

# STUDENT STORY



## Kirrily Dowling

Graduating 2024

**University:** University of Wollongong (UOW)

**Degree:** Master of Teaching (Secondary)

### **When did you decide to pursue higher education and what was your motivation?**

Well, this is my second wave of motivation. The first time was when I was completing my HSC I was doing really well and was offered early entry to Macleay College to study commerce. I wanted to study, I wanted to do commerce but I didn't want to leave my home town. Everything I loved and needed was here, the reality of leaving it all was something I wasn't prepared for so I didn't go. In 2016 I decided to begin my Bachelor of Arts with a double Major: Community Culture & Environment and Indigenous Studies. I had been working as an SLSO in schools and loved it so decided to pursue my Master of Teaching.

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

The Centre has saved me! It has been so central to successful outcomes for me. Having a business and being a single parent makes pursuing higher education almost unachievable but having somewhere to go and focus purely on what I needed to changed everything.

### **Where do see your career heading?**

Teaching is my bliss, working with kids that face challenges of any kind to connect with education is my main focus. Whether those challenges are physical, emotional or both. I especially love the "naughty ones" gaining their respect and being part of their journey from not wanting to be there to actually achieving great things and starting to have dreams is the most rewarding feeling.

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

Have a go! We are so lucky now to have the infrastructure and means to stay regional and study. That just wasn't an option when I was young. Having a place like The Country Universities Centre is a game changer too, being able to study online is one thing but having a physical place to go to and get support when you need it makes it more achievable. I think the big misconception around going to University is that you need to be a genius. You don't have to be in the top ten of your class or be really smart to kick goals at University, you just need to do the work and stay focused. You can also learn at your own pace and do it one subject at a time so it is not so overwhelming or time heavy.