

Young Achievers Program

2019 Annual Report



Purpose

The Young Achievers Program raises and supports the long-term tertiary education aspirations, career options and community-mindedness of nominated Queensland state high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds by actively engaging and mentoring them throughout their academic journey and beyond.

Enabling bright futures

The Young Achievers Program contributes to building a culture of university participation within selected secondary schools, and has a positive impact on the families and local communities of the students involved.

An important goal of the program is to help students understand their civic responsibility in a learning environment. For this reason, Young Achievers are required to serve as role models and volunteers within their schools and communities.

Young Achievers are identified by their school principals as ATAR-eligible students with the potential

to succeed at university. Since 2009, 1126 Young Achievers have participated in the program. Nine cohorts of students have completed secondary school and almost 250 students are now working towards a university qualification.

UQ values the achievements of Young Achievers and the contributions of volunteer mentors in the pursuit of their personal and professional success.



Raising the bar, changing the game

The Young Achievers Program offers a valuable support framework, designed to enable participants to reach their tertiary goals.

Welcome to our new students

In 2019, a group of 120 highly motivated Year 10 students from 55 state secondary schools in Brisbane, Ipswich, the Darling Downs, the Capricorn, Wide Bay-Burnett, South-West Queensland and other regions were selected to join the program. Of these students, 63 per cent were attending a school in a regional or remote area of Queensland, 65 per cent indicated they would be the first in their family to go to university, and eight per cent identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

In October, we formally welcomed the new Young Achievers and their families, and together celebrated the many achievements of our graduating Year 12 students. These events, which were attended by school principals and guidance officers, were an opportunity to recognise the leadership potential and the many accomplishments of the Young Achievers.

University experience

Each year, Young Achievers attend a residential camp held at a UQ residential college on the St Lucia campus. These experiences present a wonderful opportunity for students to become familiar with the university environment, establish supportive social networks and learn more about the range of post-school study options that will best complement their future career ambitions.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a critical success factor in the program. During the past 12 months, 44 passionate and highly enthusiastic UQ students – many of whom were past Young Achievers themselves – generously volunteered their time to serve as role models for the students in the program. These mentors are a valuable source of information, encouragement and friendship for younger students, staying in touch with them throughout their senior school years and helping them to stay on track to achieve their goals.



Maxine Lovell
Year 11 – Pittsworth State High School

The Young Achievers Program has opened my mind on where life can take you and how the greatest moments are those times when you step outside your comfort zone. Thank you for guiding me through this wonderful experience that I will forever remember.

The program has attracted growing interest among UQ students, who recognise it as an opportunity to give back to the UQ community while enhancing their leadership, employability and communication skills.

Access and support

Young Achievers are eligible to receive five adjustment factors to help them secure a place in their preferred UQ program. As well, the students receive transition support to assist with making the move from high school to university. Financial assistance offered throughout the program helps to ease the financial stress on families. In their senior years of schooling, Young Achievers receive an annual bursary of \$1000, and students who transition to UQ on completion of Year 12 receive an annual scholarship to the value of \$7000 a year, for up to four years.

Social and community impact

MAD Challenges

The Making a Difference (MAD) Challenges that Young Achievers undertake as part of the program have significant impacts not only in their schools but also in their local communities.

The most inspired MAD Challenges for 2019 came from three Young Achievers whose positive impact benefited students, parents and community members alike.

MAD Challenge for the environment

Matthew Hinz, Charleville State High School

Matthew set out to promote environmental responsibility within his local community. Over a six-month period, he collected more than seven bags of abandoned litter from town landmarks and from the deepest parts of the woods. The rubbish was then either recycled or disposed of correctly. The important lesson Matthew learnt while doing his MAD Challenge was that by doing something in the community, other doors open. He discovered the Girl Guides 'Bottles for Change' program in which all the bottles he collected were donated, and that helping another program made his goal a reality. He really valued the experience of cleaning up the town.

MAD Challenge at school

Tina Nguyen, Redbank Plains State High School

This Young Achiever made a difference by enhancing the lives and lifestyles of her fellow students through exercising and keeping fit – holding activity sessions in the school gym where students could join in. Both the students and Tina benefited from these exercises as it got students not only to exercise but to meet new people, as well as keep healthy and de-stress from school work. By helping others at school, Tina learnt that doing a small task can make people happy, and that doing this challenge was not only rewarding but fun too.

MAD Challenge in the local community

Marak Short, Toogoolawah State High School

Marak volunteered at his local RSL, helping out in the kitchen, cleaning, helping with posters and doing whatever else was needed. His community is extremely small, and helping out each fortnight made a big difference to the club. Marak felt that even doing a small job once a fortnight to help someone can have a significant effect on things overall. The skills he learnt in talking and listening to people, and having a better understanding of them, has certainly made a difference

to his community. He achieved his goal, which was to give back to the community through sustained volunteering and committing his time.

Continuous mentoring

In 2019, the tenth cohort of student mentors included half who were previous program participants. This demonstrates that past students are continuing to give back to others by sharing their experiences and inspiring those still at school. Additionally, one UQ student who completed two years as a volunteer student mentor is now undertaking the role of senior mentor. This type of continued involvement demonstrates the positive impact the program has on the UQ students involved with mentoring Young Achievers.



Ella Toomey
Year 12 – Glenala State High School

The Young Achievers Program has been an incredible experience. I have gained so many skills and made so many friendships and memories that I will cherish for years to come. I have benefited from the mentorship component of the program as I was able to chat to people who have been in the exact same position as me. The program has helped me through my years of schooling and has given me an insight to university life, preparing me for what to expect as I embark on my journey into university.

Success at school

The Young Achievers Program aims to support and inspire students during their senior years.

Valuable family support

Information evenings held throughout 2019 were greatly valued as an opportunity for families to seek more specific advice about university pathways, application processes, accommodation options and support services at UQ.

The popularity of UQ Open Day continued, with more than 300 people attending the Young Achievers events at St Lucia and Gatton. Open Day is the biggest annual event on UQ's calendar and is often the first time many Young Achiever families have had an opportunity to visit a university campus.

WRIT1999 - Effective Thinking and Writing

In 2019, the Young Achievers Program continued to offer a bursary to attend WRIT1999, a summer intensive course offered at UQ St Lucia to students commencing Year 12. The course aims to help students who demonstrate high academic achievement to improve their critical thinking and writing skills. Young Achievers were invited to participate from selected schools located close to the St Lucia campus, with more than 20 students taking up the opportunity.

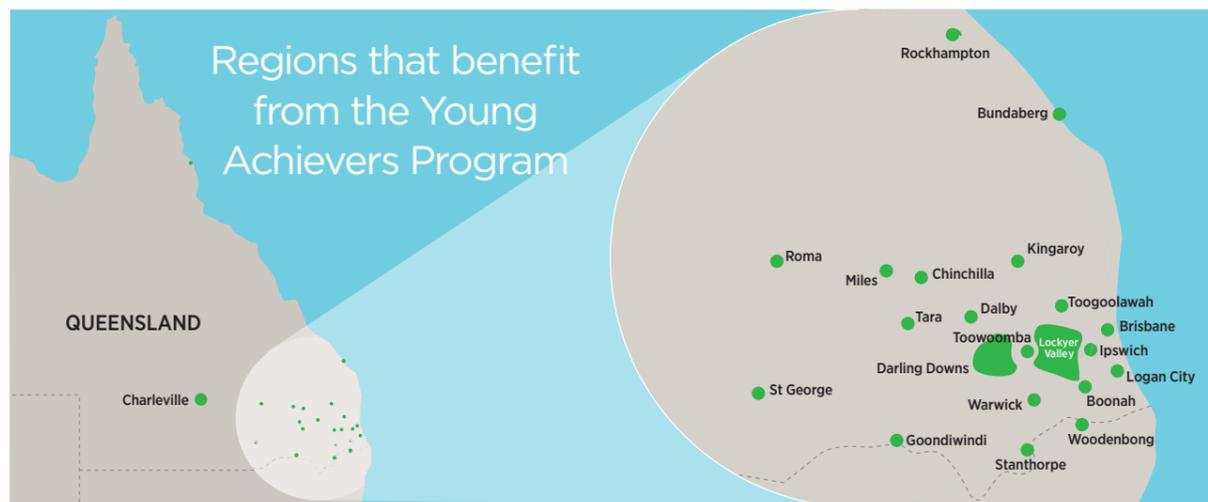


On-campus experiences

In January, 229 Young Achievers took part in the annual residential experience at the St Lucia campus. The students were highly motivated and eager to expand their knowledge, demonstrating a wholehearted commitment to the program.

Creating community spirit

The Young Achievers enthusiastically embraced the community-service ethos of the program, volunteering their time to undertake an impressive list of 'Making a Difference' (MAD) Challenges. The students demonstrated a great sense of civic responsibility by supporting projects in important areas such as the environment, community and youth development, education, animal welfare, health, sport and the arts.



Helen Stewart-Koster
Young Achiever mentor and recipient
Fourth-year Bachelor of Arts/Laws
(Honours) student

What I find most valuable about the Young Achievers Program is that it doesn't just stop at the end of the camps. That is just the beginning.

The motivation I took home from camp each year not only fired me up but also inspired the people around me to get involved more in school and to give back to the wider community.

The monthly phone calls helped to further fuel the drive to grow and remain community-minded as I soaked up all the wisdom of my mentors.



YAP benefits to students at high school



On-campus experiences



Valuable family support



WRIT1999 effective thinking and writing



Five adjustment factors to assist with entry to UQ



\$1000 Years 11 and 12 annual bursary



Two years of mentoring support by UQ students

YAP benefits to students at UQ



Accommodation support



\$7000 per year for up to four years



Workshops and events



Networking opportunities



Ongoing YAP staff support



Bart Dickman
Young Achiever mentor and recipient
Second-year Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)/Business Management student

The Young Achievers Program (YAP) has greatly influenced my life and my family. Its generosity cannot be spoken of highly enough and its impact in low-SES areas cannot truly be measured. For me, the YAP made visible the path to university and cleared this once unknown route of its troublesome obstacles. I was fortunate enough to receive Accommodation Scholarships for my first year at UQ, which allowed me to attend St Johns College and greatly reduced the difficulties of settling into the university environment.

Through this program I was introduced to the importance of supporting schools and the local community, a pillar attribute of the program known as 'Community Mindedness'. I have seen the positive, lasting effects that 'Yappers' leave behind at their schools through their MAD Challenge initiatives and through their role model characteristics.

The YAP experience brings out the best in its Yappers and was an invaluable asset for me throughout high school. I can safely say this program changed the course of my life!



Continuing success at UQ

At Uni support

The Young Achievers Program continues to partner with UQ Student Services to help support students in their transition to university. Hosting catch-ups and events for Young Achievers at UQ ensures that students receive access to the full suite of relevant transition support programs and activities on offer through the University.

Accommodation partners

In partnership with donors, UQ residential colleges and local student providers, the program has continued to support students to overcome some of the challenges involved in transitioning from high

school to university. In 2019, 31 Young Achievers students needing to relocate benefited from accommodation grants and scholarships.

Bowness Family Foundation scholarships

Three Young Achievers, Ella Toomey (Glenala State High School), Tim McIntyre (Lockyer District State High School) and Nathan Richardson (Bundaberg North State High School), were selected for the prestigious Bowness Family Foundation award based on their outstanding academic achievement, demonstrated service leadership and commitment to upholding the values of the program.

Celebrating success

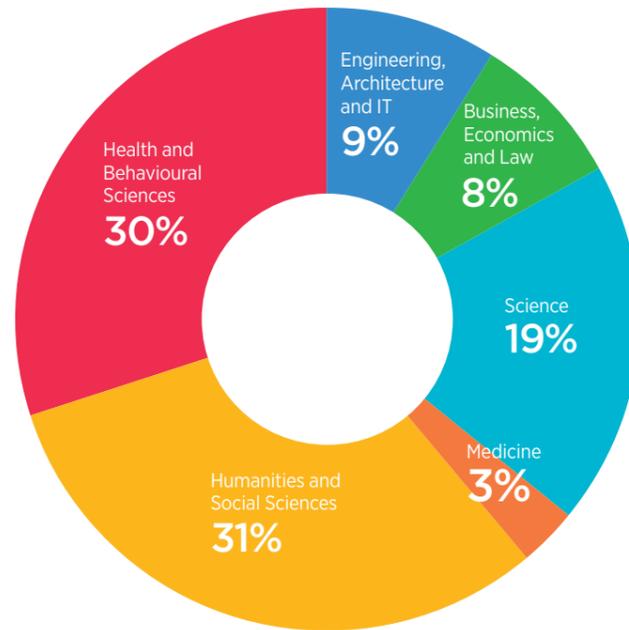
110 students completed year 12 in 2019

106 applied to a tertiary institution

102 accepted an offer from a tertiary institution

88 accepted an offer to study at UQ

YOUNG ACHIEVERS PROGRAM
STUDENT ENROLMENTS BY FACULTY IN 2020



Young Achievers Program students who commenced at UQ in 2019

94% completed first year
4.8 average GPA

\$7000
annual scholarship for Young Achiever students at UQ



Edward Greenaway

Currently working as an engineer on C-17A at Boeing Defence Australia Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)/Science graduate (2016)

Who do you want to be? This is the question the program poses to students. If there were no barriers, who would you be? You're then supported by a group of inspirational mentors and fellow students to help you figure it out.

The most important aspect of the Young Achievers program for me was that I wanted to be brave enough to try new things. And that it's quite alright to have a run at something and figure out that it's not for you.

Being part of the program also means you're already part of a community if you opt to go to university, so you're never far from a smile and a wave when you're on campus. Most importantly, it is a great testament to the success of the program that so many students, including me, volunteered to return as mentors.



Andrew Cockerill

Currently working as a school officer at St John's School, Roma (Regional Queensland) Bachelor of Science/Arts graduate (2018)

I don't think I would be where I am today without the Young Achievers Program (YAP): it gave me connections with schools, volunteer experience, as well as many important skills like public speaking and time management.

YAP built me up from a country boy from a small town and took me into the midst of city life where I studied and made lifelong friends.

Since becoming a Young Achiever, I have learnt how to serve others wholeheartedly, showing the community-mindedness aspect of the program.

I learnt that volunteering is one of the best things to undertake to learn more about yourself and I can say without a doubt that being part of YAP has taught me that nothing is out of my reach, that if I really want to achieve something, I can with the right people beside me. I can't wait to have the same effect on my students that YAP has had on me.



Success beyond university

TOP POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS
that Young Achievers are studying at UQ:

- Medicine
- Philosophy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech pathology
- Writing and publishing



29 graduates in 2019

143 graduates since 2009



Your support ensures success

Students are the driving force behind everything UQ does, and we are committed to providing them with the opportunities to pursue education and succeed.

We aim to continue to attract the best students – regardless of their background or ability to pay for education – and prepare them to become leaders who create change to advance our community.

Scholarships are a lifeline for these students, particularly as they navigate their first year of university in an unfamiliar place, often hours away from the place they call home.

Philanthropic support provides students with wopportunities to learn and flourish, through work-integrated learning, undergraduate research and international study.

Together, we can empower and support students to reach their potential.

Contact UQ Advancement for more information on how to support this life-changing work.

UQ Advancement
The University of Queensland
E: advancement@uq.edu.au
T: + 61 7 3346 3900
W: uq.edu.au/giving

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