

STUDENT STORY



Emma Barr

Graduating 2022 with First Class Honours.

University: University of Wollongong

Degree: Bachelor of International Studies (Honours)

International Relations Major,

Double Minor – Japanese and Psychology.

Emma's thesis looked at international responses to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

What's Next?

Emma has successfully applied to the Commonwealth Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) graduate program and begins this exciting journey in January 2023. This highly sought after position includes multiple rotations (including one internationally) and exposes the graduates to a diverse cross section of the activities of the Department. The program also incorporates an element of further postgraduate study which Emma is looking forward to.

How important was CUC Southern Shoalhaven in your study journey?

VERY important, It's great to be surrounded by like-minded people and to have access to a Centre Manager who knows the uni space really well and who is so well connected. It's people like Adam who encouraged me to keep going and was able to point out the opportunities and the bigger picture that really assisted in me not only graduating, but to be able to graduate with first class honours. I love the sense of community that the CUC provides, it's been such a welcoming and friendly space from the get-go. It took the stress out of lots of aspects of study for me. It was a place where I could come and be productive, a community of smiley faces telling me "you can do this". It was also really helpful to have access to really good technology, I have a very old laptop that doesn't have word and it's pretty buggy at times, so to have access to computers with all the software and hardware I needed and a fast internet connection was great. It's also a place where I could go to get my social fix.

What other challenges has CUC helped you overcome?

For me one of the main things it helped me with was boosting my confidence –the self-belief that I could do this incredibly challenging thing and to see the bigger picture. Uni in the COVID era was an isolating experience for me, I found it hard to connect with people in the digital world and lock-down meant that I wasn't seeing the opportunities that were available to me. When you come to the Centre you're in one of those spaces where you can see the opportunities and the people in the CUC community (staff and students) made me believe I could do it. Also, the access to the tech and mental health supports were really valuable too.

What advice would you give to other regional and rural people who are considering higher education?

Take a risk! Uni can feel out of reach for non-metro people, and that's a terribly limiting experience. What you can see is what you can be – so position yourself in a place like your local CUC where you can see amazing people achieving great things. Be aware that there are so many opportunities out there and it's worth taking a risk to explore them. You don't need to have aced high school – passion and motivation can take you a long way and you're more capable than you might think.

Thanks Emma! Best of luck in the next phase of your journey!

Thanks Adam, I really appreciate your support.