



EDUCATION TO EMPOWER IN JOURNEY OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Professor Bridget Aitchison believes in lifelong learning, whether it be completing a doctorate at university or becoming a dive master. She has continued her passion for education since she began as Campus Dean at ACU Ballarat in June. The role, which brought Professor Aitchison to Ballarat for the first time in May 2017, will allow her to achieve her vision of improving the university's connection to the community.

"Education is transformational. It helps people change lives, both theirs and others," she said. "Having access to high quality education and health care is essential for a regional city especially to grow and prosper, and that is where Ballarat really has an advantage."

"You have to connect the campus to the community in a way you don't have to in the city. It is one of the things that attracted me to the job, the chance to connect with the community in meaningful ways."

Professor Aitchison has worked within the university sector for almost twenty years, and has experience in various leadership roles in universities in Australia and her birth country the United States. She moved to Sydney from New Hampshire in the U.S. in 1989, after growing up in Hollywood.



Professor Aitchison was adopted at birth and grew up in the entertainment industry in Hollywood with a mother who was an actress and a father who was a writer. Her new life in Ballarat is a change from the glitz and glamour of Hollywood and the crowded streets of Sydney, but one she sees as full of opportunities.

"This is a special community," Professor Aitchison said. "My experience of living regionally is that a lot of regional or rural areas are very closed communities, but people here have been so warm and welcoming. I have met some amazing people here."

"You have got this amazing juxtaposition of incredible historic buildings and people that are passionate about history, but you have also got the modern. There is a great mix of old and new that seems to respect each other and work well together."

Professor Aitchison said she plans to stay in Ballarat and continue her journey of learning. "I am always challenging myself to learn new things. I became a scuba diver, which is something I had wanted to do all my life and in my 30s I decided now or never."