Success Stories

The Employment and Related Accommodation (ERA) program is designed specifically for Aboriginal people from remote areas. The program enables Aboriginal people to fulfil their study or employment goals in large towns and regional centres.

The ERA program is made up of unique individuals who believe in striving for the best and making a difference. The following people have broken down barriers and are working towards a bright future. Below are some of their stories and their journey in trying to achieve their goals.
Mark – International aspirations

“The ERA program makes the decision to move and study a lot easier.”

Mark is a young student currently living in an ERA property in Armidale. He had never thought about moving because of the financial responsibilities of moving. For Mark, the ERA program has allowed him to study and live in a nice place in a regional centre.

“I was afraid of moving because I would have to find a place to live and I knew I would not be able to cope financially because I could not work enough hours to support myself because I study full-time,” he said.

“This program has allowed me to do everything I wanted to do.

“The house is nice, clean, tidy and modern and I can still study full time and work towards completing my International Studies degree.

“This is a very exciting time for me because students in remote areas do not have the same choices as people living in larger cities so I feel very lucky.

“I am now thrilled about the future and all the opportunities that I have because of this program,” he said.

Scott – What a difference a year makes

“Providing housing is an important step that can propel people to a positive future.”

Scott is a mature aged student enrolled in a hospitality degree at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. Scott wanted to pursue a career in hospitality and successfully applied for the ERA program. He has been living in an ERA property for around 12 months.

“I have been living in an ERA house for around a year now and it has made such a difference to my life,” he said.

“I always wanted to study hospitality. I tried living on campus at first but being a mature aged student the atmosphere just didn’t suit me. I needed a place that would allow me to focus on my studies. The ERA program was perfect because it allowed me to stay in a house that is affordable so I could continue with my degree.

“The ERA program gives you more than just a house to live in – it gets you excited about what lies ahead,” he said.
Lyneah – A beauty-ful opportunity

“The program allowed me to follow my dreams and study beauty — this is a fantastic opportunity for a young student like me.”

Lyneah is a young student who has moved from Bourke to pursue her dreams of studying beauty at TAFE in Dubbo. Lyneah successfully applied for the ERA program and has been living in Dubbo for around a month.

“This is a wonderful program for young people living in remote areas,” she said.

“It gives us an opportunity to pursue our goals outside of our remote community and it will also be a good example for others who are thinking about moving but have not taken the first steps.

I would never have thought of leaving Bourke and living in a regional centre without this program.

It has been a life changing experience for me and I love every minute of it.

It is also very important for my family to know that I am living in a safe environment and in a nice place where I have more opportunities to grow and learn,” she said.

Zona – Learning to teach others

“Opening the door to our new house was also opening the door to a new ERA in our lives.”

Zona is a mother of three teenagers. She comes from a remote community. Zona successfully applied for the ERA program and will be living in Newcastle where she is enrolled in a Bachelor of Education degree which she hopes to convert into a teaching degree.

“I want to be a primary school teacher so I am learning to teach others one day,” she said. “It is not easy growing up in a remote community because the opportunities are limited. I wanted to do something for myself and also set a good example for my children.

“The ERA program will help me to do that. I could never afford to move and set up a new life for my family. The ERA program will not only give my family a home, it will give me opportunity and hope that it is never too late to follow your dreams. This program means that I no longer have to choose between providing a home or studying to achieve my goals. I can now do both. My children will be going to high school in Newcastle and I will be studying at Newcastle University.

“I am now thrilled about the future and all the opportunities that I have because of this program,” she said.
Contact the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office for information about Employment and Related Accommodation (ERA) program.

**NSW Aboriginal Housing Office**

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