

ISSUE 51 ————— 2020

Alumni

MAGAZINE

Stronger together in
a time of uncertainty
Weaving place into
award-winning stories
All abuzz to save the
humble honeybee



Contents



11



12



16



19



20



21



26

ISSUE 51

08 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY
Tasmania's roadmap to recovery bolstered by innovative approaches to education and research.

09 ALUMNI IN ACTION
Our alumni demonstrate selfless action when the call to help drives their response.

16 ALUMNI IN FOCUS
Celebrating teachers, managers, majestic crab spotters and capturers of hitchhiking crustaceans.

20 ALL HANDS ON DECK
Marine biologists insist the little-known and odd-looking handfish are worthy of conservation.

24 TRACKING SWEET SUCCESS
Understanding the behaviour of the world's most important pollinator could have huge impacts for food growers.

26 NO ORDINARY DAY
Daniel Aitken says no two days are the same as Marketing Manager at Mona.

- 03 Welcome to Country
- 04 Welcome
- 05 Community strength
- 06 Stronger together
- 07 Ingenuity and resourcefulness
- 08 Response and recovery
- 09 Alumni in action
- 10 Ready for vaccine delivery
- 12 Future campus comes alive
- 14 Place as character
- 16 Alumni in focus
- 20 Saving the handfish
- 21 Angry art
- 22 Under the sea
- 24 Tracking sweet success
- 26 No ordinary day
- 28 Excellence in architecture
- 30 Seeds and startups

Welcome to country

The University of Tasmania's public lecture series, Island of Ideas, partnered with Reconciliation Tasmania to deliver a lecture for International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. It was prefaced by a Welcome to Country by the University of Tasmania's PVC - Aboriginal Leadership Professor Greg Lehman (pictured). Professor Lehman (BSc 1984, GraDipEnv St Hons 1998, PhD 2017) encourages us to think of the parallels between the past and present pandemics, and of how common experience brings people together through shared understanding.



EDDIE SAFARIK

In offering a welcome, I'd firstly like to honour the Muwinina people, who were the traditional owners of the western shore of the Derwent River, around the port of Hobart. The Muwinina knew this place as nipaluna.

None of us contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal people can welcome you on behalf of the Muwinina, as none of us can count them as our ancestors. There's a reason for this. First Nations living on the western side of the lower Derwent and Huon rivers were mostly wiped out by an epidemic of a coughing disease a few years after the British setting up their camp at nipaluna.

So it's unavoidable that this year's celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples will occur against the global backdrop of the COVID-19 epidemic. This crisis is a reminder of the experience of indigenous people across the world since the beginnings of modern European colonial expansion.

Often it's a common experience that brings people together through shared understanding. Just as nations around the world have been brought together in a common struggle to manage the impact of this current coronavirus epidemic, we have an important opportunity to reflect on the experience of indigenous people over the past 400 years, as they experienced the impacts of influenza, smallpox and other infectious diseases

introduced by colonial powers in their competition for economic and military influence.

While the settings may be different, the impacts on our ways of life are analogous. Each experience of a major epidemic leaves lasting impacts on a society's economy and culture. For most indigenous peoples, the impacts were much more intense than the disruptions and mortality of the current COVID-19 crisis, and this was certainly the case for the Muwinina.

It's also important to acknowledge that these impacts are not contained by the past. As the United Nations emphasises in its discussions around the 2020 Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, indigenous communities already experience poor access to health care, significantly higher rates of disease, lack of access to essential services, sanitation and other key preventative measures, such as simple things like clean water, soap and disinfectant. This results in indigenous people being among the most vulnerable to the current pandemic, here in Tasmania and across the world.

Against such a devastating background, can treaty-making remain a priority? As we begin to understand the relationships between pandemics and disruption of environmental systems, we can also start to recognise the importance and urgency of properly acknowledging the

custodial rights of indigenous people over their lands.

This year, the heads of 16 French research organisations raised the alarm on links between pandemics and ecosystem degradation. They noted that the ability of viruses to jump species is significantly enhanced by habitat destruction and fragmentation, biodiversity loss and illegal wildlife trafficking.

A solution, they propose, is important. They say focusing on the interdependencies between functioning ecosystems, sociocultural practices and the health of human, animal and plant populations taken together is what's important. These are the very defining characteristics of indigenous lifeworlds and the very same qualities of caring for country that our First Nations emphasise through our calls for formal recognition of our rights in the systems of governance of our nation-states, in our constitutions and our legal frameworks.

In many ways we can consider our current COVID-19 crisis as a reminder of the urgency of treaty-making. Perhaps even evidence of its necessity. So in welcoming you, I ask that you remember this every time COVID is mentioned. If you do this, you'll begin to understand how important the issue of treaty is for Aboriginal people.



Welcome

This has been a year that has challenged us all. When the pandemic hit at the start of the year, I had calls from across the University where the question from staff was not, what can we do for the University, but how can we best help Tasmania? Through those most difficult months people did so much.



Grateful:
Vice-Chancellor
Professor
Rufus Black.

OSBORNE IMAGES

ISSUE 51 On the health front:

- 34 of our epidemiologists and biostatisticians joined the two people in Public Health who normally deal with infectious diseases to provide the analytic backbone to the responses.
- When Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was in short supply, staff from engineering to the arts printed face shields for front line health workers
- When hand sanitiser ran short in the early days, our pharmacy and chemistry staff produced it.
- When the state needed quarantine facilities, we provided them within a week.

On the jobs and wellbeing front, we created in a very short time a whole range of free courses to help people get back into work from our Job-ready certificates and Graduate Certificates in Tourism and, to manage through, we created our

Wellbeing Toolkit of courses. So many people across the state have taken up these offers.

On the public policy front, staff created The Tasmania Project to survey Tasmanians to find out how the crisis was impacting them and how government and NGOs could support them. We provided pivotal analysis to the Commonwealth Government on the educational impact of kids learning online and we provided important support to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council.

When year 12s faced the anxiety of a possible year 13 and a disrupted final year, we worked quickly with schools across the state to develop a School's Recommendation Program that enabled us to offer places based on evaluation of students' preparedness for University, not just their ATAR. It has had a huge uptake.

Our new strategy commits us to be a University for Tasmania. This was the year when that really started to have meaning.

While a great deal was already being done to support Tasmania, staff dedicated themselves to accelerating our program to make the University sustainable.

They have done this at the same time as working remarkably hard to continue to deliver education in very challenging circumstances right through this year and to provide support to students.

Our staff and alumni community has shown their support of the next generation of graduates by generously donating to the Student Support Appeal, which was launched to assist students experiencing financial hardship.

Combined with the University's contribution, more than 4000 student grants were delivered between March and September, an extraordinary effort we can all be proud of.

As in so many organisations, this year people have done a remarkable job and so, thanks to their extraordinary efforts

Our distinctive Tasmanian offerings sees us with the largest ever number of interstate applicants for next year.

Our Community:

From health and wellbeing to education and the economy, we are helping the community navigate a pathway to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

and considerable sacrifices, the University ends the year in good shape and in ways I think few would have thought possible back in March.

Our domestic student numbers grew by more than 20 per cent this year thanks to renewed and distinctive courses, more streamlined admissions and better communications.

For next year, the picture looks very strong. The School's Recommendation Program has seen Tasmanian applications rise by more than 30 per cent across the state. Our distinctive Tasmanian offerings see us with the largest ever number of interstate applicants for next year. Happily, the government reforms haven't affected interest in the humanities, law or business. Indeed, for the first time in a long while, we are seeing strong growth in core courses like our Bachelor of Arts.

This strong growth in Australian student numbers has accelerated the work we began before COVID started to rebalance our student profile.

The great work of many staff has seen us retain the vast majority of our international students this year by providing them with education online and our applications for next year remain strong.

Our researchers have done a remarkable job. They kept so much of their work going and, in a sector when many universities have seen their research income fall, we have actually seen it increase to be ahead of last year, which was itself a good year.

We also needed to manage our costs and staff were amazing, including more than 90 per cent supporting not taking a pay rise – that alone saved 60 jobs. We have changed a lot of how we do

things so we can run in a simpler way. Certainly, we still have a way to go but we have made a lot of progress.

The result of growing numbers of Tasmanians and mainlanders joining us, salary savings, and simpler ways of working, means we will end the year breaking even. There will be no loss; no new big debt.

The changes we have made will last so we are positioned as a much more financially sustainable university than we were at the start of the year. Most importantly, we are a university better positioned to serve Tasmania and make distinctive contributions from Tasmania.

While we have had a range of students back on campus this

semester, our big focus as the year ends is getting ready to bring all students back to in-person and on-campus learning for the start of next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and alumni for all they have done to take care of our University through this year. And in this of all years, I would like to wish all our alumni and friends a very safe festive season, and the rest and renewal for a year when we can turn with some hope to a world finding a new way forward.

**– Professor Rufus Black,
Vice-Chancellor**

Community strength

It has been an extraordinary year by any measure. Despite the challenges, I have been heartened by the many acts of kindness, generosity, determination and innovation that have helped us get through these difficult times.

Thank you to those who supported students facing the most difficult circumstances, through your donations to our special appeal, or by your support for them in the community. We know how much this has meant to them.

This year our global alumni community of 130,000 people across 112 countries found new ways to connect in the digital world. Thank you for embracing Explore, our new online series providing opportunities for advancement and inspiration. Thousands of graduates from all over the world engaged. You can take a look [here](#). Our redesigned *eNews Alumni and Friends* is attracting an ever-higher number of readers. New initiatives inviting our community to share photographs and stories are bringing us closer together, even when we are far apart. Let's continue the conversation: alumni.office@utas.edu.au.

In 2021, we will share details of a new alumni program with physical and digital engagement opportunities, including volunteering that focuses on enabling students



Acknowledging kindness:

Kate Robertson has been heartened by the University community's strength.

to benefit from your advice, experience and support.

Finally, it has been the greatest pleasure of the year to provide students with the opportunity to graduate in person, in an adapted, COVID-safe way. We know how much graduates value this special moment. What an uplifting way to end the year.

To the class of 2020: congratulations on your achievement. Welcome to your global alumni community. We salute your resilience, determination and, ultimately, the successful completion of your degree in the most difficult of years.

**– Kate Robertson
Executive Director, Advancement**

Stronger together

RESEARCHERS JOINED FORCES TO CONDUCT COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH THAT HELPED TASMANIA – AND THE WORLD – GET ON TOP OF THE PANDEMIC



EDDIE SAFARIK

Team work:
Associate Professor Nicola Stephens led a group of 30 in research on COVID-19.



As COVID-19 caught the world unaware, University of Tasmania alumna Associate Professor Nicola Stephens is leading a team of fellow researchers on the frontline to help Tasmania get on top of the pandemic.

Associate Professor Stephens (BA 1999, GradCertEd 2003, PhD 2016) is an infectious diseases epidemiologist and the University's Tasmanian School of Medicine's Associate Professor of Public Health.

She became the planning lead for a team of about 30 epidemiologists and statisticians from the University, who put their own research on hold to battle COVID-19.

"It was a massive effort by the University and particularly the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, who played a major role in providing staff to help," Associate Professor Stephens said.

While the work was challenging, she said it was rewarding to be using her experience to make a difference at ground zero.

The alumna spent several years as a researcher with the University's Menzies Institute before working for public health in Tasmania, NSW and Victoria for 15 years.

Much of her research is based in the use of microbial genomics and data linkage, to drill down to the disease incidence, distribution and control.

While genomics is often associated with the links between people's genetic makeup, in the case of COVID-19 the sequencing has been used on people's pandemic test samples to identify the connection between samples and outbreaks – an essential key to the containment of the disease.

The genomics method described by Associate Professor Stephens and her team is the result of years of research led by the Microbiological Diagnostic Unit Public Health laboratory at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity.

"In the case of COVID-19 we have been able to sequence samples of over 96 per cent of all cases in Tasmania, which allows us to address very specific questions such as the source of outbreaks," she said.

Associate Professor Stephens is also collaborating with fellow

It was a massive effort by the University.

University of Tasmania researcher Associate Professor Fay Johnston, who is leading a North West Tasmania cohort study of staff members in hospitals affected by the recent COVID-19 outbreak.

The study aims to improve the understanding of risk factors for transmission of COVID-19 (and other epidemic-prone respiratory infections) in hospital settings to prevent future outbreaks.

The pair are also leading a serological study in the same cohort to estimate undiagnosed infections and the longevity of immune responses to COVID-19.

These studies represent a huge amount of research being carried out in Tasmania, to help understand and respond to the COVID pandemic.

"This research is very much collaborative, working closely with the Tasmanian Health Service, Public Health Services, the Royal Hobart Hospital public health laboratory and a team of experienced University of Tasmania researchers," she said.

Associate Professor Stephens is also currently involved in data linkage projects to inform public health actions and policy.

– Liz Stacey



SHUTTERSTOCK

Personal initiative:

Jen Rayner with some of the face shields that she manufactured with Tim Lennard.

Empowerment during time of uncertainty

RESEARCHERS, STAFF, ALUMNI AND STUDENTS RALLIED TOGETHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In just a few short weeks of 2020, our lives changed profoundly.

Yet, in the face of this disruption and uncertainty, University of Tasmania alumni, staff and students saw great opportunity, to help others.

In every case, the ingenuity and resourcefulness of alumni and staff were very much to the fore.

When hand sanitiser supplies were running low, our chemists had a solution.

Laboratory Manager Dr Krystal Woolley (BSc Hons 2013, PhD

2018) and Dr Christian Narkowicz (BSc Hons 1985, PhD 2003) from Pharmacy provided the University with more than 500 litres of sanitiser. They made a further 33 litres for Ambulance Tasmania.

When there was a shortage of protective equipment for frontline health workers, a cross-disciplinary team led by University College (UC) chief executive and alumnus Lee Whiteley (GCLeanMgtSys 2015) stepped up to make protective face shields for Primary Health Tasmania and hospital staff using laser-cutting machines and 3D printers.

A shared desire to help the community saw the staff and students from the University College, Australian Maritime College (AMC), Engineering, Architecture and Design, Health and Medicine and Creative Arts and Media work together as one.

Some staff took it upon themselves to help make masks and shields at home.

College of Health and Medicine's Clinical Research Facility Coordinator in Hobart, Jen Rayner and Client Services Officer (IT) Tim Lennard hunted down open-source 3D print files and used their own funds and home equipment to start an immediate printing run.

"It has given me a sense of empowerment during a time of uncertainty," Ms Rayner said.

As the virus spread and concerns arose that the coronavirus could remain on surfaces for days, the world turned to Tasmania.

ACROSS Director Professor Michael Breadmore (BSc Hons 1997, PhD 2001, DSc 2017) was called upon to research a world-first mobile COVID-19 detection tool with CSIRO and GreyScan Pty Ltd.

– Peter Cochrane

I have been really touched to see how the University and broader community have come together to help protect our health care workers.



OSBORNE IMAGES

Chance to thrive when looking beyond numbers

To ensure young Tasmanians were not disadvantaged in their transition from high school to further study, the University of Tasmania designed the School's Recommendation Program. It enabled thousands of year 12 students to focus on their studies without fear of failure, knowing they have a university place based on a range of considerations, other than an ATAR. This included their academic performance and, importantly, their teacher's belief that they will thrive in their tertiary education. The program radically changed the way that young Tasmanians were accessing higher education. University applications were up by more than a third across the State. In the North and North West, applications were up to 40 per cent higher with enrolments coming from high schools and families with no previous engagement with the University.

Projecting a pathway to recovery

ISSUE 51

When the global pandemic broke out, the University realised that Tasmania would face specific challenges, needs and concerns through the crisis and the recovery phase.

It launched the Tasmania Project, directed by Professor Libby Lester, the Director of the Institute for Social Change at the University of Tasmania.

Professor Lester said that as in many things, Tasmania was experiencing the pandemic in ways that differed from other states.

In the longer term, the social research platform is aiming to reveal specific features of life in Tasmania that can help other parts of the world to make decisions about their futures.

Food source: The Tasmania Project gathered valuable information about food access and supply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We knew being an island could give us faster and tighter control of our borders, and we know our demographics make us more vulnerable – physically, socially and economically – to the virus," Professor Lester said.

To help inform decisions about the State's immediate and long-term future, the Institute for Social Change's research team is conducting regular surveys and interviews, to understand how residents were experiencing the social, political and economic responses to COVID-19.

The Tasmania Project has published more than 30 reports so far, spanning a range of topics from compliance and restrictions, to food access and supply, wellbeing, housing, and work. The findings are providing decision-makers with invaluable insights that will guide policies now and into the future.

In the longer term, the social research platform is aiming to reveal specific features of life in Tasmania that can help other parts of the world to make decisions about their futures.

New courses support critical areas of our workforce

The University of Tasmania created new subsidised online courses to support the community's recovery by creating pathways to higher education and new skills, knowledge and jobs. Six-month job-ready certificates in areas such as: health, education, business, science and engineering, helped Tasmanians affected by COVID-19 to retrain and upskill. To build confidence and resilience in the community, the University designed the Wellbeing Toolkit, providing people with practical skills and knowledge to help navigate the challenges of COVID-19. The Toolkit, which Tasmanians studied at no cost, included: financial planning and budgeting, mental health and resilience, sustainable living, and creativity.



LAC JOHN SOLOMON

Alumni in action

OUR ALUMNI DEMONSTRATE SELFLESS ACTION
WHEN THE CALL TO HELP DRIVES THEIR RESPONSE

Undeterred by the threat to their own health, or the sacrifices they would need to make to keep loved ones safe, our graduates were on the frontline when their community needed them most.

Whether it was tending to the sick, searching for chinks in the armour of the coronavirus, or finding new ways to work in their respective fields, the University of Tasmania alumni community were quick to offer their expertise to help others.

Some graduates, like alumna Sophie Cunningham (BN 2012, BN ClinHons 2014, GradCertN 2016) went above and beyond to serve during the height of the global pandemic.

When the Royal Australian Navy issued a call for help on the frontline during the outbreak in Victoria, the

Royal Hobart Hospital ICU nurse knew instantly she wanted to be part of the support efforts.

The Burnie-born nurse landed in Melbourne within 48 hours of answering the call-out, where she worked in a drive-through testing facility set up in the Melbourne Showgrounds.

Being part of a close-knit team that were all working to help ... was a really worthwhile experience.

“When I was there, they were just starting to lock everything down, so I got to see the shift in public perception, people became quite scared as the virus began to spread.”

Sophie was required to quarantine for 14 days upon her return to Tasmania.

Born to help:
Alumna and nurse Sophie Cunningham flew to Melbourne to support testing.

“Being part of a close-knit team that were all working to help the Australian community was a really worthwhile experience; I'd do it again in a heartbeat,” she said.

Sophie has always had a desire to make a difference. The first country she visited upon leaving Australia was India.

“It was a shock and it made me realise that I wanted to help those who needed it most.”

She later spent time working in Africa. In 2018 she joined the Navy Reservists because she felt it would enable her to continue to use her expertise further afield to help others.

– Lucie van den Berg

Read more stories about how our graduates assisted and adapted during the global pandemic on our [Alumni news page](#).

Duty-bound and ready to deliver on vaccine

AN ALUMNUS DRIVEN BY A DESIRE TO CRACK MEDICAL MYSTERIES IS RACING TO DEVELOP A VACCINE

As a trainee doctor, Professor Nikolai Petrovsky (BMedSc 1979, MBBS 1982) found it difficult to accept it when he ran out of treatment options for patients: they would live or die, and there was nothing more he could do.

“There are so many unanswered questions out there, and we are duty-bound to search for the answers through medical research, which is why I wanted to be a clinician and a scientist,” Professor Petrovsky said.

He has an insatiable desire to push the boundaries of what’s possible in order to help his patients. This drives his mission to develop a vaccine for the most pressing global health issue of our time: COVID-19.

And it’s a mindset that was nurtured during his studies at the University of Tasmania.

It would be easy to assume that Professor Petrovsky’s foray into medicine was predestined, but like his parents, he trod his own path towards a life of service.

His father, Dr Constantine Constantinovich Petrovsky, was a Russian who studied medicine in Hong Kong, worked as a young doctor in Singapore, joined the British Army there and ended up a prisoner of the Japanese on the Burma railway. After surviving the war, he moved to Tasmania to become the Superintendent of the Launceston General Hospital.

His mother was a general practitioner in Launceston, where she still practices medicine.

Professor Petrovsky was fascinated by science from an early age. After schooling in Northern Tasmania and Victoria, he studied medicine in Hobart where inspirational lecturers fuelled his passion for research.

“The teaching was second to none. We had great mentors who taught us how important research was and that a clinician’s role was not just to treat diseases but to decipher their causes.”

He trained in endocrinology

before undertaking an immunology PhD at the University of Melbourne, during which time his first two children were born.

“Ever since, I’ve split my time between working clinically as an endocrinologist and doing immunology research,” he said.

Completing his PhD, Professor Petrovsky’s career took an unexpected turn when he answered a plea from a hospital in country Victoria without any doctors. A one-month locum in Mildura turned into three years, during which his third child was born. He then joined the Canberra Hospital as an endocrinologist with academic status at the Australian National University.

In 2004 he moved to Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide to run the Endocrinology Department, where he has been ever since.

Professor Petrovsky also leads Vaxine, a research company he founded 18 years ago. In July, its COVID-19 vaccine became the first

vaccine developed in Australia to enter human trials.

The vaccine (COVAX-19) is a synthetic version of the COVID-19 spike protein. This harmless replica of the virus protein teaches the immune system to recognise the virus, creating antibodies and T cells that attack the virus when it tries to enter the body.

Despite carrying the weight of the world’s expectations on their shoulders and working under intense pressure to accelerate development of the vaccine, Professor Petrovsky said his team remains optimistic about the prospect of success.

“The pressure on the team is intense, but we know we should be able to deliver a vaccine, because we’ve done it before,” he said.

In 2009 his team developed the world’s first swine flu vaccine; commencing human trials in less than three months. Similarly, the team developed a SARS-1 coronavirus vaccine, which was effective in animal models.

“We’ve been honing our skills in pandemic vaccine development for 20 years. Now is the time for us to deliver.”

– Lucie van den Berg

ISSUE 51

There are so many unanswered questions out there, and we are duty-bound to search for the answers through medical research.

Time to deliver:
Professor Nikolai
Petrovsky's team
have been honing
their vaccine-
making skills
for 20 years.



Community at the heart of future University campuses

COLLABORATIVE DESIGNS AND WORKING WITH NATURAL LANDSCAPES ARE THE INSPIRATION BEHIND NEW BUILDINGS

New, regionally distinctive, city-centric campuses are continuing to take shape in Tasmania's North and North-West. Co-designed with and for the community, the developments are already supporting positive transformations.

Amid an unprecedented time of crisis, when much of the State was in COVID-19 lockdown, hope and certainty endured at West Park in Burnie, and Launceston's Inveresk.

The precincts are home to the University of Tasmania's future campuses – developments that are considered crucial for the State's economy.

Despite the challenges and disruptions arising from a global pandemic, work to bring the

new campuses to life has been continuing, with construction activity for both projects on track and on budget.

Collectively, this new-style of regionally distinctive University campuses are known as the \$300 million Northern Transformation Program.

It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase local educational attainment while supporting communities to flourish.

The vision is shared by local, State and Federal Governments which are funding the project along with contributions from the University.

At West Park, construction is sitting at more than 50 per cent completion with the new campus scheduled to open in the latter half of 2021. Work is also in motion

Collaborative:

West Park in Burnie will be a community campus shaped by the surrounding environment and the people who inhabit it.

to create a vibrant calendar of events and initiatives to involve the community with the precinct, both in the lead up to, and following the campus opening.

It is a similar story at Inveresk, with the project's first stage – the Library and Student Experience building – scheduled for completion in late 2021. A pedestrian and cycle bridge is also under construction to link the precinct with the city, and Development Applications have been approved for new academic buildings that form stages two and three.

'River's Edge,' will comprise flexible, collaborative teaching and research spaces, while 'Willis Street' will provide state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratories from which key disciplines of the North – allied health, nursing, food, science and physical education – will be delivered.

A series of outdoor green spaces, known as the 'Urban Realm' landscaping will add a unique extension to the learning and research programs at Inveresk.

Collectively totalling 15,000sq/m, these will host recreational activities, community gatherings, food gardens and events.

In addition to providing future opportunities for students and

ISSUE 51





ARTISTIMPRESSION



ARTISTIMPRESSION

communities, both campuses are already supporting the construction leaders of tomorrow.

Contractors across both Northern Transformation projects have committed to 20 per cent of the total construction hours being fulfilled by apprentices, and supported by a 3 per cent Indigenous employment target.

CRADLE COAST
PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR
PROFESSOR JIM CAVAYE



"The West Park development is helping us transform our teaching model so we can deliver education in a

way that suits our regional students, and better reflects how our communities want to access university. It will help us offer distinctive learning programs in the North-West such as Nursing, and experiences which leverage the strengths of the region, preparing our students for employment and making important contributions to their community.

"We will also be growing our local partnerships in ways which embed community and industry into our curriculum and campus to enhance the student experience, and create further vitality at the West Park precinct and in the centre of Burnie.

"The architectural designs of the new style of University campus have been shaped by community, students, staff, and the surrounding environment.

Innovative: River's Edge building (pictured left) and Willis Street building (pictured right) in Launceston, Tasmania.

"The building echoes the ecological and historical significance of West Park by connecting with the natural landscape, foreshore, sea and nearby penguin colony, in addition to the site's rich cultural tapestry.

"It will be a community campus open to community organisations and members of the public. It also is for the whole region, allowing the University to provide learning for people right across the Cradle Coast. Our learning stretches far beyond the building and into the real world ongoing industry and community involvement."

LAUNCESTON
PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR
PROFESSOR DOM
GERAGHTY



"Designed in collaboration with communities, students and staff, the new Inveresk campus

considers the site's industrial heritage, while connecting with city, culture, the environment and Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

"The learning opportunities it offers will be built around what people are passionate about, with a focus on distinctively Northern Tasmania experiences.

"Designing new campuses based around the needs of communities enables us to support more flexible learning options and pathways into education, while leading research that identifies and addresses the issues that matter in our region.

"The Urban Realm will allow anyone from the age of 1 to 101 to engage with learning. It is key to making the entire precinct a place of learning and culture, and is part of a series of connected parks and green spaces across Launceston.

"The new campus will be visible and accessible, rather than a place where learning happens behind closed doors. Students will be able to learn through real-life scenarios led by local leaders, on the ground and as part of their community.

"Being part of a shared educational, cultural and sporting precinct at Inveresk will enable endless opportunities to partner with neighbouring organisations to provide a unique lifestyle, memorable learning experiences and engagement with our University."

– Shantelle Rodman

Our learning stretches far beyond the building and into the real world with ongoing industry and community involvement.

Awards speak volumes of our island home's powerful stories as writers make waves across the land

Put on your writer's hat and imagine your perfect location. A quiet place, without all the stresses of big city life. A naturally beautiful place, with its heart in community and creativity. All on a little island at the bottom of the world.



SEPTEMBER

Home song:

Robbie Arnott explores and celebrates the richness of place as character.

In Tasmania we have a shared lexicon of foundational stories that we are able to visit, and revisit and reinvent from new and unexpected angles.

Whatever it is about Tasmania, our island is home to a growing number of highly-accomplished literary authors, and in many of their stories place is almost a character in itself.

The literary spotlight this year shone on Kate Kruimink (BA 2013) (*A Treacherous Country*), winner of *The Australian/Vogel* Literary Award, and Erin Hortle (BA Hons 2014, PhD 2018) (*The Octopus and I*). Robbie Arnott (BA, BBus 2012), winner of the 2019 Margaret Scott Prize for *Flames*, released his second novel (*The Rain Heron*). Katherine Johnson's *Paris Savages*, the basis of her University of Tasmania PhD (2019), was longlisted for the Australian Book Industry Awards.

In 2019 Violet Macdonald (BA 2014) won the prestigious Sir Peter Ustinov Scriptwriting Award at the Emmy Awards and PhD candidate Sam George-Allen made a splash on the creative non-fiction scene with *Witches: The Transformative Power of Women Working Together*. Rohan Wilson (BA Hons 1998), who has multiple literary awards, moved from the colonial setting of his first two novels to a dystopian Tasman Peninsula in 2075 for *Daughter of Bad Times*, published in 2019.

They follow in the footsteps of Man Booker Prize winner and alumnus Richard Flanagan (BA Hons 1983, HonDLitt 2002), who released *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams* in 2020, and best-selling double act Danielle Wood (BA Hons 1994) and Heather Rose, who over

the past decade have combined as Angelica Banks to produce the popular Tuesday McGillycuddy trilogy.

Wood, a past winner of the Vogel award, has had a huge year in 2020. She released *The Lost Love Song* hot on the heels of selling the film rights to *Star-crossed*, which has been published in more than 25 international territories. Both novels are written under the pen-name Minnie Darke.

Within the work of the authors above, there are numerous examples of how place shapes a novel, from the exquisite Eaglehawk Neck coastline inhabited by Erin Hortle's octopus, to the labyrinthine caves and underground rivers beneath a 1950s dairy town in Katherine Johnson's *The Better Son*.

Within her own busy writing life, Danielle Wood (BA Hons 1994) is a Senior Lecturer in English and Writing in the School of Humanities and has 17 years of teaching creative writing behind her. Many of her students have gone on to literary success. She believes the size and uniqueness of Tasmania makes it an ideal setting for emerging writers.

"In Tasmania we have a shared lexicon of foundational stories that we are able to visit, and revisit and reinvent from new and unexpected angles. And, they're powerful stories," Dr Wood said.

"We continue to need to explore and write about dispossession and colonialism, about human impacts on this island's fauna and flora, about the convict experience, about the island experience, about our particular blend of lightness and darkness, our capacity for extremes of radicalism and conservatism, goodness and evil.



Double-act: Danielle Wood collaborates with Heather Rose on the Tuesday McGillicuddy stories.

KAREN BROWN



Literary spotlight: Kate Kruimink won The Australian/Vogel Literary Award for *A Treacherous Country*.

CECILIA

“Mark Twain once said of Tasmania that it was a kind of bringing together of Heaven and Hell, and I think that makes it a rich place for finding and telling stories.”

Dr Wood encourages students to find and write in their authentic voice, “to find and explore their unique vision. We’re not looking for cookie-cutter stories, but fresh, new, exciting, original, authentic stories that stem from our students’ selves”.

Her teaching philosophy involves encouraging students to work on two fronts – the imaginative skills that enable us to come up with great stories and the writing skills that enable us to convey our ideas to other people.

“It’s important to remember that while there are many, many ways to be storytellers, the units I teach are all about storytelling in writing, which is why we spend time working at the level of the sentence,” she said.

While creative writing classes at some institutions focus on ‘literary’

writing, the University of Tasmania units are open to other genres that students are interested in. It’s so popular and successful that students can now major in English and Writing within the Bachelor of Arts.

The School of Humanities has also established the **Hedberg Writer in Residence Program**. Robbie Arnott was awarded the inaugural residency where he will work on his third novel and conduct creative writing workshops.

From 2022 onwards, established authors Australia-wide can apply. The Program’s coordinator and Head of English, Dr Robert Clarke, said it was an opportunity to further highlight Tasmania as a writer’s destination.

Dr Wood said Tasmania had a strong literary culture fostered by

great bookshops and dedicated readers who provide a market for books about Tasmania and by Tasmanians.

Robbie Arnott believes it is vital that those readers see their homeland depicted in the art and media they consume. “There are countless novels set in New York, London, Paris, Melbourne, Sydney and because we grow up seeing these places in the fiction we read, we are conditioned to consider them normal and acceptable settings for the novels our own generation might create,” he said.

“I think it’s important that Tasmanians are able to see their own world as a worthy and vibrant setting for a story.”

– Miranda Harman

Mark Twain once said of Tasmania that it was a kind of bringing together of Heaven and Hell, and I think that makes it a rich place for finding and telling stories.

Award-winner: Violet McDonald has been applauded for her scriptwriting with an Emmy Award.



SUPPLIED



DR EMILIANO CIMOLI
(PhD 2020), Institute of
Marine and Antarctic
Studies (IMAS)
researcher

Alumnus Dr Emiliano Cimoli captures tiny crustaceans hitching a ride on a large colourless jellyfish deep beneath the sea ice.



Alumni in focus

CELEBRATING THE MANY PATHS TO SUCCESS IN OUR TEACHERS, MANAGERS, MAJESTIC CRAB SPOTTERS, SILVER LEAF PHOTOGRAPHERS AND CAPTURERS OF HITCHHIKING CRUSTACEANS.



SOPHIA VOLZKE
(BMarAntSc 2019),
Institute of Marine
and Antarctic Studies
(IMAS) researcher

Alumna Sophia Volzke was on a field trip looking for crabs at Marion Bay, on the East Coast of Tasmania, when she had an incredible close-up encounter with a majestic Maori Octopus, the largest octopus in Australia.





JUSTIN SUWART
(BE 2005), Business
Manager – Armour
and Protection,
Bisalloy Steels

Alumnus Justin Suwart with a stack of high-strength steel at Bisalloy Steels' quenching and tempering facility in Unanderra, New South Wales.

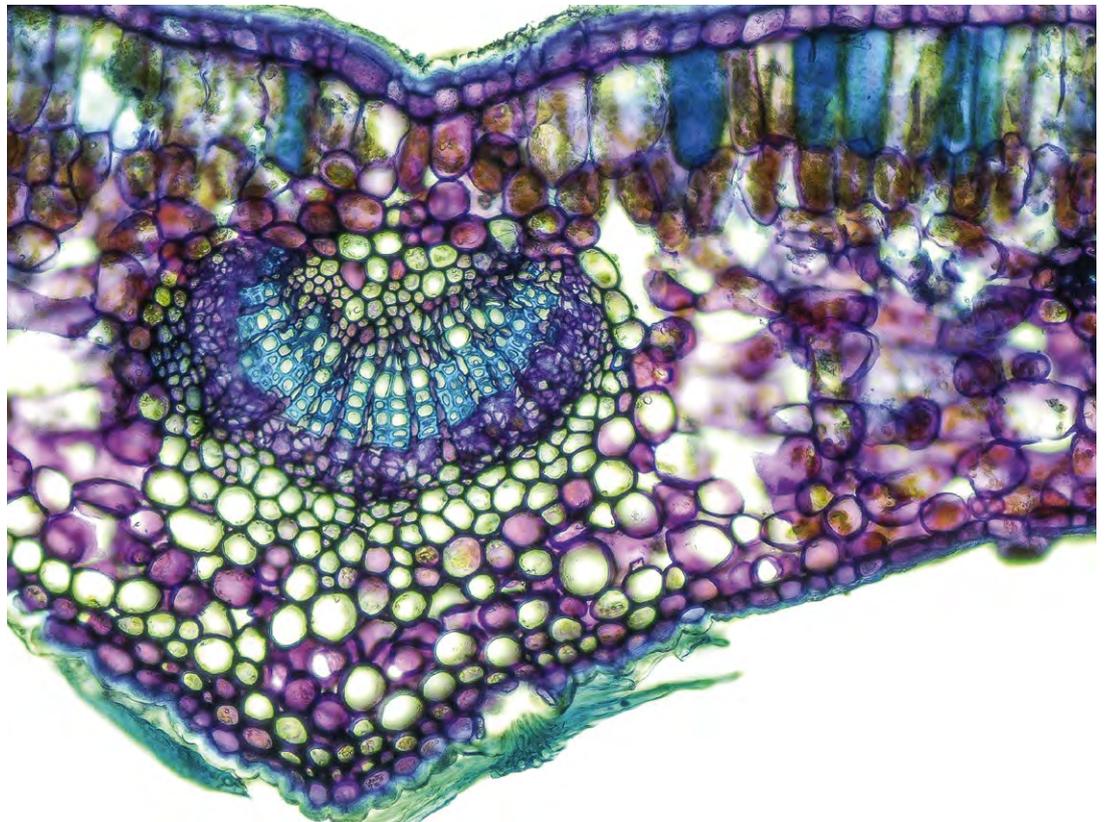
MEG IRVINE
(BEd Primary
2019), Teacher,
Smithton Primary
School

Alumna Meg Irvine is passionate about education in rural and remote areas and has spent her first year after graduation teaching in Tasmania's North-West.



DR ROB WILTSHIRE
(BSc Hons 1984, PhD
1991), Senior Lecturer
in the School of Plant
Science, University of
Tasmania

Alumnus Dr Rob Wiltshire's image of the lower surface of a satinwood leaf reveals its silver umbrella-like scales.



From Tasmania to the world

KEEPING A WORLDVIEW, NOT A SMALL VIEW IS KEY TO EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES AND FOSTERING RICH CROSS-FERTILISATION OF IDEAS

From opposite ends of the globe, via Zoom: Professor Nicholas Farrelly, Head of School of Social Sciences, a multi-disciplinary scholar of politics and society, in conversation with Julie Heckscher, Australia's Deputy High Commissioner in London, who is a strong believer in the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

Professor Nicholas Farrelly, Head of School of Social Sciences



It's morning here in Sandy Bay, and I'm delighted to have the chance to talk about some of your experiences, Julie. Could you start by telling us a bit about your Tasmanian story? I understand that you went to Rosetta Primary School and then to St Michael's Collegiate. What do you remember about Hobart in those days?

I was a good student and I loved school, but my family wasn't one with a lot of money. So, it was many small experiences, of going to Regatta Day and ANZAC Day, of going into town at Christmas, and camping – it was always camping for us during the summer holidays. For me, it was always a very warm city. Even though I haven't lived in Tasmania for a very long time, Hobart and Tasmania are always close to my heart.

So, back then, did you ever consider a career in diplomacy? Was that something that was on your radar?

It wasn't. Compared to my daughter, who was born in Hobart but was in Russia by the time she was four months old. I didn't travel because we just didn't have any money to do it.

So, with that background, what was it that pushed you towards doing Arts/Law at UTAS?

I started with an Arts degree because humanities was where my interests lay, and I switched to Arts/Law, largely because I was mixing with other people and I wanted to maximise the options and the opportunities for me.

One of the things about the University of Tasmania that was good was that we made friends across faculties. The University built a sense of community, and there was a lot of cross-faculty engagement and mixing.

That was a really significant part for me of the experience of UTAS, and I don't think you get that at the big universities where the faculties

are more inward-focused. Right through my career, I've seen the importance of that cross-fertilisation of ideas. You end up with better ideas if there is a process of contestation.

So, now, of course, you're a senior career officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and currently serving as Australia's Deputy High Commissioner in London. I'm really curious, does your Tasmanian background ever come in handy in your work?

I'm always keen to tell people I'm from Tasmania, and they're always interested. Tasmania is good copy, and it's important diplomatic cred these days. For me, Tasmania is part of my history and it's in my heart, but it's also part of the story I can bring that I use to build trust and credibility.

It's really quite incredible to think that having started out at Rosetta Primary, you've now got the opportunity to show off some of the very best that Tasmania offers to visitors from around the world. And you've represented Australia all around the world. One area where you and I have overlapped, in the past decade, is Southeast Asia. It's a region that has great beauty, great interest, great history, a great future, and a lot of complexity.

For me, it's been a long-term love affair. A key focus has been to find creative, interesting, nimble ways of building our relationship with all of the important countries of this region.

For me, Tasmania is part of my history and it's in my heart, but it's also part of the story I can bring that I use to build trust and credibility.



SUPPLIED

When it comes to Southeast Asia, I have always enjoyed our interactions, but it can be hard to know what value researchers bring to the table. In broad terms, what do you think is the role of our academic researchers in supporting Australia's international relations?

Academics are talking to different people. We are talking to these people too, but in a different way. You're hearing different things, you're seeing different things. I've always been a believer in taking advantage of your expertise and hopefully giving some value as well.

It goes back to that comment I made earlier, that really, the best ideas we have are ones that are contested and creative, and the importance of introducing ideas from many different sources.

In Singapore, I had the great privilege of being able to engage with so many different academics and think-tanks – not just on Singapore but on the region – and it really got me into the habit of sitting down and testing ideas and theories, and that intersection of policy and research and thinking and academia is immensely valuable.

Expanding worldviews:

Australia's Deputy High Commissioner in London Julie Heckscher says podcasts are a great way to understand current issues.

Finally, if you were advising a young UTAS graduate who is set on a career in DFAT, what are your top tips for success?

If you're interested in a career in foreign affairs, have a worldview, not a small view. You'll get asked questions and there's no right or wrong answer. What people are looking for when you apply, it's thoughtful answers; answers that show that you're thinking.

One of the great things I do on my 45-minute walk into work is listening to fabulous podcasts, one of the best developments of the last few years. It is a really challenging, contested world at the moment, there are a lot of complex issues in the US-China relationship, the shape of our own region, the shape of democracy, the recovery of the region from the pandemic and the way that that's changing relationships, development assistance and the like, all of those things are live issues that are currently being debated a lot, and you can hear all of them on podcasts. I'm a great listener of podcasts.

That's a great note on which to end, Julie, and thank you for being so generous with your insights from your wide-ranging career. We started with Tasmania, and I think one of the reflections that I might finish with is that this year, perhaps more than any year in our recent experience, is one where that cross-fertilisation, that context building is more crucial than ever and where we need to be able to draw ideas from so many different sources. The fact that your University of Tasmania education appears to have been one part of that story for you and to have set you up for such success is wonderful for everybody back here in your original home to be able to understand.

All hands on deck to save a rare beauty

MARINE BIOLOGISTS INSIST THE LITTLE-KNOWN AND ODD-LOOKING HANDFISH IS WORTHY OF CONSERVATION



PETER MATHEW

red spots, and the mohawk-like red dorsal fin standing high atop its head,” Dr Stuart-Smith said.

The fish has been rather unkindly described as “like a toad dipped in paint and forced to wear gloves two sizes too big”. Yet, the researchers, volunteers and donors who are trying to save it from extinction see handfish as charismatic and intriguing, and as worthy of conserving as any animal.

The Red handfish is known to inhabit only two places on the planet, both near Hobart. It’s estimated that there are fewer than 100 adults in the wild.

They are under threat from habitat degradation, pollution, development, fishing impacts and other aquatic foes, such as seaweed-munching sea urchins, who are eating it out of house and home.

Unfortunately, handfish can’t swim away, even when their habitat is being destroyed.

“Another challenge is that the juveniles have no larval stage and cannot be carried off by currents to new places, so they stay at the spawning site with the adults, even as their habitat disappears,” Dr Stuart-Smith said.

“Personally, I feel a sense of responsibility; we can’t just watch them pass into oblivion.”

Conservation efforts include: habitat restoration, searching for more populations, improving awareness and garnering public and political support.

Head-starting, which involves taking eggs from the wild and raising them in captivity, is another strategy being trialled.

This year, 42 of the Red handfish graduated from ‘handfish school’, where they were introduced to predators and the perils of the natural environment, and were released into the wild.

To the delight of the team, monitoring of the site where they released the fish reveals most are still alive and now, only time will tell if they thrive.

Dr Stuart-Smith coordinates the Handfish Conservation Project and is a member of the National Handfish Recovery Team.

To help the critically endangered Red handfish visit the [Handfish Conservation website](#).

– Lucie van den Berg

ISSUE 51 Meet the marine biologist trying to turn the tide for rare fish

In a year awash with negative news, a glimmer of hope surfaced for one of the world’s rarest fish.

On a calm spring day, alumna Dr Jemina Stuart-Smith, from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, led a team of researchers and divers to a secret location in southern Tasmania.

They held their breath in anticipation as dozens of Red handfish, hatched and raised in captivity, were released into the

Deep diver: Dr Jemina Stuart-Smith is on a mission to conserve the habitat of the Red handfish.

wild, likely doubling the size of one of the last remaining populations.

Dr Stuart-Smith (BSc 2002 Hons, PhD 2007) didn’t set out to study handfish. Her love of field work saw her volunteer for many weird and wonderful wildlife projects, including cleaning out blue tongue lizard enclosures and milking fur seals.

As part of her PhD she trekked through Tasmania’s coastal heath and alpine scrub measuring mountain dragons.

It was during a dive with the Reef Life Survey that she spotted her first Red handfish sitting on the seafloor.

“I remember staring at it intently, feeling a little guilty for invading its hiding spot, but also trying to memorise its assortment of quirky features: an upturned mouth, a fluffy Illidium perched on its head, the big red pectoral fins splayed out like hands used to ‘walk’ across the seafloor, the rough skin with patchy



“Personally, I feel a sense of responsibility; we can’t just watch them pass into oblivion.”



Art as angry, ugly but pointedly real

FROM A BURNING LAND TO A BURNING RAGE, ARTIST ROBERT O'CONNOR CREATED A HORRIFIC AND HUMOUROUS AWARD-WINNING LANDSCAPE

Alumnus Robert O'Connor (BFA Hons 2007) is an award-winning artist who exhibits his work across Australia, China, the USA and Chile.

This year he won Australia's most prestigious landscape art prize, The John Glover Art Prize. Judges described his painting, depicting a rack of lamb imposed on a bucolic Tasmanian landscape, as a humorous and poetic look at our colonial past and the impact that it had on pre-European landscape, and a deliberate prod to issues such as deforestation and revegetation.

What inspired you to pursue a career as an artist?

"After I finished my Bachelor of Fine Arts, I had assumed that the next logical step would be to teach. Then I met the gallerist Dick Bett who told me that you can just be an artist if you want it. Nobody had told me that before. It blew my mind and I'm so thankful to him."

In March you won The John Glover Art Prize. Tell us about your entry and how it felt to win such a significant and high-profile prize.

"My entry was made last summer while the country was on fire. It didn't make sense to make a traditional landscape painting in that context, so I wanted to focus attention on human imposition on the land. To me, there seemed to be two types of prevalent approaches to the landscape genre: either sublime natural beauty or dark, spooky 'Tasmanian Gothic'. Neither of these does much for me as neither expresses the realities of what we do to the land.

I had just read Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* and a lot of poetry by Henry Dumas. My favourite is one called *Kef. 12*. Those two writers did most of the work for me. I was saddened and angry at the situation, but these writers gave me hope too. What came out this time was this ugly painting. There was no time for clever, classical

composition – just slap the thing right in the middle of the canvas. Boom. That's a really rude way of composing an image. I am not taking your eye on a journey. There is no subtle reveal. It is a one-liner gag. It is a horrific image, but the horror is comical.

How do you manage the pressure of putting your work into the public sphere, which can come with criticism, pressure and high praise?

"I don't feel pressure when exhibiting art. I feel pressure in almost everything else, but making and exhibiting art is of such little consequence, it's the one place where the pressure is off. Like doing a cryptic crossword or something."

How would you describe your style of art to someone you just met?

"I would describe it as 'OK'. It's a collage. I try not to have a style of my own. I prefer to steal visual stuff from the world or pop culture or other artists and stick it all together like a bowerbird. Unashamedly unoriginal. No hang ups. Hopefully it's funny."

– Lucie van den Berg

You can view Robert's artwork on the [Bett Gallery webpage](#)

AMC alumnus revels in finding beautiful solutions to complex problems

IT'S TAKEN A TEAM OF ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS TO SUBMERGE EUROPE'S FIRST UNDERWATER RESTAURANT

It's a design that challenges your perception of what is possible: submerging a restaurant more than five metres under the sea on the southernmost cape of Norway.

Europe's first underwater eatery was a restaurateurs' dream and an architect's vision, but it took a team of subsea and marine engineers to turn it into a reality.

Fortunately, Naval Architect and University of Tasmania alumnus Sean Van Steel (BE NavArch Hons 2010) revels in finding beautiful solutions to complex problems.

Sean grew up sailing in Sydney. An affinity with the water and a natural curiosity for figuring out how things work led him to move to Launceston to study Naval Architecture at the Australian Maritime College (AMC).

After graduation, an advertisement for a global company in the oil

and gas sector caught his eye. It included a secondment in Norway.

"I left a Perth summer and landed in the depths of an Oslo winter for a six-month placement," he said.

"That was 10 years ago."

Sean gained expertise in everything from floating platform design to installation of subsea structures, and power cables.

"When the oil price crashed in 2015/16, the company went bankrupt and I was out of a job – in one of the most expensive countries in the world, with no one hiring. What did I do? I took a leap, and, during a market downturn, joined forces with fellow AMC grad Ben Fitzgerald and his former colleague Øyvind Johnsen to found CoreMarine (CMA)."

The company, which has employees in Norway, Spain and Tasmania, are leaders in designing and installing platforms and



structures in some of the harshest environments in the world, from offshore wind turbines and aquaculture facilities to power cables and mooring systems.

The underwater restaurant, aptly named UNDER, was the first project CMA landed.

Designed by world-leading architecture firm Snøhetta, the building presented a raft of exciting engineering challenges.

"We were brought in to determine the weather limits that the restaurant would be subjected to.

"Our responsibility snowballed into designing and overseeing the entire marine construction works, including stability analysis, lifting operations, floating of the structure and final in-place design."

"We still can't quite believe we have been a part of something so unique and globally recognised."

They were tasked with ensuring that the world's largest open sea

Unique challenge:

Naval Architect Sean Van Steele said the practical nature of the AMC degree taught him how to solve almost any problem.





“ We still can’t quite believe we have been a part of something so unique and globally recognised.

facing window could withstand water pressure and wouldn’t break during a winter storm.

Sean said they also had to work out how to get a large structure to sit on the seabed and ensure it still looked spectacular.

“UNDER was constructed on a quayside barge as a single concrete structure, floated into position, and lowered to the seabed.

“This was an incredibly challenging task: to steady a structure that is not designed to float. Normally to manage this we would add tanks or similar, but given the architectural nature of the building, we were not allowed to add such devices.”

“To make things more challenging, we were trying to perform a

complex marine operation on a shoestring budget.

“Normally, we solve an engineering problem using a simple tool where aesthetics don’t matter; or design a very bespoke and complex tool with a price tag to match.”

The trio was able to design a solution that was a simple, albeit unconventional, construction plan.

“We proved that we could transfer our skills and knowledge to a new industry and shake off the perception of expensive oil and gas constructions.”

Sean is currently on paternity leave in Oslo, a city which he said was not dissimilar to Hobart.

“We have a large body of water that is used for sailing on the long

summer days and a mountain behind the city that has an abundance of walking trails that are always in use.

“The main difference is that it is covered in snow for 3-4 months of the year and I’ve experienced temperatures down to -23C.”

Now, Oslo residents are just emerging from the country’s coldest and darkest month where it hovers around 0C, is dark and rains constantly.

“Once the first snow comes the city and people brighten up. The darkness is abated by the city light reflecting off the snow.”

– Lucie van den Berg

Read more about Sean’s fascinating life and career in his [Alumni profile](#).

Under the sea: Naval Architect Sean Van Steele co-founded CoreMarine which installs platforms in some of the harshest environments in the world.



ISSUE 51

Tracking device could bring sweet success

UNDERSTANDING THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT POLLINATOR COULD HAVE HUGE IMPACTS FOR FOOD GROWERS

Ryan Warren's hand is covered in bees. Fortunately they are new adults that emerged from their combs yesterday and are still too young to sting or fly.

It's the perfect time to attach tiny identification tags, which are less than 2.5 millimetres in size, to their backs using tweezers and a glue. One down, 999 to go.

This painstaking practical work is part of Ryan's fascinating research project undertaken as part of his PhD at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) at the University of Tasmania.

Ryan has developed a high-tech tracking system that will give fruit growers and beekeepers a unique insight into the behaviour of the

All abuzz: Gathering data on the movement of bees could help in the production of food.

world's most important pollinators, the humble honeybee.

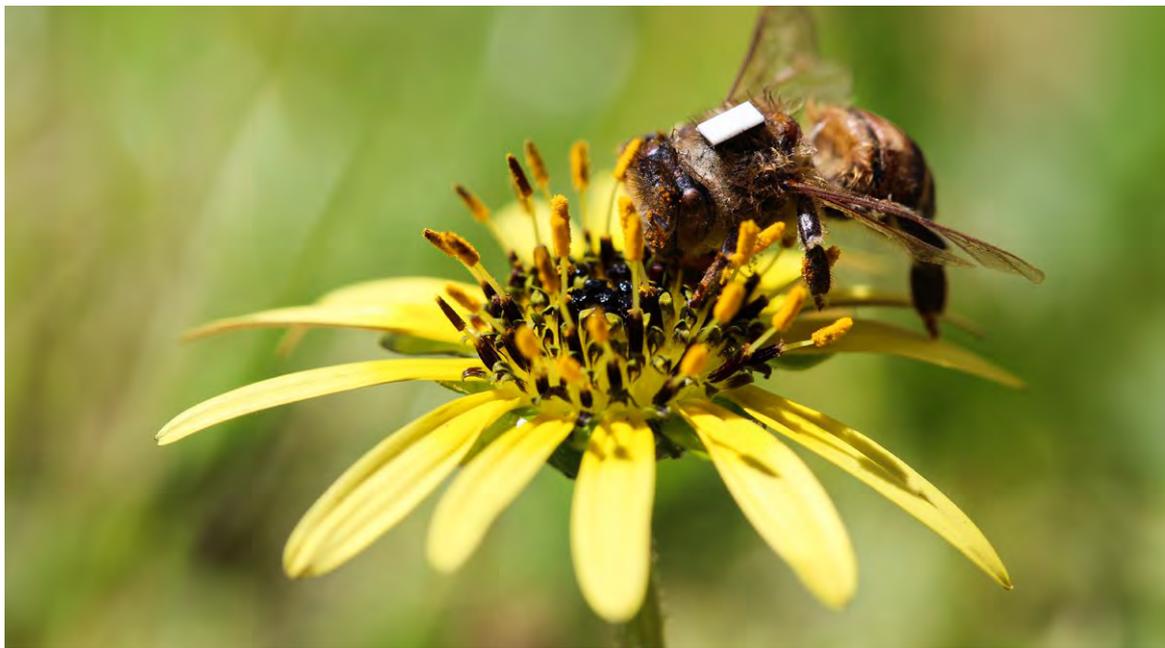
He attaches the tags, known as Radio Frequency Identification, to the backs of the day-old bees and puts them back in the hive.

"I have designed a scanner system, which is mounted to the hive's entrance," Ryan said.

"It has antennas that can detect the tags, so I know every time a bee moves in and out of the hive, and from that we can tell how long they have been foraging, or if they fail to return to the hive.



SUPPLIERS



RYAN WARREN

Pollinating power: The tracking system will be able to detect any sprays that may have harmed the bees.



RYAN WARREN

It almost acts like a security system in a shop, or like an e-TAG that records vehicle movements on a tollway.

“It almost acts like a security system in a shop, or like an e-TAG that records vehicle movements on a tollway.”

Being able to monitor the movement of the bees with precision means he can gather incredibly rich datasets that could help improve hive health and enhance pollination, a major coup for the agricultural industry.

“I’m trying to improve pollination and bee health in covered cropping systems, which includes bird netting, rain covers and polytunnels. They protect crops from hail, rain and birds, but there is a concern that they may be bad for the bees because they can influence navigation, climate and pesticide exposures.”

Ryan, who graduated from a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with Honours in 2017, has been working in cherry and carrot crops in southern Tasmania, using his high-tech tracking

system to observe the normal pollination period.

His project will provide valuable evidence that will have wide-ranging benefits for horticulturalists, fruit growers and apiarists alike.

“Beekeepers are worried about the health of their bees, but currently we don’t have any good baseline evidence about the impact of covered cropping systems on the insects,” he said.

“I’m looking at the foraging activity, analysing the pollen they bring back, to make sure they are pollinating the right crop, and I also detect any spray events that may harm the bees.

“My tracking system could also be used by fruit producers to tell them exactly when the bees start and stop flying, so chemicals could be sprayed when they know they are back in the hive.”

Ryan works under the tutelage of Associate Professor Geoff Allen,

Dr Stephen Quarrell and Associate Professor Alistair Gracie. His research is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia.

The results of his project will not be known for at least another year, when he hopes to complete his PhD, but the insights he is gaining have already received national recognition. In 2018, he won an Ag Institute Australia National Student Award for this work. He also received the Bruce Wall Scholarship in 2014.

– Lucie van den Berg

Read more about the University of Tasmania’s regionally-inspired and globally-significant research in [Research to Reality](#), including a story about [Dr James Pay who is tracking Wedge-tailed eagles on his mobile phone](#).

Dream role:
Daniel Aitken
says no two days
are the same
as Marketing
Manager at Mona.

ISSUE 51



EDDIE SAFARIK

Uncharted waters

Never drift to the middle. Never be ordinary. That is the credo etched in the DNA of Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (Mona), the cultural icon that has been making global waves from the banks of the Derwent for a decade.

And it is this prohibition on drifting to mainstream that forms the riding instructions for University of Tasmania alumnus Daniel Aitken (BBus 2009), Mona's Marketing Manager.

It's a plum gig for sure, but Daniel knows what makes Mona tick having joined the organisation fresh out of university a year before the museum's opening in 2011.

"I started as a junior marketing coordinator in 2010, joining a team of three people," Daniel said.

"We're now a team of around 16, and in my current role I spend a lot of time working across strategic planning, campaign project management, and liaising with our creative and digital teams.

"It can be a pretty hectic environment, and literally every day can be different. My role focuses on Mona's cultural activities. So that could mean working on exhibition launches, tourism campaigns, music and arts festivals, or any other number of projects that Mona has up its sleeve.

"For me, it's satisfying to see Mona's growth and its impact on tourism in Tasmania. It's an

organisation that's never sat on its laurels and is always exploring new projects and creative ways to build new brands."

Daniel is also Deputy Chair on the Board of Directors for Destination Southern Tasmania, the state's southern regional tourism organisation.

Despite his obvious affinity for the profession, marketing wasn't always Daniel's sole focus. He envisaged combining it with law or accounting.

But after moving south to live at Jane Franklin Hall and undertake a Bachelor of Business at the University, Daniel found his calling.

"I liked marketing because, one, it was interesting, and two, it allowed for creative problem solving and it could span all genres and industries," he said.

"I was fortunate enough to have had a couple of really great lecturers. Mark Wickham in particular was a lecturer who was a bit of a character and kept you engaged."

Despite leaving the University more than a decade ago, Daniel

finds time to reinvest in his alma mater through his role on the industry board of the new Masters of Tourism, Environmental and Cultural Heritage.

He also returns to Jane Franklin for monthly dinners as a college Fellow; hosting a table of students who are keen to pursue careers in Marketing.

After a decade at Mona, Daniel said there were at least another 10 years of exciting events in the pipeline to sustain his boundless enthusiasm.

No matter where his work takes him, Daniel wants future UTAS graduates to know they can forge a serious career in Tasmania.

"If they want to pursue a career in marketing it helps to find an industry that they could be passionate about.

"But you do need to put yourself out there and try and get as much experience so by the time you do graduate you can stand out from the rest."

– Duncan Abey

For me, it's satisfying to see Mona's growth and its impact on tourism in Tasmania. It's an organisation that's never sat on its laurels and is always exploring new projects and creative ways to build new brands.

Excellence in architecture

AWARD-WINNING TASMANIAN ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE FOUNDED BY TWO UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA GRADUATES, MAT HINDS (BENVDES 2003, BARCH HONS 2006) AND POPPY TAYLOR (BENVDES 1998, BARCH HONS 2006)

You both studied Environmental Design and Architecture at the University of Tasmania. Why did you want to become Architects?

We both have very different approaches to the course, but we shared an interest in environments and people, and architecture seemed a good holistic consideration of both.

There is a growing recognition for your commitment to excellence in architecture, including state and national awards. Congratulations. What have been the highlights for you?

The awards are nice professional recognition of our work, but the best highlights for us have centred upon memorable encounters with our clients. Their awareness expands when they see ideas manifest in buildings, and this is something that we have sought to foster in all our projects. We are often approached to solve spatial problems for people: too little space, a story to tell, or adaptation of existing

fabric to new needs. Often the resolution of the work brings out qualities that were never specifically requested, but which help to strengthen the specific response and experience of the work. The highlights come when a client engages with the ideas we are revealing through the work. It can be seemingly simple gestures. We have letters from clients who write to us and express deep gratitude. They tell us we have helped them to realise something that they never thought possible.

What sets your practice apart?

We are interested in stories and spatial traditions and feel that our Tasmanian context offers very particular insights in this regard.

Your project krakani lumi in wukalina (Mount William National Park) in Tasmania received a National Architecture Award. Can you describe the project itself and how you collaborated with the custodians of the land during the design?

krakani lumi is a kind of spatial device which furnishes the larger room of the cultural landscape it is situated within. It seeks to intensify the agency that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have in telling their story on Country. krakani lumi is conceived on a basic spatial

principle of concealing and revealing. When not occupied, or attended by the Aboriginal community, it is a shadow in the coastal heath – quiet, protected, and inaccessible. But when it is opened, its interior life expands out across the country, and it is enlivened by story and togetherness. Our work with the Aboriginal Land Council involved a lot of listening. But it was also driven by an extremely strong cultural lead in our client. There was mutual recognition that architecture is also a cultural act, and that its engagement was a way of enriching the cultural story of Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

Mat, you worked as an associate lecturer and honorary researcher at the School of Architecture and Design. What impact did teaching have on your practice?

It allowed time to consider and articulate a direction, which has become foundational to our approach in practice. Teaching is a great privilege, and I was fortunate to have been taught by some of the most exceptional lecturers in the history of the School, the late Rory Spence primary among them. I also felt that it was important to teach in order to bridge the professional divide, given the School is located in Launceston, but the profession is largely concentrated in the south of the State.

Taylor + Hinds has received national recognition for heritage architecture. What responsibility do we have to preserve our built history?

We have a responsibility to care for our heritage, but at the same time we must live in it and through it. Preservation and conservation are particular types of approaches to built fabric, which tend not to allow us to interpret the meaning of places – just 'keep' them. Cultural heritage relies on the shared identification of meaning in the fabric. This kind of engagement is precisely the focus of architectural endeavour – it is essentially a way of telling stories of certain places, over generations. That is why heritage is also something to be considered in terms of new work – because it is heritage for the future. We produce heritage when the architecture we envision has communal meaning, which endures.

You have a deep understanding of sense of place and respect for our natural environment. What does sustainability in design mean to you?

Buildings outlive us, that is the measure of sustainability. It is a similar point to the question of heritage. If buildings are meaningful experiences for the community, then there is the prospect of these structures sustaining that experience for generations. If we seek to construct clobber, it is an enormous waste – and it is not supported by the tenets of our field. Making buildings is incredibly resource intensive, so we seek to ameliorate these impacts by designing buildings that are smaller, robust and experientially rich and purposeful.



Partnership in work and life: Mat and Poppy love spending time along Tasmania's coast with family.

Collaborative effort: Taylor and Hinds worked with the palawa people to create krakani lumi.



“ We have a responsibility to care for our heritage, but at the same time we must live in it and through it. ”

A journey of science, seeds and startups

FOLLOWING HER NOSE LED ONE AGRICULTURAL SCIENTIST TO TAKE A TASMANIAN WILDFLOWER TO THE WORLD

Fortunately, Hazel MacTavish-West, the 'VegDoctor', missed out on vet school by a whisker.

"I discovered plants and how amazing their chemistry is, and I never looked back. That was it," she said.

Hazel studied agricultural science in Sydney and took on a fast-paced and creative international career that combined science with business.

In 1992, Hazel commenced a PhD at the University of Tasmania researching fragrance production in an endemic Australian wildflower called Brown Boronia (*Boronia megastigma* Nees). Boronia flowers are highly scented, and the crop is grown commercially in Tasmania by Essential Oils of Tasmania, who supported Hazel's PhD.

"The science behind how plants rapidly respond to a change in their environment, and how these changes can be harnessed commercially, remains fascinating to me," she said.

Through her PhD in Agricultural Science and subsequent postdoctoral work, Hazel applied chemistry and plant science to challenges that helped establish Tasmania as an innovative player in the international aromatics and essential oils world.

She relocated to the UK in 1999 with her young family, and after a stint in academia, moved into more commercially focussed, applied

Smell of success: Hazel MacTavish-West now supports innovative local food, drink and agritourism startups.

research by joining an agricultural and environmental consultancy.

"I was doing diverse projects like assessing Narcissus fragrance on the Isles of Scilly, and growing marshmallow hydroponically so the roots could be extracted and used in face cream," she said.

"I think working so closely with industry and academia here in Tasmania and the 'can-do' attitude we have here, meant that in the UK, I just got on and did stuff."

Just doing "stuff" opened doors for Hazel. In 2004 she attended an international 'Flavours and Fragrances' conference in Manchester.

Over a coffee with some delegates, she explained the amazing fragrance that comes from Brown Boronia, and was invited to take a sample to their company headquarters near Durham.

The company had a brief to recreate rose scent for a new shampoo, but the budget wouldn't

cover real rose oil, which is eye-wateringly expensive.

To recreate the scent of roses less expensively, they found out from Hazel that they could add a tiny amount of boronia oil ('absolute', as it's called) to a comparatively inexpensive geranium oil.

"Even though boronia absolute is also expensive, it has an amazing 'bang for buck' in terms of impact," Hazel said.

The company bought substantial volumes of boronia absolute from Tasmania, and the shampoo made its way to every corner of Britain.

Hazel was thrilled to close the loop with Brown Boronia, and she learned this self-discovered wisdom along the way:

"If you have a vision, and you can explain it passionately and back it up with delivery, people will get behind you."

In 2017 Hazel was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to





Keeping in touch

Thank you for reading the 2020 Alumni magazine. We hope you were inspired by the endeavours of your global alumni community and enjoyed receiving an update on your alma mater.

If you'd like to share your story, or learn more about opportunities and services available to University of Tasmania graduates, please update your contact details via our website: utas.edu.au/alumni

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If you have a vision, and you can explain it passionately and back it up, people will get behind you.

explore food innovation across the UK and Europe.

Upon her return, Hazel created the vision and secured the funding for Seedlab Tasmania, an incubator that helps innovative Tasmanian food, drink and agritourism startups to take their businesses to the next level.

"I'm passionately committed to making Seedlab successful and helping Tassie businesses have great outcomes," she said.

"I'm also thrilled that sponsors, including Woolworths and the University of Tasmania, have come on the journey with us.

"I have absolutely found my thing."

– Claire Baker

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Each year the University of Tasmania's access and diversity scholarships offer around 400 individuals the chance to change their lives through education and shine with the brilliance of our Southern Lights.

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