

Building disaster resilience in Nepali communities



Becky-Jay Harrington

Disaster Management and Urban Resilience Consultant
Bachelor of Business (Management)

Nepal was probably not the most obvious destination when Becky-Jay Harrington graduated from UniSA, but after six years living and working on the “roof of the world”, the people and place have very much carved her a second home.

She could never have known it at the time, but it was accepting a position with the NT Treasury Department following her graduation from UniSA that set Becky-Jay on a path to the Himalayas.

While in Darwin, her interest in humanitarian work was initially piqued when she became involved in projects that supported Indigenous Australian communities.

“What really struck me was that growing up in Adelaide in the 80s and 90s, I never really had the opportunity to learn about Indigenous cultures and communities,” says Becky-Jay.

“The United National Human Development Index listed often lists Australia as one of the top three countries in terms of our quality of life. Aboriginal populations in Australia were ranked around 100th – a stark difference.

“This experience really showed me that not all things are equal and there is a lot more targeted support needed to help people reach their potential.”

Shortly after her posting ended in the NT, Becky-Jay moved to Victoria. She was working in the Department of Human Services’ State Emergency Management Centre after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires swept through Victoria, devastating the countryside, destroying over 2000 properties and claiming 173 lives.

“This was really my entry into the disaster and emergency development sector, working on the bushfire planning and recovery and later working on the Royal Commission’s recommendations,” she says.



Becky-Jay and her colleague Gita Pandey, in the Nepal Red Cross Operations Centre in Kathmandu.

After two years in the service, and seeking to extend her knowledge of the growing disaster management sector, she successfully applied for an Australian Government aid volunteer role in Nepal.

“I spent a year supporting the Nepal Ministry of Home Affairs develop their National Emergency Operations Center,” she says.

“I also found that I had enough time to volunteer with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), which led to paid employment with the IFRC for three-and-a-half years working on community-based disaster risk management programs across Nepal.

“Nepal might be an economically poor country, but it’s a culturally and spiritually rich one – it is such an interesting place and over the last 10 years I have spent six living here.”

After proving her worth at the IFRC, Becky-Jay was transferred to Hanoi, Vietnam, as the Disaster Risk Reduction Programme Director for Vietnam for the Australian Red Cross. She was then posted to Fiji where she managed Recovery Operations for Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands after Cyclone Pam tore through the region in 2015.

“This work can be extremely challenging, emotionally and physically, and it is important to look after yourself,” says Becky-Jay.

“You can’t take everything on because it can become overwhelming. If you’re trying to help an individual or a community and you take their grief and trauma on as your own then it is hard to keep working effectively for them.”

Studying yoga has given Becky-Jay the balance she says is required to cope with the intense stress and pressure of disaster and emergency work. When her contract in the Pacific region ended she returned to Nepal to continue her yoga training.



Becky-Jay and her Vietnam Red Cross colleagues before a community outreach meeting.

Shortly after returning, the offer of a two-year contract with the British Red Cross, managing their largest international project – the Urban Resilience Programme, building disaster management skills with some of Nepal’s most disadvantaged communities - was too tempting an opportunity to pass up.

Becky-Jay led a team of 100 Red Cross workers and volunteers to deliver the program that is supporting vulnerable people - including older people, people living with disabilities, people who were homeless, and single-parent families – to develop resilience to the multiple natural and man-made threats they face.

“These communities tend to suffer more in the wake of a disaster as their needs are often overlooked. For example, many people who live in improvised dwellings along the riverbanks of Kathmandu are at risk each year from floods and the government doesn’t allocate resources to protect them or help them rebuild,” says Becky-Jay.

“As part of this programme we built up these groups by training 840 individual community champions so they could learn to mobilise their own networks and advocate to the local mayors for funding and resources for things like clean running water, riverbank reinforcement and support for rebuilding after a disaster.

“We also worked with seven municipality governments on how they can better engage with their communities and prepare for disasters, as well as training people from the vulnerable groups themselves in emergency preparedness skills like first-aid”

When the contract ended Becky-Jay returned to further her yoga training and teaching in Nepal. She is also currently following her passion for providing a space for individuals of underrepresented genders working in the humanitarian and international development field to raise their voice with the [Stories of Women in Aid](#) blog that profiles the different experiences of underrepresented workers in the field, particularly cis women, trans-men and women, non-binary people and others.



Becky-Jay discussing with the Nepal Red Cross team and community members their response to the large 2017 floods in southern Nepal. The Red Cross led the safe evacuation of many communities from their homes and rebuilt critical infrastructure (such as bridge and latrines) after the floods subsided.

She also continues to consult for local and international groups working in disaster management, including the Danish Red Cross.

“My business degree from UniSA has been very beneficial as it gave me the tools I need to manage and communicate with large and diverse teams, which has really been invaluable and a definite advantage in my field,” she says.

“A lot of graduates go into this work expecting a paid position immediately as they have a Masters in the field, and end up disappointed. In order to deepen my knowledge in the field I undertook a Masters in Community Development (Disaster Management), but I’ve found it is volunteering that has always been the best first step towards employment in the sector.

“We as humans so often disassociate ourselves from the experiences of others – the ‘it’s not happening here so it’s not our problem’ argument. Creating more empathy for people that we don’t know and being open to other people’s stories is really at the heart of humanitarian work – and about making better living situations for all of us.

“I can’t recommend this work enough. The opportunity to see life from another angle has been an incredible experience and privilege.”

For more information about the work of the Red Cross in Nepal click [here](#) and for more about Becky-Jay and her endeavours click [here](#).



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UniSA grad behind 2020 Adelaide Fringe Poster



Photo by Morgan Sette

Dave Court

Artist
Bachelor of Visual Arts, (Honours)

As the weather in Adelaide heats up and the city braces for the most jammed-packed festival month of the year, you may notice the sweet, sunny colour palette of artist Dave Court's art start popping up around town.

A great honour for any Adelaide creative, the 27-year-old University of South Australia Visual Arts graduate won the coveted 2020 Adelaide Fringe Poster Design Competition in celebration of the Festival's 60th anniversary, which will run next year from 14 February to 15 March.

Dave – who is now more comfortable referring to himself as an 'artist' – is adept at a multitude of forms of art including painting, designing, illustrating, photography, but it was his diamond design, ingeniously created using aerosol spray paint, which will act as a sparkling emblem for the diamond anniversary of the Adelaide Fringe.

"I've entered the Fringe poster competition several times before, but this time I kept it super simple, clean and design-y, and also with zero digital design elements, which I think is a good signifier of my integration of art and design processes," Dave says.

"It's just a huge privilege and honour to be chosen. I think it will sink in properly when the artwork starts showing up on trams and bus stops, I'm really excited to work with the fringe team to deliver some cool stuff over the festival season."

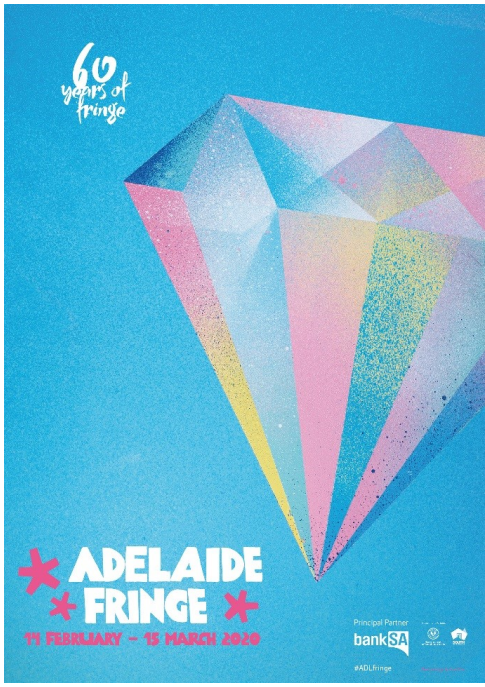
Describing his work as "varied, collaborative, accessible, experimental and technical" it's clear Dave's talents aren't limited to just one thing, having tried his hand at everything from large-scale mural paintings, clothing labels and retail stores, creative director of Yewth Magazine, and venue design and the creation of immersive installations for SALA Festival and the Spin Off, Field Good, Laneway music festivals.

"I like bringing a multitude of influences to my work, and pushing myself to try and make things in different modes or media, which also keeps me from getting bored doing one thing all the time," he says.

"I see working to create things that are a part of a larger event or venue as a way to get art in front of an audience that might not ordinarily engage with it – it's something that isn't in a gallery or specifically a 'public art' work – which I think there should be more of.

"It creates a more enjoyable and unique experience for attendees of a space and gives them something that they will remember."

Dave says this desire for creativity in as many mediums as possible, was nurtured during his time at UniSA where he was afforded a lot of space and time try different media and ideas.



Credit: Adelaide Fringe



'Beastly Sea' mural collaboration with Che Chorley, commissioned by Seawall Apartments, Glenelg, 2018.

"The teachers I had at the time, especially Christian Lock and Dr Paul Hoban, really pushed experimentation as a driving force of making things," he says.

"I was able to use all the workshop facilities to try a range of different things which all feed into each other, glass making, ceramics, sculpture, textiles, printmaking, and photography."

As a result, Dave has well and truly making a name for himself in the Adelaide arts and cultural scene, even joining the board of Renew Adelaide last year.

When asked about his involvement in Adelaide's burgeoning industry, and developing platforms for new talent, he says it's the people that matter.



Neon Forest, a late night immersive art / party zone, made in collaboration with David Musch for RCC Fringe, 2019. Photo by Daniel Marks.

"I think all of those kind of involvements are what it's all about, being a part of a community and making things with my friends, and meeting people who have become my friends through making things with them," he says.

"I like watching people be good at what they do, and doing what they love, whether that's in music, art, fashion or whatever."

"Being involved with all these different areas myself has informed my practice, whether it's involving more photography in my artwork, learning how to document my work well or being approached to make music videos and artwork for musicians.

"I just recently sent copies of Yewth Mag to an artist in Kenya that I met painting murals here in Adelaide because he's looking at starting his own art magazine there, which is sick, and I wouldn't be able to do that unless I had this specific combination of background experience."

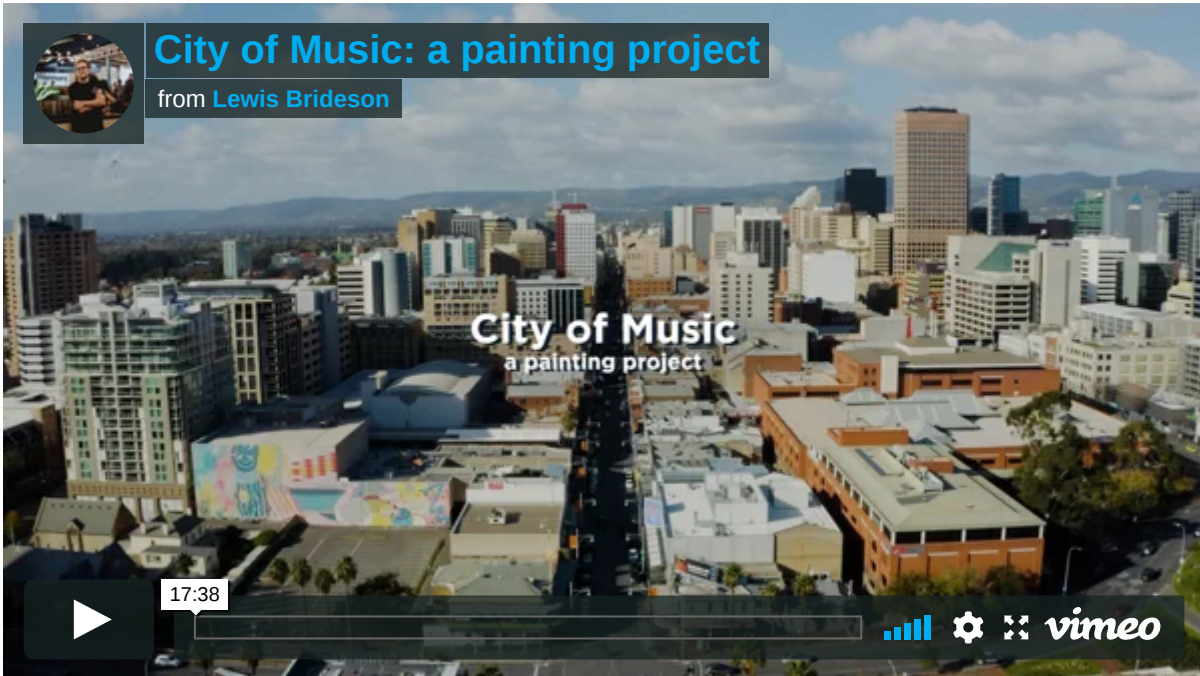


'City of Music' mural, 128 Hindley Street, 2019. Photo by Jarrod Knochlauch.

A recent highlight for Dave has included his recent 'City of Music' large-scale mural project on the West facing wall of 128 Hindley Street, carried out in partnership with Music SA through the City of Adelaide, Music Development Office and UNESCO.

The stunning work of art involved painting the largest wall in the city with an abstracted story of Adelaide's musical history, celebrating Adelaide as a designated UNESCO City of Music.

The project which spanned more than six months, including planning and preparation, was accompanied by a documentary – made by friend and frequent collaborator Lewis Brideson – that followed Dave as he interviewed iconic SA musicians and industry heavyweights to research for the mural.



City of Music: a painting project from Lewis Brideson on Vimeo.

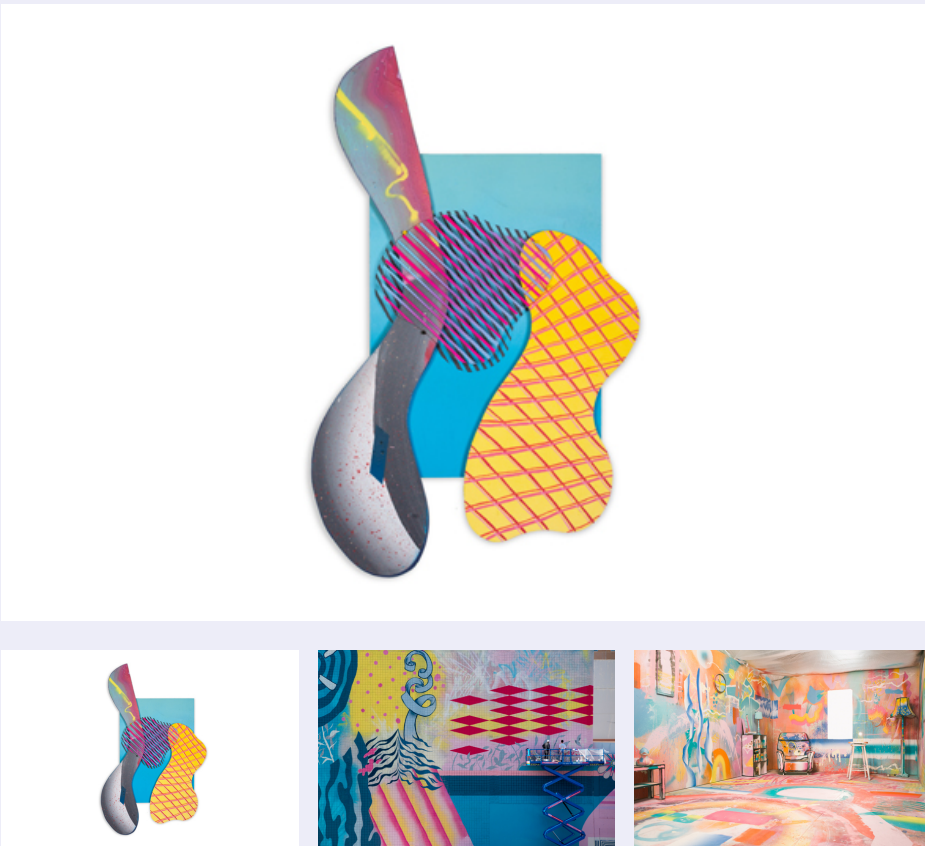
He isn't about to sit back and admire his work just yet, though, with many projects already in the pipeline to keep an eye out for, including involvement in the SALA Festival, a new indoor mural at the National Motor Museum, an installation collaboration with Arton Hall at the City Library, and a painting at Northern Sounds System.

Dave does periodically come across his work unassumingly, though.

"Sometimes I'll go to someone's house and they have a painting of mine up, or I'll see someone wearing a t-shirt that I made years ago that I had almost forgotten about, but it's been a constant part of that person's life on a daily basis, which is a great privilege and kind of intimate in a weird way," he says.

"..And painting a big wall is kind of like that on a huge scale. There are how many hundreds of people that look at that painting every day on their commute, or out of their office window, which I hope brings some sort of joy or colour to their day."

Gallery: A snapshot of some of Dave's recent work



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UniSA researchers find education and support helps young refugees thrive



Last month in honour of SA Refugee Week, UniSA’s Pathways to Active Citizenship: Refugee Youth and their Transition from School to Further Education, Training and Employment research team was honoured to have His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le, AC, Governor of South Australia, launch the Research Report: ‘Demographic Profile of SA Refugee Youth Population’.

Lead researcher Associate Professor Tahereh Ziaian says the research, which has been undertaken in partnership with The University of Adelaide, Multicultural Youth SA and the Australian Migrant Resource Centre, was to investigate education and employment outcomes and pathways for refugees, to better inform policy and practice.

The landmark report – released as part of an Australian Research Council-funded research project looking at refugees’ transition from school to further education, training and employment – has shown that positive education experiences can be the vital key to future success, professionally and personally for refugees.

“We have observed some very positive indications that increased culturally appropriate support for students and their families, better resources for adolescent English learners, and active promotion of inclusive school culture, are all building blocks for improved self-esteem and resilience in young people from refugee backgrounds,” Assoc Prof Ziaian says.

The study also found a very positive attitude to migration with a strong positive relationship between integration, resilience and life satisfaction. Refugees who reported a strong sense of ethnic identity matched with a strong sense of national identity (as Australians), had more positive measures for self-esteem.

“Positive experiences for refugees seem to have a relationship with other aspects of their lives, such as emotional health and wellbeing, family relationships and more successful resettlement,” she says.

“When young refugees have access to the right supports, including educational environments that are sensitive to their needs, their outlook is generally very positive. Moving to a new country and culture is a massive adjustment for anyone and when that move is instigated by push factors, such as war or persecution, readjustment and integration is not simple.

“There is still much we can do to help refugee background youth and their families and support the development of the culturally-enriched, integrated and connected communities of which these young people will be a part.”



Shakila Orozgani at UniSA's 2019 Scholarships & Grants Ceremony.

22-year-old Foundations Studies student, Shakila Orozgani, has recently been a beneficiary of this positive engagement with education after she received the David Pank UniSA College Encouragement Prize at UniSA’s 2019 Scholarships and Grants Ceremony.

She described receiving the honour as a new beginning after fleeing the violence and oppression of the Taliban in Afghanistan and arriving in Australia just last year.

“Growing up in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan, which was then under Taliban rule, I was denied the basic right of going to school or university,” Shakila says. “I’m the first girl in my family who has ever gotten the chance to have an education.”

“It was my dream to have a notebook and pen, and go to a class that had a computer. I had heard about such things but had never seen them, except in my dreams,” she says.

Now thriving as Foundation Studies student at UniSA, Orozgani has ambitions to eventually complete a Bachelor of Law and International Relations, become a lawyer, and act as an international advocate for refugee rights and voice for the voiceless.

“I’ve been given the freedom to get an education to help myself and my family, but also contribute to Australia, have value and worth as citizen,” she says. “Now I have the opportunity to just study for the sheer joy of learning and explore my interests at university, and to fully develop myself intellectually, culturally and socially.”

“I want to be a positive role model for people who want to pursue their goals and visions. To empower people – especially women and girls – to move beyond what they expected to do.”



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Planting the seed of sustainable change in Finland



Professor Christopher Raymond

Professor in Sustainability Science, University of Helsinki
Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Management)
Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Management), Honours
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Human Geography

Christopher Raymond spent his childhood years traipsing through the rolling Adelaide Hills wilderness. It was here amongst the untamed gum trees, winding paths, and squawking magpies, his love for nature and the environment was born.

These experiences, bolstered by parents who encouraged him to consider the environmental consequences of his actions, which in turn promoted a strong environmental ethic and a set of biospheric values, led to his lifelong career in environment and sustainability.



Now on the other side of the world, in a remarkably colder environment, Christopher spend his days at the University of Helsinki as a Professor in Sustainability Science (Sustainability Transformations and Ecosystem Services) leading the Social Values and Sustainability Transformations Research Group.

The Group is team of nine passionate researchers investigating the relationships between humans and nature, actively engage citizens, industry, NGOs and government agencies in the design, implementation and monitoring of environmental initiatives for a greener future.

This includes the ENVISION Project (an inclusive approach to assessing integrative scenarios and visions for protected area management), a 3-year project funded through the 2017-2018 Belmont Forum and BiodiveERsA joint call under the BiodivScen ERA-Net COFUND programme, and the VIVA-PLAN Project (a sustainable spatial planning framework for engaging diverse actors and citizens in revitalising in-between spaces for social inclusion, biodiversity, and well-being).

"Through all these different initiatives I aim to develop new concepts and techniques for integrating the diverse values of nature – including economic, socio-cultural and health values – into environmental planning and decision-making," Chris says.

"The concepts and techniques my team and I develop aim to enable more diverse voices – particularly those of vulnerable groups – to have a say in environmental planning and decision-making, supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (i.e., Reduced Inequalities, Life on Land).

Chris and his team's work towards the mission of connecting people, place and prosperity is more vital than ever, as one of the most pressing issues facing the world at the moment is our growing population.

Chris explains our continued and rising thirst for natural resources, combined with the assumption that new technology and the economy will fix our problems, is detrimental to our current way of life.

"Our increasing levels of consumption are having detrimental and increasingly catastrophic effects on the global state of biodiversity and ecosystems," Chris says.

"As well as the climate we all enjoy for our basic survival.

"At individual and organisational levels, we need to find innovative ways of living within planetary boundaries and creating a safe operating space for humanity to thrive over the centuries to come.

"We also need a personal rethink of how our individual actions contribute too much of the environmental destruction we now see across the globe."

Chris also mentions this will require de-growth and a radical shift in political ideologies particularly in Australia concerning how we use and manage natural resources.

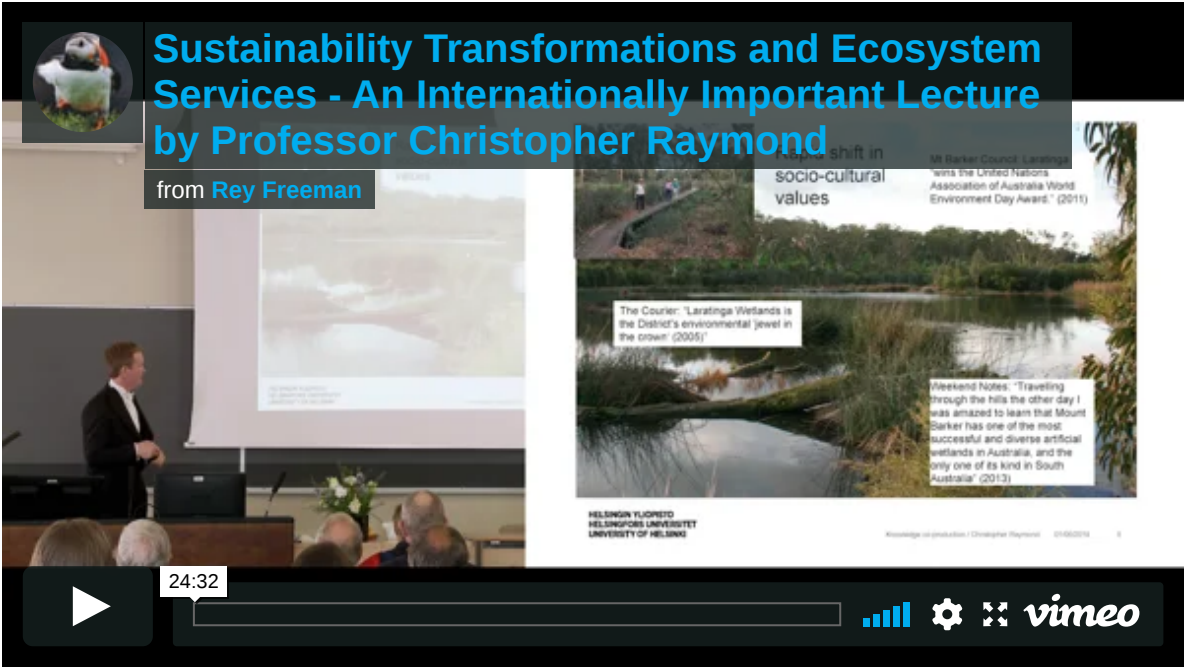


Professor Christopher Raymond with his brother in Helsinki.

In his travels, he has learnt that the Nordic region, in particular Finland, is one of the more supportive cultures of education in the world, which fosters a healthy respect for nature and high level of trust evidenced-based research across local, regional and national governments.

"My experiences in the Nordic region demonstrate to me that the political and policy context to education and environmental management require a major rethink in Australia," Chris says.

"The funding for environmental research in the Nordic regions is more enduring and stable in this part of the world, making it easier to support a research team in environment and sustainability.



Sustainability Transformations and Ecosystem Services - An Internationally Important Lecture by Professor Christopher Raymond from Jonathon Freeman - Raymond on Vimeo.

"As a case in point, the previous President of Finland attended my inaugural lecture as professor. A mutual respect across politics, science and society provides for a collegial and cohesive working environment that is conducive to internationally leading and policy-relevant research."

Also at his inaugural lecture at the University of Helsinki was Tom Pearce of the Pearce Family, scholarship donors and valued supporters of the University. During his studies Chris received the Jean Pearce Environmental Scholarship which Tom Pearce, the late Jean Pearce and family generously sponsored.

A decade later this connection has blossomed into a lasting friendship with the pair meeting on an annual basis to follow-up on the latest world events, and more recently saw Tom travel halfway across the world to support Chris at this milestone in his career.



Professor Christopher Raymond with Tom Pearce in Helsinki.

"The scholarship was incredibly important to me because it enabled me to study full-time without the pressure of having to work on unrelated issues on the side," says Chris.

"Tom and family have also changed my worldview concerning financial contributions to society - we all have an important responsibility to give within our means to important projects of the public good, such as the environment, education, health or justice.

"We all have a responsibility to be part of the solution in these areas."

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UniSA Online goes global as Director named Top 40 Under 40 leader



Executive Director, Tom Steer with his award and SA Premier, Steven Marshall.

UniSA Online has grown from strength to strength in the past year, enrolling more than 2000 students and now launching its 100% online degrees into the overseas market.

The push for international expansion is being led by Executive Director, Tom Steer who was recently named as one of South Australia's top business leaders under 40 in InDaily's 40 Under 40 Awards.

Steer joined the University in 2017 to lead the start-up and ongoing operation of UniSA Online, the University's online education arm which delivers a suite of career-focused, online degrees.

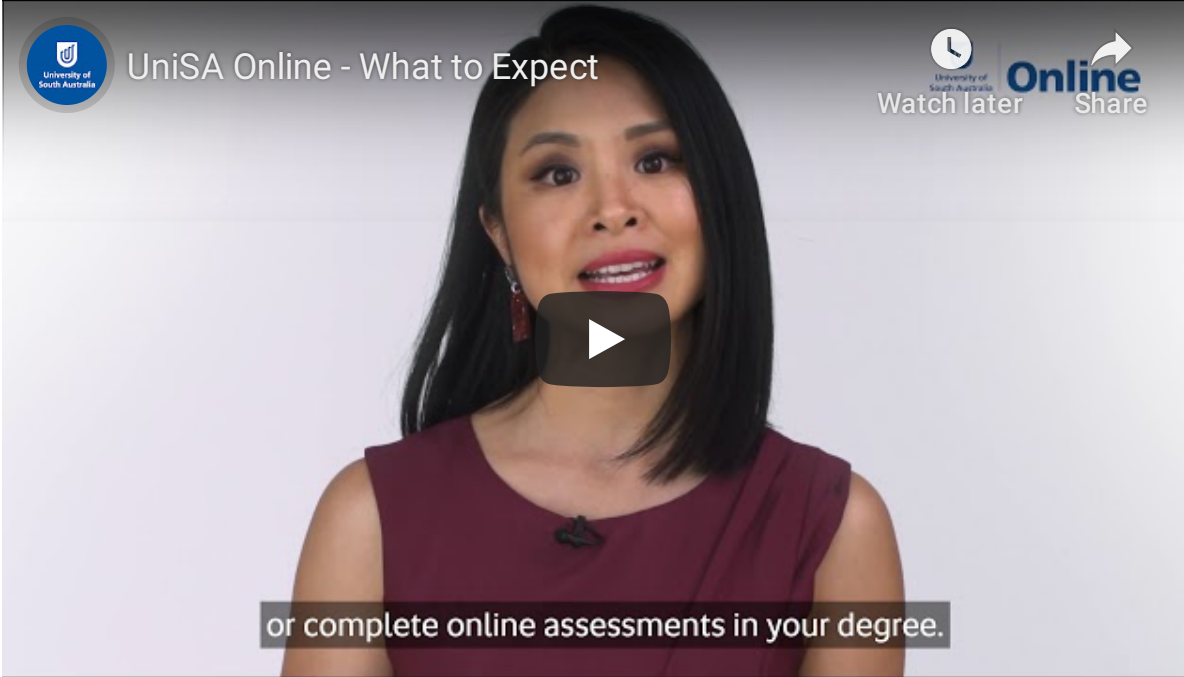
Of the InDaily honour – in which South Australia's finest, most innovative and passionate young businesspeople were awarded – he remains humble and attributes the success of the project to the whole UniSA team.

"This award reflects how far UniSA Online has come in a short period of time due to our collaborative and customer-focused culture, as well as the commitment from so many people across UniSA," Steer says.

"As a start-up, we were in a unique position to completely redesign the experience for our online students. Our degrees have been specifically designed for online learning and our academic and support services are second to none.

"Time is a precious commodity for working adults – We had this at the front of our minds when building our degrees. Students can access the course materials whenever it suits them and complete assessments fully online.

UniSA Online's degrees can be studied anywhere and at anytime, providing you with the flexibility to fit study around life. For students based overseas, or for non-Australian citizens, there's no need to interrupt work or family life, or spend time and money on visas, travel and student accommodation.



WATCH: What to expect in your first year of study with UniSA Online

You're also never alone in your study. We have a strong global network of current students and alumni who connect online and through events and activities. Wherever you are in the world, you can share your experiences and engage with UniSA students, both past and present.

With thousands of students across the country already enrolled, and a majority from interstate, it's clear UniSA Online's combination of quality and convenience is striking a chord.

"To see UniSA Online grow so rapidly, and to hear such positive feedback from our students has been really positive," Steer says. "We launched with 11 degrees and will offer 20 by the end of 2020 – with our sights also set on post graduate qualifications."

Previously Chief of Staff for Australia and New Zealand at global IT giant, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Steer says industry collaboration will be a key priority moving forward.

"We're focused on strengthening our existing industry relationships and building new partnerships to ensure our degrees meet current and future workforce needs," he says. We want to make sure that our graduates are fully equipped to take the next step in their careers."

Steer is also a graduate of UniSA where he completed both a Bachelor and Master of Business Information Systems.

He is now an industry mentor in the UniSA Business Career Mentor Program, mentoring current students and recent graduates, sharing experiences and insights, advising on career progression and helping students develop their leadership skills.

If you would like more information about our 100% online, career-focused degrees, visit the website [here](#).



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UniSA PhD students reinvent retail therapy wheel



Carolyn Reichherzer and Mitchell Norman, two University of South Australia (UniSA) Computer Science students, have won the 2019 Retail Game Changer Challenge with their app concept ShopTrotter, an application designed to encourage shoppers to meet their fitness goals while exploring shopping centres and unlocking surprises on their smartphones, smartwatches and wearable tracking devices.

The idea came from Carolyn's observation of how seriously her otherwise technology agnostic mother took her fitness tracker to reach her daily 10,000 steps and often went to the shopping centre to reach this goal.

"ShopTrotter is designed to motivate and reward people for the exploration and the exercise they get while shopping. The aim is to turn the shopping centre into an activity space, where frequent visits and activity within are rewarded," Carolyn says.

"It builds around the idea that visitors naturally engage in a lot of walking during their visits to shopping centres. We envisioned supporting recent trends of tracking your steps to reach fitness goals with your smartphone or fitness tracker.

"The addictive nature of being rewarded for 'feel-good' goals such as healthy living combined with the natural time spent at shopping centres is a gap in the market that we think has not been filled."



The proposed ShopTrotter application interface. The user reaches their goal and gets notified.

The Retail Game-Changer Challenge, spearheaded by Precision Group's CEO Shaun Bonétt and CTO Roger Hatem, is now in its second year and gives local entrepreneurs the chance to revolutionise the shopping experience for consumers and bridge the divide between digital and brick-and-mortar retailers.

The pair and the expert UniSA panel – made up of Associate Professor Stewart Von Itzstein, Associate Head: Academic Programs at the School of Information Technology and Mathematical Sciences, Associate Professor Svetlana Bogomolova, Senior Marketing Scientist at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science, and Jasmine Vreugdenburg, Associate Director at Innovation & Collaboration Centre – were tasked with the difficult decision.

Precision's Roger Hatem says the panel was looking for an innovative and unique idea.

"Technology usually disrupts customers' behaviour; ShopTrotter instead compliments what customers are already doing. It was the winner because of its simplicity and what promises to be an easy adaptation for customers," he says.

"We often look overseas for the next big idea when it could very well be found in Australia. By fostering new talent in the technology and marketing space, it allows talent to grow and ideas to manifest in our own country.

"It is an exciting opportunity for our Precision team to work with talented young minds that are the product of a new generation. We are looking forward to further developing, testing and implementing this feature with ShopTrotter within the practicalities of a live shopping centre environment."



One of Precision's major retail properties, Adelaide Central Plaza in Rundle Mall.

Precision Group is one of Australia and New Zealand's top privately owned property investment and development companies. Founded by UniSA graduate Shaun Bonétt in 1994, just two years after graduation, the Group now owns major shopping precincts, high profile and historical commercial sites and hotels across Australia and New Zealand, including the Adelaide Central Plaza.

Following their win, Carolyn and Mitchell will now utilise their \$25,000 winnings to further develop ShopTrotter in conjunction with Precision Group and their unmatched knowledge in the commercial retail space, while also enabling better insights into customers, their behaviours and shopping habits for the company.

"It is a fantastic feeling when people believe in your idea, one you've invested time and effort into, and offer support to bring it closer to reality," Carolyn says.

"We are beyond excited about having the opportunity to see our idea come to life and apply it to the real world together with Precision."



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