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Much like the athletes from around the world who will chase their dreams of gold at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018), TAFE Graduate Aella MacDonald is chasing a dream of her own at the Games, one sketch at a time.

Nineteen year old Aella completed a Diploma of Building Design in 2015 and now has her sights firmly set on the podium. This year she turns her childhood dream into reality as she helps to plan, organise and deliver GC2018 for visitors from all over the world to enjoy.

“I’m one of those annoying people who always knew what they wanted to do when they grew up,” Aella laughed.

“My passion for design came at a really young age. I grew up in a very creative household and my parents gave me a great appreciation for functional and practical design,” she said.

Aella’s father Andrew taught Art for more than 20 years and has a particular penchant for piano’s, timber and metal sculpture, while her mother Julie is a dressmaker with an affinity for Indian and South East Asian influences.

“I grew up around design and have always had a very different perspective to materials and textures to most my age,” Aella said.

“It all started with a sketch pad I had as a six year old. I used to sit and quietly sketch little floor plans and million dollar ideas into it. I don’t know why but I’ve always been attracted to clean black lines,” she said.

Born in Toowoomba, Aella had her first taste of TAFE at school completing a Certificate III in Graphic Design which gave her an insight into creative visualisation, design concepts and layouts, and reaffirmed her dream of a career in design.

For many, living away from home for the first time can be quite daunting. But not for Aella, nothing was going to stop her from pursuing her childhood dream.

“Once I finished school I immediately enrolled at TAFE and made the move to Maroochydore to study at the Nambour campus,” Aella said.

“Talk about new beginnings—I knew no one!”

“No family or friends. No car and no license. No matter, I wasn’t going to let that get in the way,” she said.

Two years later and Aella is putting into practice the hands on experience and practical skills she received studying at TAFE and turning her dream into a reality as she builds her career in design on the Gold Coast.

“As a Revit Technician in overlay design I am responsible for creating a welcoming environment in every venue by adding temporary elements like extra furniture, seating, marquees and tents to permanent buildings to make the space more functional and enjoyable for everyone,” Aella said.

So if you’re at the Games in 2018, rest assured your visit to the venues has been meticulously planned to ensure it’s an exciting and memorable experience. As you make your way through venues and crowds, just remember that much of where you go, what you see, how you move and what you feel is all shaped by practical design and started with a sketch pad.

TAFE Queensland is proud to be the Training Partner for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.
WHERE YOU COME FROM DEFINES YOU. IT SHAPES WHERE YOU’RE GOING.

Second year Plumbing Apprentice Chelsea Sala was born in Germany in 1992 and grew up the only daughter of a British Soldier on assignment during the Gulf War.

Born in Scotland, her father Mark was a telecommunications Staff Sergeant in the British Army and was responsible for keeping military information flowing 24/7 on the front line.

A middle child, an army brat, Chelsea grew up moving from barracks to barracks living in close knit communities in Germany, England, Ireland and Scotland.

Due to her father’s extended absence from home on military operations, Chelsea’s mother Shereen was the glue that kept their family together.

With uncompromising dedication and commitment, Shereen played both parenting roles. “Mum is strong, ambitious, hardworking, loyal, loving and fiercely independent—everything I want to be,” Chelsea said.

“Moving all the time, juggling work, raising three army brats and supporting a husband who was not only working away, but risking life and limb… she did it all. Well, most of it anyway. Everything but the pancakes… that was Dad’s job when he was home,” she said.

While her Mum is her rock, she shares a special bond with her Dad. “Dad was away for months on end. We were lucky to see him for more than a fortnight at a time,” Chelsea said.
“There was a massive forestry behind our barracks so if I wasn’t making a tree house or cubby, I was being chased by wild boars.”

“His life was chaotic and yet he was always smiling. He always made time for me, he’s my best friend.”

“I remember when I was 10 years old, he’d throw me on the back of his Honda Fireblade and we’d fly down the autobahn at 230 kilometres per hour. I wasn’t scared, I was with Dad—we were bonding. I’d stick my head out from behind his broad shoulders and like a puppy sticking its head out a car window, I’d feel the wind through my hair and my face melting as we attempted to break the sound barrier. I liked going fast, I felt so alive,” she said.

When Chelsea was 13 years old, her father retired from the army and the family moved to Australia.

“Looking back, life as an army brat wasn’t so bad—after all, I knew no other life. Having a loving and supporting family and living on barracks, in close-knit communities, has made me who I am today,” she said.

Two years ago Chelsea began a family of her own, giving birth to her beautiful baby daughter Monroe.

“Monroe’s a lot like me. She’s strong willed, cheeky and knows what she wants. She definitely needs boundaries. Come to think of it, now I know what I put my Mum through,” Chelsea laughed.

“Motherhood means everything to me. Since having Monroe, my whole life has changed. It’s been challenging, but being a mother isn’t easy for anyone,” Chelsea said. “It’s forced me to set goals and achieve them. I’m not thinking of myself anymore. It’s liberated me,” she said.

Now in the second year of her plumbing apprenticeship, 24 year old Chelsea firmly believes that her upbringing is shaping her future.

“In Germany we were constantly doing things outside. There was a massive forestry behind our barracks so if I wasn’t making a tree house or cubby, I was being chased by wild boars. Breaking things, fixing things or building things, I guess a hands-on career in trades was inevitable really,” Chelsea said.

“I don’t like being chained to a desk. I much prefer to use a drill or a shifter rather than a keyboard or mouse. I like using my hands to create things. I get great satisfaction from a hard day’s work and creating something that not only works, but also makes life for someone a little easier.”

“Plumbing is dirty, hard work, but it’s enjoyable. A plumbers’ work isn’t seen. It’s hidden in walls or under floors so the satisfaction has to be personal, that I’ve done a good job,” she said.

“There was a massive forestry behind our barracks so if I wasn’t making a tree house or cubby, I was being chased by wild boars.”

“Trades are about technique, not physique. From burst water mains and leaking roofs to sewage blockages, every day is totally different—I like that. One day I could be digging trenches and the next I could be hacksawing or bending copper pipes,” Chelsea said.

Chelsea’s upbringing has not only prepared her for a life in plumbing, but has also given her the confidence to take motherhood, her apprenticeship and her future in her stride.

“Being a single mother is hard work and something I don’t take lightly,” Chelsea said. “I juggle work and household chores to spend more time with Monroe because I want to. I want to be a positive part of her life, just as my mum was in mine. Like most mothers probably do, I struggled to find a healthy work/life balance at first but again, my parents are both supporting me and allowing me to find my feet,” she said.

But Chelsea’s not satisfied with successfully juggling motherhood and an apprenticeship. She has set herself lofty goals and she intends to achieve them; ambition and determination—traits that have been passed on to her from her hardworking parents.

“I see myself being a plumber for the rest of my life. I want to own my own business and expand nationally. I want to provide a future for Monroe. Once I complete my apprenticeship, I plan to enrol in a business course and learn how to set myself up for the future,” Chelsea said.

Chelsea Sala is who she is today because of the love and support of her family. She is driven to cast her own shadow and determined to succeed and become a hero for her daughter.
Crammed into an oppressive windowless cubicle – painted a drab shade of soul crushing beige – spending your days tanning in the iridescent glow of fluoro office lights and patiently sipping your lukewarm instant coffee, you sit and stare at the same cat that’s been telling you day-after-day to ‘Hang In There Baby’.

But it’s just not that simple. You’re suffering from the mundane melancholy of the daily 9 to 5 office grind.

When 24 year old TAFE graduate Nic Kerr felt the mind-numbing nature of office life take over, the thrill seeker took life by the horns, opting to swap his career for the awe-inspiring outdoors and is living every day like an adventure.

Nic traded in his suit and tie for a waterproof jacket, woollen gloves and an ice axe. He moved across the ditch and now spends his days guiding small groups aloft New Zealand’s picturesque Franz Josef Glaciers. “The lakes, rivers and rugged coastline are perfect for kayaking, rafting and hiking,” Nic said. “I love seeing the look on people’s faces as we explore the striking glaciers and snowy alpine peaks. The world is a beautiful place and we quite often forget that,” he said.

From its origins high in the Southern Alps, the Franz Josef Glacier descends deep into the lush rainforest of Westland’s National Park, from a height of 2700m above sea level to only 240m in as little as 11 kilometres, making it the world’s steepest and fastest flowing commercially guided glacier.

Working on rare landscapes like Franz Josef requires highly skilled and competent guides who understand how to respond to the unpredictable nature of Mother Nature. “My interview was easily one of the most incredible experiences I’ve ever had, even if I didn’t get the job,” Nic said. “After the introductory handshake I was actually flown onto the glacier and one of the senior guides took me out exploring for a few hours putting me through my paces to assess my skills up on the ice,” he said.

Studying a Certificate IV in Outdoor Recreation at TAFE, Nic learnt the hands-on skills necessary to impress his assessor and successfully turned his passion for the
outdoors and sense of adventure into a career.

“What’s not to like about camping, rafting, kayaking, hiking, rock climbing and abseiling,” Nic said.

“I learnt how to lead teams in high risk outdoor activities, the importance of team work under pressure, problem solving, first aid and search and rescue.”

“I felt like I could get a job anywhere in the world, and I did,” he said.

Living in Franz Josef, a small town of around 350 locals, Nic’s working day starts at 7:45am with a safety briefing assessing the weather forecast to determine how the glacier’s predicted movement will affect the day’s tours.

“One group finishes, Nic will either descend to the helipad to pick up another group or stay up on the ice as the next group is flown up to meet him.

“Once given the all clear, I’ll routinely check over all of the safety equipment and begin individual medical checks with clients before performing a safety demonstration in preparation for the day’s adventure,” Nic said.

“After I’ve prepared everyone for the day ahead, we head off into the rainforest for a ten minute walk down to the helipads, jump into the helicopters and fly to the peak.”

“The temperature on the ice is typically only about 5 to 15 degrees and it usually takes us about three hours to make our way through the ice formations.”

“My job is mostly just to make sure everyone is having a fun and safe time.”

“As we walk around, passing through the unique terrain, I’ll stop the group to talk about different features of the glacier, the valley and NZ in general. But most people are so blown away by all the caves and crevasses that the whole ‘speaking in front of people’ part of the job is pretty easy,” he said.

Once one group finishes, Nic will either descend to the helipad to pick up another group or stay up on the ice as the next group is flown up to meet him.

“At the end of the day, I’ll stay up on the ice and help the other guides put in new tracks or work on improving the old tracks to ensure that we’re all working in a safe environment the next day,” Nic said.

“I love working with people to help them develop a better understanding and sense of themselves, to realise the strengths and qualities they have and how to use them to achieve their potential and what they want out of life,” he said.
Over a billion coffees are made all around the world every day. For many of us, coffee isn’t merely a hot drink; it’s woven into the fabric of daily life. We wake up to it, we work out on it, we socialise with it. In fact, more often than not we can’t get through the day without it! But coffee is so much more than a need for caffeine. It connects us.

Thirty-one year old entrepreneur and TAFE graduate Shane Hepburn has a close connection with coffee and with the Sunshine Coast. The Good Bean espresso bar owner said he loves the ‘perks’ of living on the Coast.

“I grew up on the beach; chasing early morning waves, fishing and surf lifesaving. Growing up, the Coast had it all… all except coffee,” he said.

According to Shane the Coast is fast becoming a hub for innovative small business.

“It’s a much safer environment to start a business. We’re lucky, there’s less commercialisation here than major cities,” Shane said.

“More importantly we’re a close knit community on the Coast. I had incredible support when I started the Good Been franchise all those years ago,” he said.

After finishing school, Shane had no real plans. “I was more focussed on music and surf lifesaving than anything else back then,” he recalls. He dabbled in music promotion and real estate for a few years before moving to America to work on the super yachts.

For 18 months Shane followed the seasons, taking guests on luxury cruises throughout France, the US, Mediterranean and Caribbean seas, chasing adventures around the world.

“The boat was 180 feet long and took me a good six hours to clean it every morning before guests woke up,” Shane said. “I’d start at 2am, clean it top to bottom, head back for a nap and

HOW GOOD BEAN
made good business sense

Connecting People with Coffee
"I focussed on turning locals into connoisseurs, fastidious about the quality of coffee they consume and the way it is served."

then run water activities for the punters in the afternoon. It was good fun, but a lot of hard work," he said.

Returning home from his stint on the high seas, Shane was itching to start his own business and saw a niche in the Sunshine Coast market. An institution overseas, there was no well-established local coffee brand on the Coast.

Keen to learn more, he immersed himself in all that Melbourne had to offer. "I was intrigued by Melbourne's coffee and customer service culture. Melbourne was leading the way and I saw an opportunity to bring elements of my experiences back home to people on the Coast," he said.

In 2009, he gave it a 'shot' and opened the first Good Bean espresso bar in Mooloolaba and began the hard ‘grind’ of building a brand.

"I focussed on turning locals into connoisseurs, fastidious about the quality of coffee they consume and the way it is served," Shane said.

"I hated the impersonal nature of customer service on the Coast at the time. People aren’t simply a name on a receipt or an order number yelled from behind a counter."

"A huge point of difference of ours is that we bring the personal touch back to coffee. We are all connected by coffee and our baristas understand that. They love their craft and are personally invested in every cup," he said.

Committed to changing people’s perceptions about coffee, Shane decided to throw out the rulebook and look at his business through the eyes of his customers to create a unique coffee experience, relevant to everyone who he connected with.

Just like a full-bodied flat white, building a brand is delicate and complex. But when it’s finished and personally delivered to people in just the right way, they remember you.

"If you want to become an entrepreneur and own your own business there’s nothing really holding you back. Take the leap, and lead the company you’ve always wanted," Shane said.
at her doorstep and the dry northerly wind whistling over the rolling green hills of her 40-acre liquorice plant farm at Bauple.

“I must admit, the snakes, spiders and flies were a bit of a shock to the system,” she chuckled, gently shooing away flies with tranquil ease—a skill now second nature to her.

So how exactly did this highly skilled, highflying health worker with an appetite for adventure, migrate from a winter wonderland to a farm Down Under?

While holidaying in Australia in 2003, Nicole met her very own Mick ‘Crocodile’ Dundee at Rainbow Beach. She found the love of her life, a ruggedly handsome Australian. Together they settled in Bauple to start a family.

“My mother thought I had lost my mind. She thought I was crazy, but I knew there was a life for me here.”

She’s been around the world a couple of times or maybe more, but liquorice plant farmer Nicole Pelet has rounded up a sheep or two and a kangaroo and made her home among the gumtrees on Bauple farmland near Maryborough.

“I’ve really struggled with the heat in Australia,” she says taking off her Akubra, wiping her brow, and fanning herself in search of relief from the baking sun. “It’s so hot here. At first I would cry all the time, but I’m learning to cope. That’s what everybody does around here... just gets on with it,” she said.

Born in picturesque Lausanne, Switzerland, Nicole grew up gazing at the nearby snow-capped alps, keeping warm through icy winters in front of cracking cabin fires and slowly sipping on decadent Swiss hot chocolates. During the week, she worked in community services ensuring that hospital wards complied with stringent health regulations. But it was the weekends, when she would kick off her heels and attack the white powdered snow, that she enjoyed most.

Moving to Australia 13 years ago, Nicole now wakes up to roosters crowing at the crack of dawn, creepy crawly creatures at her doorstep and the dry northerly wind whistling over the rolling green hills of her 40-acre liquorice plant farm at Bauple.

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“My mother thought I had lost my mind. She thought I was crazy. But I knew there was a life for me here; new adventures to have; and new challenges to face. I was excited to make something of myself in Australia,” she said.

Since moving to Bauple, Nicole has been learning how to be a fair dinkum Aussie; cooking up roasts and eating vegemite on
toast. Having faced raging bushfires, flooding rains and serious drought, she now appreciates what it means to be Australian.

“I think with every challenge I’m starting to be a real Aussie,” she said.

With her husband a fly-in fly-out worker and her two young children at school, Nicole felt isolated from the Bauple community because she couldn’t speak fluent English.

“You feel very alone in the bush,” she shrugged. “It’s hard to connect with others when all you know are basic words – it’s so frustrating. I wanted to show my kids that their mum is someone who they can look up to. Life is a wonderful adventure and just because I’m 50 it doesn’t mean it’s too late to start something great,” she said.

In 2014, to improve her English, Nicole enrolled in the Australian Government’s Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) at TAFE and hasn’t looked back.

“It was a huge confidence booster,” she said. “And I met other migrants who understood what it was like to move here from somewhere far away. They were just like me. We shared the same feelings and emotions; it was a breath of fresh air and looking back, something I really needed.”

“I was very lucky. I had so much support at TAFE, from students and teachers alike. My fabulous teacher, Anne Kettle, not only guided me through the course, she also made me believe in myself again – something I had left behind in Lausanne. She’s an incredible inspiration – thank you Anne,” she said.

Nicole’s dream is to start up her own farm stay at Bauple with a liquorice theme and has re-enrolled at TAFE, this time in a Certificate IV in Small Business Management. “Very soon people will be able to visit and stay with us on the farm, kayak in the creek, explore the bush, and even learn all about liquorice if they want to,” she said.

Some people like their houses, with fences all around. Others live in mansions and some beneath the ground. But Nicole, she likes the bush. With a clothesline out the back, a verandah out the front, liquorice planted in the ground and an old rocking chair.
MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN

MATTHEW
from Construction to Youth Worker

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