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DENTAL STUDIES A TICKET HOME TO THURSDAY ISLAND FOR SINITTA

A Torres Strait Island student expects to fulfil a long held ambition of becoming the first Torres Strait Islander dentist based on her home island by 2016.

Sinitta Cloudy-Kris has been working toward a career in Dentistry since 2006 completing a school based traineeship as a Dental Assistant, obtaining a Certificate III in Dental Assistance and employment as a Dental Assistant.

She is currently in her second year as a Bachelor of Dental Surgery student at James Cook University (JCU) in Cairns.

Ms Cloudy-Kris is the recipient of the 2012 Morey Scholarship, one of five tertiary scholarships administered by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) under the Assistance with Tertiary Education Scheme (ATES).

The Morey Scholarship is sponsored by Queensland Senator Sue Boyce and is named after her paternal great grandfather Mr Fredrick E. Morey who operated a fleet of Pearl luggers in the Torres Strait.

Ms Cloudy-Kris said she had never considered a dental career in any other location.

"I am now looking at graduating in 2015 and I am looking forward to returning home to work.

"I think 5 years away from home for study is long enough and I would like to return as soon as possible.

"I am planning to work in the public sector because at the end of the day I want to help indigenous people and I believe this would be better accomplished in public health not private practice.

Ms Cloudy-Kris said JCU had three times more indigenous students than any other dental school in Australia.

"The university is more than happy to try and get more Indigenous dentistry students with the first two Aboriginal dentists expected to graduate from the school in December.

"There are currently 14 Indigenous students in dentistry but I am the only Torres Strait Islander.

"I consider myself more than lucky to have such great support from the staff in the school of dentistry and it's all really overwhelming.

"Also I am a young mum and having my son and study load that comes with dentistry it is full-on at times and hard to juggle but with support from my family and the staff at uni I seem to get by quite well."

Ms Cloudy-Kris said after her experience she would urge other Torres Strait students to take advantage of tertiary education opportunities.

“For those who are thinking about coming to uni I say just go for it you have got nothing to lose.

“If you want to study in the health field we need more health professionals especially dentists.

“Uni is such great place with so many supportive people.

“If there is something you are really interested in studying all you need to do is put in the time and effort and you can be whatever you want

“In the future it could take you to many different places.”

The TSRA scholarships have been awarded to university students from the region since 2002.

The annual scholarships are aimed at students who are undertaking fulltime, on campus university undergraduate study for the first time.

The scholarships assist students with the costs of relocating for study by providing financial assistance of \$6,000 per year for study and living expenses.



Caption: Sinitta Cloudy-Kris at work in the JCU School of Dentistry in Cairns

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