Mapping the Youth Sector' kick starts Hal Simons career in youth work

Hal Simons had no prior experience in youth work before enrolling in the course Mapping the Youth Sector. Hal said that when he enrolled in the course; “I was actually working in retail, I was at a hardware store in the city as well as doing some waitering and bar work on weekends. Mapping the Youth Sector was actually the only course, because of time constraints, that I could make happen and still keep my retail job”

Hal described what attracted him to the course Mapping the Youth Sector, and his knowledge of youth work prior to enrolling “I wanted to find out what Youth Work is. And what specific area might interest me the most. I had only heard a small amount about youth work as I hadn't worked in the Youth sector before. I wanted a subject that would give me a taste of things to come; informative about not only what I might learn in the program (Bachelor of Social Science (Youth Work)), but also the various areas and fields that I can move into when I finished it. And also some of what I might expect or experience out in the ‘real world’. This course was perfect! It provided everything I wanted and kept me coming back for more.”

Hal shared his experience of doing Mapping the Youth Sector. “I loved the course! For me it was a first taste of university and I couldn't get enough. I really enjoyed the open and free spirited discussions not only with my fellow students, but also with my lecturers. For someone who hadn't studied since high school, about 6 years, I found the course work and the assignments a challenge, but doable. And the teachers were more than happy to help with any questions or issues I had. The learning environment was really friendly. People got on really well with each other and it created a really nice vibe. And it was a really great safe where you could discuss anything. For example; you could have a heated discussion with someone about the issue and then go out for a drink with that person. It was a really great environment. And the guest speakers were great.”

Hal learnt what he hoped to from doing the course. “What I learnt from apart from the fact that this is the industry I want to get into, it gave me an understanding of some of the different levels of youth work, from prevention to intervention to incarceration, and that there are a lot of organisation out there making a difference, such as CREATE, Headspace, and Beyond Blue and tackling a whole range of issues facing young people today. I also learnt that there are people out there like me, making a difference and speaking up for those who might not have a voice. Doing the course was also a bit of a confidence boost; I hadn’t studied since high school and it reassured me that after 6 years, my grey matter could rise to the occasion - I got a High Distinction.”

Hal said the best part about the course “was meeting like minded individuals. We could toss ideas around, work on projects, and hangout outside of uni”.

Studying Mapping the Youth Sector also strengthened Hal’s interest to become a youth worker, and he used the course as a springboard to enrol into Bachelor of Social Science (Youth Work) three year degree.

Hal would recommend the course to anyone interested in finding out more about youth work. “Its great not only as first taste of youth work course, but it contains a lot of great information. Its appropriate for so many types of people. But I can say that for someone starting out in the industry, it was extremely helpful”