

My Future,
My Culture,
My Way.

NSW Department of Education

Case Study – Tahlia Gold

Who am I?

My name is Tahlia and I am an Aboriginal woman from the Warri Warri and Wiradjuri mob. I can happily say that after a hard year of studying and working, I have just finished my HSC. I was motivated to finish the HSC because I wanted to be able to look back on my school years and say that I finished, and I always knew that I wanted to go to university.

My careers advisor helped me to find my path

In my early years at High School, I didn't have a clear idea on what I wanted to pursue as a career. It wasn't until our careers advisor started sending out emails showing us the different opportunities that were available that I started to think about it. It was also very helpful that our careers advisor started to ask us what our goals were to help us to get there.

After having a think about the options that were available to me, I decided to complete the HSC through a SBAT, (Cert III in Education Support). I chose this course because I have always enjoyed being around and working with kids, and I wanted to have the job experience to see what it would be like in a working environment. As part of my SBAT I spent one day a week at Lakeland public school as a School Learning Support Officer of a mixed year 5/6 class.

One of the benefits of doing an SBAT is on the job experience

The best thing about doing an SBAT to finish the HSC is that you get the on-the-job experience. You can see what it is really be like to work in the industry that you are thinking of. As I have always enjoyed working with kids, I thought being a teacher would be a great career option for me.

While I loved the experience I had as a Learning Support Officer, I don't think I am suited to working in a classroom environment. From that realisation I have now decided to pursue a career path in Paediatric Dentistry. If I never pursued an SBAT, I wouldn't have known that being a teacher wasn't for me, and now as a result of completing the SBAT I have found the right career path to suit my interests and needs.

It's important to connect with Aunties and Uncles

At my high school there was a group for Aboriginal students to connect once a term, where we were immersed in culture and our history. We participated in smoking ceremonies, learnt how to paint in the traditional way and even how to cook bush tucker. Local Aunties and Uncles were invited, so that we could ask them questions about their life experiences.



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Aboriginal artwork created by Felicity Adams who is a proud descendant of the Kamilaroi people, currently living and learning on Dharug Country.





Talia celebrates the success of obtaining her HSC with her peers

Right next to our school there is a creek, that we were able to give its proper Aboriginal name to. Through the experience of naming the creek, we also learnt about the history and geography of the area. From this group I was able to feel connected to my culture at school, while making some very good friends.

My Mum was my biggest motivator

My parents were my biggest motivators through the HSC. My mum was always supportive of any goal that I had by helping me to get there. Whenever I was feeling overwhelmed by the workload, my mum helped me to calm down by writing down all the assignments that I had to do on a piece of paper and their due dates. From there she helped me to prioritise what was due first and break down the work into manageable portions.

It was also very motivating growing up in a family where everyone pursued different career paths. My mum is a correctional officer, my dad is a truck driver for different businesses, my sister wants to be a canine officer and my grandma is an electrician. I guess the variety of jobs that I saw my family members pursue, showed me that there are so many career paths out there to choose from, and no goal is too big or unachievable.

I destress through nature and drawing

To wind down and destress after a long day, I often read books, draw and go on walks.

I live at the foot of a mountain so the nature around where I live is very nice and relaxing. Another hobby of mine is drawing with charcoals, which makes me feel happy and calm. Listening to music is also another great way to de-stress.

I also work on the weekends in the Café. Talking to the different customers is also a nice break from studying although I needed to manage my time efficiently to manage work and school.

Breaking things down into little steps helps

If someone came to me, struggling with the HSC, I would comfort them and ask them what their goals are. I would then break down step by step what it will take to make their dreams happen. Breaking things down into little steps when you feel overwhelmed is the best way to calm down.

These are the questions and actions my mum took to support me when I was feeling stressed, and they work.