



Media Release

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Apprentice chef chases her dream

TAFE Queensland North cookery student, Charlene Dass has found her true calling.

The Cairns mother of two is an apprentice chef at the Pullman Cairns International.

“I wanted to be a chef when I was younger, but I didn’t end up following that path. Instead I worked in administration and focused on raising my kids,” she said.

Ms Dass said she woke up one morning and knew it was time for a change.

“When my kids got a little older I enrolled at TAFE Queensland North in the Certificate II in Kitchen Operations.

“I did it all on my own, without an apprenticeship and the course really drove my passion even more for cooking.

“I really enjoyed the program; it totally opened up my eyes to how complex the whole kitchen scene actually is, it intensified my craving to be a chef,” she said.

Ms Dass said things continued to fall into place.

“I took part in a vocational placement with the Pullman Cairns International and was later offered an apprenticeship.

“It was such a great opportunity to gain work experience at the Pullman Cairns International; it has such a big kitchen and I was able to learn so much,” she said.

Ms Dass has continued her studies at TAFE Queensland North.

“I am now studying a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery and I have been leaning about butchery and dabbling in pastry, it has been really interesting and fun.

“The training kitchens at TAFE Queensland North are very well equipped and I love my TAFE teachers. It’s not every day you find teachers like them, they know so much,” she said.

Ms Dass is happy she didn't put off her cookery career any longer.

"Every day I learn something new, it is such a good career as it is never boring because you are always learning.

"One of my highlights so far would be when I got to create and prepare food for the Torres Strait Employment and Training Recognition Awards on Thursday Island.

"I was acting as head chef for the event and I got some really great feedback about the food," she said.

TAFE Queensland North General Manager, Joann Pyne is encouraging others to seize the day in 2017.

"It is wonderful that Charlene is pursuing her passion and enjoying every minute of it.

"I would encourage other people who are thinking about studying, not to hold off any longer if they want to launch their career, upskill for a promotion or change career paths entirely.

"TAFE Queensland North has over 250 courses, flexible study options and eligible students may be able to access subsidised courses and funding support," Ms Pyne said.

To find out more about studying with TAFE Queensland North, visit the Cairns campus, call 1300 656 959 or log on to www.tafenorth.edu.au

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