

EDUCATED

20 26

ASPIRATIONS IN EDUCATION

EDUCATION IS **EVERYONE'S** RESPONSIBILITY -
JOIN THE CONVERSATION TO SHAPE WA'S FUTURE



**Fogarty
Foundation**

Creating
opportunity,
realising
potential.

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Education is Everyone's Responsibility - Join the Conversation to Shape WA's Future

EDUCATED is an annual breakfast event presented by the Fogarty Foundation, bringing together educators, policymakers, school leaders, community advocates and sector partners to explore the future of education in Western Australia. The 2026 theme, Aspirations in Education, will dive into how young people's aspirations are nurtured and how a more aspirational system can be created in WA for our students, teachers and school leaders. Today's event is designed to spark meaningful conversation, encourage collaboration and highlight the role of leadership, innovation and shared responsibility in shaping the state's future.

TODAY'S EVENT

7:00 am | Arrival and guests seated

7:10 am | Acknowledgement of Country

7:15 am | Welcome & Opening Remarks

7:30 am | Keynote Address by **Peter Klinken AC**; Former Chief Scientist of WA & 2025 Science Hall of Fame inductee

7:40 am | Breakfast Served

8:00 am | Panel Discussion moderated by Elizabeth Knight, will feature:

- **Mandy Nayton OAM**, CEO of DSF Literacy & Clinical Services and President of AUSPELD. Mandy is an education advocate and developmental psychologist dedicated to inclusive learning, literacy support, and ensuring all students can achieve their potential.
- **Liz Smith**, Principal of Joseph Banks Secondary College, home of the Western Australian Space Science Education Centre.
- **Joshua Patrick**, youth advocate, young carer & 2026 UWA Fogarty Scholar, founder of SWAN Australia's national sibling support network. Joshua champions the rights and aspirations of young carers, highlighting the importance of opportunity, inclusion, and support for vulnerable youth.

8:50 am | Closing Remarks by **Nathan Curnow**; Premier's Science Awards STEM Educator of the Year 2025 (WA), Head of Science at Willetton Senior High School

9:00 am | Event Concludes

FOREWORD

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

The Fogarty Foundation is committed to improving the educational opportunities and outcomes of young Western Australians. We believe that raising aspirations is central to enabling students to recognise what is possible for them, develop confidence in their abilities and realise their potential. More than ever, Western Australia must build a strong knowledge economy and position itself as a smart state. National workforce analysis indicates that most employment growth has been seen in jobs that typically require post-secondary qualifications. The 2025 projections suggest this trend will continue, with more than 90% of the employment growth over the next 10 years in these occupations¹. This highlights the growing importance of educational attainment for all young people and the need for students to be supported with the motivation, aspiration and opportunity to challenge themselves and reach their full learning potential.

Yet, disparities in educational opportunity remain across regions, socio-economic backgrounds, and communities, making the work of nurturing aspirations more critical than ever. Improving educational attainment matters for every student. Students who believe in their abilities and see clear pathways to success are more likely to engage deeply, persevere through challenges, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. It is also essential for Western Australia as we seek to meet the skills needs of a changing workforce and a more complex economy.

Achieving this will require a culture of excellence in education, underpinned by high expectations for all students. Schools must be supported to sustain this culture so that aspiration is reinforced by strong teaching practice, effective leadership and inclusive learning environments. This, in turn, requires schools and teachers to be appropriately resourced and continually upskilled so they can prepare students to shape their own futures. It also means engaging students from an early age, building confidence in their ability to learn, and ensuring they are equipped to pursue study at the highest level possible for them. A system that better recognises student achievement and diversity is critical to this effort.

The Foundation's Excellence in Education pillar embodies the belief that every student deserves access to high-quality teaching, strong school leadership, and a supportive learning environment. Excellent teachers inspire curiosity, build confidence, and help students see not only what they can achieve today, but what they might accomplish in the future. Initiatives such as Fogarty EDvance provide educators with professional learning, evidence-based strategies, and leadership support to embed a culture of high expectations across schools. By empowering teachers and school leaders, the Foundation ensures that aspirations are not abstract ideals, but achievable goals grounded in opportunity and support.

Raising aspirations also has profound personal and community impacts. Encouraging students to envision themselves as future leaders, innovators, and active citizens fosters resilience, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. When students from diverse backgrounds are supported to aim high, communities across Western Australia benefit from a more skilled, engaged, and inclusive workforce.

1. Jobs and Skills Australia, 2025



The Fogarty Foundation's vision is clear: every student, regardless of their background, should have the opportunity to dream ambitiously and the guidance to realise those dreams. Excellence in education and raising aspirations are inseparable; together, they form the foundation for individual success and for Western Australia's prosperity. As the state navigates the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades, nurturing aspirations will remain central to creating a resilient, innovative, and equitable future.

In order to transform our aspirations for our education system into action, we must all play a role in shaping the conditions that enable young people to thrive. We encourage you to reflect on your own aspirations for our students and our system, and to consider what these aspirations look like in your own context. This event is a space to share perspectives, learn from one another, and contribute to a shared vision for excellence in education across Western Australia.

"Through education, the sky is not the limit - it is the starting point. Our job is to empower learners to reach for the stars."

ANNIE FOGARTY AM

**Chairperson & Co-founder,
Fogarty Foundation**





KEYNOTE FOREWORD

PETER KLINKEN, FORMER CHIEF SCIENTIST OF
WA & 2025 SCIENCE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



Education is one of the cornerstones of modern society. It has been central to the development of a prosperous and cohesive Australia.

However, the world undergoing the 3rd, the 4th and now the 5th Industrial Revolutions simultaneously. Life has never changed at a faster pace. In a hyper-competitive world, there are many hungry, aspirational countries seizing this moment to leapfrog others. Education is at the core of these dynamic nations.

My deep concern is that Australia is not keeping pace with this global race and is drifting into comfortable complacency. Australia's once proud Education system is slipping and is under serious threat. If we don't aspire to be among the best, we risk being left behind in a rapidly changing world.

If the Australia viewed Education like it does sport, we may be having a very different conversation. Australians expect their athletes to perform at the elite level and be competitive on the global stage. International indices indicate that Australia's Education performance is falling compared to other nations. So, why isn't there a huge outcry? Compare the muted response in Educational performance to the uproar associated with sporting "disasters" and "crises", such as Australia's disappointing performance at the Montreal Olympics, when the nation failed to win a gold medal for the first time in 40 years?

There are many reasons for this Educational decline, including a tired curriculum and a teaching model developed over 150 years ago. I have long worried that "curriculum content can crush curiosity and creativity", skills which are critical to succeed in this rapidly accelerating world. I also fear that those who need a good Education system most are falling even further behind.

Fortunately, there has been no shortage of excellent reports that have identified the problems and have developed compelling strategies to address these challenges. Tragically, implementing change has been painfully slow. This is totally unacceptable.

Australia is one of the wealthiest countries on Earth. If we, as a nation, are not providing the very best Education possible to current, and future, generations, then we have failed them. This is not a legacy to be proud of.

So, we face a moment in time when we can stand by and watch a slow, inexorable decline in Educational standards, or we can stand up and really do something about it. It requires leadership - collective leadership. We all have a role to play in striving for excellence and to be constantly seeking new ways to improve. Our aspiration should be to be among the best Education systems in the world and perform with the global elite. Nothing less is acceptable.

"We face a moment in time when we can stand by and watch a slow, inexorable decline in Educational standards, or we can stand up and really do something about it."



ASPIRATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS



MANDY NAYTON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
DYSLEXIA-SPELD FOUNDATION

Our vision at DSF is to ensure that every student is supported, understood and equipped to learn successfully. Our approach is uncompromisingly evidence-informed - and our central goal is to improve academic and socio-emotional outcomes for all students, including those with learning and language difficulties.

"Teachers who understand and can utilise effective teaching strategies, who can manage their time and resources effectively, who have a deep knowledge of the content they are teaching, and who can create a climate of high expectations - are generally teachers who have had access to training, evidence-informed resources and ongoing support."

There are many factors that influence student progress but perhaps three of the most important are the quality of the curriculum that is delivered, the pedagogy adopted by individual classroom teachers, and the school and/or classroom environments in which students find themselves. If we aspire to improving outcomes and educational opportunities for all students, then it is important to remain focused on these three areas. Although progress has been made in relation to our understanding of what constitutes effective instruction (pedagogy), schools continue to need greater access to high-quality curriculum materials, and an improved understanding of the factors that contribute to the creation of supportive, welcoming and highly aspirational classroom environments.

Alongside these improvements, we need to recognise the contribution made by each and every classroom teacher to the success of the students in their class. Teachers who understand and can utilise effective teaching strategies, who can manage their time and resources effectively, who have a deep knowledge of the content they are teaching, and who can create a climate of high expectations - are generally teachers who have had access to training, evidence-informed resources and ongoing support. We need to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need across these three important areas - pedagogy, curriculum and environment - and in order to do this we need to ensure that all teachers receive the training, resourcing and support they need.

And perhaps this captures our core aspiration - the provision of the knowledge, skills, resources and support needed to all teachers in Western Australia so that the students they teach are supported, understood and equipped to learn successfully.



TURNING ASPIRATIONS INTO REALITY

LIZ SMITH, ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL, JOSEPH BANKS SECONDARY COLLEGE



In 2025 the Department of Education WA released Aspirations for all - Our students, our people, our schools - our system. This statement provides a clear and shared sense of direction for all public schools in Western Australia and outlines four key aspirations for the public school system.

1. Every student achieving their potential
2. Quality teaching and learning in every classroom.
3. Purposeful leadership of every school.
4. Clear direction and support across the system.

At Joseph Banks Secondary College, this statement links to both our College Business Plan priorities and our foundation pillars, values and key beliefs about teaching and learning.

Our pillars, Opportunity, Excellence, Innovation and Success, were negotiated through community, parent and student consultation and are the building blocks for our work. Our pillars have enabled conversations with stakeholders about what's possible and contributed to the creation of an innovative, ambitious, future thinking public school, committed to the creation of a vibrant culture of excellence, opportunity and success for our students, staff and the community.

At Joseph Banks Secondary College our aim is for each student to identify and develop their own talents and passions, and to provide all students with the knowledge, skills, attributes and values they will require to be successful post school. Our commitment is to provide opportunities and the right support at the right time, to enable our students to turn their aspirations into reality.

As a school we know this work depends on our collective team effort and we have established strong, purposeful relationships between all members of the College community as well as external stakeholders to achieve this.

Our college leadership team actively creates the environment for our staff and students to achieve both excellence and success. This is achieved through challenging, engaging and intentional instruction, carefully planned to ensure curriculum pathways can be personalised to meet student needs and lead to viable post-secondary destinations, enabling students to achieve their aspirations.

In 2025, Joseph Banks Secondary College extended this commitment beyond our staff and students with the opening of the Western Australian Space Science Education Centre (WASSEC). A dedicated and purpose-built facility, WASSEC provides learning opportunities for Western Australian schools, teachers, and students, including remote and regional schools through outreach programs, to engage in learning concepts linked to Space Sciences and related STEM industries.

"To meet the aspirations of all students and staff, we know this work is ongoing and we are committed to seeing every student learning successfully and working towards their potential as they reach for the stars. Djinda-k weyan."



WHEN RESILIENCE MEETS ASPIRATION

JOSHUA PATRICK, 2026 UWA FOGARTY
SCHOLAR & YOUTH ADVOCATE



In 2025, I was invited to interview for Medicine at the University of Western Australia. At the time, the interview felt monumental. It represented years of challenges, interruptions, sacrifices, and quiet battles fought behind the scenes. To many, it may have seemed like a simple milestone. For me, it was proof that a pathway once thought impossible was finally opening, even as the journey ahead remained uncertain.

Later that year, I received my ATAR results. They far surpassed my predicted score and personal expectations, turning a distant hope into a tangible opportunity. The possibility of studying Medicine at UWA or even Curtin University was suddenly real. Yet these results also raised new questions. How would I navigate the responsibility of this opportunity? Could I carry my lived experience into a field that often feels out of reach for someone with my background?

My educational journey has never been linear. Growing up as a young carer in regional Western Australia, I navigated poverty, unstable housing, medical crises, and responsibilities far beyond my age. Learning often happened between caring duties, advocacy work, and periods when simply staying engaged in school felt like an achievement in itself. There were times when study took place in hospital corridors and assessments were completed after sleepless nights caring for my sister. I often carried the weight of being seen as “the exception,” not because I wanted to be, but because systems are rarely designed for young people with complex lives.

Every challenge shaped my purpose. Every barrier strengthened my determination. Every interaction with health and disability systems reinforced my desire to pursue medicine not just as a career, but as a calling. The interview affirmed that I belonged in these spaces. Acceptance into UWA’s medical program proved to be even more profound.

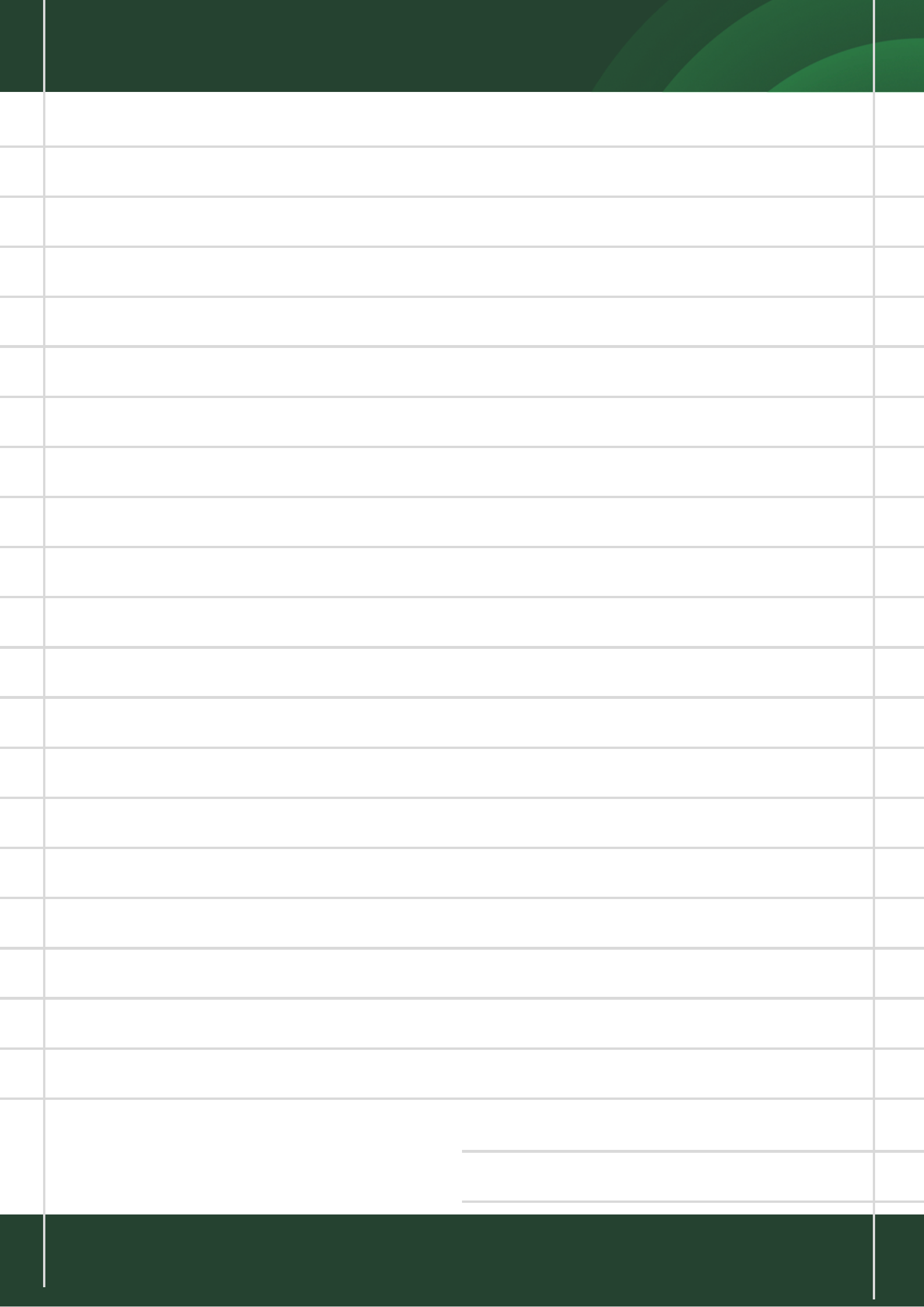
Being accepted brings pride and relief, but also a sense of responsibility. It is an invitation to step forward, to honour the journey that led here, and to consider how this opportunity can be used to serve others. My aspiration is to become a doctor grounded in lived experience, someone who understands complexity, inequity, and vulnerability not only clinically, but humanly. I hope to advocate for young carers and regional students to receive better support and resourcing, ensuring that barriers like those I faced are reduced for the next generation. I want to help create a healthcare system where compassion, understanding, and excellence walk side by side.

This is not the end of a chapter. It is the beginning of a responsibility to give back, to serve with empathy, and to champion others whose paths are often overlooked.

“For a long time, imposter syndrome told me that people like me don’t end up here. That a young carer, shaped by instability, responsibility beyond my years, and a non-linear educational journey, somehow didn’t belong in spaces like UWA Medicine. But doubt does not get the final say.”

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Goals and leaders
GenAI skills for
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September 2025
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