



# YOUR POSTCARD

## FROM AUSTRALIA

Over the past two years, Oxfam's ChangeCourse program has supported 25 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to create change within their community. But for 21-year-old youth worker, Jermayne Williams, the biggest change has been within himself.

"I've always had an inside passion for working with youth, and always thought I could do a bit more for my community. But ... I never really had that belief in myself.

"Growing up, I could've made some better choices. I think that's how I can relate now to these kids ... I got into some strife. I learned the hard way. Once I grew up and started working, life became drama-free and I liked it.

"Ever since then, I've been working. I started slowly changing my life. For me, I wanted to change.

"[My program is] a 12-week course, which I run with young fellas who've been kicked out of school, or have left school and aren't doing much. They were kind of slipping through the cracks.

"I just went and talked to them, which was the best thing I could do. In their eyes, no-one wants to talk to them, or wants to help them.

"Indigenous people don't really identify depression as depression. They see it as weakness, which then leads to suicide and self-harm.

"I'll often just pull people aside and say, 'Are you okay?' That's often all it takes. And for some people, it's saved them.

"[ChangeCourse has] not only played a big part in my work life and choices ... as a youth worker; it's ... impacted me as a person. All the great people I've met, the experiences, the training ... The support itself is just amazing.

"Part of my goal as a person was being able to get out and help people — [ChangeCourse has] helped me.

"I owe them a lot."

**JERMAYNE WILLIAMS,  
BEAUDESERT, QUEENSLAND**



### FAST FACTS

- Capital:** Canberra

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- Population:** 23.6 million

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- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Population:** 698,583

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- Area:** 7,692,024 sq km

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- Languages:** English (82%); other (18%)

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- People who speak an Indigenous language:** 61,000

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- Median age:** 21 (Indigenous); 37 (non-Indigenous)

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- Life expectancy:** 71.4 (Indigenous); 82 (non-Indigenous)

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- Students completing Year 12:** 49% (Indigenous); 81% (non-Indigenous)

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- Unemployed youth (15–24 yrs):** 24% (Indigenous); 12% (overall population)

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- Incarceration:** 2 in 5 young adults in prison are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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- Housing:** Indigenous households are six times more likely to live in public housing.

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- Oxfam's areas of work:** self-determination, women's empowerment, youth, health and wellbeing, active citizenship, Close the Gap campaign.

*Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Report Card: The wellbeing of young Australians*



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