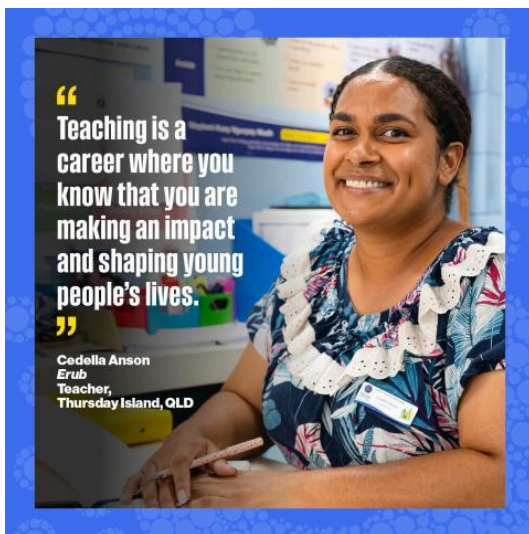




Providing a culturally safe and supportive environment for all students: Cedella's story.



Teachers often play a unique and influential role in our lives – a role which can continue to shape us long after we leave the classroom.

Whether it be within school gates or behind a desk, the value of a teacher cannot be overstated, nor their impact underestimated.

For Cedella Anson, a Erub Neur from Darnley Island in the Torres Strait, it was a teacher who encouraged her in to following a similar pathway.

“My Aunt was the first person who inspired me to become a teacher,” Cedella says.

Her Aunt taught across remote Queensland communities. Cedella recalls students always going out of their way to say hello.

“I felt really inspired (by these gestures) because it made me think she made an impact for them.

“So, then I thought after I had my first child, I need to get into education because I too want to make a difference,” Cedella says.

As a mother to one and a baby on the way, Cedella's final year of university was no easy feat.

“On Monday I gave birth to my second son and on Thursday I remember going to class.

“I was so determined.

“I just thought if I do this for my boys, they'll always see me as a strong Blak woman and that it doesn't matter what your circumstances are, you can get through it,” Cedella recalls.

Flash-forward to present, Cedella is now a secondary teacher and level coordinator.

While reflecting on her journey, she notes that becoming a teacher amongst other things, gave her choices.

She speaks of her experiences with education not only as a teacher, but a learner too, and the importance of acknowledging and recognising both First Nations and Western teaching systems.

“Education gives you so many options.

“You can step into different worlds – I can be educated in my Islander world and in the Western world.

“It opens your mind and gives you confidence,” Cedella says.

Cedella prides herself on being a teacher who provides a culturally safe and supportive environment for all her students - her lived experience and deep cultural understanding underpinning her craft.

“I feel like nobody will know our kids like we know our kids,” Cedella says.

“As Indigenous people, we have that intrinsic connection with each other and I am able to acknowledge and enforce cultural things all the time, such as being culturally strong and educating them on the importance of knowing their identity”.

Cedella hopes that her story will encourage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to consider a rewarding career in teaching.

“I hope that I can inspire others to understand how they can make a difference too.

“There are so many benefits to teaching.

“You'll be in a career where you know that you make an impact, where you know that you're shaping young people's lives, or, the next generation,” Cedella says.

To find out more about a rewarding career in teaching, go to www.BeThatTeacher.gov.au.