

## A PROUD DAY FOR GRADUATES

Proud parents and partners were in ample supply with smooches at-the-ready for the latest crop of graduates from Australian Catholic University's Ballarat campus. With one hundred and seventy-three graduates picking up their coveted 2015 degrees, the ceremony was ACU Ballarat's biggest yet.

Students graduated from the faculties of Education and Arts, Theology and Philosophy and Health Sciences, with the majority walking away with qualifications such as Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Paramedicine, Bachelor of Early Education, Bachelor of Primary Education and Bachelor of Theology.

The graduation proceedings kicked off with Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral before graduates moved on to Her Majesty's Theatre in Lydiard Street for the ceremony, with Dr Veronica Lawson giving the occasional address.

Kayla Bradley, 23, Sharlene Cooper 22, and Jessica Arcer, 22, were three friends who graduated with a Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood and Primary.

The women have already gained work either in full-time or temporary teaching with Ms Bradley the only one who will continue to work in Ballarat. They said the four-year degree had been tough at times.

"Entering maths, as awful as that is for a teacher to say, was very hard. It was university-level mathematics," Ms Bradley said. "You just have to put your head down and keep going."



Kayla Bradley, Sharlene Cooper and Jessica Arcer proudly show off their long-aspired degrees in early childhood and primary education.

Ms Cooper said she'd known for a long time she'd wanted to be a teacher. "Everyone always told me "you'd make a great teacher" and I thought one day let's do it," she said. She agreed with Ms Bradley that persistence was the key to success.

ACU Vice-Chancellor Professor Greg Craven said the graduation ceremony was a fitting occasion for students to celebrate their hard work with family and friends.

"Congratulations to each of our students who have committed several years to their studies and to the University, and who were recognised for their achievements at their graduation ceremony," he said.

Professor Craven said job prospects and the outlook was good for Ballarat's latest crop of graduates. "For more than a quarter of a century ACU has trained students from Ballarat and the surrounding regions to become the teachers, nurses, paramedics and leaders of the future," he said. "More than 90 per cent of ACU graduates find employment within months of completing their studies, and they take professional knowledge, experience and ethical practice to the workplace."

Academic registrar Kathryn Blyth said ACU had added touches to the traditional graduation garb with a boomerang and native flowers on office bearers' gowns.

*Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier*

*Text by Amber Wilson*