



## MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNI

Where are they now?



**I'M A  
FUTURE  
MANAGER.**

*Introducing:*

*Alana Barber*

*Class of 2017*

***Alana, tell us what you have been up to since College?***

I'm in my third and final year of studying Aviation Management at Swinburne University and I've been lucky enough to experience aviation operations around Australia and in five other countries!

I've visited both major Australian airlines, where I've seen airline operations and flight planning first hand, and a highlight would have to be exploring an A380 jumbo in the Qantas Maintenance hangar! I had the opportunity to visit Melbourne Airport which gave an incredible insight into ground handling procedures and allowed me to stand right on runway 27! I was also lucky enough to visit Royal Brunei Airlines and their operations at Melbourne Airport, which was a great chance to learn about international airlines and their operations here in Australia.

Finally, at the end of 2019, I travelled overseas with university, visiting major organisations such as Airbus, Virgin Atlantic, Gatwick Airport and Etihad Airways. The most exciting thing was being hosted by Virgin Atlantic where we took part in emergency procedures training and visited the maintenance hangar. I look forward to completing my studies this year and beginning my career in airline operations and management.



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### ***Was aviation an area you have wanted to explore from a young age?***

No, aviation was actually something I only discovered in senior high school and at first, I only considered piloting as it seemed like an obvious choice. But it didn't excite me and then a google search lead me to the double degree, Aviation (Management) and Business (International) at Swinburne which instantly appealed to me, opening up all these possibilities in the industry I hadn't even been aware of! This all happened at the end of year 11 / start of year 12 but I was confident in my choice and I worked towards this goal in my final year.

### ***What would you consider to be some of the key strengths that are required to follow this career path?***

That's a really hard question to answer because there are so many different roles in the industry, and different skills and strengths are applicable to different areas. However, from my experience I would say it's good to be adaptable - the industry, as well as daily operations, are constantly changing so you need to be able to adapt quickly. I also think you have to enjoy problem solving and be able to consider the big picture - My interests are in Airline Operations which requires a broad knowledge of the business so that you can understand how a single decision can impact all areas of the airline.

In VCE I studied subjects across all faculties and my university degree is both science and business based which I think is a strength. Lastly, I'd also recommend a proactive attitude - I definitely believe this is why I've had so many incredible opportunities and experiences.

### ***How has the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted on your studies and work placements?***

The pandemic has certainly changed how I study as all my classes have moved online. This has proved a challenge as I thrive off of the environment at university and like to be able to connect with my classmates and lecturers. My interactions with lecturers have been minimal since the transition which is unfortunate as conversations with them are always valuable, but thanks to technology, I've been able to keep in touch with my friends and peers, catching up and working on assignments. Something I love about studying at Swinburne is also our connection to the industry and in previous semesters this has involved guest lecturers as well as visits to different industry organisations.

Understandably, all these events have been cancelled which is a shame. Separate to my studies, I had also just begun volunteering with Melbourne Airport's Customer Care Program in February which I was stood down from in March. I trust that I will be able to return to the program when it resumes and look forward to the experience but it was disappointing nonetheless.



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Lastly, I am in my final year of university and working towards graduation in December. Therefore, like so many others, I was looking forward to applying for graduate programs and positions but these have all been suspended given the pandemic and in particular it's impact on the aviation industry. (I will always remember the day I logged on to find the Qantas careers page completely empty - a sight I had never seen before but has now become the norm.) It's difficult to know what will come next but I'm working hard at completing my degree and trust things will turn out all okay, even if not right away.



Here are the links to the career's website and brochure:

Website- <https://www.aviationaerospace.org.au/pages/women-in-aaa/no-other-career-can-take-you-higher>

Brochure -  
- [https://www.aviationaerospace.org.au/media/pdf/information\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.aviationaerospace.org.au/media/pdf/information_brochure.pdf)

