

Networking Tranby project: Student Experiences around Glebe

Patsy Robertson



Patsy Robertson lived in Glebe before she even heard about Tranby, but she is a Cape York Murri from Far North Queensland. Her grandmother was from Ayapathu and Wik Mungkan is her language. But Patsy's mother was taken away from her family in the Stolen Generation policies and put on a barge to the mission at Mapoon. Her family kept in touch with her and Patsy's mother grew up there. But later she took her young family, including Patsy as a child, to Cairns then to Mt Isa, then back to Cairns.

As an adult, Patsy herself faced much family tragedy. She loved spending time at old Mapoon but, hoping to make a new start, she moved to Glebe. Her friends in Queensland had told her that Tranby was somewhere they had been able to go to fill in the gaps in their education and get the qualifications they needed. Tranby was just up the road from where she lived in Glebe, so she decided to give it a go.

Patsy had had a hard time when she first arrived in Glebe from Cairns. She was a single mum with four children. One of the places she had found support and assistance was the 'After Dark' program:

I used to go to the After Dark Program on a Friday night to get something to eat and just mix with the mob. ... We relied on those services a lot like the Youth Service. I'd go there just on a weekday just to meet the other ladies there with their kids, we'd have a coffee and we'd get to know people and start to socialise and get a bit of a support system around me.

Patsy enrolled in **Community Development at Tranby in 2010** because:

Patsy at Family Day, Glebe NAIDOC 2015



Patsy setting up for kids at Glebe Youth Centre 'After Dark' program

'Knowledge is power. Education is the key....

...it was just so easy to come here and be with all the other mob and learning and getting that support from them and seeing other Indigenous people studying and running co-ops and housing co-ops and all this type of thing. So I've met a lot of people from here and it was really enjoyable.

It took Patsy 3 years to do her 2 year course because she had more family tragedy and sorry business responsibilities. But she pushed on because she wanted to be a role model for her family. She wanted them to be able to say: "If Auntie Patsy can do it, I can do it!"

Today – with her community development qualification – Patsy is back at the After Dark program but as a counsellor and adviser.

'Wow! Now I'm on the other side and I'm getting the food ready for everybody and they're coming up to me and asking for advice and talking and, "Oh you went to Tranby" and building up that respect.

They know that they can trust me because I've been in all these situations in my whole life and I know what it's like!