

New scholarship boosts career opportunities for Kamilaroi woman

Making a difference to the lives of Aboriginal people with a disability is what drives Carroll Towney, the first recipient of the Growing Potential Scholarship.

The scholarship is a joint initiative between Growing Potential Limited and the University of New England (UNE) that will provide an opportunity for four Indigenous students to study a Graduate Certificate in NDIS Business Development between 2018 and 2021.

Carroll is a proud Kamilaroi woman, working as the Quality & Strategic Development Officer at Galambila Aboriginal Health Service in Coffs Harbour, NSW.

She travelled to Sydney to accept her scholarship at a function held at UNE's Sydney Campus.

"I was overwhelmed with emotion and didn't think I could do an acceptance speech," Carroll said.

"I would like to thank UNE Vice-Chancellor Professor Annabelle Duncan and Otto Henfling of Growing Potential Limited for the opportunity to study business development in disability services."

"The Graduate Certificate in NDIS Business Development Scholarship will allow me to gain greater knowledge to assist Galambila's workforce to respond to the needs of our clients with disabilities. It will also help my capacity to work along-side the Windaan team to provide culturally appropriate NDIS support to the Aboriginal Community of Coffs Harbour, giving the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes to our mob."

When asked what inspires her, Carroll said that as an Aboriginal woman she believes it is important to have role models who are a tower of strength to look up to.

"With the national NAIDOC theme for 2018 being 'Because of Her, We Can', I would like to acknowledge and give thanks to my sisters Tracey, Belinda, Alison and Megan. My sisters are my tower of strengths, we may not agree, we fight, but when I need support I know can rely on them giving me strength to carry on."

Professor Duncan congratulated Carroll on her scholarship and said the inter-sector partnership is a pathway to industry-specific education for graduates looking to future-proof their work and will boost Aboriginal leadership in the disability sector.

The scholarships will also deliver a range of learning support options to be provided by UNE's Oorala Aboriginal Centre and access to executive mentoring through Growing Potential Limited.

Applications for the 2019 Scholarship will be announced later this year. If you are interested in learning more about the Scholarship and would like to be kept up to date with proceedings, please contact info@growingpotential.org.au.

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