



# Making her own future

Case study: FFT-CW®



## The Family Profile

Marisa\*, 25, a single Aboriginal mother from Mt Druitt, joined the Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW®) program, in anticipation of the return of her four children, whom she was separated from for four months.



Meeting Marisa's FFT-CW® therapist, Sue, was a life-transforming experience. Marisa has now completed positive parenting courses, engaged in drug and alcohol counselling and created a home environment where her children are able to safely stay together. Intensive therapy gave Marisa insight into her negative relationship patterns, enabled her to develop a better understanding of how children perceive their mum and the importance of her kids being back with her. "This was a turning point in Marisa's behaviour and enhanced her confidence in her parenting skills", explained Sue. Marisa has also established a stable routine for her kids, which includes going to school and childcare.



## The Result

As a result the family unit has been strengthened and Marisa's newly-found confidence has also become evident in other aspects of her life; Marisa will soon be commencing a Community Pathways course at TAFE to prepare her for a Certificate IV in Community Services. The course will bring her one step closer to achieving her dream of becoming a domestic violence support worker assisting other Aboriginal women in her community.

Given the high proportion of vulnerable Aboriginal children and families in Western Sydney, the FFT-CW® program is delivered in a culturally inclusive framework. All therapists attend cultural awareness training; an Aboriginal case worker is on-hand to guide therapists on culturally appropriate behaviour; and the team is constantly focused on building positive relationships with the local Aboriginal community, agencies and services.

**In recognition of her determination, Marisa was nominated for the Mary MacKillop Award for 'Courage in Life' at the end of 2017.** These important awards acknowledge program participants who demonstrate inspirational perseverance towards their goals in the face of challenging circumstances.

Sue commented on Marisa's progress: "As a young single mother of four, Marisa's challenges will be ongoing. However, her family unit has now been strengthened, she is a determined and confident mum who engages and encourages others in her community to seek the support that they may need."

\*Names changed to protect the privacy of individuals