

# Griffith

ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2015



## Games On

Griffith named Official University of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games



OFFICIAL PARTNER

## KNOW MORE

### Making News

Catch up on some of the achievements, research discoveries and successes of the past year or so. *Pages 4-7*

### Games On

The Commonwealth Games comes to the Gold Coast in 2018 and Griffith University is now an official partner, presenting amazing opportunities for students and staff. *Pages 8-9*

### Amazing Careers

Our alumni are setting the standard around the globe. *Pages 10-13*

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### Freedom and Justice

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## MESSAGE FROM THE VC

This year we celebrate 40 years since our first students arrived at Griffith University.

Those initial 451 students in 1975 are no doubt impressed with how their University has grown over the past four decades. Today we boast more than 46,000 individuals studying at one of our five campuses or online.

It is inspiring to hear the stories of successful graduates, not only within these pages, but at alumni events this year across the country and overseas, with an extra special occasion at our August 9 Open Day when we celebrated the return of more than 100 original students to our Nathan campus.

Looking back on those energetic beginnings gives us a deserved sense of pride and accomplishment, but our focus has always been on the future.

In this context, we are delighted to announce that Griffith University is an Official Partner of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. This event will be transformative for the city and the state.

As the Official University of the Games, Griffith will play a vital role in the lead-up and staging of the biggest event in Australia this decade. (See pages 8-9)

We believe taking the decision to become an Official Partner of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games recognises the significance of the event for our students, staff, alumni and the broader community.

It is also a nice link to our heritage. Our Nathan campus accommodated the athletes for the 1982 Commonwealth Games, and the impact of that event on Brisbane's evolution cannot be overstated.

So much has changed since those early days and the pace of change continues to increase, particularly with the unbridled impact of new technology.

Our graduates have always been valued for their innovative thinking and fresh ideas. These attributes will be sought after more and more as the world demands people who can offer solutions around creatively applied technologies to contemporary problems.

**Professor Ian O'Connor**  
*Vice Chancellor and President*



John Dobson, Kerry Brown and Angela Tuffley (Pugh) at the 40th anniversary of the first Griffith lecture

## FOUNDATION STUDENTS SHARE THE PRIDE

After 40 years of teaching, Griffith University still holds strong ties to its foundation students and graduates

Griffith University this year celebrates its 40th anniversary of teaching. Among a number of reunions of staff and students, that class of '75 returned to the Nathan campus Open Day on August 9 this year and reflected on the dramatic changes across the university.

More than 120 of the original 451 foundation students attended, shared stories and reminisced while all around them the latest generation of prospective students were exploring Griffith as they pondered their study options.

In the pre-internet world of blackboards, pens and paper, now Professor Emeritus David Pegg (School of Natural Sciences)

entered Room 0.06 in the N25 Science 1 building on the Nathan campus to deliver the first Griffith University lecture.

The subject was mathematics and the time was 8.30am on March 3, 1975. Members of that foundation Bachelor of Science student cohort went on to become medical doctors, Air Force commanders, school principals, lecturers and IT business owners.

One of them, Angela Tuffley, says it still feels like yesterday that she walked into the single building dedicated to science study and surrounded by bushland.

"Our first year was very special because we were it," she says.

"There were no second or third year students and we knew that once we moved to second year it would all change. We became such a tight-knit family and today I would still open my door to any of them."

Mrs Tuffley runs her own IT consultancy and credits her successful working career to her days at Griffith.

Professor Pegg says those first days of teaching were hectic, challenging and exciting: "From the start it was apparent that Griffith wanted to be a new kind of university for a changing Australia."

"There was a definite feeling that this was the beginning of a new era."

Another original staff member, Professor Colin Mackerras, has become synonymous with Griffith and its deep links to China.

"I think we were on the right track," he says reflecting on Griffith offering Australia's first Asian Studies degree.

While the first intake of students hits a 40-year milestone, the Gold Coast campus had a smaller anniversary of its own, officially becoming known as "Griffith University" 25 years ago, in 1990.

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griffith.edu.au/office-marketing-communications

**COVER IMAGE:** Champion swimmer and Bachelor of Science student Cameron McEvoy looking forward to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. See pages 8-9.



## Lord Coe on Show

British running legend Lord Sebastian Coe met with Griffith Sports College students at a special event hosted by the University in conjunction with the Asia Pacific Cities Summit in Brisbane in July.

Olympic gold medallist Lord Coe, who dominated 800m and 1500m events in the 1980s, told students he couldn't think of a "more potent social worker in any of our communities than sport".

Sport as a force for change and a conduit to larger conversations was often underestimated, he said.

## Equality put Simply

The executive director of Oxfam International, Winnie Byanyima, says affirmative action measures are necessary to gain equality for women in business, community and political leadership.

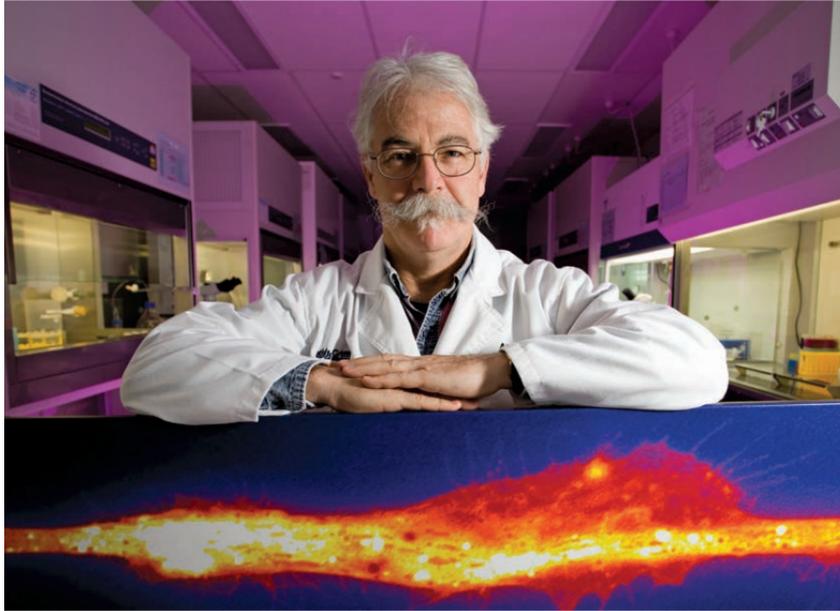
"I have seen social change happen through legislation. If equality is legislated, and if you don't agree with equality, then tough. Struggle, come to terms with it. Catch up!"

She was speaking at the International Dialogue on Women In Leadership presented by Griffith University and the United States Studies Centre.

## Integrity Agenda

Human rights barrister Geoffrey Robertson, QC, delivered the 2014 Griffith Lecture to a full house of more than 600 people at the Griffith University Queensland Conservatorium.

His powerful delivery entitled 'What Global Integrity?' came on the eve of Griffith's first Global Integrity Summit, which attracted an array of international speakers and another 400 guests.



Professor Alan Mackay-Sim

# WALKING TOWARDS STEM CELL SUCCESS

Griffith University scientists are contributing to stem cell research that may one day lead to a cure for spinal cord injury.

In 2014, British and Polish doctors helped a man walk again by injecting olfactory ensheathing cells from his nose above and below where his spinal cord was severed.

The success of the operation was hailed throughout the world, including credit to earlier work conducted by Professor Alan Mackay-Sim and his team at Griffith's National Centre for Adult Stem Cell Research within the Eskitis Institute for Drug Discovery.

Professor Mackay-Sim, former Queensland of the Year and Eureka Prize winner, says his research looked into special growth factors at the time of the injury or shortly afterwards.

"The treatment has shown it can eliminate secondary degeneration after spinal cord injury in animals, allowing them to recover movement quickly," he says.

Today, Griffith researchers are among teachers and students making the most of ever more advanced technology and techniques in this area, including live cell imaging, 3D complex cell assays, in vivo spinal injury models and natural product analysis.

**The treatment has shown it can eliminate secondary degeneration after spinal cord injury in animals**

Gold Coast man Perry Cross was just 19 when he was left a C2 quadriplegic after breaking his neck playing rugby.

His Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation is a generous supporter of the work at Eskitis.

"Catching up with the research team and seeing the work being done at Eskitis, I believe more firmly than ever that one day we will have a cure for paralysis," says Perry.



Professor Mark von Itzstein and Professor Michael Good Professor Sonya Marshall-Gradisnik

# THE BEST MEDICINE

Foremost Australian medical researchers, Griffith University's Professor Mark von Itzstein and Professor Michael Good, have been awarded fellowships in the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

Both are from Griffith's Institute for Glycomics and are global leaders in infectious disease research. Their appointments to this prestigious organisation recognise their outstanding contribution to the advancement of world scientific knowledge.

Professor von Itzstein is world-renowned for his anti-viral drug programs and the discovery of Relenza, the world's first designer anti-influenza virus drug. Professor Good's work has greatly advanced the development of vaccines as protection against malaria and Streptococcus A.

The past year has seen several breakthroughs in medical research from Griffith scientists.

In May 2015, researchers from the National Centre for Neuroimmunology and Emerging Diseases—part of the new Menzies Health Institute Queensland—announced they had uncovered significant

factors contributing to the pathology of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME).

The results revealed genetic changes in important receptors associated with immunological and cellular function and which contribute to the development of this complex illness.

CFS/ME is characterised by profound fatigue, muscle and joint pain, cerebral symptoms of impaired memory and concentration, impaired cardiovascular function, gut disorder and sensory dysfunction such as noise intolerance and balance disturbance. The condition can continue for months or years and it is believed to affect around 250,000 Australians.

"These findings have been achieved through a team effort involving researchers, patients, funding bodies, clinicians and the support of Griffith University and the Queensland Government," says chief investigators Professor Sonya Marshall-Gradisnik and Professor Donald Staines.

In November 2014, Professor Marshall-Gradisnik received the Gold Coast Women in Business Innovation Award 2014.

## Colombo Scholars

Forging deep and enduring links with Asia is a Griffith specialty and that tradition continued in 2015 with seven candidates receiving New Colombo Plan Scholarships.

New Colombo Scholars are able to spend a full semester studying or interning at an institution in Asia.

Griffith recipients in 2015 were Matthew Sharp (Law/ Criminology and Criminal Justice); Braden Rowe (Business); Courtney Organ (Business); Phoebe Atkinson (Politics, Asian Studies and International Relations); Michelle Gunawan (Law/Government and International Relations); Jonathon Glindemann (Commerce); and Sarah Griffin (Law/Government and International Relations).

## Happy Miserables

Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University's Billy Bouchier and Sarah Murr have landed roles in Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed new production of the musical Les Miserables, beginning in Brisbane in November.

The duo will join the talented ensemble in the award-winning production and will understudy the principal roles of Marius and Madame Thenardier respectively.

It's been a huge year for the triple-threat talents, with Billy securing the lead role in a production of The Pirates of Penzance directed by Simon Gallaher, and Sarah accepting this latest role after a run in Opera Q's Candide.

## Top Ranking

Both the Academic Ranking of World Universities and the QS World Rankings have placed Griffith University in the top 400 worldwide for 2015.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings placed Griffith in the world's top 300 universities.



### Top of the Class

Griffith University can officially declare it has the best teachers in Australia, led by Associate Professor Brydie-Leigh Bartleet.

In December 2014, Associate Professor Bartleet, from Griffith's Queensland Conservatorium, was named Australian University Teacher of the Year.

The awards announced by the Federal Minister for Education each year recognise academics with exceptional records of advancing student learning, educational leadership and scholarly contribution to teaching and learning.

Griffith received a further four prestigious Australian Awards for University Teaching alongside Professor Bartleet's.

Awards went to Associate Professor Leonie Rowan, from the School of Education and Professional Studies; the Griffith English Language Enhancement Strategy program; and the Griffith Widening Tertiary Participation Program for Pasifika Communities.

Then in 2015, a further five awards went to Dr Caryl Bosman and Dr Tim Stevens (School of Environment), Associate Professor Ruth McPhail (Business), Associate Professor Halim Rane (Humanities) and Dr Andrew Pearson (Medicine).

"These awards are an acknowledgment of the quality teaching and outstanding contributions made to student learning here at Griffith," says Vice Chancellor Professor O'Connor.



## CAVE DISCOVERIES ROCK ART WORLD

Research led by Griffith University scientists is challenging notions of the origin of creative arts, and even the migration of the earliest humans.

Dr Maxime Aubert and Dr Adam Brumm were lead authors on a paper published in the journal *Nature* and reporting the dating of 40,000-year-old rock art on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi.

Both are Australian Research Council DECRA fellows at Griffith, with Dr Aubert part of the Place, Evolution and Rock Art Heritage Unit within the School of Humanities, and Dr Brumm part of the Environmental Futures Research Institute within the School of Environment.

Their findings immediately confronted traditional views that Europe was the birthplace of modern human creativity and artistic expression.

"It is often assumed that Europe was the centre of the earliest explosion in human creativity, especially cave art, about 40 thousand years ago," says Dr Aubert.

"However, our rock art dates from Sulawesi show that around the same time on the

other side of the world people were making pictures of animals as remarkable as those in the Ice Age caves of France and Spain."

The prehistoric images are from limestone caves near Maros in southern Sulawesi, a large island east of Borneo. They consist of stencilled outlines of human hands—made by blowing or spraying paint around hands pressed against rock surfaces—and paintings of primitive fruit-eating pigs called babirusas ('pig-deer').

These ancient images were first reported more than half a century ago, but there had been no prior attempts to date them.

The journal *Science*, which releases an annual list of what it deems to be the top 10 science stories in the world each year, noted: "The new dates in Indonesia end Europe's monopoly on early symbolic art and could rewrite the history of a key stage in the development of the human mind."

The scientific team led by Dr Aubert and Dr Brumm, and working closely with Indonesian colleagues, determined the age of the Sulawesi paintings by measuring the

ratio of uranium and thorium isotopes in small stalactite-like growths, called 'cave popcorn', which had formed over the art.

The 'pop corn' structure can be accurately dated so the researchers' work literally peeled back the layers of time.

Samples from 14 paintings at seven caves were shown to range in age from 39,900 to 17,400 years ago. However, as the cave popcorn grew on top of the paintings, the method provides only minimum age, which means the art could be much older.

Further research shows that this art practice—brought by the region's first people, hunter-gatherers who arrived over 50,000 years ago—was prevalent across the region and means the Sulawesi discovery is not an anomaly.

Published in the archaeological journal *Antiquity*, the research shows that these earliest people skilfully produced paintings of animals in rock shelters from southwest China to Indonesia. Besides these countries, early sites were also recorded in Thailand, Cambodia and Malaysia.



Dr Adam Brumm

Dr Maxime Aubert

Griffith University Chair in Rock Art, Professor Paul Taçon, led the research which involved field work with collaborative international teams in rugged locations in several countries.

The oldest paintings were identified by analysing overlapping superimpositions of art in various styles, as well as numerical dating. It was found that the oldest art mainly consists of naturalistic images of wild animals and, in some locations, hand stencils.

### Silicon Valley tour Inspires

A team of Gold Coast students revelled in an IT trip of a lifetime to the US, enjoying meetings and tours with Google, Apple, Facebook, Twitter and other technology powerhouses in California's legendary Silicon Valley.

Lizzie King, Charles Nelson, Callum McColl, Anthony Guevara and Jack Lewis represented Griffith University's School of Information and Communication Technology and were among 20 young Queenslanders identified as having the potential to lead Australia's next wave of global tech success.

The students were chosen after taking part in Startup Catalyst, a program devised by millionaire Australian tech entrepreneur, Mr Steve Baxter, and sponsored by his Brisbane-based non-profit organisation, River City Labs. The Griffith contingent was the largest within the travelling group.

### An App-etite for Success

A mobile travel application devised at Griffith University is now an international business adventure for a group of graduates.

Raymond Siems (Bachelor of Engineering), Jamin Wood (Bachelor of Engineering), Hector Ren (Bachelor of Information Technology) and Wenchao Chen (Bachelor of Multimedia/ Bachelor of Information Technology) struck up a unique business partnership while working together at Griffith's Gold Coast campus during 2013-14.

A little more than a year later, and just two weeks after its European launch in March 2015, the team's Ventoura mobile application was valued at \$2 million.

The Ventoura app allows travellers to connect with people who live at their holiday destination and can arrange the "awesome experiences" that only local knowledge can provide. It also matches up other travellers bound for the same place at the same time.

# OUR HOME, OUR GAMES

## Griffith's Games Vision

- Official Partner
- Official University
- Creative Arts Partner
- Marathon Presenting Partner
- 250 student internships with Games organising body
- Up to 250 student internships with Games partners
- Employment opportunities for graduates
- Academic and Professional staff placements and secondments
- Research and Expert consultancies
- Queen's Baton relay passes through Nathan and Gold Coast campuses
- Creative contribution to major ceremonies
- Scholarships for Commonwealth students

Business graduate and marathon champion Michael Shelley

Griffith University is proud to announce it has been named the Official University of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. And the partnership is not just about sport. **Dean Gould** reports

It's a vision so very Griffith, it glows red.

Cast forward to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Marathon Medal Ceremony.

An athlete, as remarkable as he is exhausted, bends forward to have his victor's gold medal draped over his head. Millions of people across the world see it streamed into their homes.

The dash to the finish-tape is cheered on by the Griffith University contingent gathered along the final stretch while the prominent red signs in front of them leave no doubt about where they're from. It's a fitting end to the best Commonwealth Games ever staged, the largest sporting event in Australia this decade and a magnificent global showpiece for the Gold Coast.

It is a watershed moment for the city, for the Games and for the University.

Griffith is the Official University of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, firmly embedding itself in the historical fabric of the city.

The Commonwealth Games Village is being built at Parklands, across the road from the Griffith campus. It is estimated the Games will inject about \$2 billion into the Queensland economy overall.

The partnership will see unique benefits and opportunities for Griffith students, staff and graduates.

"We will see as many as 250 internships for our students offered through GOLDOC over the next three years," says Vice Chancellor and President Professor Ian O'Connor.

"It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for students to directly contribute to such a major event like this through work-integrated learning in the areas of sport and event management, business and commerce, communications, digital media and design, human resources, engineering and planning, health and exercise science and other disciplines.

"Our graduates will also benefit from the burgeoning employment opportunities around the Games.

"Our academic and professional staff will also have opportunities to be seconded to GOLDOC



Commonwealth Games swimming gold medallist and Griffith student Emma McKeon

or act as consultants in areas where their deep knowledge can impact the preparation and implementation of the Games."

This could range across disciplines from the University's medical and allied health staff to engineers, IT and planning experts.

Griffith has a history associated with the Commonwealth Games within its rich sporting heritage. Athletes at the Brisbane 1982 Commonwealth Games were accommodated at Griffith's Nathan campus, which was next door to QEII Stadium where the famous 'winking kangaroo' Opening Ceremony was held.

**The next three years will be a period of amazing energy and excitement**

The Griffith Sports College supports elite athletes who are juggling their studies with the demands of training and international competition. General Manager Duncan Free, himself a four-time Olympian and gold-medal winning rower, says Griffith students and alumni featured among the Australian medal winners at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and he expects more of the same at the Gold Coast.

"Swimmers like Cameron McEvoy and Emma McKeon, triathletes like Ashleigh Gentle and marathon runners like Michael Shelley are at the top of their sports and proud Griffith family members," says Mr Free. "Some are students, some are alumni

and by 2018 more will be among the University ranks."

The future scenario imagined earlier particularly highlighted the Marathon because Griffith also features as Presenting Partner of the men's and women's marathon events. They will showcase the Gold Coast to millions worldwide and be enjoyed by thousands of locals for free along the ocean-front course.

"But it is not just all about sport," says Professor O'Connor.

"Griffith University is also an Official Creative Arts Partner for the Games.

"Griffith will be integral to the arts and creative program that will run concurrently with the Games, so this generates whole-of-community involvement and celebration."

The new Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Scholarships will generate great interest. These full scholarships include tuition fees and a living allowance and are offered to successful applicants from any one of the 71 Commonwealth countries and states, including Australia, to study sports- or events-related programs.

"The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games will be something to remember and the next three years will be a period of amazing energy and excitement, so it is appropriate we are deeply involved."

The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games will be held on April 4-15 in 2018.



Judd Armstrong reunited with Griffith University to develop the Jaybird Reign

## JUDD REIGNS IN WEARABLE TECH

Judd Armstrong embarked on something of a homecoming when deciding on who best to bring his latest project to fruition.

That product is the Jaybird Reign activity tracker and in the world of wearable sports technology it is already receiving rave reviews, thanks greatly to input by Griffith University.

Through SABEL Labs—which grew out of the Sports and Biomedical Program in the Centre for Wireless Monitoring and Applications—academics including Associate Professor Daniel James and Dr David Rowlands contributed expertise to what is being hailed as a game-changer in wearable tech.

“Jaybird Reign is an activity tracker worn on the wrist,” says Judd, CEO of the US-based company Jaybird, who graduated with a degree in international business in 2006.

“However, where it differs from other products is in its approach to automated activity detection by providing a timeline of your activity on a simple dial, along with its forward looking sleep recommendations and its recognition of the body’s readiness for activity.”

By measuring the variability in time between each heartbeat, the Jaybird Reign detects patterns of fatigue or recovery and activity versus inactivity across a range of categories.

“SABEL Labs provided the technical expertise that covers so many aspects of analysing the body during sleep, inactivity while awake, as well as walking, running, cycling, gym and general sports,” says Judd.

Always keen on health and fitness, Judd identified the potential of wearable sports technology and launched Jaybird with a focus on headphones.

“I like staying fit, but I never liked exercising with all the wires and cords that some products required. I wanted to get rid of all that,” says Judd. “Once we had established ourselves as a leader in sports headphones, we worked hard to enhance the active lifestyle in other meaningful ways.”



Elliott Nash says his Griffith MBA opened his eyes to the limitless possibilities in the marketplace and it has led him to one of the world’s retail giants

## ELLIOTT’S AMAZING AMAZON JOURNEY

A decision to return to university to pursue an MBA culminated in Elliott Nash’s crucial role for online retail giant Amazon.com.

**Stephen O’Grady** reports

When Elliott Nash received an email from internet retail giant Amazon.com asking if he would be interested in interviewing for a job in the US, he almost mistook it for spam.

Fortunately, Elliott didn’t delete the email and now the 32-year-old with a Master of Business Administration from Griffith University is based in Seattle, Washington, and is a vital cog in the operation and management of Amazon’s technical systems.

A combination of university degrees and in-depth industry experience brought Elliott’s profile to the attention of Amazon

recruiters when they were looking for a suitable candidate to take up a technical program manager position in Seattle.

“Due to my hands-on technical background, I was referring to myself as a technical project manager on LinkedIn,” explains Elliott. “As it turns out, Amazon was scouring the globe for people with exactly that niche skill set.”

Life in the US is far removed from the small country town of Crystal Creek in northern NSW where Elliott grew up and was one of only three pupils in his Year 6 class.

A move to the Gold Coast followed and Elliott initially graduated with a multimedia degree from Griffith in 2004.

Accepting a programmer analyst role with a Gold Coast tourism operator with a focus on online domestic tourism, he gained a strong understanding of the eCommerce industry and how to drive business growth online.

In 2010, Elliott returned to Griffith to pursue his MBA and it has been repaying his investment ever since.

“It has opened my eyes to the limitless possibilities that are out there,” he says. “I use the knowledge gained through my MBA on a daily basis, both at work and in my personal life.”

Towards the end of his MBA studies, Elliott began working as a technical consultant for Queensland Health, delivering the IT and biomedical environments for the new Gold Coast University Hospital.

This dovetailed effectively with a management consulting course he was taking under Dr Alan Blackman and proved extremely valuable at the time. Equally valuable were subsequent project manager roles with the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service and Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital in Brisbane, which honed his experience and shaped his professional profile into exactly what Amazon was seeking.

His postgraduate qualification even played a key part in securing the E3 Visa which completed the official migration formalities enabling the move to the US.

“Amazon’s attorneys based my case for a US Visa purely on the back of my MBA qualification,” says Elliott.

He now leads Amazon’s Financial Ledger and Accounting Systems team, a role in which he collaborates with financial business partners and technical teams around the world.

As well as overseeing multiple teams, Elliott regularly makes decisions on technical procedures that drive the continuous improvement of Amazon’s software development lifecycle.

“With the MBA I am better prepared to handle different work and life situations. It now guides my decision-making process,” he says.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE DRIVES KARA

Kara Cook is leading by example when it comes to supporting women impacted by domestic violence, family law and other issues. **Deborah Marshall** reports

Kara Cook's working life has been committed to social justice issues, demonstrating the kind of drive that saw the Griffith Law School graduate receive the Law Council of Australia's Young Lawyer of the Year Award.

As principal solicitor for Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLS), Kara's work involves managing legal matters for women who are victims of domestic violence or struggling with other family law issues.

She was surprised and honoured to win the award.

"It's lovely to be recognised. This award recognises the work done by young lawyers across Australia to assist their communities," she says.

"In my case, the work provided by staff and volunteers at community legal centres helps some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

"Being able to raise community awareness of domestic violence and women's issues more broadly is great."

As well as volunteering her time with the Women Lawyers Association of Queensland, Griffith University's mentoring program, the Australian Young Lawyers Committee and the Early Career Lawyers Committee, Kara is a Councillor for the Queensland Law Society Council and sits on the Family Law Committee.

Kara has always had an interest in social justice issues and studying at Griffith fostered her commitment while providing opportunities to develop her legal skills and assist the vulnerable with practical clinic-based subjects.

"I was able to participate in the Innocence Project which was really rewarding and I had another subject which provided me with a placement with the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Prevention Centre," she says.

During her studies she also volunteered as a support worker for the WLS and continued to do so when she began working in private practice as a solicitor.

"When the opportunity arose to work with WLS I took it and haven't looked back," she says.

"I enjoyed my time at Griffith and its focus on social justice issues. It gave me an opportunity to pursue those interests through my study."

After graduating in 2008, Kara completed her practical legal training while working as a judge's associate. She then moved into private practice.

At WLS she is responsible for overseeing the work undertaken by the organisation's employed solicitors and the 100 volunteer solicitors who provide advice and assistance to women each year.



Australian Young Lawyer of the Year, Kara Cook



Matthew Evans: "Gaining experience through professional placements truly benefited me in developing a stronger set of skills"

## CAREER INNINGS

Student leadership, a stint at Oxford and an embrace of the variety of opportunities at Griffith have taken Matthew Evans to one of the world's leading companies. **Helen Wright** reports

While still in primary school, Matthew Evans decided that one day he would either play cricket for Australia or become a lawyer. He has at least one of those goals well in hand.

Matthew graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Commerce double degree and his final year included a four-week study exchange at the University of Oxford in the UK.

He is now in the finance graduate program with global leading company BHP Billiton.

"My exchange involved a four-week intensive program conducted around international human rights law with a focus on the marketplace," says Matthew.

"It was a demanding program each day—including about 100 pages of compulsory reading to prepare for the following day's study—but it also gave me the opportunity to network with judges, barristers and other students.

"This increased my global network of connections and also led to an informal

offer to work in a barrister's chambers should I return to England."

Matthew's professional ambition to activate his double degree in the financial world took a huge and positive step forward through the opportunity to join BHP Billiton.

A former The Southport School and All Saints Anglican School student, Matthew studied at Griffith's Gold Coast campus, rising to become President of the Griffith University Law Students Association. He also completed the Griffith Business School Student Leadership Program and enjoyed professional placements through an internship at Nyst Lawyers and clerkships with McCullough Robertson and Herbert Smith Freehills.

"Gaining experiencing through these professional placements has truly benefited me in developing a stronger set of skills in communication, time management and an attention to detail," says Matthew.

"When I returned to university from these placements, I discovered I had a

much higher level of efficiency that has allowed me to increase my workload and take on new opportunities."

One of the highlights of Matthew's study program came in 2012 when he was sponsored by Griffith Mentoring to attend the Australia Law Students Association Conference in Melbourne. It included a cocktail evening at the MCG.

All of which brings us to Matthew's passion for sport and his belief that it is an ideal way to establish and nurture connections.

"Local sport is a great way to develop strong personal relationships with the business world and has been a major contributor to providing me with early opportunities," he says.

"University is completely what you choose to make of it. When you begin to work in the business world, you are limited by the knowledge you have and the people you know.

"Getting involved in all aspects of Griffith University life is the perfect way to stretch those limits and begin your road to success."

# TWO'S COMPANY

With their mother's example guiding them, sisters Paula Grant and Dani-elle Davidson are the award-winning Griffith graduates behind one of Australia's coolest companies. **Melinda Rogers** reports

Their crisp white office oozes elegance and sophistication and their fashion sense reflects two successful businesswomen.

However, it is in their voices that one hears the most important qualities driving sisters Paula Grant and Dani-elle Davidson—passion and joy.

"We were brought up truly believing that women can have it all," says Dani-elle.

But it hasn't come easily. Take a closer look and you become aware of the hard work and determination behind their business success.

Dani-elle is a solicitor with multiple degrees. Paula not only has qualifications in public relations, business development and marketing, she is also a proud mum to baby Oliver.

With ambition and drive inherited from their mother Eleanor Davidson—a former Telstra Businesswoman of the Year—the sisters joined forces to create their XiXi Lu business consultancy.

After just two short years, the business was named one of the Top 100 Coolest Companies in Australia (*Australian Anthill Magazine*) and was a finalist in the 2014 Australian Small Business Champion Awards.

Dani-elle also won the prestigious *Australian Anthill Magazine's* 30 Under 30 competition, an award which recognises the nation's top 30 entrepreneurs under the age of 30. She was also a finalist in the Young Small Business Champion Entrepreneur category at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards.

XiXi Lu is pronounced "She She Loo" and comes from Dani-elle's time living in China. It translates to mean double happiness and financial prosperity.

"Thanks to Griffith University, when I was 19 I studied on exchange in China for a semester," says Dani-elle from the XiXi Lu office in Brisbane's Eagle Street.

"XiXi Lu was the name of the street I lived on while I was there. I always joked that if

I started a business I would call it XiXi Lu because I have always loved what the name represents. It was the start of my journey to becoming a young professional.

"China was the most eye-opening experience for me and the greatest opportunity to learn without any external influence. It was about finding out who I wanted to be."

After successful individual careers, combining their talents seemed an obvious move for the sisters.

"We knew we worked well together and we knew each other's strengths and weaknesses," says Paula.

**In just two short years, the business was named as one of the Top 100 Coolest Companies in Australia**

"Dani was working crazy hours as a lawyer and it was the same with me in the automotive industry. We just thought we were working so hard for other people, so why not put all this effort into working for ourselves instead.

"We discovered a niche in the market and ran with it."

XiXi Lu started out specialising in promotions, advertising and marketing, then quickly expanded to help businesses with everything from point of sale, staff training and policies through to customer satisfaction surveys.

The sisters have worked with national and international companies, including international accommodation and student accommodation providers, real estate agencies, and golf and country clubs.

Paula and Dani-elle are also passionate about giving back to younger generations. They support the Griffith Business School Internship Program by taking on interns and providing them with opportunities to hone their skills in many aspects of business.

## A NEW ERA

The Griffith Business School building has won the Master Builders Award Gold Coast Project of the Year for 2015.

The \$38 million facility was officially opened by GBS Outstanding Alumnus of the Year, John O'Sullivan, now the head of Tourism Australia, in August 2014.

The Master Builders judges said: "the new building... delivered by Lend Lease, represents a major milestone in a journey of transformation and growth for Griffith University and the Gold Coast. Designed by Wilson Architects, the building combines simple and functional materials in a bid to create an engaging learning space for students."

Mr O'Sullivan has praised not only the building but the type of business graduates Griffith produces.

"As a Griffith business graduate, I am proud to be part of a school which has earned its reputation and has not been afraid to challenge the norm," he says.

"It's an exciting time for the Gold Coast as it counts down to hosting the 2018 Commonwealth Games, particularly in terms of increased visitor numbers and through the international media spotlight that will shine on the Gold Coast."

GBS is providing world-leading resources for business education, research and industry collaboration, all within the heart of the growing Health and Knowledge Precinct around the University.



Sisters Dani-elle Davidson (left) and Paula Grant: "We knew we worked well together and we knew each other's strengths and weaknesses"



We're flying: Hamish Douglass and Brett Douglass

## FAMILY FLIGHT CREW

Father and son Brett and Hamish Douglass are bringing new meaning to the term 'pilot scheme' through their studies with Griffith University's aviation group. **Melinda Rogers** reports

When Hamish Douglass enrolled at Griffith to study aviation, he never expected his father Brett, already an experienced pilot, to enrol with him.

While Hamish is pursuing a Bachelor of Aviation, Brett enrolled in a Masters of Aviation.

Hamish has always admired his father's career choice, but it wasn't until he was presented with the opportunity to fly without his dad for the first time—at just 14—that his passion for aviation took off.

"For me, it was euphoric. It was like everything was together and it was all perfect, peaceful and calm," says Hamish.

"I knew then that aviation was all I wanted to do. It was an amazing feeling to be up there.

"I went with an instructor and I just really loved it."

Brett and Hamish have different reasons for hitting the books.

While Hamish is keen to pursue a career as a pilot, Brett has already clocked more than 18,000 flying hours during his 30-year career—14 of those flying for Virgin Australia—and wants to extend his experience in aviation and open up new opportunities in the industry.

"I feel it will add another string to my bow. As a pilot, I am already a valuable asset for

Virgin Australia, and obtaining a masters degree will only increase that value," he says.

Brett's love of flying began similarly to that of Hamish.

"I was just fascinated with planes from a very young age and flying was all I ever aspired to do," he says.

Brett says aviation has come a long way since he began his career, especially with the introduction of GPS and other advanced systems and safety technology.

"For me, I'd recommend it to anyone," he says. "Aviation is an exciting and rewarding career and is an interestingly diverse industry. No two days are the same."

## MARKET SHARE

One woman is tackling the retail world on the back of online success: another pair is setting the benchmark for authentic grassroots trading.

The business models could not be more contrasting between Jodie Fox's Shoes of Prey and The Village Markets owned and run by Marissa Bowden and Sarah Schoeller.

All three are Griffith graduates realising their dreams.

With two marketing degrees from the Griffith Business School, where better for Marissa and Sarah to take their skills than the markets?

"We shared a love of interstate fashion markets like Sydney's Paddington, Bondi and Glebe, where one-off finds and emerging designer labels were in abundance," says Sarah.

"We followed our hearts and started the first emerging designer and vintage market on the Gold Coast."

Almost seven years later, the markets are held twice a month at Burleigh Heads and once a month at Paradise Point.

"It took more than fashion sense to make it happen. It took the business and marketing knowledge we gained at Griffith University," says Sarah.

"Today this knowledge has become a driving force in the Gold Coast fashion scene."

In contrast, law and international business graduate Jodie Fox risked everything when she launched Shoes of Prey, an online business that allows women to custom-order their shoes. It took three years of hard work and determination to establish the business.

"Those three years were some of the most immersive and wonderful years of my life," says Jodie. "Since then we've become a team of 150 people with offices in Australia, China, Tokyo, Manila, Los Angeles and New York."

Along the way they moved from online to opening physical stores—starting with an award-winning concept store in David Jones Sydney – a reversal of the conventional trend.



Sarah Schoeller and Marissa Bowden



## TALKING HEADS

In February 2015, Griffith University staged its inaugural TEDx event at the Gold Coast campus.

Showcasing the extraordinary achievements of a range of thinkers, business leaders, scientists and adventurers, the event's theme was "Knowledge is ..." and those speaking to it created deep discussion and connection.

Professor Wendy Moyle, from Griffith's Social Robotics Lab, was assisted by an interactive 'pet' seal and explained how robots were providing an improved quality of life for dementia patients, and shaping the future direction of managing an increasingly ageing society.

Griffith Business School graduate and impending astronaut Tim Gibson told his story of how never giving up, and extraordinary luck, changed his life.

Tim always wanted to be a pilot for the Australian Defence Force, but despite passing all military tests his long-sightedness prevented him from achieving this dream.

Intensive physical preparation for the RAAF selection process, however, helped him win an out-of-this-world competition, and Tim is now preparing to go into space as Australia's youngest astronaut.

World-leading organic chemist and Nobel Prize contender Dr San Thang shared his story of how having the courage to take a risk could change everything. (See story page 22)

The TEDx talk by Professor Mark von Itzstein, Director of Griffith's Institute for Glycomics, explained how sugars are vital for our cells to function and may hold the key to beating some of the world's most debilitating diseases.



Dental Science students, from left, Emad Ahangari, Benjamin Greenlees, Philip Ho and, in front, Mengzhu Wang

## HEALING HANDS

Griffith Health's international outreach continues to bring vital health services to people in need while enhancing the medical experience of students and graduates. **Louise Durack** reports

In and around the Papua New Guinean port town of Kiunga, Griffith University dentistry students gave the local population reason to smile.

Kiunga is in the country's Western Province and was the destination for four trainee dentists—all in the final year of a Bachelor of Oral Health (Dental Science) and Graduate Diploma in Dentistry—who brought their skills to disadvantaged communities.

Emad Ahangari, Benjamin Greenlees, Philip Ho and Mengzhu Wang organised the two-week program to provide services to a lowly resourced area. Some people in the community had never received any dental care.

The mission was typical of the international outreach that occurs within Griffith Health.

In another example, a group of 13 Bachelor of Pharmacy and Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science students organised

a two-week program to provide a range of healthcare services to disadvantaged communities in northern Cambodia.

Led by student Aisha Al Mahdy, the trip was planned through the relief volunteer organisation Challengers Abroad.

**Professional healthcare and advice can make a dramatic difference to the wellbeing of local communities**

"It was a real eye-opener to hear about the poor conditions the local women were giving birth in and the poor sanitary situations," says Aisha.

"Unfortunately many chronic ailments go unnoticed in these conditions."

The students conducted blood pressure and glucose checks, along with some general health and hygiene education.

Meanwhile in rural Laos, where reliable electricity and running water cannot be guaranteed, professional healthcare and advice can make a dramatic difference to the wellbeing of local communities.

The School of Nursing and Midwifery at Griffith has offered short-term placements to Laos for several years, with 32 third-year students participating in two placements in 2014 and another 46 across three placements in 2015.

Based at a community development project in the Seuang River Valley, the students and academics stay with local families in small villages. They have basic bedding and washing facilities, eat the local food and participate in village life.

Health promotion activities are an integral part of the placement with students delivering sessions relevant to local conditions and all age groups.



Dr Kat Curtis says the structure of her Griffith medical degree was ideal preparation for the career that has followed

## MEDICINE'S TOP KAT

Supporting young doctors as an educator and trainer is a passion for Australasian Junior Doctor of the Year, Dr Kat Curtis.

Having graduated with a medical degree from Griffith University in 2011, Dr Curtis worked at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane, before joining Bundaberg Hospital as a principal house officer in general surgery.

Dr Curtis accepted a registrar position at Bundaberg Hospital in August 2014. Three months later her award was announced at the Postgraduate Medical Education Council Awards.

"This is a great honour and great encouragement. Supporting other young doctors as an educator and trainer of surgical treatment is something I am really passionate about and it is great to be recognised for it," she says.

"The registrar position provided me with an opportunity to enjoy both clinical and

surgical work in a diverse range of medical fields where I could gain experience and develop my skill set."

Dr Curtis has also served on several peer and professional organisations, including Chair of the Junior Medical Officer Forum, committee member for Queensland Women's Medical Society and Queensland's representative to Australian Junior Medical Officer Committee.

She has fond memories of her time at Griffith.

"My Griffith years were brilliant, partly due to the way the third and final years were structured. We focused on a broad range of specialities in various settings, including general practice, intensive care and emergency.

"Having that kind of knowledge and experience behind you is invaluable and really prepares you for your future career."

## THE MENZIES MISSION

Griffith University has partnered with the Menzies Foundation to form the fourth Australian Menzies health research institute.

Launched in April 2015, the Menzies Health Institute Queensland (MHIQ) brings together more than 750 researchers working across a diverse range of areas, including cancer, infectious diseases, chronic diseases, childhood illnesses, allied health, musculoskeletal conditions, psychological health and ageing.

Building on Griffith's strong local and international research networks, this significant new institute will deliver outstanding research in biomedical sciences and social health, and drive national leadership in allied health research.

Based at Griffith University's Gold Coast campus, the MHIQ is positioning Griffith as a leader in world-class research. It was officially launched by the Governor-General and Patron of the Menzies Foundation, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd).

MHIQ director Professor Sheena Reilly says she is aiming to develop a program of research that has "people's health built into it from day one".

"I don't want research for the sake of it. Whether we are talking about clinical research, research in the laboratory or out in the community, there must be a strategy behind it from the start that means it is easily translatable into tangible health outcomes."

Professor Reilly—previously Associate Director of Clinical and Public Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Professor of Speech Pathology at the University of Melbourne—says a key part of increasing health outcomes will entail MHIQ working closely with the Gold Coast University Hospital.



A jubilant Peter Greste on his arrival in Brisbane after being freed from a Cairo jail



Mr Chris Flynn, head of Mr Greste's legal team



Professor Andrew O'Neil

# PETER GRESTE: THE STUDENT PRISONER

In February 2015, the international celebration surrounding the homecoming of freed Australian journalist Peter Greste carried special meaning for Griffith University, the result of two important connections to the case

When Peter Greste touched down in Brisbane just after midnight on Thursday, February 5 2015, it was the end of an ordeal that had seen the Al Jazeera correspondent serve more than 400 days in an Egyptian jail.

Sentenced to seven years on spurious charges that spawned international public outcry, Mr Greste gave some insight into how he and his two colleagues—Baher Mohamed and Mohamed Fahmy—coped in Cairo's Tora prison.

"To get through it, you need to be fit," he said. "And that's not just physically fit; it means staying mentally fit, intellectually fit and spiritually fit."

He also acknowledged Griffith University's part in that process, which came in two forms: the tireless work of Griffith Law School graduate Chris Flynn as head of Mr Greste's legal team; and enabling Mr Greste to embark upon a masters degree in International Relations while still incarcerated.

Firstly to the degree, to which Mr Greste applied himself with typical diligence despite being the only one of Griffith's more than 46,000 students to submit assignments (a) from prison and (b) written in pencil on paper.

The University was first contacted by Mr Greste's family in July 2014 about the possibility of their son studying a masters degree by distance.

"The rationale for Peter seeking to enrol in the degree was an interest in world politics, but also a desire to remain focused while incarcerated," says Professor Andrew O'Neil, Head of the School of Government and International Relations.

With assistance from Mr Martin Hodgson, from the Foreign Prisoner Support Service, and after Academic Provost Professor Adam Shoemaker approved a fee waiver scholarship, Mr Greste enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in International Relations, requiring the completion of four courses.

The first was *International Relations Theory*, convened by Dr Dan Halvorson, and he had begun *International Security*, convened by Professor O'Neil, just prior to his release.

"The initial box of readings was sent express post to the Australian embassy and follow-up materials were sent electronically for printing and delivery

to Peter during Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade visits to Tora prison," says Professor O'Neil.

"With Peter not having computer access, the School worked closely with the Australian mission in Cairo to deliver course materials, including voluminous readings, to Peter's prison cell."

At one stage, Professor O'Neil handed a 600-page textbook to Mr Greste's brother, Mike, before he left on a visit to Cairo.

Within a week, the news came back that Mr Greste had consumed the book and was seeking further reading. In fact, 25 journal articles were sent to the Australian embassy the day before his release.

"Peter's experience with Griffith reinforces the point that education can be a truly empowering experience for individuals in even the most dire of circumstances," says Professor O'Neil.

Meanwhile, ever conscious of those circumstances and the injustice that placed Mr Greste in their midst, law alumnus Chris Flynn says the case was of a kind that "provides meaning to everything we do and is the reason why we study law in the first place".

**Peter's experience with Griffith reinforces the point that education can be a truly empowering experience for individuals in even the most dire of circumstances**

A partner with prestigious Sydney law firm Gilbert and Tobin, he says one of the biggest challenges the legal team faced was the complexity of the case.

"There were a lot of pieces to the puzzle, and while we were confident that our strategy had the best chance of getting him

free, the political situation in Egypt meant we didn't take anything for granted."

He says the case resonated with the public not simply because Mr Greste was wrongly incarcerated, but because as a journalist he had reported on other unjust cases.

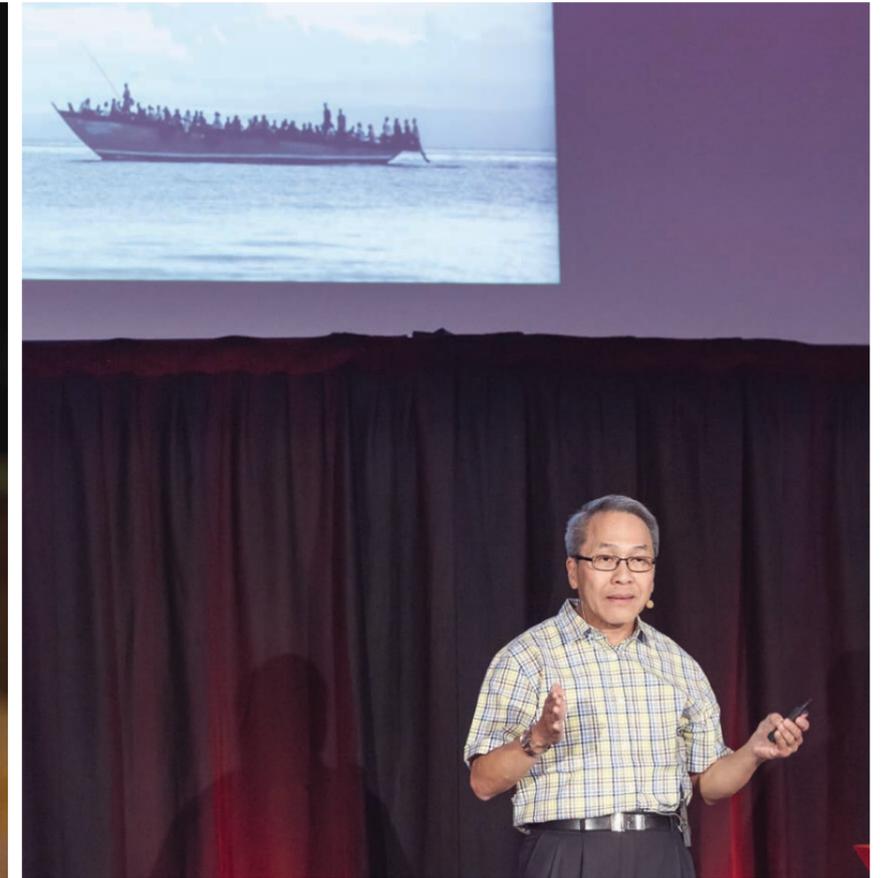
"In many ways it's the other side of the same coin. It speaks to the same values we have as lawyers of accountability, transparency, democratic values and the rule of law," says Mr Flynn.

"At Gilbert and Tobin, the emphasis on social justice is core to what we do. It's similar to what I learned at the Griffith Law School, where the overarching framework of learning about law was an excellent grounding that gave me a real toolkit for working.

"The most rewarding work in law is helping people in need. It is the pointiest end of the law and its most important work."



Dr San Thang: "Never be afraid of failure, always persist and never stop learning"



Dr Thang addresses the audience at the Griffith TEDx event in February 2015

# THE VOYAGE OF LIFE

Dr San Thang came to Australia as a Vietnamese refugee and rose to become Griffith Sciences Inaugural Alumnus of the Year and a Nobel Prize contender. Then he lost his job. The following letter from Dr Thang is confirmation that life is never predictable, always precious and full of lessons

*"The boat is flimsy and overcrowded, the sea is endless and I cannot swim. And yet it is my choice to be here, huddled among more than 400 others as we cross the South China Sea to what we hope, and must believe, is freedom."*

That was in 1979 and sometimes, when I look back, I find it difficult to believe.

It is very emotional for me because I relive the sacrifices made and the challenges faced. Then I remember where those moments led, to so many kind and generous people, to precious opportunities and a career I once thought might not be possible.

Life is never predictable. For instance, a year ago, my two CSIRO colleagues—fellow scientists Dr Ezio Rizzardo and Dr Graeme Moad—and I were included by multinational media and information company, Thomson Reuters, in its annual list of Nobel Prize contenders.

We were among its citations in chemistry, listed for our development of new plastics and polymers with applications across multiple fields, including adhesives, cosmetics, hydraulic fluids and in drug delivery and biotechnology.

Known as RAFT (Reversible Addition-Fragmentation Chain Transfer), companies such as IBM, L'Oreal and Dulux are among about 60 throughout the world to have taken up the technology. Meanwhile, our research is considered integral to around 600 patents, and royalties generated from the technology are tipped to top \$32 million by 2021.

We didn't win the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, but that's fine. It was an honour to be part of the excitement and to affirm the credibility, worth and application of our work.

Shortly afterward I was named the Griffith Sciences Inaugural Alumnus of the Year, another honour and a great thrill to be back at Nathan campus.

And then, just like that, I lost my job. I was one of many scientists made

redundant as a result of federal funding cutbacks to the CSIRO.

Like I say, life is never predictable.

Circumstances can be a challenge, but I know about such things. Once again, I am reminded of a certain boat.

I was 24, I had a degree in physical organic chemistry from university in Saigon and I was in the first stages of my scientific career.

The communist forces assumed power in Vietnam in 1975 and by 1979 I felt I had no choice other than to leave. All my family stayed behind and I wouldn't see them again for almost 20 years.

The authorities didn't care for those who were leaving. They were only interested in being paid. I handed over gold nuggets and was one of 409 others who boarded that unseaworthy little fishing boat and set off for Malaysia uncertain of the chances of reaching our destination.

It was a terrible, sometimes terrifying experience, especially for a non-swimmer. I was so afraid of drowning. I don't know how we made it. But when

you survive something like that, it makes you stronger.

After five months in a Malaysian refugee camp, I received permission to settle in Australia and, on October 18 1979, I arrived in Brisbane.

In the ultimate irony for someone who cannot swim and who had been through what I had been through, I was employed by a boating company. I believe I was the most highly qualified factory labourer in Australia as I waited for my Vietnamese qualifications to be translated into English and attested by Australian education authorities.

**This was a turning point in my life. I went from the factory to the laboratory. I was what I was meant to be: a scientist.**

That process was the key to everything. Once my qualifications were recognised, I met Griffith's first Pro Vice Chancellor, the late Professor Roy "Gus" Guthrie, and he offered me a role as a research assistant in Griffith University's School of Science.

That was in 1980 and typical of the generosity and support I found at Griffith. This was a turning point in my life. I went from the factory to the laboratory. I was what I was meant to be: a scientist.

I became an Australian citizen in 1982 and the following year completed my Bachelor of Science (Honours) in organic chemistry in what is now Griffith's School of Natural Sciences. In 1987, I completed a PhD in organic/polymer chemistry, also from Griffith.

I joined the CSIRO in 1986, moved to ICI the following year, then returned to the CSIRO in 1990. As for the future, who knows?

Whatever happens, what I've learned through the years is this, that to succeed in science requires the same qualities as to succeed in life. Never be afraid of failure, always persist and never stop learning.

You never know where life may lead, or the wonders to be found along the way.

I still can't swim. However, as in all things, how precious it is to have the freedom to learn.



Blaise Itabelo spent 15 years in a refugee camp in Tanzania. Now he is assisting new migrants with their transition to life in Australia

## LEADERS IN A NEW LAND

Despite many years as refugees in Africa, Blaise Itabelo and Sanesie Dukuly have risen from adversity, thrived on education and are making a substantial contribution to society

At a time when the issues of migration and multiculturalism have rarely been more polarising in Australia, the example of Griffith University alumni Blaise Itabelo and Sanesie Dukuly is testament to the virtues of inspiration and aspiration.

Both overcame great adversity to pursue their education dream and now they are responding by contributing personally and

professionally to the betterment of their communities.

In 2014, Griffith Law School alumnus Blaise received the Migration Institute of Australia Student of the Year Award. Meanwhile, Bachelor of Human Services graduate Sanesie was the recipient of the African Australian Community Ambassador Award.

A registered migration agent, community development co-ordinator with Access Community Services Limited and director of Okapi Migration Services, Blaise was recognised for his work in assisting new migrants in their transition to life in Australia. Such transition is a process he knows only too well.

After spending more than 15 years in a refugee camp in Tanzania where he

completed primary and secondary school, Blaise won a highly competitive United Nations-backed scholarship to study a Bachelor of Industrial Relations in Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania.

He came to Australia in 2011, completing the Graduate Certificate in Migration Law and Practice while working full-time and supporting his wife and three children.

Based at Logan, since graduating in 2013 Blaise has been in negotiations to establish a pro bono immigration and refugee practice in collaboration with his employers at Access.

His motivation to become a migration agent is to help those in need.

"Working with a settlement agency, I constantly come across people going

through depression and stress because they do not know what to do to bring their family members to Australia. This motivated me to study at Griffith," he says.

That desire to help others is echoed by Sanesie, whose graduation from Griffith was all the more admirable for the fact he began life as a refugee and could barely speak English until the age of 15.

The founder of the Griffith Refugee Students Group, Sanesie arrived at Griffith's Logan campus in 2011.

As a student, Sanesie was acknowledged in the 2012 School of Human Services and Social Work Academic Excellence Awards, a natural extension of his mentoring work among his fellow students.

"After graduating in 2013 I moved to my current role as a student equity programs officer for Griffith's Uni-Key tertiary transition program, based at Logan," he says.

In 2014 I was elected as the community relations officer for the Queensland African Communities Council and I continue to contribute to the Logan community through my extensive involvement in local and state advisory panels relating to multicultural affairs and issues affecting young people."

It's a long way from life's beginnings in the civil war-torn countries of Liberia, Ivory Coast and Guinea, before his family was able to migrate to Australia in 2005.

"My English was next to non-existent and it was hard to get a start in life," says Sanesie.

"I was pretty lonely too and, with having to send money home to other family members, I didn't have a lot to live on. After a brief move to Sydney I then moved to Brisbane in 2006 where I found work in a meat factory and then in airport security.

"Because of some of the traumatic experiences as a refugee, I eventually decided to do a full-time TAFE course in juvenile justice alongside a certificate in English. I loved what I learnt and the course gave me the impetus to start aiming for a career in the community services field."

For Sanesie and Blaise, their achievements reflect what is possible when granted freedom and choice.

Furthermore, their desire to help others realise their own potential speaks volumes for two men who have endured much, yet who strive to be positive influences for others within their communities and in the country that is their new home.



### G20 RECOGNITION

Griffith University embraced the importance and potential of the G20 World Leaders Summit in Brisbane in November 2014.

As well as co-hosting a two-day Pre G20 Summit Conference that included an address by Turkish Prime Minister Mr Ahmet Davutoglu (pictured), Griffith academic expertise was in constant demand from local, national and international media as issues arose out of the G20.

Head of the School of Government and International Relations, Professor Andrew O'Neil, said the major achievement of the G20 was a recommitment to global tax reform and targeting tax avoidance, plus the message to developing world countries that poverty reduction remains a key mission of the G20.

Among events hosted by Griffith, the G20 Interfaith Summit provided a forum for international dialogue around economic development, religious freedom and social cohesion. It was attended by leading religious commentators from Australia and overseas.

Furthermore, the G20 East-West Dialogue on Tourism and the Chinese Dream acknowledged the expanding economic and trade relationship between Australia and China, including the role of tourism.

Griffith students across many disciplines, including journalism, criminology and business, were also actively involved in G20 activities.



Sanesie Dukuly is founder of the Griffith Refugee Students Group

Our alumni can be found throughout the world and they are succeeding in all areas of life. As part of Griffith University's acknowledgement of their achievements, events are held to ensure the connection between Griffith and graduates remains strong.

In recent times Griffith has hosted alumni functions in cities including Nairobi, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Canberra, Melbourne and, of course, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Immediate past University Chancellor, The Honourable Ms Leneen Forde AC, and Vice Chancellor and President Professor Ian O'Connor travelled thousands of kilometres to attend many of these events. New Chancellor, Mr Henry Smerdon AM DUniv, is just beginning his Griffith travels, following the retirement of Ms Forde in June.

Griffith also supports alumni through the Stay Connected Program, an initiative encouraging alumni to stay in touch as well as take part in professional development activities and networking. Employment opportunities, industry mentoring, postgraduate options and global social events all fall within the gamut of Stay Connected.

Development and Alumni offers several communication options:

Web: [griffith.edu.au/development-alumni](http://griffith.edu.au/development-alumni)

Facebook: [facebook.com/griffithalumni](https://facebook.com/griffithalumni)

Twitter: [twitter.com/griffithalumni](https://twitter.com/griffithalumni)

Griffith University Alumni is also featured on the LinkedIn professional network, while the email address for general alumni enquiries is [alumni@griffith.edu.au](mailto:alumni@griffith.edu.au)

These two pages present some of the alumni highlights of the past year.



Melbourne



Brisbane Riverfire Festival



Brisbane Riverfire Festival



Hong Kong



Hong Kong



Canberra



Gold Coast Marathon



Canberra



Brisbane Riverfire Festival



Sarah Brikke says her relationship with the natural world has been fundamental to developing the committed person she is today

## THE GIRL WHO PLAYED FOOTBALL WITH ELEPHANTS

Sarah Brikke's commitment to the natural environment began while growing up in Africa. Today she continues to work towards systems and solutions in the name of sustainability. **Michael Jacobson** reports

As a little girl growing up in Kenya, Sarah Brikke's appreciation for the natural environment could hardly have enjoyed a more inspiring setting.

"We had cobras and boas in our garden," she recalls. "I strolled among rhinoceros and played football with elephants."

A couple of decades later, having been awarded a PhD in environmental education and environmental psychology from Griffith

University, Sarah's childhood stories anchor the guiding forces of her life.

These have led to many notable achievements and experiences.

For instance, in 2014 Sarah represented former US Vice President Al Gore at the 20th Asia-Pacific Model United Nations Conference in Brisbane.

Before that, from 2010-11 Sarah was based in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta where she interned at UNESCO. She has also co-convoked and/or addressed several international forums, among them the 2013 World Environmental Education Congress in Morocco, the 2013 Earth Charter meeting at the University of Peace in Costa Rica and 2013 World Water Week in Sweden.

Now based in Sydney, Sarah is a consultant in sustainability education and behaviour

change and an education officer for the Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Her main responsibility is to reconnect young people with nature.

It's an ideal position for Sarah and one that continues an environmental odyssey begun all those years ago in Africa.

"In 1977, the Nairobi-based David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust was founded by Dr Daphne Sheldrick in honour of her naturalist husband," explains Sarah.

"A pioneering conservation organisation for wildlife and habitat protection in East Africa, it has since become the most successful orphan elephant rescue and rehabilitation program in the world.

"My family often visited the orphanage when I was small and I just loved the baby elephants. I seemed to have a rapport with them.

"Like I say, I used to play football with them, kicking the ball from one to the other, running around with them.

"While they were so playful and affectionate, I was also aware of how they had been orphaned through activities like poaching. That reality hit home to me, about how precious, vulnerable and innocent they were."

Sarah describes herself as a global citizen, a student of human behaviour and an agent of change committed to providing leadership and education in the areas of environmental sustainability and climate change.

Her masters in development studies from Victoria University of Wellington (NZ) was awarded for her research on women and the forest in Vanuatu. She also has two masters degrees from the esteemed La Sorbonne University in Paris, one for research on local perceptions of the sea

turtles of French Polynesia, the other for her work in the Peruvian Amazon.

Sarah's PhD through Griffith's School of Environment researched the relationship between young people and the environment by exploring the factors influencing environmentally caring behaviours in Indonesia.

"Ever since I was a little girl, I think the course of my life was clear," says Sarah. "The relationship I had with the natural world, wherever I was in the world, was fundamental in developing the person I am today.

"That thinking drives me today, to keep working towards systems and solutions in the name of sustainability and to take on the challenges that arise in the world."

It may be a long time since Sarah last played football with elephants, but she has her sights firmly set on a world full of goals.



### THINK BIG

Griffith University academics have featured prominently in the annual list of Queensland's Top 50 Thinkers compiled by the *Sunday Mail* newspaper.

They were:

**Vice Chancellor Professor Ian O'Connor**, for his leadership of Griffith University and within the tertiary sector in general, as well as for his roles on many boards, including the Innovative Research Universities group;

**Professor Mark von Itzstein**, Director of the Institute for Glycomics, who led the team that developed Relenza, the world's first anti-influenza drug;

**Professor Michael Good**, also from the Institute for Glycomics, for his research into a cure for malaria;

**Associate Professor Daniel James**, from SABEL Labs, a pioneer in sports and health technologies;

**Professor Ross Homel**, Foundation Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, whose work investigating crime's causes, preventions and responses has earned respect and acclaim throughout Australia and the world;

**Associate Professor Francesca Iacopi** (above), from the Queensland Micro- and Nanotechnology Centre, for her work capitalising on the remarkable properties of the pure carbon material graphene for future cost-effective mass production of micro-devices;

**Chris Eigeland**, a double degree graduate in law and politics and one of Queensland's leading young social entrepreneurs.



Lyric tenor Kang Wang says his move to New York is a dream come true

## KANG IS SET FOR THE MET

Queensland Conservatorium graduate, tenor Kang Wang, is calling New York home after joining one of the world's most famous opera companies.

**Lauren Marino** reports

Hailed as the venue for the world's greatest voices, New York City's renowned Metropolitan Opera has welcomed another fine voice in Australian-Chinese lyric tenor Kang Wang.

The Met, as it is fondly known, uses its Lindemann Young Artist Development Program to identify and develop extraordinary emerging opera talent from all over the world.

For Kang, the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University graduate was one of only a handful selected to take part from August 2015 for a two-year tenure.

He says it's a dream come true.

"I'm hoping to make the most of my time in New York and improve all aspects of my singing," he says.

"This offer really came as a big surprise for me, and it still feels surreal when I think about going to the Met to work every day."

As part of the program, Kang is receiving specialised training from the Met's own artistic staff and invited master teachers, along with access to rehearsals for all Metropolitan Opera productions.

The stellar appointment tops off an already exceptional career for Kang, who recently completed a one-year contract at Theater Basel in Basel, Switzerland, in its OperAvenir opera studio.

It also follows a string of notable achievements including the People's Choice Award of the Dame Joan Sutherland Award, the Italian Opera Foundation Australia Scholarship and the 2014 Clonter Opera Prize.

Since 2010 Kang has appeared as a guest soloist in more than 20 concerts with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, was a special guest soloist in acclaimed operatic soprano Lisa Gasteen's return to the stage in 2011 and was guest soloist in concerts by Opera Queensland in 2013 and 2014.

Kang also has a great singing pedigree. His parents are both professional opera singers in China, but it wasn't a career he envisaged for himself until he saw *The Great Caruso*, a film about the life of tenor Enrico Caruso, when he was 17.

"I knew then what I wanted to do with my life," he says.

His father, another tenor, warned him classical singing was not always an easy career choice, so Kang moved to Darwin to complete a Bachelor of Information Technology (with electives in singing under Mrs Kathy Banks) and worked as a web-developer for three years while also performing with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra.

At the end of 2009, he started flying to Brisbane every two months for private lessons with Joseph Ward OBE at the Queensland Conservatorium, before beginning his Graduate Diploma and then a Masters of Music Studies in Opera Performance.

"I learned so much during my time at the Conservatorium," says Kang. "I had singing lessons twice a week with Joseph Ward, opera classes with Lisa Gasteen, movement classes with Anna Sweeny, language coaching with Teresa Desmarchelier and the opportunity to do a lot of ensemble work."

"Since graduating, I've met some great young tenors with voices as good as mine and even better, so they have become the inspiration for me to keep training harder and harder."

"The long term goal for me is to become better and better so one day I will be singing leading tenor roles in the best opera houses around the world."



Acclaimed pianist Alex Raineri wants his playing to reflect and represent the support he has received at the Queensland Conservatorium

## MAKING OF A MAESTRO

Young concert pianist and Queensland Conservatorium graduate Alex Raineri has the world talking about his prodigious talent

The music world is fast recognising and embracing the exceptional talent of young Brisbane pianist Alex Raineri.

However, for the moment Alex is content to base himself in Australia and pay tribute to those who have nurtured his musical journey so far, before going on to what appears certain to be stellar international career.

High among these is the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, from which Alex graduated with First Class Honours in 2014 and then continued into postgraduate study.

"There are opportunities out there for me, but the grass isn't necessarily greener in Europe or the US," says the 22-year-old prodigy. "There are also great opportunities here at the moment and I very much want my playing to reflect and represent the training and support I have received here."

The recipient of the 2014 Australian National Piano Award and winner of the prestigious Kerikeri International Piano

Competition, ANAM Concerto Competition and the Audience Prize in the Mietta Song Competition, Alex was just four years old when he began showing an interest in the piano.

"We had a piano that no one was using and it was taking up room in the house. My parents had to come to a decision as to whether to get rid of it or give me piano lessons. They chose the lessons," says Alex.

How handsomely that decision has paid off.

By 14, Alex had already written part of a score for a feature film and released three albums, which then led him to tour Australia, Europe and America.

As time has passed and his schedule become ever more crowded, Alex has formed a philosophy that speaks to his character, the gift he never takes for granted and his perceived obligation to the composers whose work he interprets.

"It may sound clichéd, but music is a language and when I play I really do try to communicate what I think and feel the composer was trying to express. For me, it is a collaborative effort," he says.

"It seems to me that over the recorded centuries of human life, people have either encountered or observed the same finite range of experiences and emotions.

"Their artistic reaction is then a product

of the materials and technology at hand, and is often influenced by the prevailing fashion and social values of their time.

"Still, there are always innovators and experimentalists who want to find new forms of expression."

While pursuing his masters jointly with the Queensland Conservatorium and the Australian National Academy of Music under the tutelage of Leah Horwitz OAM and Timothy Young, Alex has been dividing his time between Brisbane and Melbourne.

Next year he will travel to Germany to participate in the Darmstadt Summer Course as one of five young musicians selected from hundreds of international participants for the Kranichstein Music Prize Scholarship.

A passionate chamber musician, Alex is the pianist and co-artistic director of the Brisbane contemporary music ensemble, Kupka's Piano, and has taken part in a range of international collaborations. His schedule is already hectic and becoming increasingly so.

Yet as much as the world continues to beckon, Alex Raineri remains determined to be the one conducting the course of his own musical future.

# WILD ABOUT HARRY

From high school in Ipswich to television and music fame in China, Harry Harding's life since graduating from Griffith University has been a stunning adventure, reports **Deborah Marshall**

The speed with which Harry 'Hazza' Harding has risen to fame in Asia has at times left him lost for words, a decidedly ironic situation for a Mandarin-speaking languages graduate.

What's more, the journey that has taken him from Ipswich schoolboy to Chinese talk show host and internet pop sensation is about to enter another exciting phase.

"It's been a remarkable and weird adventure," says Harry, a graduate from Griffith's School of Languages and Linguistics and a finalist in the 2014 Arts, Education & Law Young Outstanding Alumnus Awards.

**Griffith gave me the language and communications skills to be able to tackle this enormous challenge**

So how did the former West Moreton Anglican College school captain and swimming champion come to be working for the GDTV World network in Guangzhou, South China, a city of 13 million people?

In a true case of being in the right place at the right time, Harry's break came while holidaying in China. He posted a number of cover videos online in Chinese and a producer at GDTV saw them, liked Harry's style and offered him a job.

Up until late 2014, Harry spent three years working as a journalist and presenter, hosting a talk show, a travel show and a documentary program.

"Griffith gave me the language and communications skills to be able to tackle this enormous challenge, to communicate effectively with guests and

co-workers from all different backgrounds and cultures," says Harry.

During his first stint with GDTV, Harry interviewed a diverse range of guests, from well-known singers and actors, politicians and diplomats to farmers and ordinary Chinese citizens.

When rival Hong Kong-based station HKSTV offered Harry a new position as a television presenter, he jumped at the chance. However, the 25-year-old is now back at GDTV and excited about taking on a more serious news role.

Of course, being a talk show host is not all that Harry is famous for in China.

A talented musician, he has released two singles on the Chinese new music charts. The first one, *Let Go*, reached No.1 and stayed on the Guangzhou New Music Charts for 11 weeks. His videos have gained 50 million hits on Chinese video sharing websites.

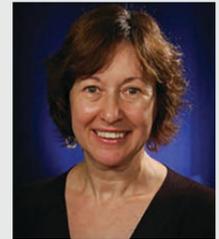
His second single, *No Worries*, was also a top 10 hit and featured on the front page of China's iTunes equivalent, QQ music. Further musical releases are planned.

While Harry loves life in China and appreciates the opportunities it has provided, the longer he is away from Australia, the more his homeland tugs at him.

"I love my family, yet it seems I had to move to China to fully realise how important and precious family are in your life," he says. "I feel like a better person for realising that and honouring it."

"I'm very lucky. I love Australia and China, so it always feels like I'm home."

## OUR GLOBAL CONVERSATION



Dr Susana Eisenclas

Two-thirds of the world's population is bilingual (if not trilingual), so why not join them?

Learning another language can also increase career prospects, so studying a language at university makes perfect sense.

"Research shows that language learning can increase cognitive skills and performance in other areas," says Dr Susana Eisenclas, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics.

"This is because new neural pathways are created in people learning another language.

"Everyone can learn a language and even if you didn't have a good experience at school, at Griffith we can show you how much fun language learning can be.

"Learning also gives us direct access to other cultures and the ability to know more about the world."

Learning a language can also increase your income. According to a University of Guelph study, bilingual men earn 3.6% more and bilingual women earn 6.6% more than their monolingual counterparts.

Careers in languages include: translating and interpreting, publishing, healthcare, financial services, sales and marketing, tourism and hospitality, education, social services and public services.

At Griffith University, students can study a wide range of languages including Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, French, German, Indonesian and international English.



Harry 'Hazza' Harding was in the right place at the right time - complete with Griffith degree - to forge a career in China



Katrina Van De Ven hopes her experience with the United Nations will pave the way to a career in international relations. Image courtesy Trevor Collens Photographer

## WORKING FOR THE WORLD

Katrina Van De Ven has the desire and the determination to work for a better world. And precious insight into the workings of the United Nations has only heightened her commitment

As a truly eye-opening insight into the workings of diplomacy at the highest level, Katrina Van De Ven could not have asked for better than an internship at the United Nations.

While studying for a Master of International Relations, Katrina's three-month stint in New York opened her mind to issues such as the impacts of atomic radiation and the peaceful uses of outer space.

Katrina completed the internship with the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, assisting staff during the 69th session of the General Assembly.

Her duties concentrated on the work of the Fourth and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly, presenting Katrina with exceptional insight into major global issues.

"The Fourth Committee focuses on a wide range of issues including decolonisation, the impacts of atomic radiation, the Middle East and the peaceful uses of outer space," she says. "The Fifth Committee,

which is the budgetary and finance committee, approves funding for the United Nations' many programs.

"I supported experienced policy officers at the Australian Mission by attending committee meetings, contributing to reporting and assisting with the negotiation of texts and resolutions."

Katrina is confident the experience will not only bolster a move towards a career in international relations, but will help inform other choices she makes along the way.

"Working within the Australian Mission provided me with the unique opportunity to learn about both Australia's foreign affairs policies and the United Nations system."

Katrina's passion for international relations began while studying a psychology degree at Griffith.

After taking electives in politics and foreign policy, she was selected during her honours year to take part in the competitive Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. This opportunity sent her to Washington DC where she worked as an intern in a United States Congressional Office.

At the same time she completed her honours thesis in the field of political psychology, focusing on religious tolerance.

"I subsequently worked for a member of the Queensland Parliament," says Katrina.

"I enjoyed this position immensely and learnt a great deal, but still wanted to explore my passion for international affairs and foreign policy, which sparked my decision to commence the Master of International Relations (via research) program in 2014."

During her first year of the program, Katrina applied for the Australian Mission's United Nations General Assembly internship program and soon she was packing her suitcase once more.

"I had been looking for an opportunity to explore my interest in diplomacy, particularly in the area of multilateral relations. I participated in some model United Nations conferences in 2014, including the Asia-Pacific Model United Nations Conference, which affirmed my interest in the United Nations system."

New York soon beckoned and Katrina threw herself into the experience.

"It was wonderful to have the opportunity to explore the city beyond the normal tourist destinations and get to live like a real New Yorker for a few months," she says.

"The first thing I needed to adapt to was the frenetic pace of the city. However, once I settled into New York life, I came to realise that, while a big city, New York is really just a series of amazing, diverse neighbourhoods, all with their own vibe and community feel."



Engineering graduate Tanya Kooymans: "All workplaces need diversity in gender and cultural backgrounds"

## ROADS SCHOLAR

Changing the perception of women in engineering is a priority for award-winning alumnus Tanya Kooymans.

**Melinda Rogers** reports

Tanya Kooymans will never forget the first time she felt she really made a difference.

Always eager to convince young women of the potential and diversity of careers in engineering, a Griffith University Open Day a couple of years ago presented an unexpected challenge.

"I was approached by a young Muslim girl who was interested in studying engineering, but her father was against it," says Tanya, speaking from her office in which she is surrounded by state-of-the-art technology that controls the Gold Coast's transport infrastructure.

"I managed to share my knowledge and sway her father to open his mind to the idea. It's about breaking down the barriers."

In what has long been a male-dominated profession, Tanya has broken down barriers in her own career to become one of the leading forces behind South-East Queensland's intelligent transport system.

That message you see on the electronic communication boards overhanging the M1 and advising you of an upcoming delay? That's Tanya.

The monitoring and notification of upgrades along Smith Street? The eyes behind the Gold Coast's CCTV traffic network? That's Tanya as well.

As Principal Project Officer (Traffic Systems) with the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), Tanya is responsible for the maintenance and operations of the intelligent transport systems that motorists rely on every day.

"It's really critical to ensure the systems keep up and running," she says. "There are moments that are high pressure, but you just need to prioritise your tasks and challenge yourself."

Tanya graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering (Electronic Engineering, First Class Honours) in 2010 and went on to work as assistant project manager with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation and as project engineer with Honeywell Process Solutions. She joined the DTMR as a shift leader in the traffic management centre.

"I'm pretty open to anything in engineering," she says. "My experience all comes back to systems and project management."

"I am very passionate about encouraging

women into engineering pathways. I want to bridge the gap between primary and high school and then tertiary and the workplace.

"When I was studying engineering at Griffith, I was the only female in my class, although I'm happy to say my classmates became like brothers.

"However, engineering is still very male dominated. Women are making inroads, but there are a lot of improvements to be made and stereotypes to overcome.

"Engineering is such a diverse field and there is much you can do. Plus, all workplaces need diversity in gender and cultural backgrounds."

Living on the Gold Coast, Tanya is excited about the prospect of a more immediate challenge: the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

"I will be heavily involved in communications to the public, ensuring infrastructure is up to scratch for security reasons, and working out the needs for a centralised control room so all agencies will have accurate information on hand when it is required."

In November 2014, Tanya was named Griffith Sciences' inaugural Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year.

"I hope it can inspire other young women," she says. "It shows what can be achieved if you have passion, drive and support."



Samantha Alexander: "I went from reading textbooks myself to having to listen to a monotonous voice reading the text to me"

## SAM'S INSPIRING VISION

Samantha Alexander is showing struggling Australians what can be achieved if you refuse to yield to the difficulties life sometimes presents

Despite losing her sight halfway through her Griffith University degree, giving up was never an option for Samantha Alexander.

Having graduated with a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, the Indigenous Sydneysider is now using her degree and determination in her role as a community officer working in Sydney's south-west.

"My work brings me into close contact with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who are economically disadvantaged and struggling with various social and health issues," says Samantha.

"It's been quite a transition. I'm from Penrith and I know it so well that being legally blind was not so much of an issue when it came to getting around. Now my work is based in Campbelltown and I had to embark on a stringent process to familiarise myself."

Not that Samantha is unaccustomed to such challenges.

Afflicted with cone-rod dystrophy, an incurable degenerative eye condition that affects her peripheral and central vision, for her online degree Samantha had to learn to use voice recognition and speech software. Griffith's Disability Support Services helped her through the process.

"When I started university I could still read textbooks, so not being able to read print was very confronting," she says.

"I went from reading textbooks myself to having to listen to a monotonous voice reading text to me. Then I had to absorb and remember that information. It was a huge learning curve."

Samantha had to hand in her driver's licence a few years ago, but she has maintained her independence, completing an Indigenous cadetship with NSW Corrective Services in 2014.

"I needed to be able to travel into the city alone, which meant I had to begin orientation and mobility training and learn how to use the cane," she recalls.

"Even though I dreaded using the cane and I still detest holding it, I'm passionate about helping people and so I wasn't letting a stick hold me back."

Such persistence paid off in her studies, with Samantha maintaining a high distinction average. It is also proving particularly useful in her new career.

"This part of Sydney is a tough setting for many people. There are transport issues and a lack of public funding and resources. Such things have a negative impact on people's lives and attitudes," says Samantha.

"That's where I'm a little different. I can be the example of what can be achieved if you refuse to surrender to the difficulties and challenges that life can throw at you. In that context, I hope and believe I can be an invaluable resource."

Samantha has also been accepted into a Master of Forensic Mental Health at Griffith University.

"I want to be part of an organisation that can make a change and close the gap between the wider Australian community and people in greatest need," she says.

"My ultimate goal is to assist offenders with their rehabilitation; to really make a difference."

Even without her sight, Samantha is the personification of a vision truly splendid.

## A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

A year studying at Griffith University's Logan campus proved a personal and professional milestone for Canadian Aaron Bailey. **Michael Jacobson** reports

Canadian graduate Aaron Bailey believes there's only one thing missing from his career helping young people with learning disabilities.

Speaking from his home in Kingston, Ontario, he says: "You can call me 'mate' as many times as you like. I love the Australian accent and miss it more every day."

Fortunately, a love of the Aussie lingo is not all Aaron took home to Canada after a year of studying at Griffith University's Logan campus in 2012. His Bachelor of Human Services degree is also being put to invaluable use.

Aaron came to Griffith via a transfer agreement with his Canadian college. He now works at Queen's University in Kingston as part of its Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC).

"We engage with Year 7-9 and 11-12 students who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and who are on the autism spectrum," says Aaron.

"We help them transition from elementary school to high school and from high school to post-secondary. I helped develop and create a Transition Resource Guide to help students with disabilities transition into post-secondary institutions in Ontario."

It's rewarding work and Aaron comes to it with a wisdom born of his own experience with learning disabilities, including ADHD and a severe problem with basic numeration that almost curtailed his education.

"I didn't know how I was going to get through high school, let alone go on to university," says Aaron.

"However, once I was diagnosed—after going through the same facility that now employs me—I learned more about my condition and what was possible, then immediately set my sights on greater things.

"Many students, and I was one of them, never expect to go on to further education

because of their disability. They don't think it's possible.

"The programs in place at RARC are helping to change what the students believe is possible.

"To see the transformation in them as they gain a better understanding of their own disability, understand their rights and responsibilities and especially the extent of the opportunities before them, I won't lie, I've cried. It's truly wonderful.

"And if they still have doubts, I tell them I understand how it feels. I can tell them my story."

Since returning to Canada, Aaron has also launched a public speaking company, ABtalks, through which he further engages

with teachers, student teachers, parents and people with disabilities.

"As much as I want to demonstrate what people with learning disabilities go through, I also hope to convince people with disabilities that by knowing their rights and believing in themselves they can achieve more than they ever believed," he says.

"The ensuing confidence has a positive ripple effect through entire families. I've seen it.

"Griffith was so important in teaching me and supporting me. It's helped me make my way personally and professionally.

"I can't wait to come back for a visit. If you see me, just say "G'day mate" and start talking and I'll be a happy man."



Aaron Bailey is using his Griffith degree to help young people with learning disabilities



Daniel Lyons is taking his arts degree to the RAAF

## WORK OF ARTS

It's not every Bachelor of Arts degree that leads to a career in the Royal Australian Air Force, but new recruit Daniel Lyons says his study at Griffith University has allowed his future to take flight.

Daniel will enter the RAAF as a communications and information systems controller, a role requiring him to manage, monitor and maintain local area networks and wide area computer networks, and also to operate communication facilities and protect classified data.

"The critical thinking skills I developed throughout my Bachelor of Arts degree have definitely given me the edge in getting this role," he says.

When he began his degree, Daniel was keen to further his love of literature, but soon discovered another interest.

"In my first year I took an elective in Islamic Studies. It really challenged my preconceptions about Islam so I took that as another major."

Daniel believes one of the advantages of studying a Bachelor of Arts at Griffith is the diversity of courses on offer.

"Students can study so many different courses and discover new areas of interest, which in turn provide new opportunities for learning," he says.

"For me, being able to combine literature and Islamic Studies meant I gained a better understanding of the world.

"Literature has given me the ability to harness the power of language and improved my writing and critical reading skills, while Islamic Studies has helped me understand one of the world's largest and probably most misunderstood cultures."

Capping off his three years of study, in early 2015 Daniel travelled to Malaysia, Turkey, Spain and Morocco as part of the School of Humanities Muslim World Study tour.

Led by Associate Professor Halim Rane, Daniel and 11 fellow students visited mosques, museums, historical sites, markets and other places of social, political and economic significance in each country.

"The study tour was absolutely fantastic," says Daniel. "It was so good to put what we'd learnt in class into practice and experience the culture we'd been learning about."

## JOURNALISM IN ACTION

Griffith journalism students enjoyed the unique experience of providing coverage of the G20 World Leaders Summit in Brisbane.

Journalism students worked alongside professional journalists from Fairfax and The Conversation in the Griffith School of Humanities Journalism Media Centre set up especially for the arrival of the world's most powerful leaders.

The immersive experience allowed the students to attend the Summit as accredited media, to participate in press conferences and to supply content for websites, audio and video coverage.

The students covered addresses by the world leaders, seminars and conferences associated with the G20 as well as external events, and even protests by some groups.

Third year journalism student Audrey Courty was excited to be a part of the G20 coverage.

"The practical experience that this internship offered will be invaluable in helping me grow professionally, especially when it comes to achieving my goal of becoming a foreign correspondent."

Operating near the heart of the event, the Griffith School of Humanities Journalism Media Centre was created at the South Bank campus, providing a specialist industry work placement for third-year journalism students. Journalism academics shared the roles of Chief of Staff with professional journalists, guiding the students on their assignments and their delivery.

Journalism student Amy Mitchell-Whittington said covering the G20 was an exceptional opportunity.

"I feel extremely privileged to be given the opportunity to be involved in the G20. It was a once in a lifetime chance to be a part of a global news network."



Forensic biologist Kirsty Wright and School of Natural Sciences student Felicity Poulsen are honouring Australian servicemen with their research

## IN THE NAME OF THE SOLDIERS

In 2015, the centenary of the first Anzac Day added even greater meaning to this annual commemoration. Felicity Poulsen's research is also honouring those who served. **Melinda Rogers** reports

Felicity Poulsen knows her grandfather was one of the lucky ones to have returned home from war.

This explains the Griffith honours student's passion for her latest research project: helping the Australian Defence Force identify unrecovered Australian servicemen.

With the centenary of the first Anzac Day marked in April 2015, Felicity says it was timely to highlight the importance of ensuring every Australian soldier received a proper burial—even 100 years after they died.

"Identification is the ultimate goal in this research," she says. "To be able to give a name back and have a soldier buried with dignity and respect I know would mean the world to their families.

"My grandfather fought at Kokoda during World War Two and he is very excited that

I am part of something like this. And I am very proud to be involved."

Felicity, who is completing a Bachelor of Forensic Science, is working with Griffith senior lecturer Ms Kirsty Wright on Unrecovered War Casualties—Army, the Australian Army's official response to matters associated with Australian servicemen who remain unaccounted for.

Ms Wright is a forensic biologist with experience in missing persons and disaster victim identification. She previously worked as part of the forensic operation after the 2002 Bali bombings and was a member of the Tsunami Victim Identification Team following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in Thailand.

Ms Wright is also an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force and is assisting the ADF to improve forensic capabilities for current conflicts and the identification of historical remains.

Felicity is the third honours student to assist with the important research. Her project is investigating the paternal side of ancestry DNA used in the identification of soldiers, particularly those who fought in the Asia-Pacific region during World War Two.

Ms Wright, based at Nathan campus, says due to the remains of soldiers being so degraded, modern forensic techniques are not useful.

"We are helping develop new methods and new research that will be helpful to the military," she says.

"If we can help identify and recover these soldiers and give them a respectful burial, it is really important to modern Australia.

"I also think it is important for current soldiers to know the Australian Government will make every effort possible to recover and bring them home no matter when or where they fought."



The one-off customised 3D-printed bicycle



Designer and creator, James Novak

## RIDING HIGH

Queensland College of Art graduate James Novak is winning world attention for his work with 3D printing

As 3D printing continues to transform technological capability across a spectrum of industries, Griffith University graduate James Novak finds himself the subject of increasing plaudits and exciting potential.

One highlight came in May 2015 when the Queensland College of Art lecturer and industrial design PhD candidate won one of the world's most prestigious awards in additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing.

Designer and creator of the FIX3D customised bicycle frame, James received the 2015 RTAM/SME Dick Aubin Distinguished Paper Award at RAPID, the world's pre-eminent industry and academic event for 3D printing, held at the Long Beach Convention Center in California.

The award recognises innovation in the application of additive manufacturing design, processes and techniques and continues the success for James since he created the first version of the bike for his Griffith University honours project in 2014.

Such is the interest in the FIX3D and the commercial potential it represents, the bike recently featured in the Making a Difference/A Difference in Making exhibition at the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels, and a version is also on display at the new Griffith University Red Zone on the Gold Coast campus.

James says the bike is an example of how 3D technology is providing a vision of the very near future.

"More than anything, I'd like my work to be an example of what we should be 3D printing," he says.

"It opens up the ability to create one-off, customisable pieces that may be lighter and stronger than traditional frames through the use of complex lattice structures.

"The bike speaks volumes on the role this technology can play in saving energy and resources in the future of mobility."

Program Leader of Industrial Design, and Convenor of 3D Design at the QCA, Dr Jennifer Loy, says the Dick Aubin Distinguished Paper Award is a huge accolade for James and an acknowledgment of the credibility of Griffith University's role in education on designing for 3D printing.



Red Zone, Nathan, with a series of interactive stations

## IMAGINE A VERY RED FUTURE

The new Red Zone interactive centres at Griffith's two largest campuses have become compelling focal points for the university.

More than 5,000 people visited the Red Zones at the Gold Coast and Nathan campus in the first two months since they opened this year.

The Red Zones provide an exciting and immersive learning experience through interactive technology and massive projection displays.

Celebrating Griffith's passion for the colour red, the new facilities showcase research and teaching expertise across the University, and are open to students and staff, as well as visitors from schools and community groups, corporate partners and international guests.

The theme behind the centres is "Imagine The Future"—a place where the creative application of technologies can be experienced and explored. They also

act as a geographical focal point for the campuses, established already as the start or finish points for campus visits.

Queensland Science and Innovation Minister Leeanne Enoch launched the Gold Coast Science and Tech Fair at the Red Zone in July, indicating its quickly rising profile in the IT community.

Students are using the Red Zones to collaborate on projects with other students, relax and learn more about what is happening at the University.

The Gold Coast Red Zone is located in the Griffith Health Centre (G40) and the Nathan Red Zone is at the Sir Samuel Griffith Centre (N78).

Among the highlights of the Red Zones, visitors can:

- Use body movements to make music via Kinect motion sensors and a giant screen display

- Experience the augmented reality sandbox where you can create rivers, mountains and valleys and see what happens when you make it rain

- Hear the future of music with work from Popular Music students from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

- Immerse yourself in hidden worlds by exploring ancient rock art sites and discovering some of the world's oldest cave drawings

- Imagine the future of water and rivers through an interactive water catchment simulator used by the Australian Rivers Institute

- Get on your bike and discover what pedal power really means.

You can see more and even book the rooms for use at [griffith.edu.au/redzone](http://griffith.edu.au/redzone)



New Chancellor Mr Henry Smerdon



Retiring Chancellor Ms Leneen Forde

## A GREAT LEGACY, A BRIGHT FUTURE

On June 1 2015, Mr Henry Smerdon AM DUniv became Griffith University's fifth Chancellor, following the retirement of The Honourable Ms Leneen Forde AC. Here Mr Smerdon discusses the honour of the role and the challenges ahead

While Griffith University's new Chancellor, Mr Henry Smerdon AM DUniv, left high school at the end of Year 10, he says he has never stopped learning and that life is one great and ongoing educational experience.

It's this kind of enthusiasm, combined with the wisdom and skills gained over a long career encompassing business, government, education and the arts, that Mr Smerdon brings to the role of Chancellor.

He believes Griffith University was born to be different, and he conveys strong views on the potential arising from that difference.

"Griffith has made the unique educational experience a cornerstone of who we are and I suspect that is what the University will continue to be known for," says Mr Smerdon.

"We seek to produce the unique graduate, one who understands the social issues and

the social and community responsibility that come with being a Griffith graduate.

"I particularly want our graduates to be able to say: 'Griffith played a major part in who I am today. It gave me the opportunity. It believed in me and supported me. And I was valued and continue to be valued for the contribution I make to the community around me.'"

Clearly Mr Smerdon is excited by the challenge ahead, which comes after the retirement of The Honourable Ms Leneen Forde AC after 15 years of outstanding leadership and guidance.

"Leneen has been a great Chancellor and leaves a great legacy," says Mr Smerdon. "As Deputy Chancellor, I certainly enjoyed working closely with her over the past 15 years in what were challenging but also

very exhilarating times in which we saw much growth and success for Griffith.

"We have built a great platform for the future underpinned by a strong balance sheet and disciplined fiscal management that creates the opportunities for our wonderful and talented staff to deliver high quality academic and research programs that have been the hallmark of our success."

Though still a young university, Griffith continues to grow in terms of student numbers, facilities and reputation. On a more philosophical level, the new Chancellor is proud of the University's commitment to social justice and education opportunities.

"I am a strong believer in the proposition that every person who genuinely aspires to

obtaining a university qualification ought to have the opportunity to do so," he says.

"At Griffith, we work hard to achieve this. We have created numerous pathways for aspiring individuals to join our university. Our mantra is "Know more, Do more" and it is something we truly believe."

Mr Smerdon's views on the value of education were shaped initially by his father, who despite the brevity of his own formal education believed passionately in its value.

"To me, education provides the key to opportunities to live a productive and fulfilling life. It is instrumental to achieving our life aspirations, no matter how big or small," says Mr Smerdon.

"It is important in skills development for career purposes, but also for knowledge enhancement and personal growth.

"I don't think anyone doubts the value of formal education and the part it plays in improving our quality of life through economic prosperity, better healthcare and the like. It is why the community is prepared to devote significant resources to foster educational opportunities for all.

"I do have a slightly wider view of education. Important though formal education is, I see each day as an opportunity to learn something new."

Finally, the new Chancellor says that while Griffith has positioned itself as the tertiary provider of choice in the key Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor, there is no room for complacency.

"The multi-campus environment to service the area is not without its challenges," he says. "Our task continues to be to provide the high quality products and services that the community expects and wants.

"We have worked hard to provide strong bonds with our marketplace and from where I sit the future looks great and I am looking forward to continuing to be a part of it."

Mr Henry Smerdon AM DUniv was a senior executive at Queensland Treasury during the 1980s and '90s, serving as Under Treasurer and Under Secretary from 1989-1994. He was the Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Investment Corporation from 1995-1998 and his contribution to finance, education and arts sectors was recognised in 2010 when he was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM).



## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT IN FOCUS

I trust you have enjoyed reading the latest edition of your Griffith University magazine.

Alumni are at the heart of the Griffith story, as I was reminded during a recent event to mark 40 years of our four foundation programs—Science, Humanities, Modern Asian Studies and Environmental Science.

I was pleased to meet pioneering graduates from these cohorts and to learn how their passions as undergraduates had translated into successful and satisfying careers. Some surprising outcomes too! They are great ambassadors for their disciplines, and for Griffith.

A growing number of alumni are starring in our new television commercials and also the Know More in 60 Seconds initiative. These bite-sized videos allow Griffith students, staff and graduates to discuss many fascinating topics. They have attracted hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube. Check them out to learn something new.

Earlier this year, the University launched its first Engagement Plan, which focuses on how we can better connect with our key stakeholders. The Plan's goals include the creation of new alumni communities, including those to support our Logan campus and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates. We are working to improve our Alumni Awards programs and to better engage with industry to create mutually beneficial work-integrated learning opportunities.

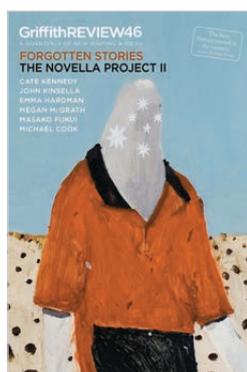
Enclosed in this edition is a reminder about our Annual Appeal, which supports hard-working and deserving students through Griffith Futures Scholarships. Due to the support of our donors, we offered more Griffith Futures Scholarships this year than ever before and we hope those numbers continue to grow. Every donation makes a difference. Thank you to all who give so generously.

Next time you are on the Nathan or Gold Coast campuses, please visit the Red Zones, which showcase our research and teaching using the latest interactive technology. They are hands on, very red, and lots of fun. I'd love to hear your feedback.

**Professor Martin Betts**, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement)  
dvc-engagement@griffith.edu.au

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