

MEDIA RELEASE

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Photos are available in high-resolution upon request

Country nursing scholarships

Memorial for London attack victim Kirsty Boden

Two local mature aged students have been awarded scholarships to complete their nursing degree with Flinders University in honour of Loxton-born nurse Kirsty Boden.

Third-year Flinders University students Tammy Stephenson and Hollie Bullock are the 2021 recipients of the Kirsty Boden Nursing Memorial Scholarship which grants them \$10,000 towards their studies at the University's Renmark campus.

The annual scholarship is supported by a grant from the Government of South Australia and is named in honour of Kirsty Boden, a young nurse who tragically died in the London Bridge Terror attacks in 2017.

Ms Stephenson, of Monash, and Ms Bullock from Loxton, say they are only able to pursue their nursing studies because the course is offered close to home.

"If nursing wasn't offered through Flinders rural campus in Renmark, I would not have been able to undertake my nursing degree," Hollie says.

"Being only 45 minutes from home means I can attend contact hours at uni easily. Studying at Renmark has so many benefits. You feel like a big family having smaller class sizes and the same lecturers for numerous topics, so you build very close relationships."

Unlike many of their nursing peers, they came to the profession later in life after juggling motherhood and other careers including jobs in the health care industry.

They are now facing their final year of studies before graduating next year with plans to gain employment as registered nurses working somewhere close to home.

Tammy – whose daughter Alana was a scholarship recipient in 2020 – says she feels "completely humbled" to be granted the scholarship in the name of Kirsty who demonstrated that "caring for people is not a profession but a value".

"I feel this is a realisation I have come to over the past few years of nursing study, that is, you can be taught nursing principles but the care you apply to people is something that doesn't leave you when you're not on shift. It's a part of who you are," she says.

Hollie says she is honoured to receive the scholarship and remembers vividly the sorrow within her community at the time of Kirsty's death.

Hollie pursued her dreams of becoming a nurse after spending 12 years as a dental assistant, and becoming a mother to two children, now aged seven and five.

“I reached a point in my career after completing my family, where I wanted more of a challenge,” she says.

“There are so many different aspects and career choices being a Registered Nurse, therefore I can always challenge myself by changing what area I work in or continuing to study.”

Both Hollie and Tammy have experienced the real world of nursing by completing various work placements as part of their studies, including a four-week stint in the Northern Territory.

Tammy spent the time in the remote town of Tennant Creek and was exposed to child, family health care and community nursing.

“I enjoyed becoming part of the local community and meeting the local Warrumunga people as many of the women shared some of their special places and stories with me which was such a privilege,” she says.

“These placements are essential in putting theory into practice. They also provide you with a broader understanding of how broad nursing can be and therefore expand your ideas of career options.”

Flinders University Nursing Course Co-ordinator Associate Professor Pauline Hill says students who complete their degree from the Renmark campus reap the benefits of rural practice.

“Regional nurses have greater responsibility and are exposed to a variety of patients and scenarios within a multidisciplinary team of health workers,” Associate Professor Hill says.

“Our Renmark students also become registered nurses who are more autonomous and in touch with their community.”

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