



### Season's Greetings from UniSA's VC

UniSA's Vice Chancellor & President, Professor David Lloyd, discusses his highlights from 2017 and what he is looking forward to in the new-year. Plus watch a special conversation between Prof Lloyd and one unique individual from MOD. [more...](#)

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### Celebrate Christmas with Maggie

Celebrity cook, TV host, renowned author and all-round Australian treasure Maggie Beer AM DUniv shares two of her favourite festive recipes and how she celebrates Christmas. [more...](#)

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### Pain science experts leading a Pain Revolution

With one in five Australians suffering from disabling chronic pain, Professor Lorimer Moseley's work is causing a pain revolution – changing the way health professionals and sufferers think about pain and how to manage it. [more...](#)

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### Overseeing the digital hospital of the future

In 2013 University of South Australia Alumnus Bill Le Blanc took on the role of Executive Director & CIO of SA Health. Since then he has begun to appear frequently in the media, drive innovation in health ICT, and has overseen the technology elements of the "digital hospital of the future". [more...](#)

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### Community driven career: public health to homelessness

Louise Miller-Frost's expansive career is centred around the community's wellbeing – from leading a not-for-profit organisation which houses women experiencing homelessness to providing community-driven perspective on the SA Medical Board and the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Vaccines Committee. [more...](#)

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### Growing opportunities throughout Asia Pacific

Andrew Chan, recent Recruitment International Entrepreneur of the Year, has found his niche, forging a path in the tourism and hospitality human resource sector to grow opportunity throughout the Asia Pacific. [more...](#)

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>> Image gallery: UniSA alumni events

### Alumni events

- 03  
FEB

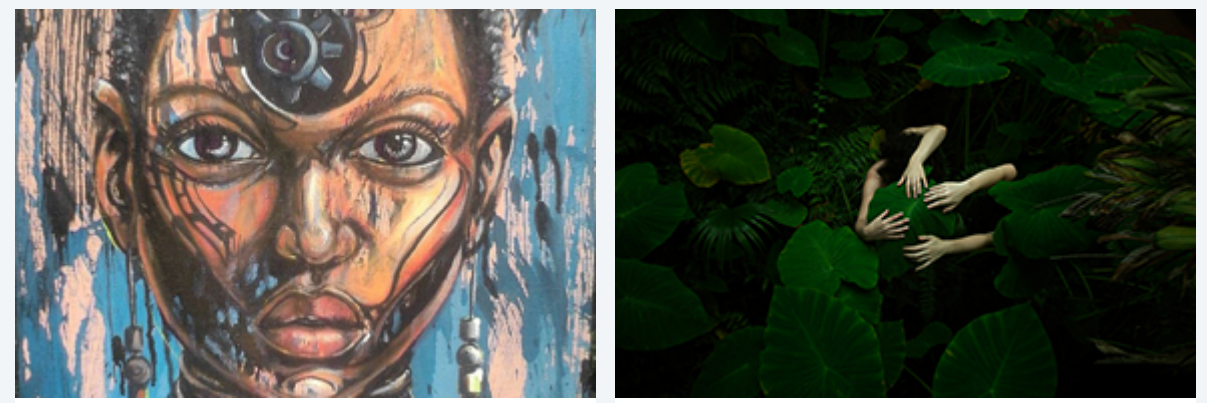
**Masters of Business Administration Class of 1988 Reunion – Adelaide**  
Calling all MBA graduates from 1988 and your classmates of 1987 & 1989 - Come, reminisce and celebrate with your fellow MBA graduates at the 30 year reunion.
- 05  
FEB-16  
MAR

**Sanaa: A Better World Through Creativity - Adelaide**  
Showcasing the artwork and artistic talent of East and West African street and visual artists, the Sanaa exhibition gives a voice to African artists who are working on political, cultural and socially engaged street and visual art. Visiting Kenyan street artist Swift9, will once again paint a mural direct onto the gallery wall on 1 & 2 March.
- 23  
FEB

**East West Street: A Song of Good and Evil - Adelaide**  
The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre and Arts Projects Australia present this extraordinary music piece based on the book by human rights lawyer Philippe Sands exploring the origins of genocide and crimes against humanity. Directed by Nina Brazier, written by Philippe Sands and performed by Katja Riemann, Philippe Sands, Laurent Naouri and Guillaume de Chassy.
- 03  
MAR-03  
JUN

**2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Divided Worlds – Adelaide**  
Titled *Divided Worlds*, the 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art presents an allegory of human society. Curated by Samstag Museum of Art Director Erica Green and held across Samstag Museum of Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, JamFactory and the Santos Museum of Economic Botany in the Adelaide Botanic Garden.
- 05  
MAR

**2018 Art Talks- Brett Dean – Adelaide**  
Building on the Hawke Centre's collaboration with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Art Talks continues in 2018. Australian composer Brett Dean and ASO Principal Conductor Nicholas Carter discuss the path to the Australian Premiere of Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Adelaide Festival





## Season's Greetings from UniSA's VC

Watch Professor David Lloyd have a chat with Lucy – the special star of MOD.



To learn more about MOD., Australia's leading future-focused museum, please visit: [mod.org.au](http://mod.org.au)

For UniSA 2017 was a year of consolidation, a hiatus between our 25th birthday celebrations and the gala openings next year of our new Health Innovation Building and Pridham Hall when the party season starts up again. As busy as we were consolidating the business of education and research, launching UniSA Online and signing partnership agreements with powerhouses such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Crows Football team, we looked up and discovered that Times Higher Education had not only rated us as one of the best young universities in the world (an accolade we have become used to hearing) but they put us in the list of the world's best universities of any age. We are now ranked at Number 9 in Australia, just behind the Group of 8 sandstones with their hundreds of years' experience and hundreds of millions of dollars of endowments.

Thankfully we have our own generous alumni who have helped lead us to a place of great strength in the Australian higher education sector and who regularly excel in their chosen fields which reflects well on the education we gave them.

This year we inaugurated The Vice Chancellor's International Alumni Leadership award that recognises the enormous value offered to the community by the people we graduate. In July in Singapore the award was made to Mr Andrew Chen, a Fellow of the University of South Australia, the founder and chief executive of the Asia Pacific Management Institute in Singapore, for his devotion to education and support of future leaders. That support comes to the tune of \$100,000 donated to our scholarship funds.

In Malaysia the award was made to Mr Yeong Chee Meng, also a Fellow of the University of South Australia, who studied his Masters of Applied Science in Project Management with UniSA in 1994 and now runs a major hydropower project. He is also a donor to our scholarship fund because he believes that it is his responsibility to give back to his community some of the opportunities that education has given him.

In Hong Kong at the start of November the award was made to Dr Edward Lam who took his Masters of International Business Administration at UniSA and, with his own business, is a passionate supporter of small and medium enterprises in Hong Kong and is incredibly supportive of UniSA, mentoring students and giving them work opportunities.

And during the year we caught up with hundreds of our alumni at events in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide and it's always a great pleasure to see how well you're all doing and how effectively you're putting your education to work.

As you would know, we celebrate four outstanding alumni each year in Adelaide. This year we chose fantastic examples of successful alumni, men and women who, although they come from completely different backgrounds, all share common values: to help their communities in humanitarian ways, to educate those with limited access to education and to serve their communities in whatever way they can.

Leon Choong added a Master of Arts (Communication Management) to an economics degree and became an advocate for educational innovation and creating new markets to help more people gain access to quality education.

Wawira Njiru was studying for her Bachelor of Nutrition and Food Sciences and organised a community fundraiser featuring Kenyan food. Six years on the money she raised had turned into a business, Food for Education, that provides around 1200 healthy meals a day for African students who were missing school because they were hungry.

Glenn Cooper AM (yes, he of your favourite beer) was an automotive electrician who moved into computing which led him to studying an Associate Diploma in Business at the South Australian Institute of Technology. He moved into the family brewing business and plays a key role in the Coopers Foundation which has given more than \$4 million to charities involved in medical research and health care, youth education, aged care and family and community support.

Andrea Mason, now the Chief Executive Officer of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council, took a Bachelor of Aboriginal Affairs and Public Administration at the South Australian Institute of Technology, dreamt of working in remote communities and is now working to make a real difference to the lives of families and individuals in remote Australia.

We also initiated a new group of super donors, the Hetzel Group named for the late and much missed the Honourable Dr Basil Hetzel AC who was one of South Australia's great contributors to public health and the intellectual life of the State.

The people who are now members of the Hetzel Group have donated more than \$100,000 to the University. They are: Winemaker Wolf Blass AM DUniv; Bob and Gayle Cowan; Associate Professor Margaret Davy AM; former Chancellor Dr Ian Gould AM DUniv and his wife Christine; Tom Pearce; Emeritus Professor Kym Adey AM; Professor Peter Hoj DUniv; and Dr Pamela Ryan OAM DUniv.

There are some donors in this group who would prefer to remain anonymous and some who will be inducted in the future. There are also two other familiar names included in the group - both with Irish accents - who are known to wear stylish blue robes at our graduation ceremonies and are proud to give back as best they can.

It was a very satisfying year in many respects as we worked at building our plans for the future and next year we'll start to see those plans come to fruition. Stay tuned for the official grand opening of [Pridham Hall](#), [MOD](#), and the [Health Innovation Building](#). I hope that many of you will join us for the celebrations.



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## Celebrate Christmas Maggie Beer style

Maggie Beer AM DUniv

**Australian celebrity cook**, food author, TV host, restaurateur, food manufacturer

Christmas is a special time of year for millions of people around the world – each celebrating in their own unique and different way. For many, Christmas is the time of year dedicated to sharing delicious festive treats with loved ones. It's the occasion to feast on the never-ending leg of ham, when a bowl of chocolates is a permanent fixture on the dining table, when South Australian cherries are in abundance and when the adored pavlova is a nostalgic treat (and an acceptable meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner).

As many families will know, to enable all of this magic to happen planning and preparation are key. Thankfully, Maggie Beer has taken the time to share two of her favourite festive recipes with UniSA's alumni, and explains what Christmas means to her.



"When it comes to Christmas, I must admit a streak of extravagance - if I am tempted by something special, I'll justify it by saying, 'but it's Christmas...' The house will be overflowing with flowers, the cellar will be raided for special wines and if there's enough water in our dam for Colin to catch some yabbies, they'll definitely be on the list. Then we always have baked ham at the centre of the table with lovely salads and vegetables, and finish with Christmas pudding. Although I have to admit, our family never manages to eat the Christmas pudding on Christmas Day. What tends to happen is that it's covered well and put back into the fridge. In the evenings that follow, it is taken out, a slice at a time, and warmed a little, to enjoy with a cup of tea after dinner," says Maggie Beer.

### Baked Ham with Quince Glaze

Serves 20-25

#### Ingredients

- 5kg traditionally smoked leg of ham
- 200ml Maggie Beer Quince Glaze
- ½ cup water



#### Method

1. Remove ham from the fridge half an hour prior to preparation.
2. Preheat the oven to 250°C.
3. To remove the rind, make a cut 10cm from the hock, then using your fingers, gently pull the skin away from the ham. Remove the rind completely and discard.
4. Using a small sharp knife, score the fat in a crisscross pattern to form diamonds. Ensure to maintain an even depth all over and avoid cutting the flesh. Place it onto an oiled wire rack that rests in baking dish.
5. Pour water into base of baking dish.
6. Using a basting brush, brush the fat of the ham with half of the Quince Glaze. Place uncovered ham into oven to bake until it begins to caramelize - this should take approximately 15 minutes.
7. Remove from the oven quickly and brush over the remaining amount of Quince Glaze. Return ham to the oven, ensuring to place the tray back in the opposite way around, and bake until the ham is beautifully caramelised all over – this should take approximately 10-15 minutes. Ensure to keep a close eye on the ham so you don't take it too far, but you're looking to achieve a nice burnish all over.
8. Remove from the oven, carve and serve.

### Salted Brandy Caramel Pavlova with Caramelised Bananas

Serves 8 to 10

#### Ingredients

- 4 free range egg whites
- Pinch of salt
- 220g caster sugar
- 1 tbspn cornflour
- 1 tbspn Maggie Beer Verjuice
- 375ml thickened cream
- 375ml crème fraîche
- 1 jar Maggie Beer Salted Brandy Caramel
- 4 lady finger bananas, peeled and sliced
- ¾ cup brown sugar



#### Method

1. Preheat oven to 160°C.
2. Place the egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer with a pinch salt and whisk until peaks form. Gradually add the sugar, a third at a time, whisking well until the mixture is stiff and glossy. Check the sugar is dissolved by rubbing between your fingers.
3. Add the cornflour and Verjuice and do a final whisk to combine. You'll know when the meringue is stiff and glossy because the mixture will have tripled in volume and stands up when the beaters are lifted.
4. Spoon half of the mixture onto a baking tray lined with non-stick baking paper and shape into a rough rectangle (approximately 22cm x 8cm). Repeat this same process with the second half of the mixture.
5. Place the meringue slabs into the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 140°C. Bake for 40 - 45 minutes.
6. Turn the oven off and allow the meringue to cool completely in the oven with the door ajar.
7. To prepare the filling, place the cream into the bowl of an electric mixer and whip to soft peaks. Add the crème fraîche and whip for another 30 seconds. Gently fold through the Salted Brandy Caramel, ensuring not to combine, but just swirl through.
8. Coat each side of the banana slices lightly with brown sugar.
9. Place a large non-stick frypan over a medium heat and once hot, place in the bananas. Fry each side for 3 - 4 minutes or until caramelised. Remove and set aside.
10. To assemble, place one meringue onto a serving platter. Spread over half of the cream mixture, then place the second meringue on top. Spread the remaining cream on top, and decorate with the sliced caramelised bananas. Serve.

To find more of Maggie's Christmas recipes please visit her website:

<https://www.maggibeer.com.au/recipes/theme+christmas>

**We hope all of UniSA's alumni enjoy a safe and happy festive season in 2017!**



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## UniSA pain science experts leading a Pain Revolution

Professor Lorimer Moseley

Professor of Clinical Neurosciences and Chair in Physiotherapy, University of South Australia



Most people would explain pain as beginning in the body due to some sort of damage, which sends a signal to the brain that pain is occurring. However there are a number of problems with this theory: why is pain sometimes delayed after a trauma? Why do people feel pain in phantom limbs after amputation? And, importantly, why do millions of people experience years of chronic pain without an identifiable injury?

"We now know that pain is truly not a measure of tissue damage, it's a marker of all of the things that might be telling your brain to protect your body," says Professor Lorimer Moseley, Professor of Clinical Neurosciences and Chair in Physiotherapy at UniSA (pictured above with his research team).

While this idea sounds simple, it can be considerably difficult to grasp, particularly if you have the very real experience of chronic pain. Yet it is this concept that has caused a major re-think in the scientific and medical community.

"Pain is no longer thought to be a purely sensory function but one that also includes psychological and environmental input – particularly learning – that motivates our behaviour to protect ourselves.

"It is now understood that the body doesn't have pain sensors, but it does have 'danger' sensors. These sensors are called nociceptors, nerve endings that respond to changes in their environment, such as something touching the skin or a contraction within the gut, by sending signals to the brain that there might be something important occurring that needs attention.

"The brain is able to produce this unpleasant feeling in just one location, so you know that you need to protect just that area. When you think about it in this way, pain is a gob-smackingly sophisticated development in evolution."

The Imprecision Hypothesis is one project Moseley has undertaken to better understand how the pain system can go wrong. This hypothesis details how a normal protection response (pain activation) can become 'fuzzy', leading to generalised pain — a more over-protective pain response.

A normal pain response is usually elicited to an area of the body due to a specific event. However, Moseley's work suggests that the brain learns to associate events or situations surrounding the initial pain causing stimulus, as being a cue for danger, thus leading it to trigger pain when pain is not in fact helpful.

But Moseley warns, "We need to be careful how we frame the idea that pain is all in your head, because someone in pain hears 'you don't have pain, it's not real, you're illegitimate', when the reality is that their brain is eliciting a very real pain response – it feels exactly the same, there is nothing fake or unreal about it.

"What we now need to do is teach people about their pain, convince them that we know it hurts but that we also know that they are safe if no serious damage is found.

"We want people experiencing persistent pain to ask their health professionals if their pain system is being overprotective, how to retrain it to be less protective, and to also ask if they are safe to move because we also know that movement is usually the kickstarter to recovery."

Now Moseley and his team are focusing much of their work on helping sufferers rethink their pain, in order to find new ways to recover. This is why each year they hold The Pain Revolution — a fundraising and community education cycling trip through remote and rural centres.

"The fundraiser supports the training and mentoring of rural based pain educators who will support their local community.

"Each of these pain champions will receive training in pain science and develop a curriculum for their community, and then pay it forward by training others to do the same – train the trainer; the gift that keeps on giving!

"These people will become pain champions for their neighbours, helping people in their area learn how we can promote recovery – little by little, how we can use evidence-based tools such as mindfulness, active coping skills, biopsychosocially based graded exposure, and new self-help tools like The Protectometer. Most importantly, we want entire communities to rethink how pain works.

"Our Pain Revolution ride gives us the opportunity to start to build awareness about the changes in pain science and get people engaged. Next year we will visit Wollongong, Nowra, Canberra, Cooma, Jindabyne and Albury/Wodonga — rural centres where we will have a pain champion ready to continue to educate people after we leave.

"Over the next few years we hope to see pain educators far and wide in rural and remote centres helping people better understand and manage their pain."

To make a donation to support the Pain Revolution, please visit: <https://donate.unisa.edu.au/pain-revolution>

For more information about the Pain Revolution Rural Outreach Tour and Ride, visit: [www.painrevolution.org](http://www.painrevolution.org)



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## Overseeing the digital hospital of the future

**Bill Le Blanc**

**Master of Business Administration**

**Executive Director & CIO of SA Health**

In 2013 UniSA alumnus Bill Le Blanc took on the role of Executive Director & CIO of SA Health. Since then he has begun to appear frequently in the media, drive innovation in health ICT, and has overseen the technology elements of the 'digital hospital of the future'.

Bill was recently announced by [CIO Australia](#) as the top CIO in Australia for 2017, in its annual ranking of Australia's top 50 technology leaders.

The past few years have seen the construction and recent opening of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. Covering 10 hectares of land, the complex has over 6,000 staff, 40 operating suites, and is gearing up for full use of electronic medical records. As CIO of SA Health, Bill has spent his time driving business transformation through new technologies in medical imaging, pathology and electronic medical records, in addition to overseeing a wide range of new technologies being incorporated into the new hospital.



"As a leader, it is sometimes difficult to keep teams motivated in the face of public criticism, but conviction and drive to deliver has carried us through. It's been through the hard work of a huge number of people over many years that we have this collective achievement," says Bill.

The hospital's construction has faced a number of criticisms from both the media and the public over the building period. While Bill says there have been a number of challenges during his time as CIO, the voyage he has taken with the hospital and SA Health staff has ultimately paid off.

"The new hospital requires different ways of working for hospital staff when compared to the old Royal Adelaide Hospital. Working together with clinical leaders, executive and administrative leaders, to take staff on the change journey and providing effective leadership and governance over the program of work, has been one of our key challenges."

A major mainstay of the new RAH has been the introduction of a wide range of new technologies. From electronic bedside devices, to the pneumatic tube system, and even driverless robots, the hospital has aimed to be at the forefront of health ICT innovation, earning the title of the '[most advanced digital hospital](#)' in the country. Bill says these advances in technology are critical for improving the lives of both staff and patients.

"The technologies in this hospital support a completely different way of working, where we are transitioning into radically new models of clinical delivery. It is truly a digital hospital of the future."

Bill says these [innovations](#) are important not just for the future of health in South Australia, but vital for improving health on a global level.

"The population we have is living longer and with more chronic health conditions. It is unsustainable to continue providing services using the service delivery models of old, and hence constant innovation is required."

Since becoming the CIO of SA Health, Bill has frequently appeared in the media on all things concerning health information technology. When initially taking on the role, Bill says he did not expect the level of exposure and media attention he has received, though in hindsight it should have been expected.

"I knew the role encompassed driving transformational change, but I did not anticipate that the attention this generates would play out in media or require me to speak publicly on it.

"With 20/20 hindsight, it is completely understandable because the technology function within our business has, over the same period, transitioned from being a support function to being integral to the delivery of clinical services to patients."

Despite the newfound exposure, Bill maintains that it does not impact the way he works or does business. For Bill, the work he does is too critical to let outside influences change his perspective.

"It's certainly at the forefront of my mind that outside SA Health the average punter forms their impression of what we are doing based on media stories, but it doesn't affect the way I do business. The key is to just keep doing the right things and the rest will take care of itself.

"What we do is incredibly important for the entire community and this a constant source of motivation."

Before studying at UniSA, Bill had spent 15 years progressing through the ranks working various tech roles. It wasn't until his interests started to shift more into working with people, that he realised he could combine his knowledge with a new set of skills.

"I began to enjoy business and people leadership functions more than the technology piece. And while I was achieving a level of success in leadership I felt that the formal grounding and leadership frameworks inherent in an MBA program would help boost my workplace performance."

Bill says both health and ICT are linked as growing industries, with both providing ample opportunities for recent graduates, particularly where the two intersect.

"There are many paths to the same destination and many of the jobs of the future in both these areas do not exist yet. There are people working in the health ICT who trained as doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, IT technologists and more.

"My advice for recent graduates who want to get into the industry, is to immerse yourself in it as much as you can. Read about industry trends, challenges and projects. Network with people already in the industry and don't wait for the perfect opportunity. Once you are in the industry there is plenty of scope to move around."



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## Community driven career: from public health to homelessness

Louise Miller-Frost

**Master of Business Administration**

**Master of Communications Management**

**Bachelor of Applied Science**

**CEO of Catherine House Inc.**

Louise Miller-Frost's expansive career is centred around the community's wellbeing – from leading a not-for-profit organisation which houses women experiencing homelessness to providing community-driven perspective on the SA Medical Board and the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) Vaccines Committee.

This year, Louise's vast experience in public health policy landed her an appointment to the TGA Vaccine Safety Committee.

"Vaccines have provided some of the most significant leaps forward in public health in the last century, unfortunately there is a lot of misinformation about vaccine safety and underestimation about the harm some of the diseases they address can cause," says Louise.

"The role of the Committee, and my role as a Consumer Representative on the Committee, is about public safety and improving the health of the community in the fights against infectious diseases."

With speculation and controversy surrounding vaccinations for children, Louise believes legislation can be used as a tool for changing behaviour.

"Legislation has worked in public health policy previously, for instance the introduction of the compulsory seatbelt legislation. This is particularly important when the health of the community, specifically young children, is at risk.

"But it is also important that people have a sense of security and safety about the medicines and vaccines that are released in the Australian marketplace, otherwise they will still opt out."

With conflicting information constantly available online to read, Louise says it is more important than ever for the public to feel confident about vaccination safety and the process new vaccines undergo.

"For a vaccine to be approved by the TGA and the Minister for release in Australia is a long process, often taking several years. Scientific evidence about its safety, quality and efficacy is analysed and assessed. After a vaccine is released for use in Australia, post-market monitoring continues to ensure ongoing public safety."

As well as her work with the TGA, Louise is the CEO of Catherine House Inc., a recovery-focussed homelessness service for women. With extensive programs available to women needing support services and accommodation, the organisation houses 48 women on a nightly basis.

"The issues that bring women to homelessness are often complex – we help them find housing, secure their income, connect with the services they need and make plans for their future."

Since its initial inception in 1988, the organisation has grown to have a team of 50 full-time, part-time and casual employees – as well as a team of over 50 volunteers. Catherine House also offers programs such as National Affordability Housing Agreement Services programs, education programs and Mental Health Programs.

In 2016, Louise was appointed as a community member on the Medical Board of South Australia, a role that she says is critical in the board gaining another point of view from a community-driven perspective.

"The Medical Board deals with registration matters and complaints or notifications about medical practitioners. Sitting alongside medical professionals, my role is to represent a community perspective of the issues being discussed, community expectations and priorities in the way practitioners deliver health care and services to the community.

"Some of the issues we deal with are technical and clinical in nature, but others are about practitioner behaviour, communication or the way in which they practice. The overarching guiding principle is about public safety in healthcare, which is something I am passionate about."

Before Louise was running Catherine House, she was working full-time in local government while her triplet sons were in primary school. It was at this time she decided to enrol at UniSA and study a Master of Business Administration online to help provide for her children and further her career.

"I was very time poor but knew I needed a business degree to further my career. UniSA online gave me the ability to complete subjects after the children went to bed. And I really like the intensive subject format, which fitted nicely with my busy life at the time."

Although Louise's academic career has been varied – she also holds a Bachelor of Applied Science, and Masters Degrees in Communication Management and Public Health – she is adamant that everything she has learned has given her a diverse and useful set of skills.

"I have found that each one has added something to my skill set. It has been years since I completed the communications degree but the principles I learned are standing me in good stead for engaging with our community of supporters at Catherine House."

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## Inspiring growth in the Asia Pacific human resource industry

**Andrew Chan**  
**Master of Business Administration, Marketing**  
**Founder & CEO, ACI HR Solutions**

A passion for travel, hospitality and helping people achieve their career aspirations has led Andrew Chan to build his own successful human resource firm, ACI HR Solutions, with offices throughout the Asia Pacific.

On graduating from high school in Sydney, Andrew went straight into work and progressed quickly through sales, business development and marketing management for a series of large airlines and hotel chains. But it wasn't until relocating to Singapore in 2004 that Andrew was offered an opportunity to lead the regional arm of a large recruitment and executive search company that he discovered his niche.



"Since joining the tourism industry I have discovered that incorporating a HR element into my work is something that motivates me every day. The best part, and why I am so passionate about it, is that I am constantly able to meet and interact with inspirational people and learn from their experiences and success," Andrew said.

After completing an MBA at UniSA in 2010, Andrew could combine his broad experience of the tourism and human resource sectors to start his own venture.

"Having utilised head-hunters throughout my career, it became apparent that understanding the nuances and macro-talent issues of an industry required people from within the industry to appreciate. In addition, the inability to truly understand candidate requirements, their experiences and skills, can only result in misplaced aspirations," he said.

"So we identified a need for a specialist firm that is owned and operated by people from within the travel, hospitality, lifestyle and tourism industry to compete against the major generalist recruitment firms.

"I founded ACI HR Solutions in 2012, not long after completing my MBA as my studies gave me the necessary tools and confidence I needed to combine with my experience to set up my own business.

"We ensure that all of our consultants have worked in travel, tourism and/or hospitality and are genuinely passionate about both the client's success and the industry as a whole."

This recipe has proved itself as ACI is now considered one of the region's leading boutique recruitment firms and Andrew has expanded the company throughout the region with offices in Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Sydney.

"We have been quite fortunate in recent years to be recognised by industry peers with a number of awards, including being crowned the Recruitment Agency of the Year in 2017. That was certainly an honour, but having my team with me on stage as we received the award, and sharing the excitement with them, was the best part and a proud moment for us all."

It has not always been an easy path to navigate however. Andrew was leading TMS Asia Pacific when the global financial crisis hit. He describes it as one of the toughest experiences of his career when TMS scaled back operations in the region by over two thirds.

"I went from being the CEO of nine office locations with over 80 FTE to having to retrench two thirds of my manpower and close six offices – all two weeks before Christmas, it was terrible but getting through that period was one of the most important learning experiences I've had.

"It is a lesson that still guides me. The start-up phase for ACI during the first couple of years was particularly hard as we were a small to medium enterprise without external funding so it was a fine line between spending and returns.

"Being the owner of a business offers me a degree of flexibility and freedom. But there is also little opportunity to switch off. Rather than reporting to someone above I believe that it's an even higher level of responsibility knowing that ultimately the buck stops with me and the decisions I make impact everyone within the business."

Andrew's interest in helping people achieve their career ambitions has also led him to a role in guiding others as a speaker and mentor at tourism conferences, events and educational institutions.

"There have been considerable changes in the human capital landscape over the years, as organisations struggle to engage and retain their best talent and fuel growth. I am a firm advocate for the need for leaders to change from the ever-popular command-and-control type management, to a more holistic mentoring approach to help overcome these challenges.

"This year we created the ACI Mentor of the Year Award as a way of encouraging more people to see the benefits of a more democratic leadership style that allows staff to grow professionally and learn to be more creative and invested in their work.

"We received entries detailing some truly inspiring stories about mentors, before we eventually crowned Dr Jennifer Cronin, President of Wharf Hotels in Hong Kong our Mentor of the Year in 2017 for her dedication to her staff and her work."

Another area that Andrew hopes to influence is to see a better transfer and delivery of education, training and skills across the Asia Pacific.

"Millennials are said to be the most educated generation in history, but in developed countries we're still facing a skills shortage, with more of the working demographic retiring than entering the workforce - this will become a major problem for years to come.

"Developing nations have the human capital to address an aspect of this problem, but insufficient access to higher education and training has prevented them from fully addressing the issue.

"I wish I had the skills to do more. I try to involve myself as much as possible in initiatives run by industry associations such as PATA by offering my expertise, and speaking to students through workshops and seminars in developing countries in order to help these organisations create more opportunities.

"The most important lessons I have learnt that I would pass on to others is to be resilient, be nimble and always be willing to learn.



"Personally, I embarked on my MBA during one of the busiest and most turbulent periods of my life, but an industry mentor of mine had convinced me that it would be worth the time investment and a decision I would not regret, and he was right. Having my parents attend my graduation ceremony in Singapore was probably one of the proudest moments of my life, and one I won't forget.

"Whilst it's important to have strategic goals and plans in place both professionally and personally, the ability to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start over is an important virtue to have."

This is testament to the success Andrew's company is now experiencing. "We are careful when it comes to growth. However, I do believe that there's still a white space for travel, tourism and hospitality recruitment, with very few specialist firms across Asia, Middle East and India. I'm confident that the market has potential and our aim is to grow across those regions."

WATCH: 'A day in the life of Andrew Chan.' Andrew Chan takes you behind the scenes at a recent media interview.



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