

Name: Dr Doseena Fergie OAM

Current role: Academic at Australian Catholic University

How long have you been a nurse/midwife? Since 1975 as a Nurse and 1976 as a Midwife

Why did you want to you want to become a nurse/midwife? To assist and support others, especially our people, in a field that did not have many of our Mob in this workforce.

What were the enablers and barriers for you to complete your degree? Pathway into nursing/midwifery – how did you get to where you are today? Enablers – Where and when I trained (hospital system) there were many of our Mob working at the hospital as cleaners. My family were among them and so I felt culturally safe and knew that because I lived in the Nurses Quarters, I could access them anytime for support. When I wanted to do my Higher Degree Studies (PhD) I was awarded a scholarship to do it and have an employed position in the tertiary education sector.

Barriers – There were no scholarships specifically offered to our Mob to advance in the Nursing and Midwifery field so having to support my Family as well as study further and become University trained and do postgraduate studies up to Masters level was challenging. After that I had to wait and concentrate on doing clinical work until a competitive PhD scholarship was available. I have also experienced racism and discrimination in our profession and this has caused me much angst. This even led me to think about changing professions.

Do you believe our nurses and midwives are role models for our communities, I know our workforce are good role models for our communities because they are culturally sensitive to our Mob's needs as well as being so skilful in their clinical work. We work hard and long for our Mob and wider society because our Mothers and Fathers did - it is in our genes to be caring and sharing and have that respect and compassion for others because we have been through so much trauma.

if yes do you think it is a priority that we increase our workforce and why? It is critical to increase our numbers because we offer so much to society in terms of not only giving quality service but a different worldview/perspective in dealing with situations. We bring knowledge of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island ways of healing which is important. I know we are a Deadly Mob in our profession by the feedback we receive and what I hear and see.

Making a difference for community We have made a big difference to our First Peoples community as well as the wider community. We not only bring quality clinical skills and competence but we also challenge the mainstream services by decolonising their world view so that we are better able to collaboratively work together for the community. We are better researchers and appreciated so much by our Mob because of our cultural awareness we bring a different dimension to research.