



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 21 April 2017,

2017 delivers another milestone graduation ceremony for Geraldton Universities Centre.

Over 400 dignitaries, VIPS, family and friends packed the Queens Park Theatre on Thursday evening, 20 April, as Geraldton Universities Centre celebrated the graduation of another 27 students.

Rianna Pension, the first Aboriginal education student to deliver the GUC Graduation Address, summed up her achievement in graduating with Bachelor of Learning Management (Early Childhood Education) from CQUniversity.

"I studied my Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as this was my dream job from 5 years old. I remember the positive impact and caring nature of my Pre Primary teacher and I want to be able to be that person for many other children. I truly believe that if children are guided in the right direction and have a positive influence in their life, they will achieve whatever they want to achieve," Ms Pension said.

"To think after a hard 4 years, it has all paid off and we have formally received our testamur stating that we are qualified teachers for the future generations. It is so exciting," added Ms Pension.

Rianna was one of 12 students to graduate with the Bachelor of Learning Management in Early Childhood or Primary Education and were joined by 10 graduates in the Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching (Secondary) in what was a big year for GUC and professionally qualified education graduates.

Other graduates included the first graduate in the CQUniversity Bachelor of Psychological Science – with Honours, as well as Bachelor degrees in Business and the University of Southern Queensland's Associate Degree in Engineering.

2016 graduate with Distinction in Bachelor of Accounting/Bachelor of Business (Management) Debbie Carson also capped off her exceptional achievements in being awarded the CQUniversity School of Business and Law School Medal.

"I'm really proud of this achievement, it was completely unexpected of course, but really nice to be acknowledged for the hard work, commitment and sacrifices that it took to be deserving of this award," Ms Carson said.

"I felt very supported at GUC, the tutors and staff were always very helpful and accommodating to our needs as students. As a working mum who was also studying through GUC full-time, it was an amazing opportunity to be able to study a predominantly online course, but also have the academic and administrative support locally. Having access to the GUC tutors was an asset to my learning, and I feel that it was their contribution and support that enabled me to achieve the academic results that I did," said Ms Carson

GUC students are exposed to local industry networks within their professional fields from their first year of study through to their graduation and beyond. GUC graduates are not only highly skilled



but highly valued as potential employees in local industries, building local community capacity and keeping some of our finest and brightest graduates in the Mid West.

“With the growth in student numbers and reflected in the 27 graduates this year - most of whom have already secured work in the region – the GUC model is proving over and over again to be an immensely valued asset in the community. GUC fulfils an important social and economic role – addressing our very low tertiary participation rates and developing the skilled workforce we need for today and tomorrow,” said Steve Douglas, Chair, GUC Board.

Whilst providing the administration, student and pastoral support that traditional city-based University campus's offer, the unique GUC University model allows regional students the flexibility of studying online with GUC university partners whilst being supported with face-to-face tutorials and practical intensives from dedicated local professionals.

“We learnt that no matter what journey you had been on to get to this point, we were all heading in the same direction. In my cohort alone we had super hero Mums, fresh newbie high school graduates, men making a positive difference and of course they had to put up with all of us girls. If this doesn't show that anyone can achieve their dreams with the right support, then nothing will. University wasn't a walk in the park, but boy was it worth it,” said Ms Pension.

In 2017 GUC now has 300 students enrolled across 12 programs of study with University partners CQUniversity and the University of Southern Queensland.

Ends For further information please contact the GUC on 9920 4400

Photo Credit: Graduation photos as listed, Dragonfly Media.