

STARSTRUCK: Working on the set of iconic Australian films

Lisa Tomasetti in conversation with Joanna Kitto

Lisa Tomasetti

Film Stills and Fine Art Photographer

Bachelor of Visual Arts (Photography & Cinematography)

Bachelor of Communication Studies (Literary Studies, Art)



Image: Director Scott Hicks lines up a shot on actor Geoffrey Rush through his viewfinder by Lisa Tomasetti, Shine, 1996, Courtesy Momentum Films, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Australian photographer Lisa Tomasetti makes portraits rich with cinematic drama. Her most recent body of work takes prima ballerinas from the Australian Ballet off the stage and on to the street, capturing their movement and grace in Paris, Tokyo and New York. Viewing these works, it is no surprise that Lisa has also been drawn to the spectacle of the film set.

Tomasetti first stepped on set in 1996 as the photographer for Scott Hicks' David Helfgott biopic, *Shine*. Since then, she has worked on films including *Dead Heart* (1996), *The Dish* (2000), *Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *The Sapphires* (2012).

Many of her portraits of actors, their characters and the crew are currently on display in *Starstruck: Australian Movie Portraits* at the University of South Australia's Samstag Museum of Art. Samstag Associate Curator Joanna Kitto sat down and spoke with Tomasetti about capturing the essence of a film on set.

Joanna: As an artist with a photographic practice spanning three decades, what first drew you to film?

Lisa: I was raised in quite a theatrical family. From the age of five, I was attending Bunyips Children's Theatre and going to drama school at Carclew in Adelaide. It felt like I was always in the theatre—most of my holidays were spent putting on pantomimes—so I felt very comfortable with actors and fiction and creating stories. Later, I went to the University of South Australia's South Australian Art School [now called the School of Art, Architecture and Design] and graduating I wanted be involved with photography so I began photographing theatre. I worked on a TV series in Adelaide and then in 1996, worked on *Shine* and it all happened from there!



Image: Deborah Mailman as Gail by Lisa Tomasetti, The Sapphires, 2012, Courtesy Goalpost Pictures Australia Pty Ltd, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Fine art photographers have long-held roles within the film industry, from Rennie Ellis and Max Dupain to Robert McFarlane and Carolyn Johns. Despite this, the on-set stills photographer is perhaps the most underrated of all in the industry. *Starstruck* turns this idea on its head, drawing our attention to the photographer and giving the portraits the opportunity to be assessed as works of art, still integral to but now also independent from the film. What was it like to see your film stills in the gallery?

That's true. *Starstruck* really brings film stills photographers out into the open. After seeing the exhibition, people are actually talking about what we do! *Starstruck* gives them an insight into our work; it is incredibly important to have a good image to sell a film, but not many people know about what the job actually entails. This exhibition also gives the audience a glimpse behind-the-scenes on set, and shows images from well-known films people never have seen before. They're not always the obvious choices!

What are the key differences between your work as a film stills photographer and a fine art photographer?

My two roles are incredibly different. With my arts practice, I have control over the image. I am able to set up my own tableaux and dictate the direction of the outcome. With film stills, I am part of a much bigger team and don't have the same sense of autonomy. You have to be as quiet and discrete on set as possible and work in the 'shadows'—with sixty people in a small space it's so easy to get in people's way! You really do have to pick your battles, reading the atmosphere and the mood of the actors and finding a balance between asking for the shot you need and letting the moment pass as to not cause stress.



Image: Chris O'Dowd as Dave Lovelace and Deborah Mailman as Gail by Lisa Tomasetti, The Sapphires, 2012, Courtesy Goalpost Pictures Australia Pty Ltd, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

In *Starstruck*, we see behind the scenes on film sets through your camera. Across your career, has there been a particular actor or director you have admired, or stand-out performance you have witnessed?

I have always loved working with Cate Blanchett. I photographed her in *Little Fish* and *Truth* and her attention to detail and ability to transform into her characters is a privilege to watch and a joy to shoot. I recently worked with Bruce Beresford on *Ladies in Black* and that was like having a masterclass in brilliant directing!

There is a striking shot in the exhibition from the set of *Shine*, taken in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, can you tell me about this moment?

This still was taken early on in the *Shine* shoot, and was my first day on set taking stills for a feature film. [Director] Scott Hicks was lining up his view-finder on [lead actor] Geoffrey Rush, deciding which lens to use. The entire time the crew were there setting up equipment and cameras around Geoffrey and he just stayed in character, seemingly oblivious to any distraction. This photograph shows a truly trusting relationship between this director and actor.



Image: Shari Sebbens as Kay, Chris O'Dowd as Dave Lovelace, Miranda Tapsell as Cynthia, Deborah Mailman as Gail and Jessica Mauboy as Julie by Lisa Tomasetti, The Sapphires, 2012, Courtesy Goalpost Pictures Australia Pty Ltd, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Another film in *Starstruck* that has been hugely successful internationally is *The Sapphires*, following the story of four young Aboriginal girls who leave their rural mission community to sing for US troops during the Vietnam War. What was it like to work on that set?

Working with Deborah Mailman, Jessica Mauboy, Shari Sebbens, Miranda Tapsell and Chris O'Dowd made my job incredibly enjoyable. They immersed themselves so deeply in their characters, which allowed me to capture truly beautiful portraits. When you have the honour of trying to convey the mood of such sensitive scenes, I feel compelled to do justice to the actor's performance. The story itself is a personal one as well. [Writer] Tony Briggs based *The Sapphires* on his mother's experience, and everyone who worked on set developed a deep connection to her life. It was wonderful to be a part of.

Starstruck: Australian Movie Portraits


This is your last chance to see some of the most iconic shots in Australian film history.

Discover Lisa Tomasetti's work alongside original costumes, casting books and rare film posters in the *Starstruck: Australian Movie Portraits*, exhibition on until 30 November at the Samstag Museum of Art. Find the Museum on North Terrace, University of South Australia City West Campus. Entry is free.

For more information visit: www.unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum.

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STARSTRUCK:
AUSTRALIAN MOVIE PORTRAITS_
MOLLY REYNOLDS & ROLF DE HEER:
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Free entry, all welcome

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Building foundations for the future

Michael T. Smith

Regional CEO, Europe and USA, **Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd**
Bachelor of Business in **Property** and **Real Estate**



When asked what sparked his interest in real estate and property development, Michael Smith highlights a conversation he had by chance while purchasing a van to start up a part-time courier business.

Fast-forward two decades, Michael has firmly established himself in the real estate and investment industry, with a firm hold on the Asian property market, where he has made a name for himself.

"It was quite serendipitous that I ended up enrolling in the UniSA real estate course as I did not have any friends or family in the industry," says Michael, who now leads the European and USA interests of multi-billion dollar investment company Mapletree Investments.

"Truth be known, I left school to do a Bachelor of Arts, which I began to lose interest in halfway through. I started a courier business on the side and whilst purchasing a van, the seller told me about the real estate degree that he was completing at UniSA – this conversation resulted in me transferring to UniSA.

"From my first day I was drawn to the industry and the huge potential it offered on multiple fronts."

He says he may be biased but believes UniSA's property and real estate program are some of the best in Australia, having immensely informed his career, and planted the seed for his giving back philosophy.

"I particularly liked the breadth of subjects that we were taught such as Property Finance, which became an increasingly important part of my career. I also enjoyed the hands-on practicality that the course provided through field trips to country South Australia and Sydney in our final year."

These experiences at UniSA, and a year in Shanghai working with a developer, set the tone for the beginning of a successful 21-year investment banking career which sent Michael all over the world.

"The course also provided me with a better understanding of the cliché 'it is not what you know but who you know' as I met people that have been incredibly influential in my career.

"This included Mark Steinert, the current CEO of Stockland who shepherded me firstly to Sydney, then Hong Kong and then back to Sydney again to join him at UBS in 1996 with Andrew Pridham, John Carter, Darren Rehn, Phil Redmond and Chris Monaghan – all of whom were UniSA alumni," explains Michael.

Michael made waves firstly at UBS Investment Bank for 10 years, working his way up to Managing Director, then at Goldman Sachs for another 11 years as Head of South East Asian Investment Banking and Head of Asia Pacific Real Estate Investment Banking, eventually making partner, before departing early 2017 for Mapletree, based in Singapore.



Image: The US\$2.3bn Hong Kong-based shopping mall, Festival Walk, acquired by Mapletree

Now as Regional CEO of Europe and the USA (EUSA) for Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd – valued to have \$946.3bn assets under management as at 31 March 2018 – Michael manages 17.5% of Mapletree's holdings, in "a role that is quite unique, given the breadth and scope of the real estate markets" he now oversees.

"Since joining Mapletree, we have opened offices in London, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Amsterdam and Warsaw, and we will soon open in Atlanta and Dallas. Much of my work as a member of the senior management team is in the execution of our business model, based on five-year plans, across 12 economies," he says.

Michael says he is also fortunate to have had the opportunity to act as lead advisor on significant real estate transactions in his career, including Swire Properties sale of their US\$2.3bn Hong Kong-based shopping mall (subsequently purchased by Mapletree) and the challenges such acquisitions and responsibilities pose.

"Across my career, I cherish the human interactions that have enabled me to meet and work with some of the most influential people in the real estate industry across multiple jurisdictions."

"I also enjoyed the creative side of the business too, particularly the convergence of the physical real estate markets with the financial markets. Above all, I enjoyed and embraced the challenges that come my way - this is something you can only truly understand if you are passionate about your craft," he says.

After Michael left UBS to join Goldman Sachs, taking up the role of Head of South East Asia, he quickly made partner, where a portion of compensation is placed in a 'Gs Gives' account.

This initiative helps provide more than US\$1.3bn in grants to 6,000 non-profits across 80 countries, and Michael's old colleague – and fellow UniSA property graduate – Andrew Pridham inspired him to use this funding to support property students at the University.

"When Andrew Pridham invited me to attend the hard-hat opening of Pridham Hall, his generosity inspired me to give back to UniSA, and after thinking about my own experiences, we devised the Asian Experience Travel Grant"

Recalling how influential winning the Jones Lang Wootton scholarship was in his final year at UniSA, and how the subsequent travel had opened up the world to him, the Asian Experience Travel Grant was established with a generous donation to support high-performing students who have enrolled in the Bachelor of Business (Property) degree.

The grant allows students to undertake an intensive Asian study tour that incorporates six of the most important regional cities in Asia – Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo, which in many cases, may otherwise be beyond their financial means.

For the first time this year, the grant was awarded to Arya Loodin, a current Bachelor of Business double degree student in Finance and Property, which took him on a life-changing journey throughout Asia this past July.

"Facilitating access to opportunities similar to the experiences I was fortunate enough to achieve in the early 1990s will give students like Arya the chance to forge a deeper understanding of the Asian real estate market," says Michael.

"My desire to give back and foster the next generation of UniSA graduates stems from my gratefulness for all the opportunities that I have experienced on the back of the time I spent at UniSA. Not just the education, but also for the contacts and connections that have helped sustain my career."



Image: Michael Smith with Arya Loodin this July in Singapore

Arya's 'Asian Experience'

Arya Loodin cannot describe his experience on his intensive property study tour which took him to six of the most important cities in the industry as anything short of "life-changing".

Funded by the generosity of fellow UniSA property graduate and CEO of EUSA for Mapletree, Michael Smith, Arya was able to experience a variety of industry-based workshops, site visits and seminars to gain insight into some of the world's most exciting leading property projects and developments, thanks to the 'Asian Experience Travel Grant' he was awarded.

"You can't really quantify how valuable the trip was – it's hard to put into words," Arya says.

"You'll never get to see and experience the things we did on the trip, and in Asia particularly, especially compared to a market like Adelaide. It was an eye-opening first-hand experience.

The trip was so influential Arya has even rethought his career pathway, from banking to a specialised property firm, after a chance meeting with Michael Smith – much like a serendipitous conversation Michael himself had years earlier that set him on his successful path.

"Mapletree was not originally part of the plan, but Michael fit in a talk to all the students about what Mapletree does and what his job entails. He's obviously very busy, and hardly in Singapore living on a plane, so I was incredibly lucky that we were able to go for a coffee the next day as well."

"We ended up talking for almost an hour, and for someone in his position – very busy and always having somewhere to be – I was very grateful he gave me the time out of his day.

"He gave me sound advice I keep very close to me. Basically repositioning what I want to do post-university, and gave me guidance on how he did it, and how if you want to advance you career sometimes you have to go interstate or overseas to get where you want to be."

With highlights including a visit to the Great Wall of China, the "exciting and fast-paced lifestyles" of Tokyo and Hong Kong – and even an "expensive missed flight lesson learned" – Arya maintains the real pinnacle of the tour was the precious time he had with Michael one-on-one, and how they have stayed in contact.

In fact, the experience is already reaping rewards with Arya landing a job as an Assistant Commercial Valuer at Knight Frank Valuations, shortly after he returned as a result.

"Knight Frank knew about Asian experience, so I had the interview, and got it!"

"It's a great job to land while I'm still at university – I believe I wouldn't have got the opportunities I've got now without the Asia experience and Michael's donation, which made me go on the trip to begin with."



[Back to Alumni News](#)

A journalist daring to challenge conventional thinking

Annette Young

Journalist & Presenter, **France 24 International News**
Co-Founder & Host, **The 51 Percent**

Bachelor of Arts (Journalism)



Both curious and passionate, Annette is a journalist who has simultaneously fitted in and stood out, thriving in the media industry. Originally from Adelaide and now based in Paris, Annette has reported all over the world from parts of Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

In an extensive career, she has worked for the Melbourne Age, the Sydney Morning Herald and SBS Television Australia. While based in the Middle East, she became a Jerusalem correspondent for France 24.

Her experience includes covering a wide range of international news and affairs, including historic events such as the death of Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, and the Gaza war in 2008. Since returning to Paris in 2010, she has also interviewed a range of figures for France 24 from world leaders to Hollywood actors.

Annette has also always been determined to make a difference to gender equality. She created and hosts "The 51 Percent" – a France 24 show that challenges the status quo and social norms through reflections on women who are reshaping our world.

In 2015, recognising her achievements, Annette was named by UN Women as one of the 20 inspirational global voices on women in the media, and just this November was awarded another accolade from the UN Correspondents Association (UNCA).

Annette Young, along with her France 24 colleague Virginie Herz, won the joint gold medal in The Ricardo Ortega Memorial Prize for broadcast media for their special earlier in the year on the rising number of U.N. female peacekeepers.

The 23rd annual UNCA Awards will take place in New York on December 3 with guest of honour, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2018 UNCA Global Citizen of the Year Award Amal Clooney, and 2018 UNCA Global Advocate of the Year Award Adrian Grenier.

Not letting her many accolades slow her down though, Annette recently spoke about her professional journey and her relationship with France and Australia as an expat, while in the US covering the political chaos, historic midterms and Kavanaugh hearings.



Image: Annette filming a special for 'The 51 Percent' on the untold stories of women in the history of Paris

Could you tell us more about your background? What made you choose journalism as a career option?

When I was 14, my school sent us home with a career guidance questionnaire. I remember asking my late father what he thought I should do and he replied with a smile: "Well, you're good at English, you always pinch the newspaper off me in the morning and most importantly, are very nosy, so why not be become a journalist." His best friend, John, was a journalist with the Guardian in the U.K. and I suspect Dad was always envious of John's life.

But Dad was completely spot on with his suggestion and now, all these years on, I can't even contemplate doing anything else which says a lot about the level of job satisfaction. I completed my journalism degree at the University of South Australia, ended up with a cadetship at the Melbourne Age, and did a stint in Canberra with them before joining the Sydney Morning Herald. After six years at the SMH, I made the switch to television and joined SBS Television where I worked first for World News before joining Dateline as a producer.

What do you remember from your time at UniSA, has it informed your career in any way?

My journalism degree served as an essential tool in helping to get my career started. Having said that, I was the first graduate cadet at the Melbourne Age to be hired with a journalism degree since at that time, there was a degree of cynicism about the quality of such courses. That of course, has long disappeared, as UniSA journalism graduates (along with other journalism graduates) have proved their mettle. My bosses also quickly realised the course had provided a strong practical element which meant I knew how to write and report.

I would strongly encourage anybody wanting to pursue a career in journalism to do either an undergraduate, or these days, even better still, a post-graduate journalism course.

I also have very fond memories of my time at Magill: through its work attachments, I made valuable contacts with people in the industry. More importantly, I made wonderful friendships that have lasted to this day. Our family also has a strong connection to UniSA with my late father lecturing in architecture when it was SAIT and my niece completing her degree in medical radiation science at the City East campus.

Why did you choose to leave Australia and work in Paris?

My mother was French and from Paris and so it's not a completely random choice but in 2000, my then-French partner wanted to return to Paris and I followed him. During those three years in Paris, I started working for Agence France Presse. My first years in Paris were tough; my French language skills were far from great and for foreigners who live here, it can be far from easy. The culture was not then particularly foreigner-friendly; not to mention, the bureaucracy, and the long cold and gloomy winters. It was so difficult that I decided to head to the Middle East (yes, you read this right).

A few years on, I ended up working as a Middle East correspondent for France 24 English but by 2010, I had was ready to swap hummus for foie gras again. Since then, I've been working as a news presenter for the network. In 2013, I created the program that I now host, "The 51 Percent," which is about how women are reshaping our world.



What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a journalist and presenter?

On our first day at journalism school, a lecturer told us that for those who are natural journalists will find that "newspaper ink gets into your blood." He was right; it does except of course, back then, newspapers had not been decimated by the digital revolution. Still, the sentiment of what he said was so true.

It's more of a lifestyle choice than anything else. I sometimes joke that it's like signing up for a religious order with the long hours, the shift work, the stress, the low pay (I've watched my friends in other professions zoom past me financially a long time ago). But this is still over-shadowed by the professional joy I still receive. I've interviewed people from all layers of society be they world leaders, Hollywood actors, West Bank settlers or Palestinian militants, through to poverty-stricken parents in a village in southern Laos determined to carve out a better life for their children or a Bangladeshi trade unionist who took on the global garment industry and vastly improved working conditions for her fellow female workers. Dad was right; I am very curious by nature and always wanted to know what made people tick. We journalists are given a rare, privileged access to people's lives. For that alone, I am truly grateful.

There have been difficult times too. In the course of my career, I've covered war, an intifada, and violent protests. I was on-air hosting the France 24 news during the shootings at the kosher supermarket in Paris in January 2015 and then incidentally, on-air again in November 2015 as news started coming through of the terrorist attacks being carried out at a number of Paris restaurants, the Bataclan theatre and the Stade de France. We didn't know it at the time but one of those killed at the Bataclan was a studio technician who had just ended his shift at France 24 and was walking out of the studio as I walked in to begin mine. As I get older, reporting or covering violence for me has become tougher. The professional distance that you use to keep a level head, starts to shrink. You begin to understand and appreciate just how fragile life is.

But no doubt, creating "The 51 Percent," has been among the most personally and professionally rewarding times of my life. I've met wonderful women and men along the way since we began the show. Giving a platform for my guests' views on the need for equality in all aspects of life is something I feel very strongly about.

Where did you get the idea to create TV program The 51 Percent? What's your vision for the program?

I created the program along with a French colleague in 2013. As senior journalists, we both passionately believed about the need for a different take on the news. A take reflecting that women do indeed make up 51 percent of the population but are still way behind, even in the most open of societies, in terms of being represented in all fields. Just thinking about the gender pay gap, or the extremely low number of senior female politicians and CEOs in Australia, for example.

I like to think it's our job to make the unfamiliar, familiar; to challenge those cultural biases that we all have. Everybody stands to benefit from equality. The beauty of working for a global broadcaster is that we can look at all parts of the world and report on a wide variety of stories. France 24's Arabic and Spanish networks also now have their own versions of our show.

The world is not only confronting a digital revolution but a gender revolution also. It will be just as transformative. Take a look at how much has changed in the last 50 years for women; not to mention, the last 12 months with the #MeToo movement. Still, we have a very long way to go before true equality is reached.



How do you find the experience of working in Paris? Does it match your expectations?

Thanks to my Parisian mother, I'm probably not your classic Australian expat (the irony in that less than a few kilometres from where I work, my great-grandparents, grandparents, great-uncles and aunts, and cousins are buried in a family crypt) but Paris has challenged me in many ways. Of course, to the bulk of the world, it's a stunningly beautiful city to visit with its superb architecture, history and culture. But people forget it is also a real, living city too with all the inherent problems of a large metropolis.

Despite its rigid adherence to tradition, Paris, and France, has changed since I first came here in 2000. More and more young people have lived, travelled or studied abroad. They have experienced other cultures and in Paris, English is much more widely spoken than when I first arrived, which itself is an important sign. For instance, when I first came, there was barely a vegetarian restaurant to be found; organic food was to be scoffed at; the idea of a gap year for students was unheard of; and as for decent coffee, well, forget that!

This has all changed and there is now an English-speaking president who understands the need for France to move forward and embrace change, as opposed to outright rejecting it. Not to mention, a determined group of Australian baristas and cafe owners and their ever-growing number of French fans who love their "flat whites."

I always say to any Australian contemplating a life abroad, "just do it." There will be crappy periods as there will be very happy times. But the experience adds an incomparable richness to your life that cannot be measured on a CV. Your life-coping skills will be majorly enhanced; you understand that your own culture's way of doing things is not the only way and maybe, not necessarily the best.

What do you miss most about Australia?

Where do I start? The weather; our unique sense-of-humour; the glorious food; the coffee; our diverse society (although sadly, that is still not reflected in the media, political representation or other positions of leadership as much as it should) and the sheer beauty of its landscape. I miss how even when your eyes are firmly closed, the searing sunshine still penetrates through. Or the scent of eucalyptus that I always inhale as I step outside the airport terminal when I go home. "Home." There you have it, the fact I still call it home says so much.

What's your favourite way to spend a day in Paris?

I would head to the Marais, particularly the Northern Marais (or NoMa, as some jokingly call it). It was one area that was not razed during the 19th century by the master urban planner, Baron Haussmann and many of its medieval buildings still remain. Walk through its streets, have brunch at "Fragments" cafe, visit the Picasso Museum; walk along the rue de Bretagne and then wind your way south. Head to the Musee Carnavalet which gives you a wonderful taste of the city's art and social history. Then walk towards rue Vieille du Temple and all of its shops. From there, head to the River Seine, and enjoy an "apero" at one of the many bars nearby. For dinner, I'm currently a big fan of "Elisworth" restaurant which is in the first arrondissement and a wonderful example of fusion cooking at its best.

To read the original interview on Advance visit: <http://bit.ly/2yycvCV>.



[Back to Alumni News](#)

Making strides in Aboriginal Australian healthcare

Dr James Charles

Associate Professor of Indigenous Teaching & Learning, **Deakin University**

Bachelor of Podiatry

Masters of Health Science (Podiatry)



Dr James Charles could not have imagined how far he would eventually come after he decided to continue his education at the age of 27-years-old, and was immediately deemed illiterate, dropping out of high school a decade and a half earlier.

It has been a long and winding road for Dr Charles, now one of Australia's foremost academic authorities on Aboriginal foot health, but he was supported along the way by the love of his family, and several UniSA Scholarships – including the Irene and David Davy Scholarship – providing vital financial support and confidence he was on the right path.

"High school didn't work out for me and I dropped out to work with my uncle as a plumber when at 13 I was told I would have to repeat the year," James says.

"Then in my mid-twenties, with two young children, I found myself starting to think beyond myself and feeling concerned about how I was going to help my children with their school work.



It was important for James to break the cycle of poor levels of education in his family, and to show his children that it would be possible to get a decent education and graduate from high school. He signed up for a TAFE course that would allow him to earn his Year 11 and 12 grades.

"When I applied for the course, the TAFE educator said 'James, congratulations, you can join our course – you are illiterate'. I can see the lighter side of this welcome now, but it was confronting to hear this as a man in his mid-twenties."

A proud Kaurna man, born and raised in Adelaide's northern suburbs, it was also important for James to find a way to give back to his community. This goal eventually led him to enrol in the Bachelor of Podiatry at UniSA with a focus on Aboriginal Health.



"I was a mature age student amongst mostly 19 and 20-year-olds, but I found an amazing mentor in Associate Professor Sara Jones who gave me on-going support and help. She also provided podiatry services to the Aboriginal community, which really resonated with me."

"I worked hard and proudly graduated with a Bachelor of Podiatry, and continued into my Masters at UniSA"

Dr Charles is just one of many students that were crucially helped along the way to graduation through UniSA's scholarship program.

The University is proud of its legacy and commitment to equity as the university in South Australia with the highest rate of students from a disadvantaged background, successfully completing their degrees.

In fact, nearly 30 per cent of commencing students to UniSA come from an economically disadvantaged background. The University also receives more applications from students who qualified for the equity category than any other, so support from UniSA scholarship donors is more paramount than ever.

Now with the benefit of hindsight, James is also a passionate advocate for supporting university students with scholarships when they are struggling to make ends meet and complete their studies, as he was fortunate enough to receive several scholarships, including the Irene and David Davy Scholarship.



Image: Dr James Charles' five sons by the river

As a father of five while completing his own studies, James is well aware of the additional stress that juggling multiple responsibilities can place on students.

"Without this financial support I know for a fact that I wouldn't have been able to continue to study full-time, and I may not be where I am today without it."

James says that knowing that these generous people, basically strangers, believed in him and wanted him to succeed was an additional motivation, "I am still in touch with the family who supported me and they have been following my success – I hope with pride knowing just how much their support made my career possible."

Without the generosity of people like Irene and David Davy, the potential of countless individuals – like Dr James Charles – would not have been realised. When they succeed, we all succeed.

He is an inspiration for Aboriginal people, not only for his personal example of achievement, but also in the fantastic work he is doing to research and teach in his field. In 2008, he was the inaugural Chair of the Indigenous Allied Health Network and in 2017 he was named national NAIDOC Scholar of the Year.



Image: Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Lloyd with Dr James Charles at the 2018 Alumni Awards

Now an Associate Professor Indigenous Teaching and Education, and Coordinator Master of Public Health in the Institute of Koorie Education and the School of Medicine at Deakin University, James was also honoured this year for his outstanding achievements at the UniSA Alumni Awards.

"Sadly, Aboriginal people – especially those in rural and remote communities – are at higher risk of foot health problems than the general population.

"As part of my podiatry work, I was visiting clinics and community centres for Aboriginal people around Australia and I kept seeing the same types of problems. Through my research, and then my PhD, I found that Aboriginal people have high rates of equinus – reduced movement at the ankle – that can contribute to serious issues and lead to ulceration and amputation, especially as people get older and heavier.

"There were some academics who didn't believe my suspicions that there is a genetic element which contributes to this problem – I was told poor foot health was 'just a result of smoking and diabetes'.

"I am really glad I trusted my instincts and continued to focus on my work. Ultimately by trusting myself and staying dedicated to my education, I have been able to help so many people improve their health and wellbeing.

"Now I am also working as an academic supporting Aboriginal students studying health degrees. I see first-hand the wide barriers that students face and I know how challenging juggling study with work, family and life."

To find out more about the Scholarship Fund, and how you can donate visit: <http://bit.ly/2KdaUPG>.

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[Back to Alumni News](#)

Paving the way to new career opportunities through education

Haydn McComas

Frontline Operations Supervisor, Australian Border Force

Master of Education

Bachelor of Social Science



Frontline Operations Supervisor Haydn McComas has led an adventurous life in law enforcement, from the Australian Army to the new national Australian Border Force and has always strived to expand his learning and embrace new opportunities throughout his career. Now the part-time lecturer and passionate volunteer firefighter plans to continue his education by pursuing a PhD at UniSA.

Shortly after joining the Army in 1985, Haydn was appointed to the Military Police where he quickly discovered a passion for policing and law enforcement, a career path he never envisioned before entering the Army. At the age of 23, Haydn left the military and joined the South Australia Police (SAPOL) and spent 14 years working in rural policing, traffic policing, general patrols and, eventually, in the field of intelligence analysis.

“One of the wonderful aspects of policing was the unpredictable nature of the work and the need to be able to not only manage a crisis or emergency but also bring some kind of order to complex and difficult situations,” says Haydn.

“I was also deeply touched by the humanity and tragedy of life that unfolds around us daily. In amongst such difficult circumstances I often observed ordinary people rise up to do incredible things.”

In 2002 Haydn saw an opportunity to join what was then the Australian Customs Service as a Manager in the Intelligence Branch. He moved into Learning and Development in 2006 to run recruit training for Customs, which introduced an entirely new career direction in adult learning. Haydn contributed to the design and delivery of leadership learning experiences for frontline supervisory leaders, and between 2010 and 2013 spent almost a year on and off living and working in Papua New Guinea designing and delivering recruit training courses.

“After almost 12 years in learning and development I felt it was time to return to operations and a position became available within the newly established Australian Border Force. It’s a complex and dynamic workplace; my role involves managing several different teams responsible for managing sea cargo, ship and other vessel movements into and out of South Australian based international ports.”

Haydn’s extensive tertiary education began as a Police First Class Constable within SAPOL, when his Senior Sergeant asked him whether he had completed any of the formal studies required for a promotion to the position of Senior Constable.

“I told him I hadn’t, to which he gruffly said, ‘if you don’t have a ticket you can’t get on the bus – and it’d be a damn pity if that bus just happened to come along.’ So, I studied an Advanced Diploma in Justice Admin at TAFE, which led me to a Bachelor of Social Science at UniSA.”

After completing his Bachelor degree and moving on to work in Customs, Haydn undertook further tertiary studies through a Graduate Certificate in Legal and Justice Studies at QUT, a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management at Macquarie University and a Graduate Diploma of Education at UniSA in 2014.

“I realized that throughout my academic journey, rather than work following learning, it was a case of learning following work. Law enforcement put me into new and interesting roles and each time I committed myself to diving in and undertaking study to do the best work I could. Each piece of learning has literally built upon the last.”

After finishing his Graduate Diploma and earning an impressive GPA, Haydn was encouraged by his UniSA lecturers to consider a Master of Education. His thesis explored learning for ethical leadership in a law enforcement environment, and this research journey took him to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis and to Thailand and Singapore where he delivered learning experiences for the United Nations International Police Organisation (INTERPOL).

Alongside his professional career, Haydn is passionate about volunteering and was a volunteer leader with the Scouts for almost 20 years. Allowing younger volunteers to take his place within Scouts, he then moved to the SA Country Fire Service (CFS) where he has volunteered for past 6 years.

“Volunteering has been a constant thread throughout my life. As a young person, Scouting challenged me, allowed me to see what I could be and provided me with outstanding role models for what has become an adventurous life. As a volunteer leader I had the chance to positively influence other young people in the same way.

“As a Senior Firefighter with the CFS I have been privileged to serve as a crew leader in some quite challenging incidents. The greatest gift of volunteering with the CFS has been to serve alongside some truly authentic people whose sole motivation is to protect and serve their communities.

“I strongly encourage anyone, young people in particular, to consider volunteering. Organisations like the Scouts and the CFS offer experiences, learning pathways and formal qualifications that can help build careers.”

Haydn was recently appointed as an Adjunct Lecturer at UniSA’s School of Education, where he hopes to help shape and deliver expanded professional development experiences for adult learners. He also looks forward to conducting more consultancy work in the future, where he can deliver engaging and transformational learning experiences around ethical leadership for frontline leaders.

“I have also just been accepted into a PhD at UniSA; my project aims to further understand organisational culture and leadership learning pathways, and how these impact interpretations of what it means to be ethical amongst frontline leaders across the military and law enforcement regulatory spectrum.

“It’s important to always keep learning because the environment is constantly evolving. If you keep your professional development fresh, you keep your career fresh, and in doing so you continually pave the way to new opportunities for yourself.

“Embrace new and challenging experiences, even if they seem scary at first. I never thought I’d have what it takes to complete a Master of Education, but thanks to the commitment of my supervisors and my own perseverance, I got there—and now I can see my research making a real difference globally.”



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