

## Journal of a young leader in public works – A progressive pathway

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My development to becoming an Engineer was far from direct. In 2008 I held a bachelor's degree in business administration and had a career in real estate, I knew this was not my calling. Answering an advertisement in the local paper I secured a traineeship in civil engineering design that started me on my pathway to become an Engineer.

The next decade was a stressful but rewarding journey which involved working full time, studying part time, and dealing with the trials that life brings. Whilst undertaking my Diploma of Civil Construction Design I became a father for the first time in 2010. In 2011 I graduated with distinction and was awarded the NSW State Medal for achieving the highest average mark in the state. At this point I knew I had found my calling.

In 2012 my wife and I made a commitment that I would continue to study, and I commenced a Bachelor of Engineering Technology at UNE. Shortly after commencing I lost my father because of suicide. This was a low point in my life. I pressed on and in 2013 started a new role as Cadet Civil Engineer and was involved in the project management of the \$4.6 million revitalisation of the Narooma Streetscape. I also welcomed the birth of our second child. At this time my wife developed a serious medical condition causing seizures which we will need to manage for the rest of her life. Council's support network was invaluable during these times.

I secured a permanent position as Engineering Design Officer in 2014 and transferred to USQ where I completed a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) Honours degree and was awarded the University Medal upon graduation (2018). I have worked on many challenging infrastructure projects and last year I was awarded the David Abbot Young Public Works Leader of the Year (2018).