

## Swinburne Commons

Title: Andrew Peters (Swinburne Story)

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I'm Andrew Peters and this is my Swinburne story.

For thousands and thousands of years, indigenous people did that very thing. They connected with the land by walking on it, by feeling it beneath their feet, by touching it with their hands.

We can still do that today. Forget about the concrete. Forget about the bricks. Forget about the buildings that we've created. Don't walk on a concrete path once. Walk on the grass next to it. Take your shoes off every now and then and feel the earth beneath you.

My Swinburne story began as an undergraduate student, 1996. So after four years of study and doing Honors, I found myself in a position where I was able to become a lecturer and leapt at the chance. And I've been lecturing here since the year 2000, so for around 14 years now.

One of the key motivations that I've found becoming a lecturer was seeing the difference that you can make to a lot of students. And I found really quickly, too, that the knowledge of indigenous culture in Australia was nowhere near what it should be. We can't separate indigenous culture in Australia from Australian culture. We can't separate indigenous history from Australian history. And to fully understand ourselves today, we need to fully understand our history.

In May this year, the university launched its first reconciliation action plan, or RAP. And a RAP's the way that an organization can find specific things that they can do to engage with indigenous culture and communities. One of the key ambitions of the RAP is to establish an interconnectedness in the university. One of my dreams is for indigenous studies and the study of indigenous culture to become almost embedded in all aspects of the universities.

It doesn't necessarily have to mean that students have to study indigenous studies as a discipline, but that all of our discipline areas and all of our faculties will include aspects of indigenous education in whatever programs they deliver. For me personally, being a lecturer in indigenous studies is almost like a lifelong fulfilling of a dream or an obligation.

I'm a descendant of the local people. We teach a lot about Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve. I have a very strong family connection there. It's a very significant part of Victorian, let alone Aboriginal history. And it's wonderful to be able to share that message with students and staff alike.