

# Law graduate leading with heart, from student ambassador to advocate



FOR proud Ngunawal woman and recent Western Sydney University law graduate, Jess Oehm,

her journey from campus to courtroom began with a legacy of leadership as a Student Ambassador inspiring other young people through education and a desire to advocate for her community.

Wanting to become a civil law barrister, Jess completed her Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management) double degree at Western and was the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Indigenous Student Award at the University's annual NAIDOC Awards.

Jess was involved with Western's Pathways to Dreaming program which engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 7 to Year 12 in the opportunities that await them in higher education and connects them with student mentors.

"I came on as a Student Ambassador after being involved



Jess Oehm – Western Sydney University. Photo: Yann Le Berreto.

in the Pathways to Dreaming program as a student in high school. I was a Student Ambassador in the program for seven years and I loved giving

back to the program that helped me succeed," Jess said.

"Take every opportunity that you are given and never doubt yourself."

In addition to her ambassadorship, Jess has been a tutor with Western's Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education since 2023.

During her studies, Jess completed a cadetship working as a paralegal and research assistant at Gilbert + Tobin and has now recently started a new graduate position with Legal Aid NSW in the Judge Bob Bellea graduate program.

Jess also undertook the New South Wales Bar Association's First Nations Clerkship, describing it as a highlight learning opportunity.

"I was honoured to be able to undertake the First Nations Bar Association Clerkship, it was an amazing opportunity that gave me clarity in what I wanted to be able to do, as well as seeing some amazing advocates in practice," she said.

"I spent a week at the Land and Environment Court, three days at the NSW Supreme Court and two days at the Downing Centre District Court."

Reflecting on her studies at Western Sydney University, Jess says her law lecturers and the

Pathways to Dreaming program in high school had helped her to realise her career ambitions.

"I was in a law workshop with School of Law senior lecturer, Francine Feld. We were in the Moot Court at Campbelltown, and I was allowed to be the judge for the session.

"I loved being there and listening to Francine speak about the law and how justice was achieved. From that moment on, I wanted to be a lawyer.

"I am most passionate about the impact I can have on Community, and my degree has given me the knowledge to be able to advocate fiercely for those in need."

Western Sydney University is proudly celebrating 30 years of impact, excellence, and social justice through its School of Law, which is educating the next generation of legal professionals and advocates.

Students, alumni, staff, and special guests came together on Thursday, 24 July to mark the milestone and reflect on the School's significant contribution to Western Sydney and beyond.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ENTRY PROGRAM

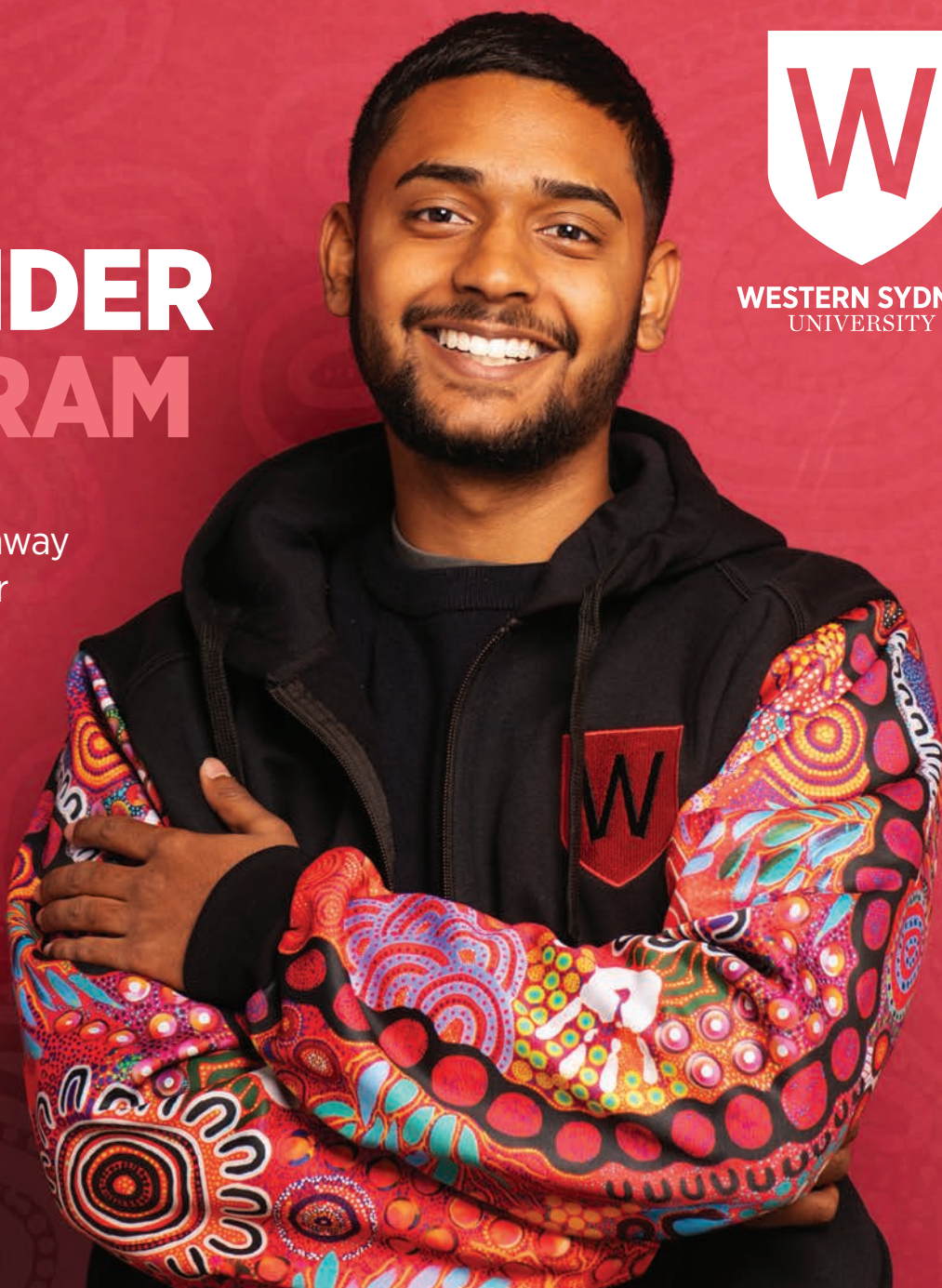
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