfilling career.

"Seeing Daisy's progress has been incredible," Gillian said.

"While her journey hasn't been without its challenges, with the right support and a lot of determination, she has overcome them and continues to thrive."

"CQU gave Daisy the opportunity to combine her love for animals with her academic pursuits in an inclusive and adaptive educational environment."

– GILLIAN LLOYD

— By Tiahna Fiddling



LOOKING BACK WITH PRIDE

Toby Tosh has come a long way since completing his construction training at CQU TAFE in 2015, building a career from Bangkok to Brisbane brick by brick.

CQUniversity caught up with Toby as part of its 10-year anniversary celebrations of CQU merging with CQ TAFE to see what achievements he's made since his training. Although he completed his initial construction training in 2012 Toby undertook some of his apprenticeship block training with CQU TAFE in Mackay and Rockhampton in 2015 and received some support and assistance when he entered a WorldSkills Australia competition. Soon after WorldSkills, Toby secured a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help build the Australian Embassy in Thailand's capital, Bangkok.

"The experience I gained both professionally and personally on the trip to Thailand is something I still struggle to come to terms with," he said.

"After moving out of home as a young 19-year-old into the hustle and bustle of the centre of Bangkok, while supervising more than 20 Thai bricklayers at times, I came home with a wealth of knowledge in so many different aspects on life."

Toby competed in WorldSkills at the time at the behest of his CQU TAFE teachers Peter Carr and Tony Bishop.

"They saw potential in me after a flunked first attempt in a WorldSkills competition. They dragged me down to compete in the regionals where things finally clicked," he said. "I ended up topping the Queensland results and furthermore closely placed fourth in the national comp in Perth when I was just 18. The Bangkok opportunity came from this."

During the covid downturn he shifted temporarily into the

food manufacturing industry where he got to see a different side to business and export, but it wasn't long before the trowel dragged him back in and he decided to start his business.

"Since starting TLT Masonry I've taken on some larger commercial jobs, which are some of the largest projects I've been involved in since the Embassy in Bangkok," he said. "The largest so far being a 13-storey building and larger ones currently in the pipeline. Whilst some projects are quite large some of the ones I pride myself on the most are the smaller technical, architectural-type projects

we complete."

Toby is also passing on what he learned to his staff with one apprentice who has almost finished his training. He also currently has six employees with expansion in mind. He said he is thankful for the opportunities his training provided.

"Absolutely, particularly from the legend of Peter Carr who was my bricklaying teacher, I owe quite a lot of my success to Pete and I should also send a shout out to Tony Bishop," he said.

"TAFE training is incredibly important to build the knowledge base of your trade with things you may not see on site every day. It's also a chance to create relationships and opportunities for further expansion of your knowledge of the trade."

**"If I could offer any advice,
it would be to knuckle down
young, take all opportunities
you get thrown at you and
go hard!"**

— By Greg Chapman



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