Kim Baker, scholarship recipient

I wanted to be a paramedic since I was about 15 and once the idea came, (I don’t know where it came from) it sort of, it just felt really right.

My Grandfather, who passed away last year, he was a very sick man in his old age. He had quite a few health issues. My Grandmother often had to call the ambulance. Whenever I told him I wanted to be a paramedic – because he had dementia so he would ask the exact same question over and over again – he always told me about this female paramedic that he had transporting him from Lakes Entrance to Melbourne – which is about five hours – and how wonderful she was with him in the back of the ambulance, you know, taking his obs and everything for the five hours. That really inspired me, that my Grandfather had that comfort in a situation that could have been really scary for him, in which he was really vulnerable. To be able to do that for someone –someone’s grandfather, mother, father, sister, brother – it’s pretty amazing that you can actually do that and be there for someone.

I really explored that dream that I had. I felt so passionately about it through high school. To be here now … the scholarship I got really enabled me to do that.

We didn’t have a lot of money when I was in high school and so I got a job as soon as I could at 14 and nine months. I worked in a supermarket for three years. I used to work a lot during high school. That was my choice because I knew in the back of my head that I wanted to go to university one day – I didn’t know what for yet – and I knew that I would need the money to support myself because it might not be there for me.

To receive a scholarship, I still remember that moment. I was actually working when I got the phone call so the woman that called me had to leave a message. I just burst into tears and I was just so happy. I rung my mum and she’s at work and I’m like ‘yeah!’ and ‘guess what!’ It was a really good moment. Just to know that things are going to be OK and it’s one less thing you have to worry about.