



MEDIA RELEASE

September 2016

## **Bond for life as students see the light at the end of the tunnel at GUC**

Two students who are set to graduate with a CQUniversity Bachelor of Learning Management (Early Childhood Education) have shown the enormous opportunities and achievements that are possible for Mid-West residents undertaking tertiary studies at GUC.

"It feels surreal," they both said almost simultaneously, when asked how they felt about the amazing achievement of reaching the end of their undergraduate studies.

Rianna Pension (23 year old Aboriginal student) and Norisah Ajaran (mature aged student of Cocos Malay heritage) may have come from very different paths but they are now approaching the completion of a profound journey together as they come out the other side as professional Early Childhood Educators.

"Every year you do, you still feel like its ten-thousand miles away," Rianna explained in retrospect. On starting her final year she said to herself, "I've done this for four years, I can do this! (We) just couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel and finally we're here."

"You just have to pinch yourself and ask; is it really finishing ... are we really there?" Norisah continued, "four years seems a long, long time, but it just went so fast."

Both high achieving students have been studying together for five years, having started in 2012 in CQUniversity's STEPS Bridging program supported at GUC.

"Thanks goodness for STEPS," Rianna exclaimed. "If it wasn't for STEPS we would've been struggling along the way," Norisha added. "We wouldn't be teachers," continued Rianna. "It was the best thing I did," Norisah surmised.

Through studying together at GUC the pair have developed a close relationship and formed a strong lifelong bond.

"The relationship, Norisah and I," started Rianna, "Yeah, we've been through the whole thing together," extended Norisah, "I've had Norisah from the start and I don't ever want to leave her," Rianna said.

The pair are currently setting out on their last teaching practicum before graduating in the four-year CQUniversity undergraduate course. GUC Director Natalie Nelmes chipped in sarcastically "You'd better get the same school then," to which Rianna jokingly replied "we come as a team."

"I'm her Uni mum and I love her. The bond that we've shared in the class, with the rest of the class, is just something you can't break," Norisah concluded.

**Ends** For further information please contact the GUC on 9920 4400



# geraldton universities centre

**Photo Credit:** (From left to right) Rianna Pension, Tiambra Calvin (GUC Aboriginal Student Support Officer), Norisah Ajaran