

# Transferable skills influence change

After completing a law degree, Rachel Wawra felt a yearning to study psychology. Now, after 10 years of juggling work, family and study commitments, she has finished a Master of Professional Psychology through The Australian National University (ANU). Rachel is a Torres Strait Islander and a Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner alumna from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). She was among the first cohort to study the Master of Professional Psychology course at ANU and for the first two years, studied part-time. Her dedication has paid off. "ANU has an amazing professional psychology program. The cohort is relatively small, so you get to know your peers really well. The lecturers provide lots of support and there are ample opportunities to develop practical skills," Rachel says. Rachel was awarded the Pat Turner scholarship to enable her to complete her final year. "Being awarded the Pat Turner scholarship helped me to finish my master's degree. I am so grateful for the opportunity." Rachel recognises how under-represented First Nations psychologists are in Australia. "Less than one per cent of psychologists in Australia are Indigenous. That figure is even smaller in the Australian Public Service (APS)." Now that she has completed her studies, Rachel hopes to provide cultural support and assistance where needed at the individual level, as well as providing a unique perspective to help shape policy and programs. "Psychologists have so many skills that can be applied everywhere, including the ability to be able to influence change. "For example, one of the biggest challenges we face when it comes to eliminating racism is human behaviour. Psychologists are well placed to make difference in that space."



Rachel Wawra with fellow Pat Turner scholars at smoking ceremony on campus at The Australian National University.

Photo: Adam McGrath/HCreations

The Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner scholarship is a one-to-three-year full pay scholarship for any level of postgraduate study at ANU or Charles Darwin University for high performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS 4 to SES Band 1 APS employees. The scholarship allows participants to take paid time out

of work to focus on full-time postgraduate study. Applications to begin study in Semester 2 2025 and Semester 1 2026 open on 16 October 2024. Learn more about the Sir Roland Wilson Foundation and the Pat Turner scholarship program at: [srwfoundation.anu.edu.au](http://srwfoundation.anu.edu.au)



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Our scholarships develop research, analytical and leadership skills, and support scholars to study topics of national significance and strategic importance to the Australian Public Service.

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