



Media Release

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From Special Forces to master chef

TAFE Queensland North student, Paul Rotherham, 60, is swapping disaster zones for the heat of the kitchen.

“I used to be a diving instructor with the army, I flew helicopters in overseas war zones, I have also worked in search and rescue, and had jobs with the Special Forces and in counter terrorism,” he said.

While many people his age are preparing for retirement, Mr Rotherham is embarking on a new career path, learning how to professionally prepare and serve food at TAFE Queensland North.

“I’ve lived all over the world and I have not always been very impressed with the food overseas.

“When you have limited supplies to work with you do find yourself getting adventurous in your cooking, so I’ve developed a real passion for creating things in the kitchen,” he said.

Mr Rotherham is currently studying for a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery.

“Five years ago I bought a café in Victoria because I am never going to retire, so the café is my retirement option, so I can slow down a little but still keep working and stay active.

“It’s funny, two years ago I didn’t even know what a barista was and now I’m looking at taking a barista course with TAFE Queensland North,” he said.

Mr Rotherham said he is enjoying his course work at TAFE Queensland North.

“The instructors are so dedicated; they are magnificent people who really know their stuff.

“I genuinely feel that what I am learning here is 100% preparing me for working in a real-life kitchen.

“The trainers here teach you the basics and make you produce five star meals and getting out there in the industry, under pressure, I’ll have to keep the standards up and that will be a challenge,” he said.

Mr Rotherham hopes he can combine his two biggest passions for a dream working life.

“The best job I’ve ever had in this area was with GBR Helicopters, flying people over the reef and rainforest. I’ve still got a few years left in me for flying, so I would love to get a job cooking five days a week and maybe piloting a helicopter the other two days,” he said.

Mr Rotherham said returning to study as a mature age student wasn’t daunting.

“There are so many mature aged students on campus, it doesn’t matter how old you are people always want adventure, excitement and to keep active and for me, learning does that,” he said.

TAFE Queensland North Executive Director, Susan Kinobe agreed that upskilling is for people of all ages.

“No matter where you are at in life, whether you are looking to improve your employment outcomes or gain more personal fulfilment, our door is always open for people who want to learn,” Ms Kinobe said.

To find out more about studying with TAFE Queensland North call 1300 656 959, visit the Cairns campus in Manunda or log onto <http://tafenorth.edu.au/>

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