

My name is Michelle Cutmore, I am a proud Gamilaroi woman from Moree in North West NSW and I have three children. I am from a family of 5 children, and the only one to finish high school and achieve higher education. I was an Aboriginal Health Worker but realised that nursing would allow me a greater scope of practice and management of the issues faced by my people therefore I completed my Bachelor of Nursing as a mature aged student at the University of Western Sydney in 2008.

My Mum and my eldest son introduced me to the health system. My son Andrew lives with cerebral palsy and together we have attended many health settings for this. My Mum as a young woman worked as a domestic in Sydney and then returned to Moree with the promise of a job as a nurse's aide if she put her age up to 16 years old. She could work in the Aboriginal only ward at the hospital with a handful of nursing skills. Thus, my interest in health began.

I began my work as an Aboriginal Health Worker in 1993, which was with an unaccredited course at Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service, and it was from my health worker role that I transitioned into becoming a registered nurse. My studies at university were difficult as I was juggling parenting of 3 children, my mum who was dying of COPD and the breakdown of my relationship, therefore it took me 6 years to complete my degree. I finished my university studies with the help of the NSW Health Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship and Cadetship program and have been a member of CATSIN (now CATSINaM) since 2003.

My passion has always been divided between providing grass roots care within the community as well as empowering and enabling more of my people to become nurses and midwives.

These passions have meant I have worked at:

- NSW Ministry of Health, Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy - to grow our own Nurses & Midwives, through a variety of pathways into a career.
- Western Sydney Local Health District board member for Mount Druitt, Blacktown, Westmead and Auburn hospitals so that nurses particularly Aboriginal nurses always had a voice in health care delivery.
- University curriculum development - I contributed to the curriculum development at the University of Western Sydney for Bachelor of Nursing students to increase knowledge and awareness of issues pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Aside from my current role as Nurse Navigator in Queensland Health, I would also like to create opportunities for sharing cultural knowledge and learning with my colleagues, that will ultimately increase cultural safety in the workplace for growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives workforce in Queensland Health.

I believe together we can increase the profile and meaningful contribution to closing the gap initiatives nationally.