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Creating opportunities for ADF veterans and their families, one lecture at a time

A few years ago, Army Reserve Private Tenille Carrick feared that without a degree, her career options were limited.

Today, the single mother-of-four is in her second year of a nursing degree, and her son Mitchell is in his first year of a commerce/law degree – thanks to a unique program at Australian Catholic University (ACU) that supports both veterans and their families in accessing tertiary education.

“[Studying has] given me confidence and independence,” said Tenille who also works as a Student Veteran Services liaison at the university’s Brisbane Campus. “This job and this course have boosted my confidence in knowing I can look after my family.”

ACU’s Veteran Entry Program (VEP) is a ground-breaking program that recognises rank and service on applications for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. In extending the initiative to immediate family members, the university has recognised the impact on families of the atypical nature of defence employment.

Mitchell jumped at both the opportunity to study at university, and to join his mother and older brother Brendan at the ACU. Brendan, a Ramsay Scholar, has been an ACU student since 2020.

“I’ve never studied at university before but I hope to make the best of it,” the 19-year-old said.

Mitchell and Tenille have joined hundreds of current and former Defence veterans and their family members studying across ACU’s seven campuses.

For Tenille, it has been a second, and much more successful attempt at university.

“Uni didn’t pan out for me the first time,” she said.

“When I started this course, I didn’t tell anyone except my parents for 12 months in case I failed.

“But here I am plugging away. The support we get here and the camaraderie from the veterans cohort mean so much to me.”

Attend one of ACU’s 2023 Open Day events to learn more about the Veteran Entry Program and Veteran Family Pathway. For more information visit openday.acu.edu.au

Hi-res images are available.

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