

We are more than you think...

Hi my name is Rachel and I am 23 years old. I did distant education for most of my school years and at the moment I am studying full time as a paramedic student and this is my story on how I got here.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Watalgan area which is just north of Bundaberg. I was born in the Bundaberg Base Hospital, seven minutes after my twin sister. My family lived on acreage and we owned lots of animals. Horses were some of the many animals we had, you cannot live on a farm without horses. If you have not already guessed, horses are my favourite animals.

I grew up with a loving mum, caring older sister and the best twin sister ever. I was very much the tomboy of the family and always looked out for by my family.

What school did you go to?

I started off doing home school after we moved to New South Wales. I then went to public school for a year. Then we moved back to Queensland and for one year I went to the Seventh Adventist School which is now called Coral Coast Christian School on the North side of Bundaberg. The rest of my schooling was distant education all the way up to year 12.

When did you know what you wanted to do?

Ever since I was five to six years old, I wanted to become a Doctor. I grew up in a broken home with financial hardship and a lot of negative extended family in my life telling me I was not smart enough to become a doctor, let alone get in to university. But I was not going to allow anything or anyone get in the way of my dreams. As I got to my teenage years, my dream to become a doctor slightly changed and I passionately became a Paramedic instead.

Why did you want to do it?

I wanted to be Paramedic because I love helping people and if possible be a part of giving others a second chance at life. I am very much an extrovert and love making new friends and experiencing things I have not tried. In 2014 I joined the Rural Fire Service and within a year and half I was elected to become an officer in my Local Rural Fire Brigade. I have learned the real meaning of working together as a team and have learnt to take on small and big responsibilities. The guys that I work with in my Rural Fire Brigade have become a part of my family. Being part of Rural Fire service helped me confirm the decision that the emergency line of work was something I wanted as part of my life. Having the ability to be part of saving properties, livestock and potentially people's life is a very rewarding job. This gives me joy to give my time or others.

As Ben Carson quotes – 'Happiness does not result from what we get, but from what we give'.

Did you have a plan?

I did have a plan on how to get there. My plan was to do Certificate IV in Health Care Ambulance and use that for entrance into university. I did not bother to get a OP score when I finished year 12 because I was planning on doing a Cert IV. The Cert IV did not work out due to the curriculum being updated to whole new set up, plus my paramedic mentors advised me to stop and do STEPS at the

university in Bundaberg. STEPS stands for Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies and this got me to straight entry to Bachelor degree of Paramedic Science.

What was the biggest or hardest challenge you faced in getting to where you are now?

My biggest challenge would be not having adequate funds to buy textbooks, afford residential school expenses, student uniforms, travel expenses and clinical placement expenses. But whenever I had needed money for these University expenses, God has always provided a way for me whether by me working, or people feeling impressed to give without knowing I need it.

What do you have to say to others who want to be like you?

I would like to encourage them first by saying never let go of your dreams even if you are come from a broken home, or are experiencing financial hardship or dealing with negative people in your life. You are a very special individual and have your own hopes and dreams and you should be able to pursue your dreams. I would like to encourage you to stick to it no matter how hard it might get. Trust me, it is not walk in the park but end result is definitely worth it. Keep your eyes on the goals you have made.

What do you wish you knew earlier?

I wish I knew about STEPS earlier. STEPS is amazing abridgement course that readies you for University. I recommend anyone who wants to get into university that has not finished Year 12, received a low OP score, or didn't bother getting a OP score, to do STEPS.

What do you wish you knew earlier?

The advice I would give my younger self would be finding more positive people and supportive people to be part of my life.

Did you ever think be where you are now?

No – not at all! Although I had the dreams and goals I set, I still thought it will only stay just that – the dreams I imagined. Through my journey I have been able to meet some incredible people, work with amazing and supportive people. I also received a personal invite to be part of Golden Key International Honour Society. The Golden Key International Honour Society provides benefits and privileges pertaining membership of society based on top 15 percent academic achievement and I am proud to be a part of it.

Are you proud to be from Bundaberg region?

I am definitely proud to be from the Bundaberg Region, I am a 'Bundy Bogan' through and through. I also had the honour and privilege of representing the Rural Fire Service in the Bundaberg region when the Governor of Queensland, His Excellency Paul De Jersey and his wife visited Bundaberg. Bundaberg is my hometown and will always be my hometown even if I have to move away for work.

What's next?

My future plans are to finish my degree, become the best paramedic I can be and never stop learning. I am unsure where I will be stationed once I graduate but I am looking forward to experiencing all the opportunities that come my way.



Rachel Curnuck



Watch the video!

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