

Past Student Spotlight

Belinda Duiker (1998)



Belinda Washington (Duiker) – Attended St George State High School from 1994 to 1998.

Year graduated: 1998 – Year 12.

While at St George State High School I participated in the The Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program (AITAP) and remember entering a public speaking competition at Nudgee college. I came third overall in that competition. I was supported by Mrs Tracey Campbell who was working for the school at the time. This was the first time I attempted anything other than sport at school. I believe it was a stepping stone to have some self-belief in my ability to attempt anything out of my comfort zone.

Plans after leaving school: My plans after leaving high school were to move to Brisbane and train to become a personal trainer and work in a gym. I did not consider anything academic in my future at the time.

I worked at a few different places in Brisbane and then returned back to St George and started working as a transport officer at Goondir Health Service. I then trained to become a receptionist and then completed my Cert 4 as an Aboriginal Health Worker in 2000 at Goondir Health Service.

University studies: I transferred to the Goondir Health Service in Toowoomba and was encouraged to enrol at USQ into a Bachelor of Nursing – I continued to work while studying and completed the degree in 2006.

I then returned to St George and worked at the St George Hospital for the next eight years and I also worked a small amount of time at the Dirranbandi hospital as a Registered Nurse.

I then relocated back to Toowoomba and worked as a practice nurse at Carbal Medical Center.

In 2012 I applied for a position at the Northern Territory Medical Program and after a long process was offered a position at Flinders University in the Northern Territory. I then started my study in 2013 as a first year medical student (I also had 2 young children by this stage and it had been many years since any formal study).

I completed a Doctor of Medicine (MD) in 2017 and worked in Darwin, Palmerston and Townsville Hospitals – mostly working in the emergency departments.

What I am currently up to: Currently I am working as a General Practitioner Registrar in the Northern Territory. I am now training to become a *Rural Generalist* [with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine](#).

I have had the opportunity to travel Australia while studying and working from Alice Springs to Darwin to Townsville and many other places in between. During this time, I was able to meet a lot of wonderful people and role models along the way.

Advice to current students: Never limit yourself and take opportunities as they present themselves even if you don't feel ready. I was never a great student, but I have been able to learn that it is never too late to have a go and see where it will take you. Believe in yourself and learn along the way – you will never feel completely ready for the next step. Study hard and never given up on your dreams.

In 2018 the class of 1998 organised a 20th High School Reunion. It was a great night 😊.

Dr Belinda Washington.