



Student Spotlight: Zoe Cannon

RMIT University, together with VACCHO and The Department of Health, have partnered together to implement the Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) Scholarship Program. This program will offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying in psychology and social work related programs at RMIT up to \$135,000 to cover tuition fees, Student Services and Amenities fees (SSAF) and financial support. Scholarship recipients were announced at the recent launch of the Balit Durn Durn Centre, surrounded by community and welcomed by Mandy Nicholson.

Zoe Cannon is a proud Nyikina and Wongi woman currently living in Naarm, undertaking her second year of a Bachelor of Social Work Honours. She is one of the four RMIT students awarded the SEWB Scholarship for Semester 1, 2022, alongside Alyia Alassani, Kahlee Weir, Warren Tyrrell and Kylie Fisher. Zoe has aspirations to work in policy reform for family violence and child protection.

Zoe was inspired to begin a Bachelors of Social Work Honours after growing up in the Kimberly region of Western Australia, "I, from a young age, was very aware of the multifaceted nature of the disadvantage faced by my mobs. A want to understand and more effectively address the intersectional nature of these challenges is what ultimately led me to study social work."

The theme of Reconciliation Week this year is Be Brave, Make Change. What changes do you want to see when it comes to social services for Aboriginal people?

I would love to see a collaboration of Indigenous community-led responses and mainstream human services frameworks. I think this would better address key issues faced by the First Nations community and other minority groups that are largely failing to be supported by current systems.

How is this scholarship going to assist you in your studies?

As a second-year University student living independently, the SEWB scholarship has been instrumental in alleviating the financial burden congruent with pursuing tertiary education. As a result, I can live and study knowing that I will enter free of educational debt as I step into my professional discipline.

What has been the most enjoyable or rewarding part of your studies so far?

Stepping into a cohort of like-minded people has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my studies so far. The wealth of life experience and the unique insights that my peers and teaching staff have provided is an aspect of my degree that I have thoroughly enjoyed.