

THE STANDARD

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Making history

One word comes to mind when talking about Winslow's Alkira Couzens: passion. The 17-year-old Gunditjmara-Peek Whurrong student has been named Warrnambool College's first Indigenous school captain. "I wanted to reach my full potential and show students that you can achieve anything despite your past," Alkira said.

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Picture by
Sophia Baker



New school leader Alkira makes history

Sophia Baker

WINSLOW'S Alkira Couzens admits her educational journey has been far from perfect, but with determination and self-belief, she is now making history at her school.

The 17-year-old has been named Warrnambool College's first Indigenous school captain.

Alkira said in her younger years she never would have believed she would be in the position she is today.

"I wanted to reach my full potential and show students that you can achieve anything despite your past," she said.

"My school journey hasn't been the best one, but I think to be able to use my past self to better myself, it's something really powerful.

"Not everyone likes school, and I think I realise that it's not just about classes and the work, I think it's also about using it as a chance to grow and using it as a chance to inspire others."

The Gunditjmarra-Peek Whurrong student said in the past she hadn't always been able to celebrate her



Alkira Couzens has been named Warrnambool College's first Indigenous school captain. Picture by Sophia Baker

culture, something she'd like to continue to champion at the school.

"For me, my culture is a big part of who I am, so to be able to share my pride that I have with the school, that's what I wanted to do," Alkira said.

"When I was younger, I

never really got the chance to embrace my culture, it wasn't something that was celebrated, and I sometimes used to get picked on by my own friends.

"So to be able to now embrace it and be proud of it is a big thing, to show my

younger mob that we can do anything, that it's something to embrace, not overcome."

Since the news of her taking the top position in 2026 alongside fellow classmates Mairead Hewson, Zac O'Connor, Farron Urrutia and Sayla Veale, Alkira said

the school community had embraced her.

"I'm hoping we can make a lasting positive impact on the school, I want to do so many things. Promote cultural awareness and bring people together and include people, I also want to spread

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awareness for mental health because all of these things I'm so passionate about. If I can bring my passion into the role, people know that it will be more authentic and real, so people know that I want to make a change."

When not at school, Alkira works with the Gunditjmarra Aboriginal Cooperative, teaching kindergarten-aged children about the region's First Nations heritage.

Studying a VCE Vocational Major, Alkira said she wanted to complete her TAFE diploma of Community Services, and had an aspiration of applying to university to study law as a mature-age applicant.