



Amber's dreams are becoming a reality at Swinburne

For Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba woman Amber Briggs, going to university wasn't just a dream – it was a goal she was determined to achieve.

In 2018, Amber took her first step toward that goal, enrolling in a **Bachelor of Psychological Sciences** with Swinburne Online. Now pursuing a **Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced)**, she is driven by a deep commitment not only to her studies, but also to setting a good example for her younger family members.

“Studying psychology has been a huge dream for me, I wanted to be able to understand people and help them reach a sense of belonging,” Amber says.

“Over and above how I could help others is being an example to my son, my nieces and nephews. Their presence has been instrumental for inspiring me to show up in the world.”

When opportunity knocks

Studying at Swinburne has given Amber the chance to build strong professional and academic connections. She has seized these opportunities with dedication and enthusiasm.

“Since I started the degree, I have been through so many life changes and adjustments, and I've been able to reassure myself through those because of the repertoire of contacts I have developed and the knowledge I gained,” Amber says.

“I genuinely believe that learning about how the mind operates in certain contexts has given me a larger capacity for compassion for others too. Which has contributed to my own self-growth.”

One of the most transformative experiences of her education journey came in 2019 when she participated in the **International Indigenous Study Tour**, led by Dr Andrew Peters.

Hosted by Swinburne on

Wurundjeri land, the tour was co-developed with the University of Saskatchewan in Canada and the University of North Carolina in the United States. Over two weeks, Indigenous students and those studying Indigenous Studies explored the intersection between tradition, modern communities and contemporary challenges on a global scale.

“I was blessed to be part of the program, connecting university Indigenous students from around the world. That was life changing for me, to the point where I can't even explain how amazing it was,” Amber says.

Support and success

Throughout her studies, Amber has worked hard to stay on track, while also taking advantage of the resources available to her. Swinburne's Moondani Toombadool Centre (MTC) has played a key role in her university experience, providing support and guidance along the way.

Established in 2018, the MTC oversees all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters at Swinburne, including Indigenous student support and success services, teaching and learning, research, staff initiatives, cultural engagement and governance.

“Without Moondani and the staff that work there, I would not even be in this course. It was because of them that I was able to enrol and continue following this path. They've continued to support me through this course by connecting me with tutors, mentors and volunteering opportunities,” Amber said.

Swinburne is continuously reaffirming its commitment to valuing the cultural identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and ensuring they feel supported throughout their university journey. As part of this commitment, on April 1, 2025, Swinburne launched the **Indigenous Student Charter**.

The charter provides a clear framework to foster an inclusive environment where Indigenous students feel supported, valued, and respected as integral members of the Swinburne community. The charter reflects the voices and experiences of Indigenous students, ensuring that their perspectives shape the university's ongoing efforts towards reconciliation and cultural inclusion.

A desire for impact

Amber grew up in Geelong, Victoria, moving to Warrnambool with her family when she was still young. Having experienced her fair share of first days at new schools, Amber developed an independence and demeanour that allowed her to make friends



With support from Swinburne's Moondani Toombadool Centre, Graduate Diploma of Psychology student Amber Briggs is turning her dreams into a reality.

quickly, even from a young age. Through her life, this ability to engage positively with people from different backgrounds has grown and formed the basis of her academic and professional journey.

Amber's professional journey began in barbering, a role where she was able to help people feel good about who they are. She soon realised that she wanted to explore this further. “I wanted to learn how to genuinely help people feel good about themselves. Not just in a superficial way, but in a way that was beneficial on a deeper level,” says Amber.

Psychology was the perfect fit. “I love the diversity of topics psychology can be applied to. I enjoy the challenge, but I also love how it's shaped me

as a person.”

To manage her academic life, Amber juggles commitments with work, study and her home life as a mother. With the support of her family and friends, these challenges have become far less daunting.

“It is difficult but not impossible. I've had to change my work hours and put my son into after school care to ensure time for study,” Amber says.

“There are things I need to say no to, so I can be mentally available to read material and write reports. I couldn't do it without a supportive workplace, family, partner and friends. Truly, my social network has been the biggest contribution to my ability to study.”

As Amber nears the completion

of her Graduate Diploma, she is looking forward to taking a well-earned break to spend quality time with her family before embarking on her next academic challenge – pursuing a Master's program.

When asked what advice she would give to someone interested in studying with Swinburne, Amber emphasised two words: “Do it.”

“Take every opportunity that is thrown your way, it is genuinely life changing.”

Contact
indigenoustudents@swinburne.edu.au for a friendly yarn about how the Moondani Toombadool Centre team can help you to achieve your study and career goals.