

MY NAME

## Vibe School Helping Out page 18

Rodney Wright used to work in the panel beating business before switching to education. He worked as an Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA) before receiving a scholarship to train to become a primary school teacher. The scholarship guaranteed him a job in teaching, and he is now in his second year at Bateman's Bay Public School.

### VIBE SCHOOL

## HELPING OUT

### Wright's choice

#### Meet Mr Wright, teacher

**FOR RODNEY, THE CAREER CHANGE FROM 'TRADIE' TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER PUTS HIM WHERE HE WANTS TO BE.**

**A**fter running his own panel-beating business in Moruya on the NSW South Coast, Rodney moved back home to Molong, between Orange and Dubbo, but found working for someone else in his chosen trade wasn't for him.

That's when he applied for an Aboriginal Education Assistant (AEA) position at the Delroy Campus of Dubbo College, finding he had a real rapport with the students.

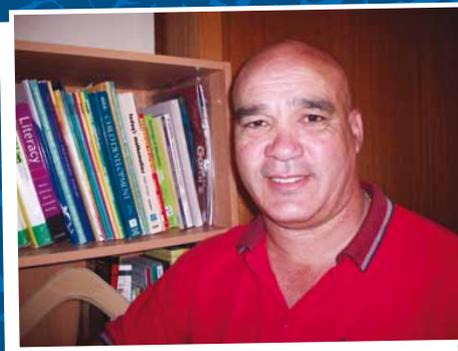
"I didn't know much about it when I applied, but I found I had a real knack with the kids," he says. "While I was there I saw that Aboriginal kids were slipping through

the cracks and, as an Aboriginal man, I knew I wanted to make a contribution towards equalising the educational outcomes."

Having left school himself after Year 10 to take up his pre-apprenticeship studies, Rodney enrolled in the Aboriginal Remote Education Program, an 18-month bridging course through the University of Western Sydney. Completing that allowed him to study and obtain a Bachelor of Education, also through UWS.

According to Rodney, five years of study flew quickly and was worthwhile not only for the qualification, but also for the new friendships he formed.

His commitment to teach was strengthened in his second year when he obtained a Teach NSW scholarship.



This covered his HECS fees and guaranteed him a position in teaching once he completed his degree.

Now in his second year of teaching Year 2 at Batemans Bay Public School, where there is about 20 per cent Indigenous student population, Rodney also gets to see his own son William, now 11, every day.

Rodney's fellow students from his course still support each other. "With email and phone we manage to swap ideas and discuss common issues. It's a great career if done correctly, you get great rewards."

SHARON WRIGHT



## ACTIVITY 1: UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Read *Vibe School Helping Out* on page 18  
Shade one bubble.

### 1. Which career did Rodney Wright change from?

- Primary teaching
- Panel beating
- Primary school principal
- Bachelor of Education

### 2. According to the text, what is the main reason that Rodney applied for the AEA position at Dubbo?

- He wanted to spend more time with his son.
- He liked working with the students.
- He didn't want to keep working as a panel beater.
- He wanted to complete his studies.

### 3. Which of the following expressions is an example of figurative language?

- "While I was there I saw that Aboriginal kids were slipping through the cracks."
- "I wanted to make a contribution towards equalising educational outcomes."
- Rodney enrolled in the Aboriginal Remote Education Program.
- He obtained a Teach NSW scholarship.

### 4. The main purpose of the text is to provide information about

- working as an AEA.
- running a panel beating business.
- switching careers and training to become a teacher.
- making new friends.



## ACTIVITY 2: LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS - SPELLING

The spelling mistakes in the sentences below have been circled.  
Write the correct spelling for each circled word in the box provided.

Rodney **applyedd** for an AEA position.

He **completed** a bridging course.

It was a worthwhile **qualificaytion**.

**Each sentence has one word that is incorrect.  
Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.**

It was worthwhile for the new friendships he formed.

He strengthened his comitment to teach.

The scholarship garanteed him a teaching position.

Its a great career.



## ACTIVITY 3: LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Which of the following correctly completes the sentence?  
Shade one bubble.

1. Rodney Wright made the decision to \*\*\*\*\* careers.

- changing
- changed
- change
- changes

2. Rodney Wright became a teacher quite \*\*\*\*\*

- recently.
- before.
- now.
- soon.

3. Which of the following has the correct punctuation?

- I found I had a real knack with the kids says Rodney
- "I found I had a real knack with the kids" says Rodney
- "I found I had a real knack with the kids," says Rodney.
- "I found I had a real knack with the kids says Rodney."

4. Rodney \*\*\*\*\* know much about the AEA job when he applied.

- didnt
- didnot
- didn't'
- didn't

5. Which of the following correctly completes the sentence?

People often find that teaching can be a hard job \*\*\*\*\* they love it.

- so
- except
- but
- when

6. Which word in this sentence is a pronoun?

For Rodney, the career change from "tradie" to teacher was just right for him.



## ACTIVITY 4: WRITING A BIOGRAPHICAL RECOUNT

A *biographical recount* retells the stages in a person's life.

The common Stages and phases of an effective biographical recount include:

Stages	phases
<b>Orientation</b>	This usually introduces us to the person and tells us why they were remembered, and tells us the most important achievements of the person's life.
<b>Record of events</b>	Sequence of events in the person's life in order of when they happened (organised chronologically).
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation of the person's positive qualities and their contribution to their community or society.

Here's an example of a Biographical Recount about Mum Shirl.

### Stages and phases of the text

#### **Orientation**

why she is famous  
her early life

*Mum Shirl (Shirley Smith) was a community leader who helped thousands of Aboriginal people in need. Mum Shirl was born as Erambie Mission in Cowra New South Wales. She was of Wiradjuri descent. She was very bright, but because she had epilepsy her schooling suffered and she could not read or write English. Nevertheless she spoke 16 Aboriginal languages in addition to English.*

background to her  
humanitarian work

*At that time, the lives of Aboriginal people were strictly controlled by the Aborigines Protection Board. Children were taken from their families and put into orphanages or foster homes. Policies such as caused terrible personal and social problems. Mum Shirl spent her life fighting these injustices, helping the disadvantaged among her people and healing their despair.*



## **Life Stages**

when she started visiting prisoners

*When she was 16, one of her brothers went to jail. After his release, the law forbade him to visit his friends in jail, so Smith continued visiting on her brother's behalf. She had the ability to put people at ease, and prisoners felt comfortable in confiding in her. When officials asked her how she was connected to one prisoner or another, she would say 'I'm his Mum.' This earned her the name 'Mum Shirl'.*

how her work and reputation grew over time

*The prison authorities eventually recognised how helpful Mum Shirl was, and let her visit anyone she wanted in jail. Her constant visits were a great comfort to lonely prisoners of all races who had no family or friends. It is said that in one week Mum Shirl visited 250 prisoners and spoke on behalf of six young people in the Children's Court.*

she used her home for prisoners and raised foster children

*Mum Shirl's home in the Sydney suburb of Redfern was a place to stay for many former prisoners with nowhere else to go. Through the years, she also raised more than 60 foster children.*

setting up Aboriginal community services

*In the 1960s, Mum Shirl formed an Aboriginal welfare service in Redfern, running it on her sickness benefits. In the 1970s, she joined other Aboriginal activists in Sydney in many projects including the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Black Theatre, the Aboriginal Children's Service and the Aboriginal Housing Company. She also took part in the Gurindji people's successful campaign for land rights.*

why she is remembered

*Mum Shirl is remembered for her strength, her love and compassion for people in need, as well as her outspoken stand against injustice.*

**Your biographical recount might be about a person that you know, like one of your grandparents, or you might research a favourite performer or sportsplayer.**

## **Your biography should include information like**

- when and where the person was born
- the main achievements in the person's life
- your evaluation of the person's contribution to your community or society.

## **Remember to:**

- Plan your writing before you start.
- Write in sentences.
- Pay attention to the words you choose, your spelling and punctuation.



You could use this checklist to check and edit your writing when you have finished.

**Self-assessment checklist for biographical recount**

*Read your recount carefully and answer the following questions by putting a tick in one of the boxes.*

	Yes	No	Not sure
<b>Background</b>			
Do you introduce the full name of the person?			
Do you say where and when they were born?			
Do you mention what they did in order to be written about?			
<b>Record of events</b>			
Is there a record of events in your recount?			
Do the events follow a sequence in time?			
Do you focus on the most important events in their life?			
<b>Evaluation</b>			
Is there an evaluation stage where you evaluate the person's positive and negative qualities and their contribution to society?			
<b>Time expressions</b>			
Does your recount have a variety of time phrases, including precise dates, and time events?			
<b>Verbs</b>			
Do you use mainly action verbs in the records of events stage?			
Are the verbs in the past tense?			
<b>Paragraphs</b>			
Is the information organised into paragraphs?			