

COURAGE, RESILIENCE AND OPTIMISM



COVID restrictions have tested us all in different ways. People living in Greater Shepparton have had a tougher time than many others in regional cities in Australia, especially with our recent lockdowns.

But our community has pulled together in extraordinary ways and shown incredible courage, resilience and optimism to get through tough times.

We spoke to some of our participants to ask them about their personal experiences and how they have dealt with the many challenges they have faced in the last 19 months.

"It was a wonderful feeling in the community when we finished isolation. The mood was incredible. We fought it and we got through it, and we know 100% that we can do it again."

Shaelyn Crowhurst

Bachelor of Nursing, La Trobe University

Shaelyn moved to Shepparton four years ago from Alice Springs. She is 18 and has a part-time job in customer service at Coles. Shaelyn started university this year and wants to work in paediatrics or ER nursing.

"Starting university and working in customer service has really helped me to develop my confidence this year and my personal skills have grown so much. Some customers at work are angry when they can't buy certain products because of Covid, but I've learned that all I can do is explain things and keep my composure and not let it affect me.

"I know now that change can happen, and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. But if you don't fight it, it can turn out to have a positive outcome.

"For example, remote learning has been a challenge for me and my three younger siblings. But I'm glad I've had the extra time at home to help them, especially as both my parents are essential workers and can't be here during the day."





Jake Zerbato

**Year 11, Greater Shepparton
Secondary College**

Seventeen year old Jake has a part-time after school job at Fun Planet in Kialla and he plays A Grade Men's basketball with The Sharks and football with the United Football Club. Jake wants to become a builder or an electrician when he leaves school.

"I've missed not working or playing sport regularly, but I've been helping around the house and also doing quite a bit of work with my dad at home. We recently cleaned out our shed and painted the whole thing which was good to do.

"Family has been really important – my sisters and my mum and dad. We can't see my aunties, uncles and cousins, but we Zoom with them every week and we talk and play games together and stay in touch that way.

"My teachers have been great with remote learning. One of the things I've learned is that I can keep myself motivated with my school work and just focus in on what I need to do. I know now that I can do it and that's been a good thing to learn about myself."



Shelby O'Brien

**Housing Services Officer, Department
of Family Fairness & Housing**

As well as working, Shelby is studying for a Certificate IV in Community Services. She is an active member of the Aboriginal Support Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals.

"Working from home has been a big challenge for me. My partner and my housemates are all essential workers, so I have been the only one at home. My course work has also been a mixture of some classes and remote learning.

"I try to keep in contact with other people as much as I can and looking after my two dogs has kept me busy as well.

"Helping others has been important too. During lockdown, a lot of our clients have struggled. So we've been making a point of staying close to people we know who aren't travelling too well. We make time to have a chat with them about things that aren't necessarily housing related.

"The local community spirit in lockdown has been amazing, there is no other word for it. Everyone came together to support each other in whatever way they could."



Ella Morgan

Year 9, Goulburn Valley Grammar School

Fifteen year old Ella wants to become an engineer or a lawyer. She volunteers with the Gowala Homework Club at Rumbalara, plays netball with the Shepparton Swans and likes riding horses when she can.

"These recent times have been challenging in ways that I hadn't expected in terms of feeling a bit isolated and disconnected, even though I'm always on the phone to my friends. It's also been a challenge to stay motivated and focused when you are learning remotely. But we are all in the same boat and our teachers have been really excellent.

"I've found it's helpful to take things one step at a time and do things that help me stay in the present. I get out every day for a walk and I love baking, especially cakes. Mars Bar Slice is my favourite."

"These times have definitely strengthened my resilience and the way I look at things. I've had to find my own way through, and I'm focusing on the positive side of things. It's not always easy, but you have to stay optimistic and I have great support through my family, friends and teachers."

Jarrara Atkinson

Bachelor of Arts & Law, University of Melbourne

Jarrara is in the fifth year of his degree. He works part-time as a National Indigenous Recruiting Co-ordinator at Officeworks. Jarrara is 23. He wants to provide pro bono legal support for those in the community who can't afford it.

"Living and studying in Melbourne is very different now to when I first started my degree. All my tutoring has been online and of course, we've been in lockdown often. But I've grown a lot over the last 19 months. Basically, I've had a lot of spare time to get to know who I am and to think about what I want to do with my life.

"There's no point being negative, because that's not going to get you anywhere. You're so much better off being an optimist and having a 'can do' attitude, because that really impacts your actions and your outlook."

"These days I focus on the smaller things and all the good things that are still happening in my life and in society as a whole. My family are all healthy and happy which is grouse. I have a few good mates who live nearby. I cook great food. University has been very supportive. Life is what you make it and mine is good."

NEW FACES AND ROLES AT GANBINA

A big welcome to our new General Manager, Laurienne Winbanks, who started with Ganbina in July. Welcome as well to our new Education Program Project Officer, Jade Beaman. And congratulations to Lisa Marsden who has been promoted from Education Program Project Officer to Education Program Co-ordinator.

Our sincere thanks to Larissa Falla, our outgoing General Manager, who contributed so much to Ganbina over the last two and a half years. Larissa has taken up a role with the Department of Education & Training and we look forward to working closely with her in future.



Laurienne Winbanks

General Manager

Laurienne previously worked for the Greater Shepparton City Council as the Manager of Citizen Services. Prior to this, she held management and customer services roles in the transport, tourism and financial services sectors. "I am passionate about issues that really matter to the community and I am very much looking forward to sharing my experience and skills with the team," she said. Laurienne has a Bachelor of Business from RMIT. Laurienne lives in Shepparton with her husband and has two daughters.



Jade Beaman

Education Program Project Officer

Jade is a former Koorie Kare case worker with the Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative (GEGAC). She has a Bachelor of Youth Work and Youth Studies from RMIT. "I love working with young people and I'm looking forward to getting to know the youth and families who are with Ganbina, and doing everything I can to help them develop their full potential," she said. Jade grew up in Melbourne and has recently moved to the local area from Berwick to take up her new role with Ganbina.



Lisa Marsden

Education Program Co-ordinator

A proud Gunai/Kurnai woman, Lisa has been working with Ganbina for the last 13 years as an Education Program Project Officer. In her new role, she will be responsible for managing other Project Officers in the team. "I love empowering young people to believe in themselves, and always do their best to be the most amazing role models for the next generation." Lisa married her childhood sweetheart. They have three children and five grandchildren.

