

# Sarah is inspired by STEM studies

Sarah Little is an Aboriginal woman with connections to the Wodjabaluk mob who grew up in Stawell, a small town in North-West Victoria. Stawell is in the heart of Djab Wurrung / Jardwarjali country at the foot of Gariwerd (Grampians). Bunjil has a resting place less than ten minutes from her home. She attended a small country primary school of only 25 students and then another small Catholic Secondary School in Ararat. Whilst Sarah loved growing up in a small community, she knew it limited her educational opportunities.

Sarah started university at the beginning of 2020, the height of COVID-19. On a gamble, and because she hadn't had the opportunity to study it prior to starting at RMIT, Sarah decided to take classes in nanotechnology. She now describes it as "one of the best decisions I have ever made."

After experiencing vision issues during her VCE exams and completing bridging courses in mathematics and chemistry before beginning her Bachelors, Sarah is now excelling in her studies, with a 4.0 grade point average. Last Semester, RMIT University recognised Sarah's dedication to her studies with the Roy and Iris Simmons award. This award was established in 1982 through the generosity of the family of the late Dr. Roy T. Simmons and is awarded to a full-time student

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who has successfully completed studies in Chemistry equivalent to a second-year level in a degree with Chemistry as a major field of study and has demonstrated the highest standard of academic achievement combined with qualities of leadership

and involvement in community affairs.

When asked what this award means to Sarah, she explained "growing up I didn't know anyone else like me. As a young female Indigenous person, it was hard to find a role model within the field of STEM and as such, I had to create my own path to get where I am. I am proud to say that this award is one step closer to becoming the role model I had wanted when I was growing up. Winning this award goes to show that anyone can have a great future in STEM and that it is possible to be successful even if the way forward isn't clear or smooth sailing. I am proud of this award because it shows how far I've come and what I can continue to achieve."

The supports offered at RMIT by Ngarara Willim have made such a difference to Sarah's experience. "I would like to encourage anyone who is considering studying at RMIT to go for it and really reach for their dreams. RMIT and Ngarara Willim have so many great services and supports in place that are there to help you get the most out of university and I personally can guarantee that taking that leap into tertiary education can be the greatest next step on your journey both as an individual and as an academic. RMIT is so much more than the schools a lot of us grew up with and can help you grow in ways you didn't think were possible."



Sarah Little

## Imagine What's Next...

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