


# ENCOUNTER

THE ANNUAL MAGAZINE FOR FLINDERS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS / 2020



**The only  
constant  
in life is  
change**

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**But is it in the  
right direction?**



**Flinders**  
UNIVERSITY

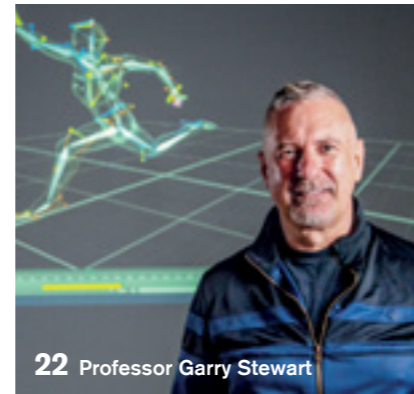




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# Thank you

## TO OUR FLINDERS FAMILY



It's often said that it's during times of crisis that people truly shine. This is especially true of our incredible alumni, whose resilience and resourcefulness are helping communities through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Around the world, our graduates are on the frontline – treating and

caring for those unwell, teaching our children in changeable situations – along with those who have carried on in food production, emergency services, social work and many other areas of essential work.

Thank you to our Flinders family of alumni, staff and friends who demonstrated their firm commitment to social justice through their generous and inspiring response to our call to support students who are vulnerable during this difficult time. Your support has enabled 1,500 students pay their essential living costs of food, bills and rent. See pages 28 and 29 for more details on the Matthew Flinders Scholarship.

Social distancing measures impacted our April graduation ceremonies – one of my favourite occasions at Flinders. As event MC, it is a privilege to see the sense of pride and joy (and sometimes relief!) as each graduand crosses the stage to receive their testamur. So, it was a personal disappointment when it became necessary to cancel the ceremonies.

As a way to still celebrate this special milestone, we created a fun campaign called VC & ME, where those who missed their ceremony could have the Vice-Chancellor photoshopped into their 'graduation' photo. We enjoyed the results – you can view them here [flinders.edu.au/vc-me](https://flinders.edu.au/vc-me).

To stay connected with you all during the pandemic, we developed new online resources, including our BRAVE Research & Innovation series, lunchtime music concerts, Flinders University Museum of Art exhibitions, and Gillian Dooley's presentation *Matthew Flinders: Life Writer* – see [youtube.com/flindersuniversity](https://youtube.com/flindersuniversity) for the recordings.

The inaugural Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien public lecture was also presented online, as was the launch of Flinders University's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) – see [flinders.edu.au/rap](https://flinders.edu.au/rap). The plan was developed through extensive and deep consultations involving staff, students, alumni and members of First Nations communities, from across South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Finally, thank you to our graduates, staff and the wider Flinders family for your generosity and support during what has been a difficult 2020. Please stay safe.

**Callista Thillou**  
Executive Director, Alumni & Advancement

### Editorial enquiries:

Alumni & Advancement  
Flinders University

[alumni@flinders.edu.au](mailto:alumni@flinders.edu.au)  
+61 8 8201 7969

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## Has a nurse or midwife impacted your life, or the life of a loved one?

Tell us about your meaningful moment so that we can share the love for nurses and midwives around the world, especially our Flinders graduates.

[flinders.edu.au/sharethelove](https://flinders.edu.au/sharethelove)



*Celebrating 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale*





2019 Convocation Medallist  
Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM

# Inspiring the Next Generation of Scientists

2019 Flinders University Convocation Medallist  
Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM

**An innovative application of physics for the Australian Defence Force and the creation of the SA Space School have seen Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM inspire the next generation of scientists.**

Born in Novi Sad in the former Yugoslavia, Dr Samardzic (BSc(Hons) '90, PhD(SE) '96) came to Australia with her family when she was just three years of age.

The value of education was instilled in her from an early age by her father (a shoemaker) and mother (a seamstress) and, from the age of 10, Dr Samardzic wanted to be a physicist.

'I knew I wanted to study physics, so it was an easy choice to study at Flinders – the top university for physics in the state at the time,' says Dr Samardzic.

Soon after graduating, Dr Samardzic joined the Defence, Science and Technology Group at the Australian Department of Defence, where she is now a Research Leader in the Cyber and Electronic Warfare Division.

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*'I knew I wanted to study physics, so it was an easy choice to study at Flinders...'*

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Dr Samardzic worked on the development of the Laser Optical Countermeasure System (LOCS), which will be used by military personnel to detect and defeat threats. She is also responsible for the Eye-safe Attention Gaining Laser Emitter (EAGLE), a unique and DST patented system developed to reduce civilian casualties by gaining their attention when they approach military or police checkpoints.

Dr Samardzic is also devoted to inspiring the next generation of scientists.

Noticing a sharp decline in the number of students taking up physics, she recalled that her fascination with space inspired her own scientific studies. In 1997 she co-founded the South Australian Space School – a strategy that has seen a significant increase in the number of students pursuing studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

A 20-year longitudinal study showed that almost 80% of respondents either continued in a STEM field or chose STEM subjects due to their positive experiences at the Space School.

'Knowing that I have been able to steer younger people to what I know to be a great and fulfilling career is my greatest accomplishment,' says Dr Samardzic.

'The mark of true leadership is to inspire more people to do great things.'

Dr Samardzic's leadership roles have included Co-Director of the Centre for Australian Space Education, chairing the SA Branch of the Australian Institute of Physics, sitting on the Flinders University Science Industry Advisory Board, and helping to develop the national physics strategy while on the National Executive of the Australian Institute of Physics. She also delivered a keynote address to around 120 Year 9 girls at the annual Flinders University STEM Enrichment Academy Conference Breakfast last year.

Her achievements were recognised in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours with a Public Service Medal. She also recalls with fondness being a finalist in the Unsung Heroes award during National Science Week in 2006. She didn't win but had three young women at the ceremony tell her they had pursued STEM studies after hearing her speak previously about the thrill of pursuing a career in science.

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*'Knowing that I have been able to steer younger people to what I know to be a great and fulfilling career is my greatest accomplishment.'*

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'That was better than any award,' she says. 'It showed that I helped them get to a place where they could enjoy an enriching career.'

'My message is – don't give up, science is for everybody.'

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## 2019 Convocation Medallist

Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM was awarded a 2019 Flinders University Convocation Medal for her outstanding contribution to the national and international science, technology, engineering and mathematics community. In particular, for her significant service to science and technology in support of the Australian Defence Force.

[flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards](https://flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards)

CREATIVE THINKING UNDERPINS

# Indigenous Advancement

## New Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)

**Flinders graduate Associate Professor Simone Ulalka Tur's background in arts research and Indigenous education underpins her transformative role as Flinders University's inaugural Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous).**

In February 2020, Associate Professor Simone Ulalka Tur (MEdSt '02, PhD(EHLT) '18), from the Yankunytjatjara community in north-west South Australia, was appointed to the new role, following six months acting in the position, shared with colleague Dr Ali Gumillya Baker (MA(EHLT) (Cwk) '02, PhD(EHLT) '18), from the Mirning community.

Responsible for enhancing respect for Indigenous knowledges and advancing Indigenous outcomes across education, research, employment and wellbeing, she also guides the Yunggoendi Student Engagement – a Flinders University hub that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed.

Key priorities this year include overseeing new Indigenous governance structures at Flinders and the implementation of an enormous project – the University's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

This May saw the finalisation of the RAP – the result of an extensive consultation phase during 2019 that was enthusiastically embraced by staff, students and alumni across South Australia and the Northern Territory.

***'This will require a collective effort, as many employees will have new responsibilities to deliver the outcomes.'***

It contains an extensive set of goals and deliverables to foster deeper engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff, but Associate Professor Tur says that's only the beginning.

'The plan will need a strong and focused process to be implemented, and will build on the commitment and momentum of students and staff throughout its development. This will require a collective effort, as many employees will have new responsibilities to deliver the outcomes,' she says.

The University's aspirations for Indigenous advancement extend well beyond its campuses, and Associate Professor Tur says strengthening external connections is essential for a community-oriented approach.

'It was important to include perspectives and knowledges of the broader Indigenous community,' she says.

As part of the RAP consultation, Associate Professor Tur visited Arrernte traditional owners around Alice Springs with Dr Baker, senior lecturer and convenor of the Indigenous Studies and Australian Studies majors at Flinders University, and Dr Maree Meredith (PhD(HlthSc) '18), Acting Director of the University's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health.

'It's about building relationships, engaging in conversations about advancing Indigenous opportunities through education.'

This extends to the exciting new initiative of employing Elders on campus.

'Through the leadership of The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and Flinders College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders Northern Territory recently appointed two new Elders on Campus, Mr Richard Fejo and Dr Pat Miller AO. We also plan to have an Elder on Campus at Bedford Park this year,' says Associate Professor Tur.

The Elders will contribute to the new Indigenous governance structures and help shape fresh initiatives, while enhancing Indigenous perspectives, staff recruitment and student support.

'This rich community involvement is key to supporting our Indigenous engagement across all areas, and can inform further approaches on how we engage in research, meet the needs of communities and engage ethically as a university,' says Associate Professor Tur.

'It highlighted the significance of Indigenous languages, a view which also came across strongly in internal discussions.'



Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)  
Associate Professor  
Simone Ulalka Tur

Completing her PhD at Flinders, Associate Professor Tur has been a member of staff since 1998, including Director of Yunggoendi for four years.

'The biggest change for me with this new role is the broader engagement, which requires an outward-looking perspective.'

***'It was important to include perspectives and knowledges of the broader Indigenous community.'***

To achieve this, she is drawing on her arts knowledge and using performance to convey complex ideas and Indigenous views. As part of a collective of four female Aboriginal academics in *The Unbound Collective*, Associate Professor Tur creatively enacts critical responses to colonial archives. The sought-after group has performed nationally, including the launch of *The National 2019: New Australian Art* exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

'It will no doubt be a challenge, but I think it's important to maintain my research and arts practice as part of this role,' she says.

'I see creative arts and creative thinking as integral to implementing strategies that relate to Indigenous advancement.'

### Flinders University's Innovate RAP

The Reconciliation Action Plan aims to enhance respect for Indigenous knowledges and advance Indigenous outcomes across education, research, employment and wellbeing at Flinders University.

[flinders.edu.au/RAP](https://flinders.edu.au/RAP)

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Could waste  
provide a solution  
for water pollution?

# THE GOOD OIL



Associate Professor  
Justin Chalker

**Associate Professor Justin Chalker is planning to minimise the damage oil spills are having on our oceans through the use of a newly created, rubber-like material.**

Ocean oil spills are an inherent risk in extracting oil from the sea floor and transporting it around the world, yet ocean oil mining occurs every day. If there is a spill, clearing the oil from the water is no easy task. While the clean-up takes place – usually over weeks, months or sometimes not at all – the oil has time to cause decades of irreversible damage to the ocean and marine life, and to the health of local communities.

And so, when a synthetic chemist stands up and suggests pouring more oil, intentionally, into the ocean to remedy the initial spill, it is understandably met with questions.

Luckily, Associate Professor Justin Chalker likes questions: 'Questions set you on a hunt for answers.'

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***What sets this work apart is their focus on using waste products to create new materials.***

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A synthetic chemist and researcher, Associate Professor Chalker completed his PhD in Organic Chemistry at the University of Oxford in the UK. He is a Research Leader for the Flinders University Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology, and runs the Chalker Research Lab from Flinders.

Associate Professor Chalker believes chemists are in a unique position to solve many of the biggest problems facing the environment. And it is exactly these problems his team of researchers are focused on. Their work is to create new molecules and materials, and to bring new matter into existence and then put it to use. In the truest sense, they are looking for answers in the unknown.

What sets this work apart is their focus on using waste products to create new materials.

'The polymer we've invented is a material made from sulphur, a by-product of the petroleum industry, and canola oil. It's a renewable resource,' he says. 'By simply reacting these two materials together, it thickens and turns into a brown rubber and we get an entirely new substance – one that we found can be used to clean up oil spills.'

The new polymer acts like a sponge that floats and quickly absorbs unwanted oil. Importantly, it returns clean water to the sea and leaves only the crude oil on the polymer. The oil can later be drained from the polymer and safely disposed of, and the polymer can be used again.

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***'By focusing on inexpensive materials to capture pollution, we can ensure clean air, water and food for everyone in the world – not just those in wealthy nations.'***

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Creating affordable and accessible solutions is an important consideration for Associate Professor Chalker – a significant benefit of waste material is that it's cheap and readily available.

Areas like the Amazon Basin in Ecuador and Niger Delta in Nigeria are economically dependent on the oil industry but are operating without the same access to adequate oil spill solutions. As a result, the environmental impacts on these oil-bearing areas is disproportionate to wealthier oil drilling areas. In Nigeria, the UN has estimated that it will take more than 30 years to reverse the environmental impacts from their oil spills.

'My broadest and most ambitious goal is to use synthetic chemistry to improve the lives of those who don't have the same access to resources to have a fair go in tackling environmental disasters,' says Associate Professor Chalker.

'By focusing on inexpensive materials to capture pollution, we can ensure clean air, water and food for everyone in the world – not just those in wealthy nations.'

In February 2020, a formal agreement between the Chalker Research Lab and Clean Earth Technologies assigned a suite of patents to the Singapore-based company to commercialise the new polysulfide material for global markets. The first manufacturing facility is set to be established in South Australia.

Professor Robert Saint, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at Flinders, says, 'I can think of no better example than the work of the Chalker laboratory in turning outstanding research into new resources that can be used to deliver a cleaner world!'

Associate Professor Chalker has also discovered that the same sulphur-canola oil polymer can extract mercury from polluted soil, water and air. Mercury poisoning occurs primarily in artisan and small-scale gold mining in some of the world's poorest countries and affects more than 15 million people.

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***'We're always at the cusp of a new discovery or technology that can change the way we think and live...'***

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Other threats to clean air and water, such as PFAS pollution (residue from fire-fighting foam) and the mounting impacts of plastic pollution, are also being investigated.

With 91% of plastic not being recycled, most will end up in landfill or the ocean.

Plastic was masterminded by chemistry so Associate Professor Chalker thinks chemists should be at the forefront of efforts to make amends.

'The chemistry that was used to make plastic is almost too good, because it's so stable it doesn't break down and now plastic is wreaking havoc on the environment.'

His team is now working towards creating new materials that are biodegradable – or more able to be recycled – made from waste or sustainable resources, of course.

'We're always at the cusp of a new discovery or technology that can change the way we think and live, and that's something that we want to be at the forefront of. We want to be involved in these changes.'

# Expert on a Humanitarian Mission

Gosia Hill is making a difference amid political turmoil



Gosia Hill at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan with UNHCR Education Associate Dr Awad Al-Shiekh and a camp UNOPS officer.

Photo supplied

**From post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, South Africa and the Middle East, Gosia Hill has drawn on her ability to network, collaborate and build mutual trust, to make a difference in complex political environments.**

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Syrian Civil War is the second deadliest war of the 21st century, resulting in over half a million deaths, including more than 20,000 children, since March 2011.

Nine years on, the conflict continues and has displaced around 12 million Syrians and civilians from neighbouring countries, and has caused substantial damage and destruction to hospitals and schools throughout the country.

In her role with the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR, Flinders University graduate Gosia Hill (BA '83, BSocAdmin '87) has seen the devastating impact of the war firsthand. The most difficult being the remote refugee camps in Jordan that provide shelter to displaced people from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia and Sudan.

'I witnessed the displacement and terrible living conditions of hundreds of thousands of people, especially children, who live for many years in remote refugee camps in Jordan such as Azraq and Zaatari,' says Gosia, who worked on developing education and protection interventions for refugees in Jordan for six months during 2018.

'At the camps and their surrounding communities, where over 70,000 refugee children are not in school, we helped to improve the coordination and resourcing of education programs, with a focus on girls, youth and children with disability.'

Gosia's work with the UNHCR team included anti-violence campaigns, mechanisms for reporting violence, training for carers and teachers in child protection, and developing support groups.

***'These kinds of initiatives improve and transform the lives of refugees by opening up safer environments and more accessible education opportunities.'***

She was involved in an education awareness campaign for the parents of children with a disability, and the rollout of special education programs in community centres. She also worked on community consultations to inform the content for the Google-funded Learning Hubs for Youth, created to support children's education in Jordan.

'These kinds of initiatives improve and transform the lives of refugees by opening up safer environments and more accessible education opportunities,' says Gosia.

With her UNHCR colleagues she helped to secure funding from international donors to support successful education programs including the UNHCR's higher education scholarship program.

'The program was in danger of reducing scholarship places in Jordan from over 150 to just ten per year. We worked tirelessly with the relevant stakeholders, especially the German mission, not to cut the program, and thankfully it's still continuing today!'

'It's so exciting to hear the news of each refugee who completes a degree either in Jordan or another host country through this scholarship.'

The impact of political turmoil has been with Gosia for much of her life.

In 1980, as a result of political unrest and martial law in her homeland of Poland, Gosia migrated to Australia. Through a communication black-out in Poland she couldn't access the papers she needed to apply for university. However, through a chance meeting with the Flinders University Registrar, and the demonstration of her high level of knowledge from her previous studies in Poland, she was accepted into a Bachelor of Arts.

Proving her apt knowledge and abilities, before she had even graduated Gosia was offered a position with the federal Department of Immigration based in Adelaide.

'I am grateful to Flinders for giving me a chance to earn my two degrees and help me start over as a new immigrant to Australia,' says Gosia.

From 2004 to 2008 Gosia served as Australia's Senior Trade Commissioner in Central and South Eastern Europe, with international trade and investment responsibility for 17 countries.

'It was a very exciting time with several former Eastern Bloc countries entering the European Union,' she says. 'I achieved several important trade and investment deals, while avoiding scams and fraudulent activities.'

Gosia is now the Honorary Consul for Poland in the South Australian Consular Corps and, through RedR Australia, she is on standby as 'Expert on Mission' for international humanitarian response missions with United Nations agencies.

In May, Gosia began work with UNICEF Suva (Fiji) as part of the Australian Government's humanitarian civilian deployment program, Australia Assists.

***'Together we will work on making their education systems better prepared for disasters and emergency situations that can greatly disrupt the ability to learn.'***

'My work will involve a great deal of engagement with local communities, agencies and governments in the Pacific. Together we will work on making their education systems better prepared for disasters and emergency situations that can greatly disrupt the ability to learn,' says Gosia.

'I believe in the social exchange theory of reciprocity – the success of our UNICEF work and Australia's assistance in the Pacific very much depends on good networking, collaboration and mutual trust.'

## Join the RedR Humanitarian Roster

If you are interested in becoming a humanitarian and want to apply your skills and expertise before, during or after a disaster or crisis, visit the RedR Australia website to find out more about how you can join the humanitarian expert roster.

[redr.org.au](http://redr.org.au)

# CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE Nurse & Midwife

**When the World Health Organisation declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, to celebrate Florence Nightingale's birth 200 years ago, who would have known a pandemic would throw a spotlight on nurses around the world?**

COVID-19 has highlighted the incredible contribution nurses and midwives make to the health of the community through their ongoing work of caring, infection control and evidence-based practice.

In 1975 Flinders University began the first tertiary nursing course in South Australia. This year we celebrate more than 16,600 nurse and midwife graduates who are now advancing health care around the globe. Read the stories of two Flinders graduates who illustrate how brave, bold and brilliant nurses and midwives are.

## The miracle of birth never fades for Kate

**After losing three litres of blood following the birth of her first child, Kate Taylor (GradCertClinEd '20) became aware of how lucky she was to be living in a country with access to quality maternal health care.**

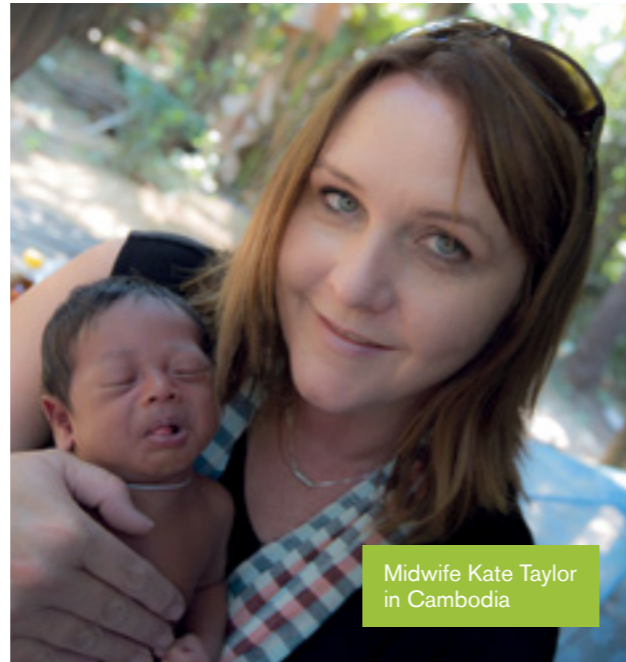
'It really alerted me to the fact that midwives, and their practice, actually save lives and it's more than just cuddling babies.'

Two more children and two university degrees on, Kate is a registered midwife, working in clinical practice and lecturing in midwifery at Flinders University's College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She is currently completing her Master of Clinical Education at Flinders.

But it's her humanitarian pursuits that are truly inspiring. Before she began studying at university Kate felt she needed to give back to the world and decided to travel to Cambodia to volunteer on a floating medical clinic. She was assigned to maternal care.

With no formal midwifery training, she had only personal experience to lean on and quickly learnt that childbirth for women in low-resourced countries is very different to back at home.

'I saw a woman with tears rolling down her face, who said that her mother had died from giving birth to her and that she herself was now petrified. It haunts me to this very day.



Midwife Kate Taylor in Cambodia

'On the way back to Australia I was having this internal argument with myself that somebody had to do something. By the time the plane landed I knew that that somebody was going to be me.'

After three years of study while raising three young children, Kate became a qualified midwife. Since 2007, and with the help of hundreds of maternal health specialists from Australia, she has travelled back to Cambodia to deliver training to more than 4,000 midwives, doctors and traditional birth attendants through her maternal health organisation The 2H Project.

**'...somebody had to do something...I knew that that somebody was going to be me.'**

'The whole labour experience can be horrifically painful but it's such a worthwhile journey. And then to be with the new parents and play a part in that joy is an absolute honour. It's those real and raw emotions that make midwifery amazing.'

During the COVID-19 crisis, Kate has fundraised to send personal protective equipment such as gloves and hand sanitiser to support medical workers in Cambodia.

Photo courtesy The 2H Project  
the2hproject.com



Palliative Care Nurse Kevin Hardy

## SA's first private palliative care nurse

**Pioneer of the Calvary Palliative Home Care Service, Kevin Hardy (BNG (PreReg) '99, MNg (NPrac) '15) is the first palliative care nurse practitioner in Adelaide to work within the private hospital system.**

Kevin believes having a love for people is the key to a successful life as a nurse. He considers it a privilege to help his patients and their families navigate the challenging end-of-life period.

'You meet some incredible people across all spectrums of life – from battlers to the wealthy – just some really tough and resilient people,' he says.

***A love for people is the key to a successful life as a nurse.***

The experience of looking after his sick father, who died at the age of 61, was life-changing. At the age of 36, Kevin, who had not completed high school, began a nursing degree at Flinders University.

'I say nursing chose me rather than me choosing nursing.'

After working in palliative care for almost two decades, Kevin returned to Flinders to complete his Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) in 2015.

Establishing the Calvary Palliative Home Care Service in September 2018, Kevin is now involved in all levels of the service.

***'I say nursing chose me rather than me choosing nursing.'***

'We do everything from start to finish – admissions, consulting, symptom management, hands-on care, end-of-life care, medication management – all through one service, without the need to refer out to other agencies or services,' says Kevin.

Previously, patients at the private hospital nearing their end-of-life period would be referred to the public palliative care services.

'I think that's the point of difference. You get that continuity of care. Even if people come in and out of Calvary Hospital or Mary Potter Hospice, they will see some familiar faces. And then as soon as they get home, we provide their home support.'

Photo courtesy Calvary Health Care



# The only constant in life is change

But is it in the right direction?

**PROFESSOR COREY J A BRADSHAW**  
Matthew Flinders Fellow in Global Ecology

## Professor Corey J A Bradshaw

Professor Bradshaw is a Matthew Flinders Fellow in Global Ecology in the College of Science and Engineering at Flinders University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Australia, and Modelling Node Leader in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. He is Co-Head of the Ecology Section for *Faculty Opinions*, sits on the Australian Research Council College of Experts, and is recipient of the Verco Medal (Royal Society of South Australia) and Australian Ecology Research Award (Ecological Society of Australia).

Photo: Getty

**As an ecologist concerned with how life changes and adapts to the vagaries of climate and pervasive biological shuffling, 'constant change' is more than just a mantra – it is, in fact, the mathematical foundation of our entire discipline.**

But if change is inevitable, how can we ensure it is in the right direction?

Take climate *change* for example. Since the Earth first formed it has experienced abrupt climate shifts many times, both to the detriment of most species in existence at any given time, and to the advantage of those species evolving from the ashes.

For more than 3.5 billion years, species have evolved and gone extinct, such that more than 99% of all species that have ever existed are now confined, permanently, to the vaults of the past.

While extinctions occur all the time, the rates are not constant. We can now say with reasonable certainty that current global extinction rates equal or even exceed those that occurred during the previous five mass extinction events.

*Don't believe me? Here are some salient observations that might convince you otherwise.*

The biomass of vegetation on land across the globe has halved over human history, with a corresponding loss of more than 20% of its original biodiversity.

This means that more than 70% of the Earth's land surface has been altered by humans.

This has resulted in over 700 vertebrate and nearly 600 plant extinctions recorded since the 16th century, and many more species have likely gone extinct unnoticed. More worryingly, massive population declines that are the precursors to extinction have also occurred worldwide – since 1970, more than 60% of all land-based vertebrate individuals have disappeared.

***More than 70% of the Earth's land surface has been altered by humans.***

This means that the total global biomass of wild animals today is less than one quarter of what it was when human civilisation began.

One scary statistic is that of the estimated 0.17 gigatonnes of biomass of land-based vertebrate species on Earth today, only 5% is represented by wild mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians – the rest is made up of livestock (59%) and living human beings (36%).

Australia is unfortunately not immune to these global trends, with at least 100 vertebrate extinctions recorded here since Europeans first arrived, giving us the ignominious title of the world's leading nation in mammal extinctions.

***...giving us the ignominious title of the world's leading nation in mammal extinctions.***

While these extinctions have been primarily the result of introduced predators like cats and foxes, we have also irreparably damaged Australia's forests.

Since colonisation, we have been responsible for the loss of nearly 40% of the continent's forests, and much of the remainder is too fragmented to provide sufficient shelter to many forest-dependent species.

Worse still is the rising frequency and severity of bushfires in an already (sun)burnt country.

Global warming is changing Australia's bushfire susceptibility, driving longer burning seasons, and fewer opportunities for controlled burning during cooler, wetter periods.

The catastrophic bushfires that recently ravaged Australia are still an open wound, with many threatened species pushed even closer to extinction.

The sad reality is that the incidence and severity of these events will increase even more for the foreseeable future.

Our poor water management (Australians use water at six times the global average rate per capita despite living in the world's driest inhabited continent), lack of a meaningful pathway to emissions reductions, and broken legislation for the protection of our remaining ecosystems, mean that our extinction crisis has only just begun.

***The catastrophic bushfires that recently ravaged Australia are still an open wound, with many threatened species pushed even closer to extinction.***

What can we do?

We can demand a more responsible government and tougher legislation to protect our native plants and animals.

We can insist on development that does not require additional deforestation, and we can restore great tracks of previously stripped land.

We can implement a broad network of clean-energy technologies to transition our emissions-heavy economy toward one with a low footprint, and we can invest in smarter, low-water agriculture.

On a community level, during pandemic restrictions we have been forced to re-think how and where we work, how our food is grown and distributed, and how cities can support this transition – all aspects that can reduce the impact of climate change.

***We can demand a more responsible government and tougher legislation to protect our native plants and animals.***

Yes, change is inevitable, and climates have always changed, but it is indisputable that human society is now responsible for one of the greatest climate changes Earth has experienced for millions of years.

For too long we have ignored the pleas of scientists to mend our ways.

We ignore these warnings at our peril.

# MAPPING A NEW PATHWAY FOR OUR VETERANS

## A former soldier transitions to law

**Meet 30-year-old Trevor Morris, a former soldier who has taken the first step in his journey to becoming a lawyer through Flinders University's Military Academic Pathway Program.**

Trevor dreams of one day sitting on a court bench but not so long ago he was based in the Middle East as a member of the Australian Defence Force.

He spent five years as a rifleman in 7RAR and patrol commander in the 7th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. He was then tasked with being a 'Guardian Angel' – providing force protection to Australian soldiers in Iraq – before deciding his next pursuit would be a legal career.

'I wanted a better career with improved options for both my lifestyle and income,' says Trevor. 'I'm aware that having a degree, or any sort of education, is the best way to progress and transition from a military career.'

Last year, 26 military veterans, including Trevor, embarked on Flinders University's Military Academic Pathway Program (MAPP) – a free, four-week intensive program available exclusively for military personnel seeking to qualify for a wide range of Flinders University undergraduate degrees.

***'...having a degree, or any sort of education, is the best way to progress and transition from a military career.'***

The free program is specifically designed to assist military personnel transition successfully into university, both academically and socially. After completing the program veterans can apply to a range of undergraduate degrees at Flinders.

Covering a wide range of academic skills development, such as writing and research, the program also highlights Flinders' online learning tools, engagement with support services, linking with peer mentoring, and academic advocacy.

'It was a great program that quickly and effectively injected the relevant information that I needed to begin my studies at university. Because of the program, I don't struggle or squirm at the thought of an essay, a thesis statement or anything else,' says Trevor.

The 2019 pilot for MAPP was made possible through a \$157,000 Supporting Younger Veterans Grant from the

Department of Veterans' Affairs, announced by Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester during a visit to the Bedford Park campus early last year. Recognising the success and value of the program to veterans, the University has committed to continuing the program.

The MAPP includes a project officer to run a support program and peer group that can provide relevant and integral transition, study and lifestyle support for younger veterans, with access to expertise in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), mental health, and drug and alcohol support.

***'Veterans bring with them a range of skills and knowledge that are incredibly valuable to society..'***

Trevor says the short timeframe of MAPP is particularly appealing. 'Soldiers transitioning out of Defence and looking at attending a foundation course for six months is something they dread. A program tailored for veterans that is just four weeks long is a very effective strategy in appealing to veterans.'

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching Innovation, Professor Deborah West (MSW '96, PhD(SS) '03) says Flinders University is committed to supporting members of the defence community transitioning out of service and exploring their education pathways.

'The Military Academic Pathway Program is designed specifically for Defence members and veterans to support them to succeed in their academic studies.'

'Veterans bring with them a range of skills and knowledge that are incredibly valuable to society. We want to ensure these are recognised and that members can use them to build the next stage of their educational and career development.'

Trevor is now in his first year of a Bachelor of Law and Society, a degree focused on developing a new generation of legal practitioners with tech-savvy skills.

'My military career helped nurture the self-discipline that now enables my commitment to study, absorb information and to ask for help when I need it,' says Trevor.

'It also developed other skills like punctuality, respect, flexibility and confidence, which will help me maintain the discipline required to reach my study and career goals.'

## Flinders Military Academic Pathway Program

Prior service in the Australian Defence Force is a pathway to a Flinders University degree. MAPP is open to Australian Defence Force veterans, including personnel still serving, those in the process of transition, and for people who have already left the military. The next intake in October 2020 will be available online.

[flinders.edu.au/study/pathways/military-veterans](https://flinders.edu.au/study/pathways/military-veterans)

Trevor Morris completed the Military Academic Pathway Program before beginning his Law degree



RECOGNISING OUR

# Extraordinary graduates

## 2019 Flinders University Alumni Award Recipients

**Women who have dreamed big and succeeded – by creating the Space School in Adelaide, and fighting for people with disabilities – are among the high achievers recognised in the 2019 Flinders University Alumni Awards.**

The 2019 Convocation Medallists are Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM, a Research Leader with the Australian Department of Defence and founder of the SA Space School, and Professor Anne Kavanagh, Chair of Disability and Health at University of Melbourne's Centre for Health Equity.

Seven extraordinary graduates received a 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award including: CSIRO Fellow and former CSIRO Chief Research Scientist, Dr Sukhvinder Badwal; Executive Producer of ScreenTime, Basia Bonkowski; Partner at PwC and Co-Chair of the National Reconciliation Governance Committee, Kim Cheater; Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer at SA Health,

Adjunct Associate Professor Jenny Hurley; Executive Director of Reconciliation South Australia, Shona Reid; and artist, author and teacher, Alan Tucker.

A Distinguished Alumni Award was granted posthumously to the late Professor Liz Eckermann (1949-2019). Professor Eckermann's public health research focused on gender and health, reproductive and maternal health, violence against women, and developing quality of life and health status indicators within developing countries.

Acknowledging the significant contributions made by our graduates to the community, to the University or within their chosen field, the 2019 Alumni Awards were presented at a special ceremony at the Mortlock Chamber of the State Library of South Australia on Thursday 27 February 2020.

Read their extraordinary stories of achievement: [flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards](http://flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards)

## 2020 FLINDERS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS\*

*Nominate a Flinders graduate making a difference in their field, to their community or to the University.*

**\*New in 2020: Early Career Alumni Award**

Nominations close: **5pm, Friday 11 September 2020**

[flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards](http://flinders.edu.au/alumni-awards)



## ALUMNI20 AWARDS19

CM Convocation Medal  
DAA Distinguished Alumni Award



**Professor Anne Kavanagh** CM  
BMBS '87

Awarded for her outstanding leadership and the advancement of research and knowledge on health inequities, particularly the health of people with disabilities.



**Dr Olivia Samardzic PSM** CM  
BSc(Hons) '90, PhD(SE) '96

Awarded for her outstanding contribution to the national and international science, technology, engineering and mathematics community. In particular, her significant service to science and technology in support of the Australian Defence Force.



**Dr Sukhvinder Badwal** DAA  
PhD(PhysSc) '78

Awarded for his outstanding international leadership, research and development in the fields of energy technology and engineering.



**Basia Bonkowski** DAA  
BA(Hons) '75

Awarded for her significant contribution to the creative arts as a television producer and presenter, author and movie reviewer.



**Kim Cheater** DAA  
BEc '86

Awarded for his significant contribution to the business community of South Australia and commitment to Reconciliation.



**Alan Tucker** DAA  
BA(Hons) '74, DipEd '75

Awarded for his significant contribution as an artist, author and teacher committed to sharing stories from Australian history with the younger generation.



**Adjunct Associate Professor Jenny Hurley** DAA  
MHithAdmin '12

Awarded for her outstanding leadership, advocacy and commitment to the ongoing development of nursing and midwifery practices within South Australia.



**Shona Reid** DAA  
BBehavSc '00

Awarded for her significant contribution and commitment to the advancement and rights of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities.

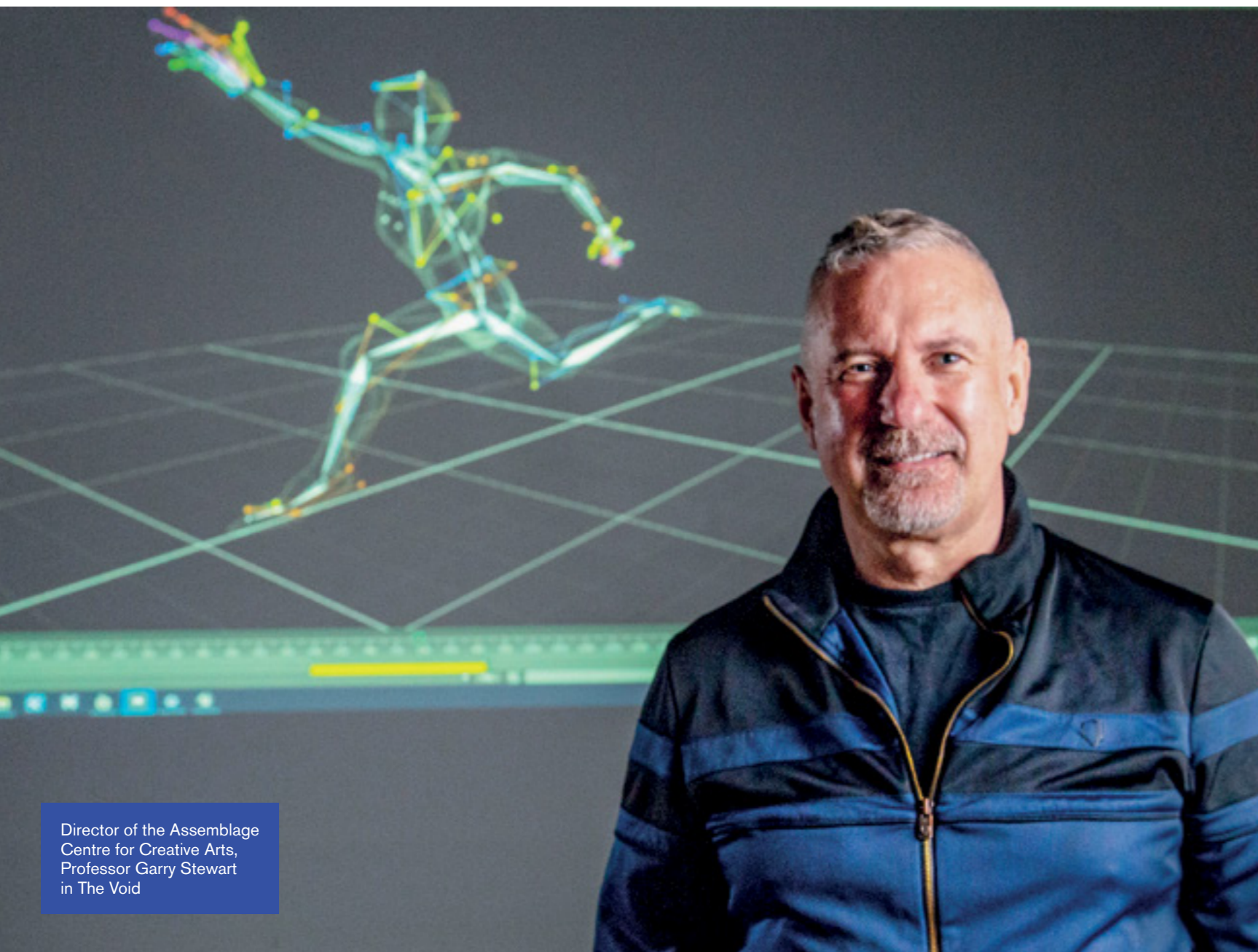


**Professor Liz Eckermann** DAA  
BA(Hons) '77, MA(SocSc)(Res) '85, PhD(SocSc) '94

Awarded for her outstanding international leadership in health research to improve the quality of life for underprivileged and marginalised people around the world.

PROFESSOR GARRY STEWART IS

# Assembling a different artistic future



Director of the Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts, Professor Garry Stewart in The Void

Despite a lifetime dedicated to dance, Professor Garry Stewart has always been fascinated by a range of other disciplines, including science. He brings this fascination, and his enthusiasm for innovative collaborations, to his new role as Professor of Creative Arts and the first Director of the Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts at Flinders University.

Professor Stewart has been notable in his other high-profile role as artistic director of Australian Dance Theatre (ADT). Since joining ADT in 1999, he has constantly pushed the boundaries of how dance and movement is expressed in live performance and media.

To expand the possibilities of this idiom, Professor Stewart has long reached out to other disciplines for explanations of how and why we move – through neuroscience, architecture, digital and motion capture technologies, prosthetics, and robotics. He is now excited by the new opportunities to fuse the creative arts with Flinders' experts in digital design, engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, and health sciences for unique research projects.

## *The Void is the largest motion capture lab in South Australia.*

This spirit of innovative collaboration will propel Flinders' new research centre to forge a nexus point for the University's existing creative arts disciplines and engage new connections with other academic sectors to promote innovative trans-disciplinary research.

'Based in the existing Flinders creative arts hub, Assemblage will draw together the significant resources already available across the University and unite them in new collaborations,' says Professor Stewart. 'We will also work externally, drawing arts organisations into the Assemblage workspace as well as other industries.'

The first example of Assemblage nurturing new collaborations will occur in The Void. Based at Flinders' Bedford Park campus, The Void is the largest motion capture lab in South Australia.

'It's an advanced facility that brings together filmmakers, actors, dancers, gamers, technicians and more in an environment where everyone is experimenting and exploring, and that brings much possibility,' says Dan Thorsland, Lab Manager of The Void.

Students who have already worked in The Void, on motion capture video for electronic game development, are excited by the possibilities that the new facility offers.

## **Hire The Void**

Like to get hands-on in South Australia's largest motion capture lab? The Void is available for hire, contact Lab Manager Dan Thorsland.

[dan.thorsland@flinders.edu.au](mailto:dan.thorsland@flinders.edu.au)

Jermaine Hampton (BA(Hons) '17) is a PhD student working on virtual reality research. He says, 'To learn everything that's going on behind the scenes in this new media is really fascinating.'

'It's innovative for how it reveals the next step in movement, and is a great opportunity for students to be submersed in what technology and media is now.'

## *'...a great opportunity for students to be submersed in what technology and media is now.'*

Professor Stewart's route to academia has been unconventional but tied by myriad threads over many years. Coming from rural New South Wales, he began studying social work in Sydney before committing himself to professional dance training at the Australian Ballet School. Through the 20 years he has spent at the helm of ADT, he has choreographed more than 25 major productions, as well as video and live performance installations. Much of his work has been notable for its unconventional collaborations.

'The desire to incorporate neuroscience, biology and technology to dance first arose in my dance production *Devolution* in 2006, which involved 30 robotic machines including robotic prosthetics and ten dancers,' he says.

## *'I'm exhilarated by alternate ways of thinking that collaborations can assert upon artistic processes.'*

'I see research and acquiring knowledge as the essential building blocks of any innovative artistic pursuit. I'm exhilarated by alternate ways of thinking that collaborations can assert upon artistic processes.'

Through his work as director of Assemblage, Professor Stewart says he will remain inexorably linked to artistic practice via his own work. However, in this new role he views himself primarily as a facilitator for artists' and researchers' own creativity.

'I intend to be at the centre of Assemblage activities,' he says, 'setting up the pathways for opportunities across a vast range of disciplines.'

'It's thrilling for me to think of the extraordinary creative arts research that is now going to be possible through this unique centre.'

# Why do men use violence in relationships?

## Research on how we can curb the crisis of domestic violence

**Domestic violence against women in Australia is a growing crisis. One in four women will experience domestic violence in this country during their lifetime, and an average of one woman a week is murdered at the hands of their partner.**

Professor Sarah Wendt, Matthew Flinders Fellow and Professor in Social Work at Flinders University, can't understand why there isn't more urgency being shown to curb this disturbing situation – but she is leading research that strives to identify why men use violence against women and children.

***'With the statistics so high, I can't understand why there isn't a panic about this in our society.'***

Professor Wendt and her team have investigated the effectiveness of an innovative approach to therapy for men that enables behavioural and attitudinal change. It uses narratives and storytelling to engage with men on a rehabilitation journey – which the researchers have found to be a useful and effective tool.

The report – *Engaging with men who use violence*, by Professor Sarah Wendt, Dr Kate Seymour, Fiona Buchanan (PhD(Ng/Midwif) '12), Chris Dolman (BSocWk(GradEntry) '03) and Dr Natalie Greenland, produced with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and Uniting Communities – was released publicly at the end of 2019.

It was both a challenging and risky process for the researchers to ask such pointed questions about the origins of violent behaviour by its perpetrators, but Professor Wendt says working with such an experienced counselling agency as Uniting Communities, and with each man's therapy practitioner, provided a safe and productive environment that gave piercing insights into violent behaviour.

'All the interviewees volunteered to be a part of this research, so they had time to digest the purpose of the study and how to answer the questions, but it was still a difficult task for them to address the shame of what they had done, and for them to articulate the hurt and damage they had inflicted,' says Professor Wendt.

The research interviews were very different to a counselling or therapy interview. 'We are not there to challenge the men or their accounts,' explains Professor Wendt.

'We asked questions to generate a narrative that enabled men to think about their behavioural change. We later analysed the transcript with a therapist and found interesting moments of change occurring along a violent man's journey.'

'The process builds a foundation for men to start articulating who they would like to be and how they would like to change – but stopping the use of violence is a long journey that takes a very long time.'

***'The process builds a foundation for men to start articulating who they would like to be and how they would like to change...'***

Due to the indeterminate length of time of each man's journey of change, Professor Wendt emphasises that trying to qualify 'success' is a very contentious term in this space. Is it success if a man stops using physical violence against his partner, but continues to threaten and belittle her, controlling her every move? Is it success if the partner's fear never goes away?

The report highlights complex, specific needs to address this problem, and Professor Wendt hopes agencies will see what this technique does to men over time. Ultimately, she hopes the report results in widespread influence over policy and practice.



Professor Sarah Wendt wants to curb the domestic violence crisis

Photo by Louise Bagger

Professor Wendt believes the widespread promotion and acceptance of this research study is a vital step towards addressing the largely unspoken social blight of violence in relationships.

'We know that we are probably underestimating the extent of domestic and family violence, because so many women survivors are not prepared to report incidents,' says Professor Wendt.

'With the statistics so high, I can't understand why there isn't a panic about this in our society. It is a significant community problem that must be addressed – and the difficult questions about men's use of violence need to be asked.'

### Supporting the frontline

Professor Sarah Wendt has been researching domestic and family violence in Australia for over a decade and is now researching how to best support those working on the frontline of the growing domestic violence crisis.

Read the full report of *Engaging with men who use violence*.

[anrows.org.au/publications](https://anrows.org.au/publications)



# Bequest for Asbestos Disease Research

Professor Doug Henderson AO Research Fund

Emeritus Professor  
Doug Henderson AO

Photo: The Advertiser

**A bequest to researchers at Flinders University honours the life and contribution of Emeritus Professor Doug Henderson AO, and continues the legacy of the world-renowned authority in pathology and his research into asbestos-related diseases.**

Known for his kind and patient manner, Flinders University researcher Professor Henderson was an internationally recognised pathologist with a focus on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of asbestos-related diseases.

He was the world expert on the deadly cancer mesothelioma – an aggressive cancer of the cells that line the lungs and the chest wall cavity, often caused by asbestos exposure.

Professor Henderson was regularly called on to provide his professional opinion in legal cases, including High Court cases, helping thousands of victims as they struggled to come to terms with their diagnosis.

A surgical pathologist at Flinders Medical Centre, Professor Henderson's expertise on diseases of the pleura and asbestos-related disorders led to him advising a range of international bodies, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC), as well as the International Mesothelioma Panel.

***He was the world expert on the deadly cancer mesothelioma...regularly called on to provide his professional opinion in legal cases...***

In 1999 and 2000, Professor Henderson was called upon by the World Trade Organisation Disputes Resolution Panel for the dispute between Canada and the European Communities on the importation of chrysotile asbestos. He also contributed to the Asbestosis Committee convened by the College of American Pathologists and the Pulmonary Pathology Society.

In 2006, he was awarded a Distinguished Fellow Award by The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. In 2010, he was awarded the Distinguished Pathologist Medal of the Australasian Division of the International Academy of Pathology. Professor Henderson was awarded an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) in 2015 for his services to medicine, especially in the field of asbestos-related disorders.

Aged 76, Professor Henderson passed away in 2018 leaving a bequest in his Will to support lung cancer and mesothelioma research at Flinders University. To continue the legacy of his incredible life's work, the Professor Doug Henderson AO Research Fund was established.

## Support Research and Education in your Will

Bequests play an incredibly important role in shaping the future for students and researchers at Flinders University. When you leave a donation in your Will you are making an enduring contribution to creating positive change in our community. If you would like to leave a legacy to research or education at Flinders University please contact Bequest Coordinator Georgie Clark, +61 8 8201 2511, [giving@flinders.edu.au](mailto:giving@flinders.edu.au)

[flinders.edu.au/bequest](https://flinders.edu.au/bequest)

The fund supports the work of Associate Professor Sonja Klebe (PhD(Med) '01) whose clinical trial of localised therapy for mesothelioma is the first of its kind in the world.

With a special focus on lung disorders, Associate Professor Klebe worked with Professor Henderson for 18 years.

The fund has also supported the creation of a new research role – the Prof Doug Henderson AO Postdoctoral Research Associate in Asbestos Associated Disease – in Flinders University's College of Medicine and Public Health.

Taking up the role in November 2019, Dr Ashleigh Hocking (PhD(Med) '19) is continuing the work of Professor Henderson through her research on malignant mesothelioma.

***'He was a great man who made a profound difference to the lives of the hundreds of asbestos victims he treated...'***

'My research is focused on a sub-population of immortal cells within mesotheliomas that can "fuel" tumour growth and withstand standard treatment regimens such as chemotherapy,' says Dr Hocking. 'Through this research, I hope to expand our knowledge of these cells so we can create more effective treatments for patients.'

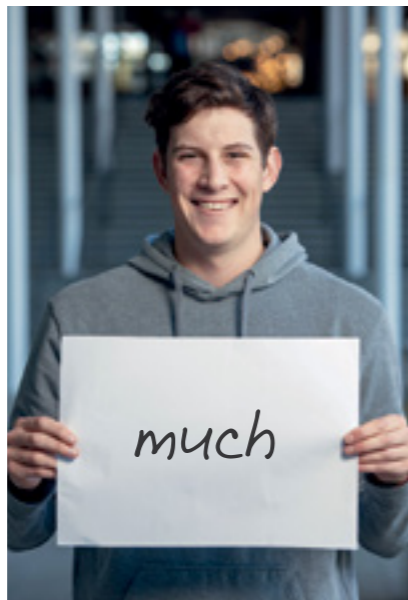
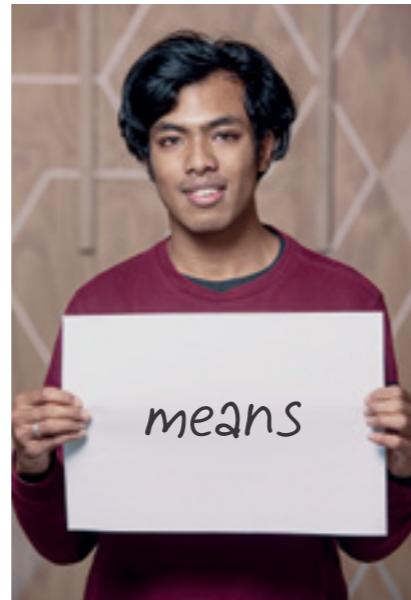
She says, 'I'm very grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the field of research that I feel passionate about, and that Professor Henderson himself dedicated so much of his life towards.'

The Asbestos Victims Association of South Australia says Professor Henderson made a significant difference to the lives of hundreds of local asbestos victims, particularly those with the aggressive and currently incurable lung cancer mesothelioma.

'Doug was passionate about so much more than just diagnosis and treatment. He focused a huge amount of time and effort on ground-breaking research into how to better treat and eventually cure these terrible diseases,' says Kat Burge, President of the Asbestos Victims Association.

'He was a great man who made a profound difference to the lives of the hundreds of asbestos victims he treated, and countless more people around the world who benefited from his research efforts.'

***The late Emeritus Professor Doug Henderson AO is survived by his children Axel and Alida, and his partner Associate Professor Sonja Klebe, who is committed to continuing his research legacy and finding effective treatments for asbestos-related diseases.***



*'Since neither birth nor fortune have favoured me, my actions shall speak to the world.'* – Matthew Flinders, 1804

# Matthew Flinders Scholarship

## Crucial support for our students during COVID-19

**As a champion of social justice, Flinders University holds an unwavering belief that those with the ability to succeed through education should be given the opportunity to do so and has recently created the Matthew Flinders Scholarship to support students during this difficult time.**

With rising levels of unemployment and under-employment, university students, many of whom had casual and contract roles to sustain them through their studies, continue to be hit hard by the ongoing economic impact of the pandemic.

As a result, thousands of Flinders students continue to face financial hardship and are struggling to meet their basic living costs.

Victoria Griffin is a second-year student in the Bachelor of Creative Arts (Creative Writing) and was working two part-time jobs to support herself during her studies. Following the COVID-19 restrictions, the hotel Victoria was working at closed and she lost her job as a trivia host. She also lost her second job as a promotion assistant doing food sampling in supermarkets – a job that won't be reintroduced for the foreseeable future.

She says, 'The financial uncertainty this brought has caused me a huge amount of stress.'

Victoria learnt that Flinders had created a COVID-19 Student Support Package, which included student relief payments of \$500 and the \$2,000 Matthew Flinders Scholarship.

Her application for the scholarship was successful and has helped Victoria to pay her living costs including bills and rent.

'To receive this scholarship is a huge weight off my mind. It has been so uplifting – both in terms of assisting with my financial stress, and because it has felt so encouraging to have the support of the Flinders community at this time,' she says.

In an incredible show of support for students, the Flinders community of alumni and staff donated generously to the

Matthew Flinders Scholarship, enabling the University to provide much needed emergency relief to nearly 1,500 students in its first round of support.

However, further support for students is still needed.

Around 4,000 domestic students are feeling the greatest financial impacts of the pandemic. These are students who are already vulnerable due to their low socio-economic background, and those who experience barriers to education, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, rural and regional students, and students with a disability.

Another 3,500 international students are also struggling and have been unable to return to their home countries due to travel restrictions. Many are cut off from vital family support while others have families who have lost their capacity, due to COVID-19, to support them through their studies.

As we open a second round of Matthew Flinders Scholarships, we can already see our students' need for financial support continues to be high.

If you would like to support students with their essential basic living needs, such as food and rent, please donate online to the Matthew Flinders Scholarship Fund. Supporting students through scholarships not only relieves financial distress but also provides the morale boost they need to continue their studies and achieve their degree.

### Emergency relief for students – donate today

Don't let COVID-19 be a barrier to our students being able to fulfil their potential - help provide emergency relief today. 100% of your donation will support Flinders students in financial need through the Matthew Flinders Scholarship Fund.

[flinders.edu.au/supportstudents](https://flinders.edu.au/supportstudents)

**Students Row 1:** Victoria Griffin, Bachelor of Creative Arts (Creative Writing); Vrinda Bhutani, Bachelor of Commerce (Finance and Economics); Samyam Shakyra, Bachelor of Engineering (Biomedical) Honours

**Students Row 2:** Phuong Anh Lai, Master of Speech Pathology; D'Arcy Mitchell, Bachelor of Nursing; Oliva Jansen, Bachelor of Human Nutrition

**Students Row 3:** Jett Zivkovic, PhD (Medical Science); Sophary Hang, Master of Social Work; Dennis Asante, PhD in Public Health

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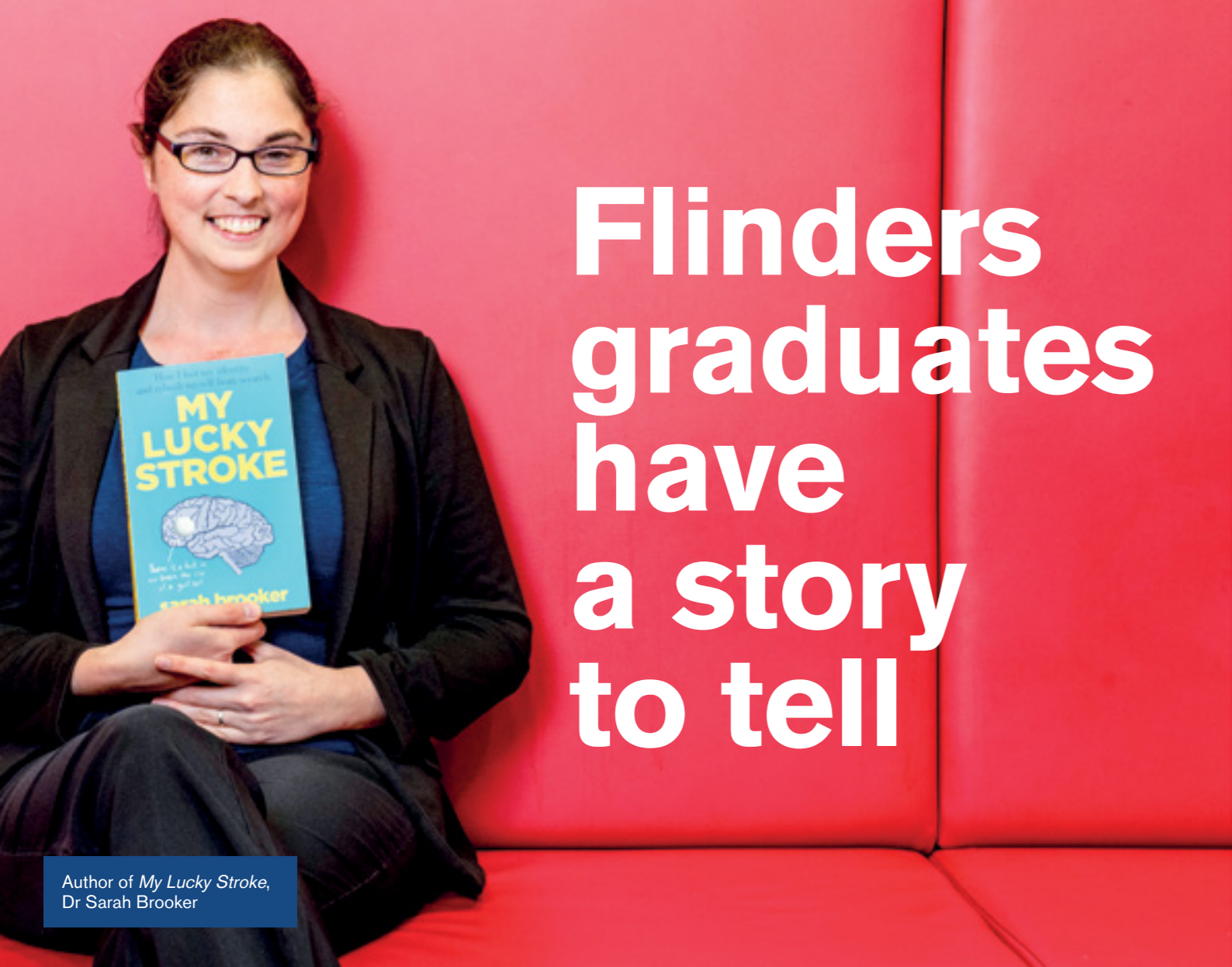
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Thank you also to our many donors who wish to remain anonymous.

\*The Donor Honour Roll recognises those who donated to Flinders University between 1 January 2019 and 30 June 2020.





# Flinders graduates have a story to tell

Author of *My Lucky Stroke*,  
Dr Sarah Brooker

## My Lucky Stroke

In 2002 when she was just 20 years old, Dr Sarah Brooker (PhD(Med) '14) had a stroke while at the wheel of her car. She survived the horrific crash, but extensive brain injuries left her with no memory of her life before the accident.

Incredibly, Sarah says she's a better person having come through the ordeal. She shares the remarkable story of rebuilding her identity in the biography *My Lucky Stroke* (2020).

**'That girl they once knew doesn't exist anymore, and I don't believe my brain will ever allow those memories to come back again.'**

'My family hadn't realised how much I'd changed as a person after the accident and brain injury,' says Sarah. 'That girl they once knew doesn't exist anymore, and I don't believe my brain will ever allow those memories to come back again.'

'My body needed the energy to do other, more vital things – like survive and heal!'

An extraordinary twist in Sarah's tale is that she retained her knowledge of neuroscience from her undergraduate degree in Behavioural Neuroscience, and went on to complete her Honours and later a medical PhD at Flinders University.

**'The struggle through recovery after stroke is always discussed as though it's a bad thing, but I've experienced positives.'**

'The struggle through recovery after stroke is always discussed as though it's a bad thing, but I've experienced positives. Everything I've done since – learning to talk, walk, sit upright, in fact every memory I have – is an achievement.'

Sarah is now teaching maths and science in high schools, as well as drawing on her post-stroke experiences to teach high-needs students who are non-verbal, have learning disorders or autism. Following the success of *My Lucky Stroke*, she plans to continue writing.

**Rich study and life experiences have equipped a diverse array of Flinders University graduates to have their compelling stories published across a range of literary genres.**

Published works include Dr Ben Chandler's fantasy novels, Hannah Kent's best-selling historical fiction, Lucy Trethewey's educative children's story, and medical graduate Dr Sarah Brooker's fascinating biography exploring her incredible medical condition and recovery.

## The Good People

Hannah Kent (BCreatArts(Hons) '09) enjoyed great success with her second novel *The Good People* (2016), following the international best-seller status of her 2013 debut *Burial Rites*.

*The Good People* is a historical fiction set in 1820s rural Ireland, exploring how folkloric beliefs and fairy superstitions take hold of a community fretting to explain a series of sudden deaths.

Desperate for answers, they point to a sickly boy as the reason for their ill fortune, believing he is in the thrall of wicked fairies. The boy's mother, Nóra Leahy, is left to battle with a rising hysteria of religious, medical, folkloric and, ultimately, legal foes.



## Beast Child

Dr Ben Chandler (BA(Hons) '05, PhD(EHLT) '09) is a busy fantasy writer who has issued *Beast Child* (2011), the second book in a continuing series of *The Voyages of the Flying Dragon*. It follows teenage twins leading a renegade airship crew through edgy adventures.

'I firstly create characters that I find interesting and then build a fantasy world around them,' says Ben who believes you can learn more from watching cartoons than you can from the news.

'There is a lot of cultural encoding in children's animation that is fascinating.'

'Cartoons provided me with a window into Japanese mythology and culture that eventually steered my academic studies. Fantasy is the progression of how we tell the heroic myths and legends that have been told for millennia.'



## Scapegoat

Lucy Trethewey (BA '98) used her sociology studies to inform an educative children's book she wrote under the pen name of Ava Keyes. *Scapegoat* (2018) is the story of a child bullied, blamed and belittled at home, told through the tale of cartoon goats illustrated by Aleksandra Szmids.

Lucy felt compelled to write *Scapegoat* after finding nothing else published for young children about this subject.

'We don't have enough understanding of how families function under their own roof,' says Lucy. 'We need to push awareness and advocate for that child who is bullied.'

'I'm keen to tell stories that explain why people become who they are.'



# RECOGNISING A GOOD DROP

## A new wine and tourism degree set to expand opportunities

**A new international degree in wine and tourism at Flinders University will develop business skills and industry knowledge to expand career opportunities in the wine and tourism sector.**

According to Wine Australia, there are around 2,468 wineries employing 163,790 full and part-time employees across 65 winegrowing regions in Australia. Contributing over \$45 billion annually to the Australian economy, the wine industry offers a range of career opportunities, especially for those with business skills and industry knowledge.

Riposte Brand manager Nick Knappstein travels the world expanding the profile of his family-run Adelaide Hills wine brand. Despite decades of industry experience, Nick acknowledges the advantages of having business qualifications in a competitive international export industry.

'Many employees of smaller to mid-size wine companies are having increasingly broad areas of responsibility,' says Nick. 'Formal qualifications encompassing all facets of the industry, from viticulture through to export market development, are an important holistic approach to the industry.'

'It also gives employers confidence that an individual holding the qualification is an asset to a wine business across a variety of roles.'

Flinders' new Bachelor of International Business (Wine, Spirits and Tourism) is for those looking to begin a career in the sector and for current industry professionals wanting to develop their global business skills.

'Attempting to upskill while working full time is a huge challenge. The flexibility of online learning and the ability to complete intensive blocks is a great initiative,' says Nick.

In a dedicated sensory lab at the Bedford Park campus, students will learn to judge the quality of wines and spirits, and understand their history and heritage. The degree includes hands-on experience with four-week industry placements, practical field trips, and study tours across Australia's leading wine tourism regions and to international trade fairs including ProWein and Vinitaly.

Flinders University's Director of the MBA and wine business programs, Professor Roberta Crouch, says the degree is designed to maximise graduate employment opportunities and enhance the sector's global competitiveness.

'The curriculum was developed in conjunction with leading academics, industry experts and feedback from extensive market research,' says Professor Crouch. 'This exciting combination of expertise will provide students with practical, internationally recognised qualifications that are highly regarded by employers around the world.'

### Lead and innovate in a global industry

Learn from industry experts from around the world and receive a business education that is ranked number one in South Australia for 'Teaching Quality in Business & Management' (The Good Universities Guide 2020). Apply now for the Bachelor of International Business (Wine, Spirits and Tourism).

[flinders.edu.au/wine-spirits-tourism](http://flinders.edu.au/wine-spirits-tourism)

Photo: Getty

# A GUM NUT IN A ZOO OF TREES

## Dr Dean Nicolle OAM has created the world's largest eucalypt arboretum

**In his early teenage years, Dr Dean Nicolle OAM had a dream to grow one of every species of eucalypt known on Earth. Now the arborist, botanist and ecologist says he's living the dream as the owner of the world's largest and most diverse 'zoo of trees'.**

In 1993 Dean (PhD(Biol) '08) established the Currency Creek Arboretum with just one species of eucalypt.

Now in 2020, the arboretum has grown to 32 hectares of 10,000 trees, representing 900 eucalypt species from across Australia. He has named 30 newly discovered species as well as 32 subspecies and 25 other taxa.

Dean grew up on his parents' four-hectare commercial orchid nursery in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. His love of eucalypts was sparked by being surrounded by trees and nature, and fuelled by enthusiastic and supportive parents who purchased the land at Currency Creek for Dean to create his 'zoo of trees'.

What began as a dream has turned into a research opportunity.

Following undergraduate studies in science, Dean completed his PhD in Biology at Flinders University, where his concurrent studies, eucalypt-related research and consulting in botany, arboriculture and ecology, proved a valuable combination.

'My studies at Flinders have significantly influenced and impacted my current work. It provided me with the knowledge, techniques and ability to do critical thinking and research, as well as to communicate with peers and non-peers,' says Dean.

Through his work at the arboretum Dean is keen to promote the importance of scientific research, knowledge and critical analysis, especially in the field of climate change and its associated impacts, such as increased drought and wildfire frequency, and the effect on species diversity and distribution.

Importantly, studies at the arboretum have supported the recovery work of the recent bushfires.

'Ongoing research includes how eucalypts respond to drought and fire, with the examination of the regenerative strategies and generation time of different species,' says Dean.

His research has also informed the commercial production of timber and biomass products, floriculture and craft products, honey and flavouring products, and products derived from eucalypt leaf oils and tannins.

In 2018 the world-renowned ecologist was recognised for his services to the conservation of eucalypts with a Medal of the Order of Australia.

With an enthusiasm for eucalypts that has earned him the title of 'gum nut', Dean is keen to share his knowledge, research and passion of eucalypts widely, and has published a range of user-friendly books on the topic.

'I was able to make a career out of my passion, and my work now takes me to amazing places throughout Australia and the world.'

### Visit the Zoo of Trees

On 26 and 27 September, as part of National Eucalypt Day, you can explore the Currency Creek Arboretum with a free one or two hour guided tour by eucalypt expert and arboretum curator Dr Dean Nicolle OAM.

[dn.com.au](http://dn.com.au)

Photo supplied

# Launching careers

**The opportunity to be part of the City of Mitcham's graduate program has launched the careers of Flinders University graduates Barry Lane and Sarah McConaghy-Beasley.**

Both say they would not be in such rewarding work in Local Government without their Flinders education and support from the University's Careers and Employability team.

Barry Lane (BGovtPubMgmt '18) and Sarah McConaghy-Beasley (BSc '18) are among 14 Flinders University graduates who took part in a 12-week pilot graduate program at the City of Mitcham last year.

'I couldn't be happier with the Work Health and Safety team and Mitcham Council as an employer,' says Barry, the former car worker and fly-in fly-out mine site operator who began his degree at Flinders via the Foundation Studies pathway as a mature age student.

'If it wasn't for Flinders University, I wouldn't be where I am today,' he says.

From help with resume and job options, to basic skills in public speaking and communicating with the public, Barry and Sarah say the combination of their university degrees and help from Flinders Careers and Employability has been invaluable.

***'If it wasn't for Flinders University, I wouldn't be where I am today.'***

Sarah says the Flinders Careers and Employability team were instrumental in her making an application via video presentation to Mitcham Council.

'To be honest, I would not have considered working in waste management with a biodiversity and conservation degree,' says Sarah. 'But my degree has prepared me for working in a professional setting, and has given me confidence to work in community liaison and education in waste management.'

'It's a growing, challenging and exciting field, which I now hope to specialise in.'

'Once you've done a degree you have a better idea of where you can work,' adds Barry, who helps manage work health and safety for almost 300 employees at the council.

'After that, you have to start somewhere, and be flexible and responsive to any opportunity that comes along,' says Barry who is now extending his tertiary studies to specialise in the occupational health and safety field.

Barry's new lease of working life is even sweeter after recovering from a double lung transplant in 2017 due to cystic fibrosis – all while completing his degree. Finding a new career path during his recovery took a lot of patience – developing his resume, looking at job options, and networking in government circles, all with support from Careers and Employability at Flinders.

***'Our graduate program partnership with Flinders University plays an important role in bringing innovative ideas and skills into our organisation.'***

City of Mitcham's Chief Executive Officer Matt Pears says, 'Our graduate program partnership with Flinders University plays an important role in bringing innovative ideas and skills into our organisation.'

'Local Government offers attractive career paths for graduates who want to play a role in making a difference in our community.'

During the 12-week program, the graduates benefited from the Flinders Horizon Professional Development Award, which was also offered to Flinders alumni already working at the Council.

'The Council saw the project as a way to access our talent pool and increase future leadership within the Council,' says Flinders Careers and Employability's Employer Liaison Officer Philippa Spencer. 'The success demonstrates the University's strong engagement with local councils, and the employability of our graduates.'

Many of the Flinders graduates who gained experience in roles throughout the Council during the pilot graduate program have now secured ongoing roles.

'It's a surprising twist working at a council, it's a whole new world really,' says Sarah.

## Engage our students and graduates

Benefit from fresh thinking and ideas, extend your projects and capacity, and be part of the development of tomorrow's workforce – engage enterprising and innovative Flinders University students and graduates in your workplace.

[flinders.edu.au/engage/employment](https://flinders.edu.au/engage/employment)



Sarah McConaghy-Beasley and Barry Lane completed the City of Mitcham graduate program



# Waking up tired and grumpy?

Don't worry, there's help on hand at Flinders

Photo: Getty

**An epidemic is raging in Australia, and it's not the one you might think. More than half of all adult Australians suffer from at least one chronic sleep symptom that is affecting their ability to live a healthy, happy life... and that's just the tip of the iceberg.**

A recent Australian Sleep Health Foundation study found more than 60% of Australians regularly experience at least one sleep issue (like trouble falling asleep) several times a week, and 14.8% have symptoms which could result in a diagnosis of clinical insomnia.

Clinical or chronic insomnia is characterised by difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, or waking too early on a

regular basis, despite having adequate opportunity to sleep, as well as daytime impairments resulting from sleep problems.

***'More than half of us suffer from loss of daytime function due to poor sleep.'***

Emeritus Professor Leon Lack leads Flinders University's Insomnia Treatment Program from the \$4 million revamped Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health (AISH) at Bedford Park, one of Australia's premier sleep research laboratories.

He has spent his career working hard to reduce the debilitating effects of insomnia and other sleep disorders.

'More than half of us suffer from loss of daytime function due to poor sleep,' says Professor Lack. 'At AISH we offer clinical consultations to treat insomnia and related conditions via phone and other remote options, as well as the option of face-to-face consultations if needed.'

At the Institute's high-tech, six-bed research lab a wide range of clinical studies are conducted to find better solutions for sleep health.

With over 50 staff, the centre brings together national sleep experts including its Director Professor Danny Eckert and Medical Director Professor Robert Adams, as well as esteemed sleep scientists including Professors Doug McEvoy and Peter Catcheside, Dr Nicole Lovato (BPsych(Hons) '08, PhD(Psych) '12), Dr Gorica Micic (BBehavSc(Hons) '12, PhD(Psych) '16, MPsych(Clin) '19), and Associate Professors Andrew Vakulin, Sutapa Mukherjee and Ching Li Chai-Coetzer.

***'We aim to find solutions for even the most complex cases.'***

'Our toolkit for different insomnia treatments includes various forms of cognitive behaviour therapy in combination with light therapy and other technologies. We aim to find solutions for even the most complex cases,' says Professor Lack, who helped invent Re-timer light glasses and a small wearable consumer device to adjust individual circadian rhythms for better sleep.

'Through our clinical treatment services, some find rapid relief from their seemingly endless sleep problems,' he adds.

After many years of having trouble sleeping, Anita Helbig felt like she was living on a knife edge. Suffering from constant headaches and feeling tired all day, she found it difficult to function. Sleeping pills and day naps only increased the symptoms and she developed insomnia.

Anita's doctor recommended the Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health and, through a sleep study, she was diagnosed with the breathing-disrupted sleep condition sleep apnoea.

'I was then given support to get my sleeping patterns and my life back to normal,' says Anita. 'I now wake up feeling refreshed and have an inner peace.'

Anita believes the sleep study and resulting support from AISH have added extra years to her life, and she is keen to see others benefit from the Institute's research.

AISH Director Professor Danny Eckert is making inroads into targeted drug and breathing therapies for sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnoea.

***'Through our clinical treatment services, some find rapid relief from their seemingly endless sleep problems.'***

He says, 'Sleep disorders, as well as voluntary and society-driven sleep pressures have a major negative impact on health, productivity and safety – yet very little is done in the primary health care system to address these issues.'

As a result, Flinders University is leading an Australian Government NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Clinical Sleep Services project to expand GP and primary care treatment for the sleep epidemic across the nation.

***'I now wake up feeling refreshed and have an inner peace.'***

'The over-reliance on specialist services and hypnotic drug therapy, poor resourcing for primary care professionals in sleep management, and expensive testing for sleep apnoea means these disorders often go untreated or mistreated,' explains Professor Robert Adams, AISH Medical Director and member of the national Sleep Health Foundation Board.

'Sleep is such a vital aspect of good health and happiness, but relatively few Australians speak to their doctor about their sleep.'

'It's important to know that, through Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health, there's help on hand.'

## Help is on hand to get a good night's sleep

Flinders University's Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health has a range of clinical services (some rebates available through Medicare and private health insurance) and free-of-charge research projects to help get your sleep on track to support your health and happiness.

[sleephealthtreatment@flinders.edu.au](mailto:sleephealthtreatment@flinders.edu.au) [flinders.edu.au/aish](http://flinders.edu.au/aish)



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