

Taylor Williams To Play

SPEAKER	CONTENT
WOMAN	Welcome to the National Careers Institute podcast. In this series, we'll hear from some former VET graduates and learn about the pathway they took to get the careers they wanted. Vocational Education and Training is a great way to start, change or boost your career, and there's no time like the present to explore your options. Visit yourcareer.gov.au to find out how to take the next step in your career. And now here's your host, Australia's National Careers Ambassador, Scott Cam.
SCOTT	Thanks for joining us, and on behalf of the National Careers Institute, welcome to our podcast series. If you haven't heard our chats with some of our other VET graduates, make sure you have a listen. Our guest today is Australian VET alumni Taylor Williams. And Taylor is a Wiradjuri woman from Forbes in New South Wales and winner of the 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year award at the Australian Training Awards. Taylor's story is one of courage and self-belief. To be brave and to always back yourself, which I love. Well, you've certainly done that, Taylor, by taking on a degree in psychology as your next challenge. Welcome, Taylor. How are you going? How are you finding your degree?
TAYLOR	Oh, thank you. Thank you so much for having me. I'm actually finding it really challenging at the moment in light of COVID, everything being remote. But absolutely loving my degree. (LAUGHS)
SCOTT	That's fantastic. Now, I believe you've been appointed to a permanent role at the Department of Defence in Indigenous Affairs in Canberra. Congratulations on that appointment. That's outstanding. Can you tell us a bit about your role?
TAYLOR	Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much. So, currently, I'm a Project Support Officer within the Department of Defence within Indigenous Affairs. And Indigenous Affairs is really the strategic centre of Indigenous knowledge and cultural intelligence in Defence. And my team, we oversee the Defence Reconciliation Action Plan deliverables through various projects, policies and initiatives that really focus on Indigenous community engagement, representation and retention in the Australian Defence Force and Australian Public Service.
SCOTT	Right.
TAYLOR	And the Reconciliation Plan is really Defence's strategic road map on how we will further commit to progressing reconciliation, but also the government's Closing the Gap strategy.
SCOTT	Wow! Gee, I tell you what, that was a powerful...
TAYLOR	(LAUGHS)
SCOTT	And you certainly know what you're talking about, don't you?
TAYLOR	Yeah.
SCOTT	Now, was Indigenous Affairs something that you always wanted to do?
TAYLOR	Oh, I think...
SCOTT	Did you want to work in that area?
TAYLOR	I think...like, when I left school, I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I knew I always wanted to be in a job where I was happy, I was challenged. And I guess Defence really offered me a pathway where, you know, I'm really in a meaningful career where I can play a part in contributing to helping our...or supporting our Defence members, but also with the implementation of the DRAP. So, really having a really big impact in community as well.
SCOTT	Now, that's fantastic. So, tell us about the learning pathway that you undertook to get to where you are now.
TAYLOR	Yeah, um, so I think I'll start with... I think with my Defence journey, I started in November 2017 through the Indigenous Apprenticeships Program. And the Indigenous Apprenticeships Program is a 12-month program that offers permanent full-time entry level job into the Commonwealth government for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but also an opportunity to complete a national... nationally recognised qualification. And I remember back in 2017 when I

SPEAKER	CONTENT
	applied, I... (LAUGHS) ..I didn't... I didn't think I would get through.
SCOTT	Yeah.
TAYLOR	You know, being a really competitive program, but, you know, I really backed myself, went for it and was lucky enough to be offered a spot on the Apprenticeships Program.
SCOTT	That's fantastic. You backed yourself, didn't you, Taylor?
TAYLOR	Yeah. I did. Yeah.
SCOTT	You backed yourself, you rolled up your sleeves and you had a go and look where you are now, it's paid off. You're listening to the National Careers Institute podcast. Our guest today is Taylor Williams, the 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year. I believe that you also undertook another traineeship with Justice and Community Safety Directorate, is it, at the ACT prison?
TAYLOR	Yes.
SCOTT	While finishing your VET course.
TAYLOR	Yes.
SCOTT	I mean, that's very busy.
TAYLOR	(LAUGHS) Yeah. I think VET's been such a big part of my life and my career, but, yeah, in 2016, it was kind of my first real job out of high school. I did a Cert III in Business and my host employee was the ACT Corrective Services.
SCOTT	Yeah.
TAYLOR	And they provided a really unique traineeship where I got to work within the policy unit based in Canberra City and then also based within Executive Support to the General Manager out at the ACT prison. So, yeah.
SCOTT	Yeah, so you're just doing VET course after VET course after VET course. When are you going to stop?
TAYLOR	(LAUGHS) Oh, I just... I think I just... I loved it so much. So I just kept going and I went from a Cert III to a diploma and now I'm in university now. But loved...loved my VET training. (LAUGHS)
SCOTT	Yeah, that's fantastic. And of course, in 2019, as we said, you won the Australian Training Awards' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year award. Congratulations.
TAYLOR	Thank you.
SCOTT	How important was that with your self-belief and being able to reach those goals for you and your family and your friends? That must have been so... They must have been so proud of you.
TAYLOR	Yeah, oh, I just get goose bumps thinking about that moment 'cause it was such a surreal experience. But, yeah, self-belief was really critical. I think from a very young age, I struggled with my identity and knowing who I was and knowing what I wanted to do in life. So I think that, you know, VET really gave me an opportunity to build my confidence and really helped me discover who I am as a person as well.
SCOTT	Yes, yes.
TAYLOR	And I think I had a lot of people supporting me, my friends, my family, my trainers, but all the opportunities started coming through when I started believing in myself.
SCOTT	Yes. Well, you know what, the VET organisation believed in you too because they gave you that award as the Student of the Year. So, your self-belief transpired to everybody else around you, that came in contact with you and they gave you that incredible award. And, finally, Taylor, what advice would you offer to young people, your peers, looking to start or change their career? You know, there's plenty of opportunities out there, isn't there?
TAYLOR	Yeah. Yeah. 100%. I think, from my experience, I think it's OK to not know what you want to do. I think leaving school, I had no idea what I wanted to do. But I really encourage others to kind of find out what their strengths are and use what they're good at to build a really successful career. But it's really important to define your own measures of success and, you know, success doesn't always come from money.

SPEAKER	CONTENT
SCOTT	No.
TAYLOR	Yeah, so really understand what drives you and what keeps you motivated. And I think, lastly, I think, you know, ignore any self-doubt, allow yourself to fail and, you know, allow yourself to take risks, have confidence, back yourself and explore every opportunity, because we're all unique and we all have a story to share. So that's my golden little tips. (LAUGHS)
SCOTT	I love those golden little tips. Now, where is Taylor Swift... Oh, sorry. (LAUGHS)
TAYLOR	(LAUGHS)
SCOTT	I don't know why I said that. Where... Now, where is Taylor Williams going to end up? Is she going to be the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prime minister?
TAYLOR	Oh, gosh. (LAUGHS)
SCOTT	Well, you're working in Canberra. You're halfway there.
TAYLOR	I love that. Um, you know what? I'm really loving where I'm at at the moment within Defence. I'm really going to finish my degree. And my goal is I really want to become a practising psychologist. And so I'm just really excited. (LAUGHS) I'm really happy where I am at the moment.
SCOTT	That's so fantastic that you're excited. That's what I love to hear.
TAYLOR	Yeah.
SCOTT	Young people that are excited about their careers. Excited about their training that they've been through. Excited about the future, you know.
TAYLOR	Yeah.
SCOTT	It's just so unreal. And I would really like to see you prime minister of the country.
TAYLOR	(LAUGHS)
SCOTT	So can you... I mean, psychology is perfect for politics. You can... You can read everybody's minds, can't you?
TAYLOR	Oh, I think, no, I can't read everyone's minds. (LAUGHS) I wish.
SCOTT	I tell you, I will just be looking out for Taylor Williams, prime minister, PM. I will vote for you, Taylor.
TAYLOR	Oh, thank you so much. (LAUGHS)
SCOTT	OK. Well, thanks for sharing your story with us today. It's been incredible. And if you're interested in finding out how Vocational Education and Training can help you get the career you want, visit the National Careers Institute website at yourcareer.gov.au . Taylor, thanks so much. You're amazing. You're inspirational. We love you.
TAYLOR	Thank you so much for having me. Appreciate it.
WOMAN	Thanks for listening to the National Careers Institute podcast. To explore how to start, change or boost your career, visit the National Careers Institute website at yourcareer.gov.au to view the online resources to help you make informed decisions about learning, training and work pathways.