



# NAIDOC Week 2018

## Shari Pilkington – Because of Her, We Can



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health

Shari Pilkington grew up knowing that her Grandmother Doris had written a biographical book on her Great-Grandmother Molly. It was only when she became a mother herself that she realised the importance of that book and what it really meant for children to be separated from their parents.

The book, 'Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence', has become entrenched in Australia's history – and follows the story of three Aboriginal girls who were part of the stolen generation.

They walked 1600 kilometres from the Moore River Native Settlement to their home in Jigalong.

Family has always come first for Shari, who had her first child at 17 years old. When her second child came along, he was born with liver disease and needed a liver transplant. He is 23 years old now and his last liver transplant was in 2006 where Shari gave part of her own liver to save his life.

Shari said she always wanted to make a difference.

"I realised one day that making a difference could mean just one person at a time, so I decided to do a bridging course at Edith Cowan University (ECU) to become a nurse," she said.



"I started my nursing degree in 2010 and qualified in 2012. During this time I was inspired by my Nan's book, which was included in the course work at ECU. It was extremely motivating to see so many people moved by my family's story."

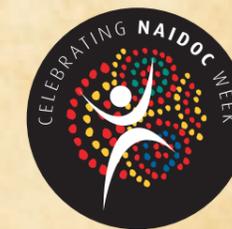
Shari's first job placement was in stroke rehabilitation and theatre, and she was nominated and subsequently won Nursing Graduate of the Year at the 2013 Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards.

"A career in nursing came naturally to me, but I wanted to do more to support Aboriginal women and their families, so I studied to become a midwife, enabling me to help Aboriginal mothers to grow healthy babies," she said.

"As I work with young mothers, I plant the seed about how important an education is to break the cycle of poverty.

"A career highlight was helping to deliver my daughter's baby at King Edward Memorial last year."

And as to her future – Shari has just been offered a role at Notre Dame – lecturing and running tutorials for post graduate Midwifery students where she hopes to continue making a difference.



**BECAUSE OF HER, WE CAN!**

8-15 JULY 2018