

# Make a difference in your community

SAMANTHA Wager, 27, is in her final year of a Bachelor of Community and Social Development and has secured a position at NSW Justice as the Aboriginal client and community support officer assisting with the facilitation of circle sentencing.

Circle sentencing offers an alternate method of sentencing for Aboriginal people.

Samantha is one of the students who has undertaken Western Sydney University's Bachelor of Community and Social Development – a degree available specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Western Sydney University is the first to offer such a course.

"The unique course content has given me the knowledge to work with communities in positions that can make a difference and continue to bridge the gap in many areas," Samantha said.

"The degree has made a real world difference to not only me but with my new role and will also have a profound impact on the communities I work in."

The rewarding degree provides students the opportunity to connect with others who share similar ideas and passions to contribute to building sustainable capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Western Sydney University now offers a Bachelor of Community and Social Development specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Samantha decided to study the degree as it was relevant to the work she was already doing in the community.

Before securing her job, she worked as an intelligence analyst

for NSW Police and then as the Indigenous student support officer for the School of Medicine at the university.

She has worked in the communities of Blacktown,

Penrith and Mt Druitt.

The three year degree is taught in block mode, which is designed to afford students the capacity to remain in their communities to fulfil their family, community,

career, cultural and social responsibilities.

Offering the degree in block mode means that those working fulltime will still be able to commit to the degree as students will only be required to attend up to six residential on campus visits per year, each lasting approximately one to three weeks.

This was the case for Zoe Stewart, a final year student who is completing the degree while working full time.

Zoe was able to travel to Fiji as part of her placement during her second year and also travelled to Vancouver, Canada, where she was exposed to Canadian's First Nations community.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience to visit another First Nations community who share a very similar history to Aboriginal people in Australia," Zoe said.

Zoe has recently started a new role with the Department of Family and Community Services as an assistant project officer.

Western Sydney University also offers a Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in block mode at Bankstown campus.

For more information on block courses available at Western Sydney University, visit: [westernsydney.edu.au/atsieducation](http://westernsydney.edu.au/atsieducation)

## FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS OF STUDY FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

Western courses offered in the block mode:

- Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Bachelor of Community and Social Development

Applications are now open via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alternative Entry Program.

**TO FIND OUT MORE**  
[westernsydney.edu.au/alternativeentry](http://westernsydney.edu.au/alternativeentry)  
 1300 897 669 or [study@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:study@westernsydney.edu.au)

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