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HOW BURMA INSPIRED A PROUD KAMILAROI MAN

AMA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2016 (Twitter: #amanc16)

A stint in Burma with the Operation Open Heart Team inspired the 2016 AMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship winner, Darren Hartnett, to follow his dream of serving his own Indigenous community.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, presented Mr Hartnett with the Scholarship, valued at \$10,000 for each year of study, at the AMA National Conference in Canberra today.

"To truly make progress in closing the gap, we must support Indigenous health professionals like Darren," Professor Owler said.

After graduating as a Registered Nurse in the 1990s, Mr Hartnett discovered deep sense of achievement in giving care to people in crisis.

"Working in mainly critical care settings, I have seen patients and families at their lowest points, which I've experienced myself, both as a patient and a family member. I understand how hard it is to be in those situations," Mr Hartnett said.

"In 2010, I was fortunate enough to travel to Burma as part of the Operation Open Heart Team organised through Sydney Adventist Hospital. Seeing first-hand how I could make an impact on someone's life, in a less fortunate situation to mine, was a very powerful experience. It was then that I started thinking of home and how I could serve my own Indigenous family."

Now in his third year of a Bachelor of Medicine degree at the University of Newcastle, Mr Hartnett believes he is close to realising his dream.

"Knowing that within the next few years I can be out in the community assisting our own Indigenous population makes me proud of the fact that I am a Kamilaroi man," Mr Hartnett said.

Mr Hartnett, who aspires to work in Anaesthetics and Intensive Care, is also part of the Miroma Bunbilla Pre Medicine entry program, tutoring the next generation of potential Indigenous doctors to help them gain entry into the Medicine program.

The scholarship was established in 1995 with a contribution from the Commonwealth Government. The AMA is looking for further sponsorships to continue this very important commitment to Indigenous health.

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