



Celebrating our extraordinary graduates at the 2019 Alumni Awards

On Saturday, October 26 members of the University of South Australia community gathered together in Pridham Hall where it was transformed for one of the most important nights of year to celebrate the accomplishments of our greatest exports. [more...](#)



Defending human rights from the frontline

Social Work graduate, Tirana Hassan, has always known she wanted to make a contribution to the world. This drive has taken her to some of the most extraordinary and remote places in the world throughout her career as the Director of Crisis Response at Amnesty International. [more...](#)



The UniSA grad at the helm of ASIO

Electronic Engineering graduate, Mike Burgess, has spent most of his professional life under the cover of darkness at the forefront of the country's security mission. He is now protecting Australian shores from serious intelligence threats as the Director-General of ASIO. [more...](#)



Building a café empire on an entrepreneurial spirit

Hong Kong entrepreneur, Dr Pauline Wong, has built a thriving food and hospitality empire – with over 20 eateries offering a range of delicious and diverse cuisines – on the foundation of her signature family-style culture, quality food and outstanding service after completing her MBA at UniSA. [more...](#)



Finding himself – and success – through art

Photographer, painter and educator, Darren Sives, found solace and catharsis in creative expression while struggling with his Aboriginal identity growing up. Now two decades later has been infusing his art with this signature political bite in his many jaw dropping and celebrated exhibitions. [more...](#)



>> Image gallery: UniSA alumni events

Alumni Events

- 13 NOV** **The Annual Hawke Lecture delivered by Mr Bill Kelty AC**
Delivering the 22nd Annual Hawke Lecture, former ACTU Secretary Bill Kelty, outlines Hawke's remarkable career and reflect on the issues that were Hawke's "unfinished business".
- 14 NOV** **Book Launch: Against All Odds**
Join us for the book launch of, *Against All Odds*, with authors Dr Richard Harris SC OAM and Dr Craig Challen SC OAM, in-conversation with journalist Tory Shepherd. This is the inside account of the breathtaking rescue that captured the world.
- 20 NOV** **Deadly Alumni Event with guest speaker Trevor Tirritpa Ritchie**
UniSA Deadly Alumni are invited to a special event to celebrate the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, to be held at Yangkaditya Wardli, Pridham Hall, UniSA City West campus.
- 25 NOV** **UniSA Arts and Cultural Management 40 Year Celebration**
UniSA Arts and Cultural Management graduates are invited to a special event in celebration of 40 years of the Arts and Cultural Management program at the University of South Australia.
- 28 NOV** **Successful Ageing Seminar: Personalised Health Monitoring**
Join us for our Successful Ageing Seminar to hear from our highly regarded researchers on the latest developments in personalised health monitoring.
- 28 NOV** **Whisky Appreciation Masterclass - Singapore**
Join fellow University of South Australia alumni for a masterclass in whisky appreciation with whisky expert Mr Lawrence Lim, who will talk about the origins of whisky, how it is made and what makes a good whisky choice.
- 29 NOV** **UK & Europe alumni Christmas party - London**
Eat, drink and be merry as you catch up with South Australian friends to celebrate the festive season in the grand surroundings of Australia House. Tickets on sale until November 27 for £5 plus booking fee.
- 28 NOV** **No blame. No shame. Surviving suicide loss.**
This Forum will explore and discuss what it means to experience, and survive, the loss of someone close through suicide. Join us for a panel discussion moderated by David Roach OAM, Deputy Chair of the GriefLink Management Committee.
- 29 NOV** **Experimentation in Film: Panel**
Fiona Tan discusses her work *Ascent*. Afterwards, Erica Green hosts a panel discussion with James Nguyen, artist; Mat Kesting, Adelaide Film Festival; Gail Kovatseff, Media Resource Centre and Julianne Pierce, independent producer.

Exhibitions

- 18 OCT.** **Fiona Tan: Ascent**
The Samstag Museum of Art brings a concise selection of works by Fiona Tan to Adelaide for OzAsia Festival. Centring upon the Australian premiere of the 2016 work *Ascent*, this is the first significant presentation of the artist's work in our country in ten years.
- 28 OCT.** **Martha Cooper: Street Shots 1970 – 2019**
New York photographer Martha Cooper's photos have been credited with spreading urban art worldwide. *Street Shots 1970-2019* draws on her extensive body of work, showcasing her unique perspective on creativity in everyday life.
- 20 NOV.** **Activism Now**
How has activism evolved and changed since women won the right to vote in the 1890s? What are the methods, the motivations, the outcomes? *Activism Now* explores contemporary activism through the stories of six self-identified women activists between the ages of 18 and 26.

2019 Annual Hawke Lecture
Delivered by Mr Bill Kelty AC

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Celebrating our extraordinary graduates at the 2019 Alumni Awards



Our unstoppable alumni are making outstanding contributions across the globe.

Among them are four extraordinary graduates that epitomise everything the University of South Australia (UNISA) has to offer – innovation, courage, excellence, and determination – delivering results and each leaving the world a better place than they found it.

ASIO's Director-General of Security, Mike Burgess; Amnesty International's Director of Crisis Response, Tirana Hassan; renowned Aboriginal artist and educator, Darren Siwes; and Hong Kong Pokka Café entrepreneur, Dr Pauline Wong, were the trailblazing University of South Australia alumni honoured at the 2019 UNISA Alumni Awards.

The prestigious awards is an annual milestone and showcases the most distinguished members of the 215,000-strong global alumni community.

Pridham Hall was transformed on Saturday, October 26 for the annual gala dinner, where everyone from Premiers and Senators to young entrepreneurs and seasoned business leaders gathered together in recognition of these four extraordinary graduates, their inspiring careers and great contributions to society.



From left: Vice Chancellor Professor David Lloyd, Dr Pauline Wong, Darren Siwes, Tirana Hassan, Mike Burgess, and Chancellor Pauline Carr

UNISA Vice Chancellor Prof David Lloyd says the gala dinner is one of the most inspiring annual events, because it's where the University pays tribute to the pioneers, innovators, and changemakers who have been influenced by their time at UNISA.

"This year is no exception," he says.

"Every career story at these awards is different, but there are common themes...that a UNISA education empowers people and gives them self-confidence, creativity and the invaluable capacity to keep learning and innovating.

"All of our worthy winners this year define what it is to have an unstoppable career – the desire to make a difference, the skills and knowledge to bring an ambition to life, the courage to keep going when things aren't perfect, and the capacity to build on each achievement.

"They really are people to be proud of."

Social Work graduate, Tirana Hassan, has always known she wanted to make a contribution to the world and her drive to protect people's human rights has taken her to some of the most extraordinary and remote places in the world and shown her the dark side of humanity.

As the Director of Crisis Response at Amnesty International, Tirana leads a team deployed to protect human rights in conflict and crises zones. Two years ago, when news of the crisis in Myanmar broke, Tirana and her Crisis Response Team at Amnesty International were key in shining light on the plight of the Rohingya refugees and the atrocities they suffered at the hands of their Government.

"There was something very dark happening out of sight across the border in Myanmar that was driving people to flee," Hassan says. "So, we mobilised as Amnesty International and the Crisis Response team and deployed immediately to the border area."

"While we were there witnessing tens of thousands of people stream across every day – holding children above their heads as they walked across the River Naf with whatever belongings they could grab before fleeing – the military went in and had burned down their homes.

"It was at that point that we needed to triangulate what was happening, and more importantly, who was responsible."



On the other side of the world, in our national capital, Electronic Engineering graduate, Mike Burgess has spent most of his professional life not telling people much about his day job.

His work in communications at the forefront of Australia's security and intelligence mission, is key in protecting Australian shores from serious threats. And after 18 rewarding years with the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) – thwarting would-be terrorists and scrambling Deash communications during battle – Burgess was officially appointed the Director-General of Security at the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in September.

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, Dr Pauline Wong has built a thriving café empire on the foundation of her signature family-style culture, quality cuisine and outstanding service after completing her MBA at UNISA.

As the founder & CEO of the Million Rank Group she is at the helm of the Pokka Cafe chain of over 20 eateries offering Japanese, Chinese and Western cuisines under different brands and has been awarded the 'Caring Company' title by the Hong Kong Social Council of Social Service for 13 consecutive years.



Darren Siwes' says his time at UNISA was about more than learning. It was an awakening of self and a discovery of potential, both personally and in career terms. At UNISA he found a passion for photography, and what followed his Visual Arts degree and subsequent Graduate Diploma in Education, was a string of highly acclaimed and celebrated exhibitions of his work, including representation by Greenaway Art Gallery.

Each series of Darren's work is a powerful masterclass in the exploration of 'space, place and identity'. His work explores themes of racial tension, and the meaning of representations of Aboriginal in our social structure and social order. His bold work is painstakingly composed and has become highly acclaimed both for its craft and its cultural importance.

More information is available about the awards online [here](#).

Alumni Awards Gallery



[View more images from the Alumni Awards Gala Dinner here.](#)



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