

STUDENT STORY



Kiara Astbury

Graduated 2022

University: University of Wollongong (UOW)

Degree: Bachelor of Arts (BA)

Re-enrolled 2023

University: University of Wollongong (UOW)

Degree: BA Honours in History [BA (hons)]

Congratulations Kiara, its been a difficult few years to finish anything with the pandemic, how does it feel to graduate as an on-line student?

It's amazing, so rewarding. Studying on-line is very isolating and finding connection with yourself and your motives is a challenge at times when you are not surrounded by a student community. I was so happy to have the CUC for my final year. It made such a difference to my outcomes and made it easier to complete my degree. Being surrounded by similar people and having study friends to support you is quite central to success. Being on campus is such a different experience to on-line learning. The first two years of my degree were hard and lonely. I did it all on-line, you feel like you are missing out on something not being on campus but living regionally, this is the reality you face and until now there has been no alternative or support.

In what ways did the CUC facilitate better outcomes for you?

Not having to travel to access resources is a massive factor. The Centre has everything I need and having access to those facilities even at nights and weekends allows my studies the flexibility they need. I also found that my final year was the easiest to complete and I achieved the highest marks of my degree. Having the Centre at my doorstep made me want to study more, having that student fellowship motivates me to go in, have a laugh with friends, sit down and get on with it.

Where do see your career heading?

At this stage I don't have anything set in stone. I love history and my immediate plan is keep studying and see where that journey takes me. I am currently doing my Honours in History through the University of Wollongong and once I have completed that I would like to do my Postgrad in Ancient History. I like the idea of working for a museum or in tertiary education.

What advice would you give to other people considering studying higher education?

Do it! That's another great part of my life now. Since graduating I am now working for the University of Wollongong as the Outreach Co-ordinator for the Batemans Bay campus. My role is to assist school age kids in that exact decision. I will be delivering programs to encourage and nurture education pathways to university. I am really enjoying helping kids to make choices that reflect their interests and improve possible career outcomes. I am also the Indigenous Student Support advisor which I love, it's such a rewarding role.