



Q1) Name: Karita McCarthy

Q2) Current role: Registered Nurse TEMHS Darwin NT

Q3) How long have you been a nurse/midwife? I start my first position as an RN on the 28/05/2020 with Top End Mental Health Services inpatient unit.

Q4) Why did you want to you want to become a nurse/midwife?

I have been in health since 1998, my positions have mostly been in healthcare, I have wanted to be a registered nurse my whole life, so after my children grew I decided to take myself back to University and pursue my dreams of being an RN.

Q5) 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?

Scholarships were the key to succeeding, I suggest that you apply for everything that is available. There are a lot of unpaid placements that you will have to budget for so make sure you save for these occurrences. My degree was very blessed and I was honoured to win a Puggy Hunter Scholarship, NTG Cadetship, various CDU scholarships and a Mediserve Nursing Scholarship. These equipped me with the funds I needed to survive a Degree. I also suggest applying for PCA rolls at your local hospital as a patient care assistance to build your skills and confidence for when you finish your studies. I encountered a lot of racism and bullying while on placements and lack of understanding about the importance of Indigenous Nurses and Midwives, the most common statement I received was “you don’t even look Aboriginal”. In Nursing you have to learn from a student to stay quiet and pick your battles. Our current battle is to close the gap and build our workforce so that we are no longer the minority. Just stay focused on your dreams and always aim for the bigger picture

Q6) Do you believe our nurses and midwives are role models for our communities? if yes do you think it is a priority that we increase our workforce and why?

For me my past is different to others, everyone has their own story and mine consists of some very bad decisions that stayed with me for a very long time. I draw on my story and my past to ensure that people know the whole me by speaking at schools, universities and public events. This is in the hope that I can become a role model and mentor to other people to know that anyone can turn their life around and succeed if they want to make that leap. Having worked in the NT most of my life I see a decline in the Indigenous workforce, we do not have many Indigenous Nurses or Midwives yet the patient ratio of Indigenous patients is very high especially in the NT. We need to ensure that our people are advocated for and cared for in a culturally appropriate manner to ensure cultural safety for all. This means looking after each other, our fellow staff, patients and their families.

CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NURSES AND MIDWIVES

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