

## 2021 Graduate Scholarship Recipient: Bec Douglas (Edith Cowan University)



### **About me**

I have always felt drawn to helping others and in particular children's health. It was these two ideals combined that led me in to return to study in 2015 and enrol in a Bachelor of Health Science majoring in health promotion and nutrition at ECU. A week after finishing my last class, a serious medical issue prevented me from working so I used this time to complete a Master of Public Health at ECU. This experience just grew my love of health promotion and also opened my mind to so many other areas I had not even considered. My MPH research project was the result of this discovery and steered me toward a focus on older women who were experiencing food insecurity.

### **About my scholarship project**

My project will be based at Edith Cowan University as a pilot program borne from the research component of my MPH. It initially began however during a 3rd year undergrad class where I was first introduced to the growing number of older women experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. Through the research phase of my MPH I met many women aged between 50-75 years who through a variety of circumstances occurring in their lives, had experienced food insecurity. Another common thread in their lives was the social isolation and disconnection they had experienced as a result of these circumstances. Women within this demographic are often overlooked and hidden in the shadows so I hope through this project to be able to shed light on the issues they face.

My program will provide an opportunity for these women to come together for two hours each week over eleven weeks and build connections with other women who have gone through similar experiences. During the first hour, the women will prepare and cook a variety of different meals together so that each women will have six nutritiously balanced meals to take home that can be frozen and eaten each night over the week. The second hour will see the women engage in a series of fun and educational activities, providing valuable information to help them adopt healthy lifestyle choices and opportunities to further build social connections with their peers.

At the conclusion of the program I hope to have provided a safe space each week for these women to have come together, built connections and also allowed them to develop a sense of self worth.