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**I feel the best way to
close the gap for
Indigenous people is
through education.
VET gave me a real chance.**

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Philadelphia Hughes' journey

Today Indigenous Research Officer at Menzies School of Health
Studying a Bachelor Degree in Psychological Science at
Charles Darwin University and aiming to study medicine

2013 Certificate IV in Frontline Management

2011-15 Worked in various roles in retail sales and business development



**Today I'm working as an
Indigenous Research Officer and studying
Psychological Science at Uni.
I'm aiming to go on to study medicine,
but how did I get here?**

Philadelphia's story

I never finished high school and if you'd asked me back then what I'd be doing as a career I'd never in my wildest dreams have guessed what I'm doing now.

I didn't have the best home life and was bullied at school, so I grew up thinking that I was never going to go anywhere. When I left I got a series of different jobs, then in 2013 I enrolled in the Certificate IV Frontline Management course because I wanted to further my skills and was serious about a career in management.

It was strange going back into a classroom environment. I was scared, but then I realised that I can do this as well, and I began to enjoy learning. It gave me confidence. I really enjoyed being in a class full of other people in management and I learned from them, and the discussions that we had with the teacher. It was life-changing.

I won the 2015 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year Award at the Australian Training Awards and was awarded the Most Outstanding Student in my class by Charles Darwin University, which really boosted my confidence further.

Doing my VET course eased me back into the routine of learning and my Certificate IV helped me get into university. It wasn't until my mid-20s that I found what I wanted to do, and now I am on the way to a career that I'm really passionate about.

**"I never went into VET as a stepping stone into Uni.
That just organically happened - VET gave me
that opportunity."**