



Charles Sturt
University

Thrive

Charles Sturt University Alumni Magazine
Summer 2023

Jack Buckley

The pharmacist flying
high to deliver care to
rural communities

One of a kindness

Karina Gray is driving social
transformation in the Tropical North

Boys to the Bush

The rural blokes connecting
troubled youth to better futures



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Charles Sturt University Alumni Magazine

With special thanks to all those who contributed to this Summer 2023 edition.

Contact us

Charles Sturt University Alumni
Locked Bag 588, Wagga Wagga
NSW 2678, Australia
Email: alumni@csu.edu.au

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of *Thrive*, Charles Sturt University's magazine for alumni and friends.

As the year draws to a close, it is with great pleasure that we extend a warm welcome to the final edition of the Charles Sturt Alumni magazine for 2023. This year has been a testament to the resilience, innovation, and outstanding achievements of our esteemed alumni who continue to embody the spirit of Australia's leading regional university.

At Charles Sturt University, we take immense pride in our commitment to advancing the careers of our students, fostering research excellence, and driving regional outcomes with global impact. Our commitment to regional education and innovation is unwavering. The stories featured in this edition exemplify the diverse accomplishments of our alumni, showcasing the incredible contributions they make to their professions and communities.

This edition highlights some of the diverse ways our alumni are impacting our regional communities.

We recently spoke with Jack Buckley, a rural pharmacist who has not only embraced the challenges of regional healthcare but has literally soared to new heights in the field (p4) to Juliette who is exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence and regional development within Charles Sturt's Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Futures Institute (p30).

We were moved by Adam DeMamial's powerful narrative of community impact that he and his team are leading with initiatives that connect troubled youth to better futures (p22), and inspired by Kate Smith and her mission to unite regional communities through the arts, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity (p26).

Graeme Sempendorfer shared with us his exciting adventure of becoming a TV host for Channel Ten program *Hunted* (p8) and in we are in awe of Kate Constantine's incredible art and creative journey, in the face of adversity, illness and claiming her identity (18).

We celebrate our 2023 alumni award winners (p10). We urge you to consider nominating yourself or any outstanding alum you know for the 2024 Alumni Awards. The 2024 Distinguished Alumni Awards will open in March – we would love to recognise and share your successes and inspire the next generation of Charles Sturt alumni.

Thank you to those who have donated your expertise, energy and donations to our students. There are many ways to use your talents to support the next generation of alumni. Our Alumni Give program is always looking for new volunteers. Find out more on page 29.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Charles Sturt University community. Your achievements inspire us, and we are excited to share these incredible stories with you. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Thrive*. If you have a story to share, please reach out at alumni@csu.edu.au.

Naomi Ricketts

Alumni Relations Officer

Meet our team



Sarah Ansell

Director of
Advancement



Carly Evans

Associate Director
of Advancement



Naomi Ricketts

Alumni Relations
Managing Editor, *Thrive*



Ali Hill

Alumni Relations



Stacey Fish

Development Officer



Craig Johnson

Manager Advancement
Services

Rural Pharmacist reaches great heights

Jack Buckley, dubbed "the flying pharmacist" has been in the air, after receiving an urgent call to action from the government to deliver critical Covid-19 vaccines to communities in regional and rural NSW.



Jack Buckley hails from the New South Wales South Coast town of Batemans Bay. After graduating in 2017 with a Bachelor of Pharmacy at Charles Sturt's Orange campus, he was convinced to give rural pharmacy a crack for six months.

Six years down the track, Jack has settled into life in the regional town of Forbes NSW, where he is now the managing partner of three stores within the Life Pharmacy Group network.

Besides Pharmacy, Jack's passion is flying, "I have my pilot's licence and love to go flying. I've been flying since I was 15 years-old, before I could legally drive."

Jack was first able started flying medical supplies and staff to towns affected by the Lachlan River, NSW flood crisis in 2022.

This time Mr Buckley and his team have been hitting the road and the sky to vaccinate hundreds of aged care residents against Covid-19, at the request of the NSW Government.

Jack has been a pilot for 15 years and was able to combine his hobby of flying, and passion for community and preventative health, to help these aged care residents in need.

"I've been flying since I was 15 years-old, before I could legally drive. To be able to put my hobby of flying, and my passion for community and preventive health together is incredibly rewarding."

The Forbes pharmacist and pilot chartered his own four-seater Piper Pathfinder to continue the rollout to remote parts of the states' west.

"Never underestimate what community pharmacy can offer to patients ... pharmacists are willing to help ease the burden".

Jack Buckley
Bachelor of Pharmacy, 2017

"We received quite an urgent call from the Department of Health to help vaccinate more than 600 aged care residents, in 12 locations, within two weeks," Mr Buckley said.

"It was important that we moved as quickly and efficiently as possible, medical services are under such extreme pressure in these regional and rural hubs".

The call to action came after the government recommended an additional Covid-19 booster for all adults aged 75 and over.

"The patients were very grateful, very receptive, and very welcoming," Mr Buckley said.

While on the road for Bush Summit earlier in July, Mr Buckley spoke about the importance of pharmacists in remote areas where access to medical services are limited.

"Never underestimate what community pharmacy can offer to patients," he urged, "pharmacists are willing to help ease the burden".



Photo: Toby Zerna, courtesy of Life Pharmacy Group

One of a kindness

Driving social transformation in the Tropical North

Karina Gray has a clear vision: to ignite social change by providing career pathways for women to do what they love, where they love.

"I spent some time working in youth programs on the Tiwi Islands and, inspired by my bosses and mentors Maurice Rioli and Charlie King, I realised there must be a better way to do business that supports young people with their dreams and career pathways," she says.

Karina founded Starwin Collective in 2010 when the concept of social enterprise was still emerging. Convinced that she could create a new model of business, she became a consultant for community change, a "solution broker" supporting local entities to do business better. Channelling the income generated into youth leadership programs, she opened her first community enterprise shopfront in Darwin in 2013.

Starwin's footprint grew to encompass a second site in Port Douglas in 2018, however was forced to close in 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year is the tenth anniversary of the Darwin site, and in that time we have supported hundreds of young people to kickstart their careers along with hundreds of micro-enterprises in their startup phase," Karina says.

The remarkable venture, led entirely by women, is uniquely focused on growing a 'Made with Kindness Economy' in the Tropical North. Founded on what Karina calls the "two kind" model, it ensures positive impacts reverberate in two directions – benefiting both the enterprise and the community and creating a ripple effect for collective change. Over the years, it has provided consultancy services to more than 80 community organisations and funded a diversity of programs to develop purpose-driven young leaders.

In 2019, Karina led the business' transition to its MK Eco by Starwin model, with spaces in Darwin and the Daintree supporting local makers and creators to showcase and sell corporate and cultural gifts. The social enterprise also offers custom workshops, cultural tour experiences and corporate gift packages. Starwin consistently pays it forward with initiatives like Each One,

Teach One Career Mentoring Program and Higher Attire for Young Stars Project.

In 2023, Starwin was named the Northern Territory's sole recipient of the Australia Post Local Business Hero Awards in recognition of its extraordinary impact. Karina now volunteers behind the scenes as a mentor for the next generation as the dynamic sector enters its next phase.

"The world of social impact enterprise has changed so much since we started out in 2010 – it's a whole new world. I advise young people seeking to follow this path to go in with an open heart but sharp mind and identify where they can best spread kindness and effect meaningful change."

Before founding Starwin in 2010, Karina dedicated over a decade to working in youth, family, and community support services across all three tiers of government.

She says her journey was enriched by her Charles Sturt Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship studied by distance education, equipping her with the skills to leap into her role as a social enterprise founder.

"I loved the course and the content. It gave me a great foundation and inspiration for starting my own social impact enterprise. The part of my Graduate Certificate I appreciated most was learning how to conceive how business can do good in the world. How to plan effectively and how to seek global approaches for local solutions."

Undertaking this further study gave Karina the confidence and skills she needed, but most importantly the inspiration to put ideas into action and seek thought leaders out. This put her in rooms with remarkable people when social impact enterprise was in its early stages of development.

"I think the greatest thing we can learn is to listen deeply and be lifelong learners and I have always attempted to pay this forward, embedding and living it in our business model with an Each One, Teach One philosophy."





“I think the greatest thing we can learn is to listen deeply and be lifelong learners.”

Karina Gray
Graduate Certificate in
Entrepreneurship, 2008

Photo courtesy of Charles Darwin University



Television, policing, fire investigations and a new degree – all in a days work

A career change ‘leap of faith’ taught Graeme Simpfendorfer that the most important outcome from saying ‘yes’ to the unexpected is what you can learn.

Graeme recently celebrated his 2023 graduation with a Graduate Certificate in Fire Investigation from the Charles Sturt Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security.

“I completed the Graduate Certificate in Fire Investigation with great support from the University, particularly my course coordinator Ms Belinda Jones and Associate Professor Valerie Ingham in the Charles Sturt Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security,” he said.

“My experience with the University was so positive, caring and understanding as a mature age student re-entering the world of studying; I graduated with fond memories and the highest sense of self achievement.”

Graeme has since started his own investigations and consultancy business, specialising in fire investigations, and working with amazing and skilful people in this field.

“It has been a challenging time leaving a family like policing and I am

sure many can agree that the loss of networks, friendships and even identity can be difficult,” he said.

Graeme found himself offered an opportunity to audition for the Channel TEN TV series *Hunted Australia* as the Lead Investigator.

“I wasn’t too keen to start with, but close friends and my kids convinced me to take a chance and say ‘Yes!’. I was fortunate enough to obtain the role and what an experience it has been,” he said.



"I encourage more people to take a chance, say 'yes' to some things they normally would not and if it doesn't work out, that's okay; it is what you can learn from it that is most important."

Graeme Simpfendorfer
Bachelor of Policing, 2011
Graduate Certificate in Fire Investigation, 2023

"I wanted to learn more and eventually completed the Bachelor of Policing (Investigations) with Charles Sturt University as a mature age and distance education student. Trying to manage full-time employment, life and studies, and eventually being promoted to detective in 2004."

Graeme said when he realised that for his own well-being his time in policing had come to an end, he had no idea what he was going to do.

"This desire to study re-emerged for me years later after I was drawn to the science and field of fire

investigations following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria and I wanted to expand my knowledge, skills and networks in this specialist field of fire investigations."

Graeme states that everyone's educational journey is different, and encourages people to learn at any stage of their lives.

"Do not let others influence your dreams, desires and especially your education. Never stop learning; I have heard many times that 'We can't afford to train our people', whereas I believe you cannot afford not to!"

Graeme's journey has had its highs and lows, but what he can say now is that backing yourself and taking a chance by saying 'yes' can open doors and opportunities.

"I have found resetting goals is a refreshing and exciting process. I have had to work hard at embracing this, but can attest to staying on course, as the results can be something you never expected. Go for it!"

"An amazing new 'family' has emerged in this professional space. I am learning so much about the industry and it is opening doors for me to achieve and set new goals.

"After this experience, which has been a 'leap of faith', I encourage more people to take a chance, say 'yes' to things they normally would not and if it doesn't work out, that's okay; it is what you learn from it that is most important."

Graeme joined Victoria Police as a 20-year-old, affording him the opportunity to create his own 'new story' away from his childhood home of Wagga Wagga.

"I thrived and knew from the police academy graduation that the choices I made were the right ones," he said.

In his career with Victoria Police Graeme was awarded the National Emergency Medal (Black Saturday bushfires, 2009), National Medal, National Police Service Medal, and a Victoria Police Ethical Service Medal.

2023 Alumni Awards Winners

We recognise the outstanding achievements of our alumni and celebrate the remarkable contributions they are making to their communities and professions, whether in their local region or the global stage.



Professional Excellence: Anna Coren

An exceptional, multi-award-winning journalist with an unwavering commitment to shining a light on important issues, Anna Coren has rightly earned her place at the top of her craft.

Anna has reported from the frontlines of some of the world's most pivotal events, from raging conflicts to natural disasters and political crises. Making an early name for herself in regional media and as a reporter and presenter for Nine and Seven, she became a much-loved face of *Today Tonight* and *Sunrise* and covered major events including the Bali Bombings.

Her enviable ability to report on complex critical incidents with sensitivity, empathy, and professionalism saw Anna appointed United States Correspondent for Seven News in 2005. Delivering insightful coverage of globally significant stories including the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War. It was the beginning of what would become a stellar career at the peak of international journalism.

Since 2008, Anna has been Anchor and International Correspondent for CNN International in Hong Kong, where she is an integral member of the global

media giant's Asia-Pacific headquarters. Here she has covered some of the most defining events of our time, from the war in Afghanistan to the Hong Kong protests, Australia's catastrophic bushfires, the Thai cave rescue and the Cardinal George Pell child sex abuse trial, and interviewed world leaders, artists, actors, and sportspeople.

It is Anna's fearless reporting from Afghanistan that has most defined her remarkable career. She reported from the frontlines alongside US Special Forces, returning to cover the withdrawal of US troops, and was on the ground when the Taliban closed secondary schools to girls just days after proclaiming their reopening.

Deeply invested in telling the stories of life in the aftermath, Anna brought a news-weary world's focus to the humanitarian crisis facing Afghan people made desperate by poverty and starvation following the withdrawal of international aid, including a sharp rise in the sale of young girls into marriage. Her heart-wrenching coverage of the handover of 9-year-old Parwana to a 55-year-old man sparked global awareness and support, culminating in the rescue of the young girl and her mother and five siblings and a renewed impetus to address the child marriage crisis.

Anna earned an Emmy Award for Parwana's story and a Gracie Award for the follow-up piece covering her dramatic rescue. These join numerous other accolades signifying her leadership and professional excellence on the global stage, including an RTS Award and Emmy nomination for her breaking news coverage of the Hong Kong protests, and Anchor of the Year – twice – and Best News Story at the Asian Television Awards.

Anna has recently directed her first independent documentary film titled *The Noble Guardian*, tracing the journey of Nobel Peace Prize-nominated activist Mahbouba Seraj and her work running the last remaining women's shelter in Kabul. She has also shared her experiences and insights in a dedicated chapter of the book *In Her Eyes* alongside other influential female journalists, and is a true inspiration for future generations of investigative and news reporters.

At the heart of Anna's global success and influence is her deep personal belief that journalists have a responsibility to tell the truth, expose atrocities, and bring important stories to light. Beyond simply reporting the news, she strives to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by the stories she covers, both through her own actions and by enabling others to see, feel, and act.



“This prestigious accolade not only signifies the recognition of my achievements but also reinforces my commitment to fostering transformative research and inspiring future generations.”

Research Excellence: Dr Bin Liang

A visionary data scientist at the forefront of data analytics, machine learning, and computer vision research, Dr Bin Liang is generating innovative solutions to complex challenges facing industry and society.

Bin is determined to deliver translational research with real-world impact through deep engagement with industry. Since graduating with a PhD in Computer Science in 2016, he has applied his extraordinary skills in predictive modelling, data processing, and data mining algorithms to solve multifaceted problems for business – first as a postdoctoral fellow in CSIRO's data and digital specialist arm, Data61, and now as a senior lecturer and esteemed researcher in the Data Science Institute at University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

In his relatively young career, Bin has already earned a reputation for global leadership in his field for cutting-edge R&D projects in partnership with diverse industries, from utilities and transport to earth sciences and sport. He is perhaps best known for his ground-breaking work with Sydney Water, where he has analysed smart sensor data streams to save over 10,000 megalitres of water each year at a cost-saving of over \$20 million, and developed a novel water pipe failure

prediction tool that has revolutionised maintenance strategies for anticipated savings of \$2.6 billion over ten years.

The impact of Bin's research on our economy, environment, and society will only continue to grow. He is currently Chief Investigator on an array of transformative projects funded by competitive grants, including exploring the potential of deep learning in the earth sciences, mapping tree coverage using high-resolution satellite imagery, developing a tool to unlock Australia's landmass for carbon sequestration, and integrating leak sensing technology and leak break analytics into Sydney Water's business-as-usual practices.

Bin has also recently had a collaborative proposal accepted by Connectivity Innovation Network to support a trailblazing PhD study on 3D flood mapping, leveraging the power of deep learning, advanced sensing techniques, sustainability, and data science to revolutionise the way we understand and respond to flood events.

Widely published in high-ranking journals, Bin also shares his research

findings directly with industry through prominent industry events and trade publications. He actively inspires other young researchers and is a dedicated mentor to research students, creating an inclusive, collaborative, and nurturing environment in which their research passions and contributions can flourish.

Bin's research excellence has been recognised with a slew of awards, including the coveted Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Excellence in Data Science Award, AWA R&D Excellence Award (NSW), AWA Research Innovation Awards, UTS Mid-Career Researcher Capability Development Initiative Award, UTS Medal for Research Impact, and the Victorian iAwards Industrial & Primary Industries Merit. He was also a finalist for the AWA Young Water Professional of the Year Award 2021-22 and for Best Paper at the 16th International Conference on Control, Automation, Robotics and Vision in 2020.

Bin continues to demonstrate admirable research leadership, collaboration, and academic rigour. Through developing data-driven solutions to tackle critical challenges, he is contributing meaningfully to advancing scientific knowledge and enhancing the world we live in.





Social Impact: Linda Burney

With her trademark passion, empathy, and strong moral compass, Linda has brought humanity to politics and dedicated her career and life to advancing social justice and Indigenous rights in Australia.

A proud Wiradjuri woman, Linda was the first Aboriginal person elected to the NSW Parliament in 2003. She served over 13 years as Member for Canterbury, where she drove crucial policy and reform across an array of high-profile ministerial portfolios including Community Services, Youth, and Women. She then spent five years as Deputy Leader of the Opposition before winning the culturally diverse Federal seat of Barton in 2016, making history again as the first Indigenous woman elected to Australia's House of Representatives.

Linda used her maiden speech – the opening delivered in her native Wiradjuri language – to promise Australians that she would push for education, reduced juvenile imprisonment, and an end to domestic violence. She also wore a traditional cloak displaying her personal totem, the white cockatoo; fittingly, this noisy messenger bird is also the Charles Sturt mascot, representing unity, a sense of community, and pride. Linda brings her lived experience to the political arena, driven to ensure that the struggles of disadvantaged communities aren't forgotten in the decision-making process.

As Minister for Indigenous Australians at a pivotal point in our nation's

history, Linda has approached the important task of implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart and establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament with clarity and care. She is a robust voice urging us to embrace this one-in-a-generation opportunity to create a stronger and more unified nation for all and help close the gaps in health, education, and opportunities for First Nations peoples.

Though she has spent the last two decades working to drive genuine change through politics, Linda's impact stretches much further back. She was the first Aboriginal student to complete a teaching degree at Mitchell College (an antecedent to Charles Sturt) in 1979. After graduating she taught at Lethbridge Park Public School in Western Sydney. Within two years she had been tapped by the NSW Department of Education to join its Aboriginal Education Unit and develop and implement the NSW Department of Education Aboriginal Education Policy – the first of its kind in Australia.

Linda became Executive Officer and then President of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, where she led a paradigm shift in Aboriginal education and seeded a long overdue transformation in how Australian history

is taught in schools. She also spent four years leading the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, first as Deputy Director General then Director General, before transitioning to politics.

A natural leader, Linda is widely respected in the community and on all sides of politics and has served on the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, the NSW Board of Studies, the ATSIC National Social Justice Task Force, the National Council for Aboriginal Recognition, the SBS Board, and numerous advisory committees. She was awarded a Doctor of Education (honoris causa) by Charles Sturt in 2002 in recognition of her immense contribution to Aboriginal education and counts the NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement Award (2014), Meritorious Service to Public Education and Training Award (2010), and the Centenary Medal (2001) among her many honours. She is also founding Director of the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre.

With over three decades of sustained social impact, Linda is a shining inspiration to others – and young Indigenous Australians in particular – showing just what can be achieved by rejecting limitations and rising to your own potential.

Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Creativity: Craig Ford

An ethical hacker, security engineer, cyber security journalist, and author, Craig Ford is driving a fresh approach in the information security industry in pursuit of a safer and more equitable society.

Craig is currently Chief Technology Officer at Baidam Solutions, an Indigenous-owned and operated information technology business delivering industry-leading cyber security services to private and public sector and not-for-profit clients. In this role, he leads the company's technical services component and plays a central part in creating an open and inclusive workplace.

Since joining Baidam three years ago, Craig has embraced the company's mission to bridge the gap for First Nations peoples. He is dedicated to building pathways and securing opportunities for young Indigenous men and women to pursue rewarding careers in cyber security, including through the company's recently launched Security Operations Centre, the first in Australia to be Indigenous codedigned.

Throughout his twenty-year career, Craig has developed vast expertise

and an innovative approach to solving complex problems. He has worked in both incident response (blue team) and performed ethical hacking engagements (Red Team) for real-world testing of clients' systems. He has worked as a virtual CISO, conducted high-level security audits, and brought systems in line with international security framework standards.

Craig was named Australian Information Security Association (AISA) Cyber Security Professional of the Year in 2020 in recognition of his industry leadership and a Male Champion of Change, special recognition award in the Australian Women in Security Awards in 2021. Last year he was among Top Cyber News magazine's inaugural 40 under 40, and recently became the only Australian ever featured on the global publication's cover.

A prolific cyber security journalist, Craig is a vocal advocate for a more open cyber security industry. He has

written almost 100 articles for CSO illuminating a diversity of topics for broad audiences and is a regular columnist for Women in Security Magazine and contributor to Cyber Today, Careers with STEM, Top Cyber News, SecureGOV and Cyber Australia.

Also, a best-selling author, Craig's popular book series *A Hacker, I Am* offers a fresh and creative perspective on cyber security, making it fun and accessible to anyone seeking to learn how to stay safe in our digital world. His second series, a cyberpunk/hacker fantasy *Foresight* and its sequel *Shadow*, delves into the mind of a female hacker to encourage young women with an interest in cyber security.

Craig's third series, co-authored with Caity Randal, is *The Shadow World*. A cyber awareness book created for primary school students and their teachers and carers, the book unpacks online safety in an engaging way to explore topics including cyberbullying, cyber stalkers, and strangers online. An instant bestseller, Craig secured industry support to put thousands of free copies in the hands of schools across the country.

Driven to shape the wider industry's future for the better, Craig has served as an executive committee and board member for AISA for the last three years and a mentor for the Australian Women in Security Network. He was also an online learning adviser and unit coordinator in Western Sydney University's Cyber Security program and a member of Charles Sturt's Industry Advisory Panel, where he brings his considerable expertise and talent to enhance cyber security education for the next generation of industry professionals. →





Young Alumni: Aimee Snowden

Aimee Snowden has proven herself an innovative young leader in agriculture and an advocate for agricultural education.

Growing up on her family farm in Tocumwal, Aimee graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Business Management in 2016 after studying via distance. Upon graduating Aimee worked in agricultural outreach and education initiatives for Charles Sturt University in north-east Victoria, South Australia's Yorke Peninsula with Regional Skills Training, and Central Queensland for CQUniversity. In 2014, she hit upon a unique idea: using LEGO® as a tool to engage a new generation with life on the land.

Through her initiative Little Brick Pastoral, Aimee puts her LEGO® farmer minifigures and friends to work showcasing the incredible diversity of Australia's food and fibre industries and the vast array of careers it offers. Harnessing the ever-popular world of LEGO® photography, she creates and photographs immersive, entertaining scenes reflecting agricultural life – from feeding the cows to planting crops, stacking hay, fixing fences and farm vehicles, and so much more – and shares them with a devoted legion of fans via her website, blog, and social media.

She has since expanded Little Brick Pastoral's offering to encompass teaching resources, delivering talks in schools and at events, and participating in a range of other outreach activities designed to engage people of all ages with agricultural technology and modern farming practices.

Her innovative approach to primary industries education has marked her as a young leader poised to contribute significantly to the sector in the long term. She was selected to represent Australia at the Global 2015 Youth Ag-Summit, was a Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Rural Achiever at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, and a finalist in the NSW/ACT AgriFutures Rural Women's Awards. Aimee was selected to go to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) World Food Forum in Rome in October of this year.

Aimee was selected by the National Farmers Federation as a 2030 Emerging Leader, securing a prized place in the organisation's development program for emerging leaders in partnership with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. She was also named an ABC Heywire

Trailblazer in recognition of her status as a young regional changemaker.

This year, Aimee is taking her passion for immersive agricultural education to the world as the recipient of the Nuffield Scholarship, Australia's most prestigious agricultural research scholarship program. It is a career-defining achievement that will see her travel to North America, Europe, and New Zealand, where she plans to study agricultural education models that deliver immersive experiences and engage curious minds. Ultimately, she seeks to dismantle industry silos to create an all-encompassing hands-on agricultural education experience, aiming to encourage future generations to consider the multitude of pathways to meaningful careers in the sector.

As a young woman in a traditionally male-dominated field, Aimee is blazing a trail for other young women in regional Australia and seeding ongoing innovation in the agricultural sector. Her achievements and contributions are remarkable for someone so early in their career, and her impact on this vitally important sector will surely continue to grow.

Indigenous Alumni: Teresa Cochrane

Through her pioneering environmental research and advocacy, Teresa Cochrane is fusing First Nations science and knowledge with Western science to better protect our precious biodiversity.

A proud Dughutti Gumbayngirr woman living and working on Bunjalung Country, Teresa is deeply passionate about ecological conservation. Her research interests lie in the understanding of contemporary Australian ecosystems, the use of Western and Indigenous scientific methodologies to achieve transdisciplinary scientific outcomes, and the relationship between culture, people, and the environment, with a particular focus on the koala – also her personal totem.

Graduating from Charles Sturt in 2022 with a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management (First Class Honours), Teresa is making a meaningful impact for a graduate so early in her career. She was recently invited to give a keynote presentation on her honours research at the 3rd National Koala Conference, sharing her insights with 270 experts in koala biology, conservation, veterinary science, and science communication, leading to a request to develop educational content for primary schools. She has also spoken as part of expert panels in the field, and her work has attracted the attention of mainstream media, including a recent interview with ABC Radio National's The Science Show with Robyn Williams.

For almost five years, Teresa has volunteered as a researcher and Assistant Plantation Manager at the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, using this opportunity to aid the organisation's important conservation work and conduct research into koala diet selection.

A dedicated and exceptional student, Teresa has been awarded numerous scholarships and was selected for the Aurora Education Foundation International Study Tour in 2022. She also won the Scientific Poster Competition at Charles Sturt DOCFEST 2023, paving the way for a new framework for conducting Higher Degree Research that does not fit within the traditional dissertation or thesis structure.

For Teresa, the study of biodiversity conservation resonates deeply with her connection to culture and Country. She is currently undertaking a PhD (Arts and Education) in the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at Charles Sturt, focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge around the koala to shape ongoing management, conservation, and preservation. She has also been accepted to study in the Master of Philosophy of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Management Program at the University of Oxford in 2023, where she will further her skills and understanding of

interdisciplinary approaches to scientific research in her field.

Since October 2022, Teresa has provided support and guidance to 30 young Indigenous women in Year 11 as Academic Coordinator for the Young Women's STEM Academy at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), helping them to graduate high school and move into tertiary education pathways in STEM fields. Through this important work, she is empowering young Indigenous girls and helping address the critically low representation of First Nations women in STEM. She also supports First Nations students at Charles Sturt as an enthusiastic tutor and mentor.

The first member of her family to go to university, Teresa is committed to inspiring other Indigenous students, and women in particular, to pursue higher education and the rewarding careers it can bring. Also a passionate advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community, last year she was named a winner of Out for Australia's 30 Under 30 Awards.

Teresa's potential for impact as her career progresses – both through her research in koala ecology and her contribution to encouraging greater Indigenous representation in STEM in Australia – is enormous. →



2023 Alumni Awards Highly Commended

We love to recognise and share our alumni successes and inspire the next generation of Charles Sturt alumni. The 2024 Distinguished Alumni Awards will open in March – we urge you to nominate yourself or a fellow alum.

Professional Excellence

Nancy Oraka

Graduate Certificate in Customs Administration; Master of Customs Administration



Nancy Oraka is widely recognised as an outstanding leader in the customs profession who has made a significant and positive impact in her native Papua New Guinea and continues to do so at a regional and international level.

While working as a Regional Manager in the PNG Customs Service, Nancy won a scholarship to study the Master of Customs Administration at Charles Sturt. On completion of her degree she successfully applied for the highest customs position in the Pacific region – the Oceania Customs Organisation Head of Secretariat.

Her appointment was groundbreaking. Not only is she the first PNG national – and Melanesian – to hold the position, she is also the first woman to lead the organisation – a remarkable achievement in such a male-dominated profession and a true inspiration to other female officers throughout the Pacific.

Research Excellence

Professor Judith Gullifer

Bachelor of Psychology (Hons); Doctor of Philosophy



Professor Judith Gullifer has a career providing services to the education and mental health sector since 2000. Judith is currently employed as the Director of Education in the Monash University School of Psychological Science and has held positions as Associate Dean (Partners and Quality) and the foundation Associate Dean (Academic) in the Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences at Charles Sturt University.

Judith was awarded the Charles Sturt 'Faculty of Arts Award for Academic Excellence' in 2009. In 2010, she received a 'Faculty of Arts Award for Teaching Excellence' and a 'Vice Chancellors Award for Teaching Excellence' in 2010. At a national level, the same year, her teaching excellence was recognised by being awarded an 'Australian Psychological Society Early Career Teaching Award'. She was appointed to the APS Board of Directors in 2016.

Social Impact

Grant Edwards

Graduate Certificate in Police Management, 2001; Master of Leadership, Policy and Governance, 2016



Mr Grant Edwards is a retired Australian Federal Police Officer with 34 years' service. He has diverse field experience and has held senior responsibility across 13 countries. Grant currently volunteers as an ambassador for non-for-profit organisations, works as a leadership and mental health consultant and sits on the advisory board chair of the Centre of Excellence for Law Enforcement and Public Health.

Grant has published numerous academic papers across the world on mental health in law enforcement and in 2017, his lived experience of PTSD was featured on ABC's *Australian Story*. His memoir *The Strong Man* was published in 2019. Grant is also an accomplished sportsperson having represented Australia in events such as the 1999 World's Strongest Man competition in Malta. Since retiring, Grant has dedicated his time to consulting on mental health and wellbeing across the globe.

**Innovation,
Entrepreneurship
and Creativity**

Jim Boekel

*Graduate
Certificate in
Information
Systems
Security; Master
of Information
Systems Security*



Mr Jim Boekel has worked across cyber security and IT technical positions and management since 2001. In 2019, Jim co-founded Bluerydge, an award-winning cyber security and technology firm supporting Government, Defence and Industry. He is a member of the Industry Advisory Committee on Veteran's Employment and has exemplified strong leadership, innovation and commitment to excellence as CEO of Bluerydge.

Jim has received numerous accolades for his industry commitment and excellence. In 2022 Bluerydge won the 'Australian Small Business Champion', the Prime Ministers National Veterans' Employment 'Employer of the Year' and was finalist in Australian Defence Industry Awards 'Cyber Business of the Year' awards. Jim has also been nominated for numerous awards and was a finalist for two 2023 Australian Cyber Security Awards and Telstra Business Awards.

Indigenous Alumni

**Carmel
Flavell**

*Master of Child and
Adolescent Welfare*



Ms Carmel Flavell is a tenacious and resilient practitioner in the disability field, with a strong focus on social justice and inclusion for all. A proud Wiradjuri woman, Carmel has dedicated her life to the care of others. Following a career in the NSW Police Force, she has worked across the Disability and Health sectors for the past 29 years in an array of managerial and consultative positions, as well as voluntary roles.

Carmel has served on several boards, including the Right Start Foundation and an appointed member of the Disability Council of NSW. Instrumental in the development of the charity 'Kidsequip', Carmel has also received numerous awards including the Community Engagement Carers Award from the NSW Carers Association, and the Western Sydney University Partnership Award for Medicine in Context.

Young Alumni

**Dr Tristan
Robinson**

*Bachelor of
Veterinary Biology
/ Bachelor of
Veterinary Science*



Dr Robinson is a senior veterinarian and director of the Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital. He has dedicated his career to the well-being of animals and has made significant contributions to the veterinary community. As a director at Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital, he has played a crucial role in its success, managing rural practice, teaching final year students, and overseeing business operations.

His passion for animal welfare was nurtured during his time at Charles Sturt. Dr Robinson's experiences include participating in an equine externship in Dubai, which provided him with a global perspective on veterinary challenges and instilled in him a deep appreciation for diversity and adaptability in animal care. He maintains a strong connection with Charles Sturt as a donor to the Charles Sturt Foundation Trust and Life Member of the CSU Bushpigs AFL Club.

Young Alumni

**Evangeline
(Evie) Jay**

*Bachelor of Equine
Science (with
specialisation)*



Ms Evie Jay is the Southern NSW Territory Manager for Hygain Feeds. This was a highly competitive position which she secured after proving herself in the equine industry.

After graduating Evie started work as a full-time stud hand at Twin Hills Thoroughbred stud. In 2021 Evie started her role as program facilitator for the Wagga Riding for the Disabled Centre (RDA). Whilst working full time at the RDA Evie gained the necessary requirements to become coach before becoming the coach coordinator in 2023. Whilst working at RDA Evie completed a Certificate IV in Business. As her working career encompassed many different types of horses, Evie's passion for tailoring equine nutrition expanded. Evie started stocking and marketing nutritional feeds and supplements, expanding her equine nutrition knowledge base. In 2023 Evie was appointed the position of Hygain Territory Manager for Southern NSW.

Reclaiming her narrative

Kate Constantine's creative journey through identity, culture and place

Artist. Author. Curator. Activist. Mother. Proud Gadigal woman of the Eora nation. These are but a few of the many roles Kate Constantine plays; all hold creativity and culture at their core.

"Like many creatives, my career trajectory has not been linear. I left school at 15 and have worked in retail, hospitality, media and marketing, TV and radio broadcasting, and have sat on many corporate and philanthropic boards," Kate recalls.

"There have been countless curveballs and rollercoasters, but I truly feel that all these experiences have been necessary and inform who I am and my artistic practice."

Kate is a celebrated neo-contemporary Indigenous artist, working under the moniker Konstantina. Her bold, visually stunning works re-imagine the dot painting traditions of her people, creating a modern narrative to enable all Australians to better understand our First Nations people, Culture and Country.

"I am a visual storyteller, a conjurer of stories in physical form based on feelings, research, learning and advocacy, as much influenced by my children as I am Country and my Elders. In its simplest form, I am a vessel that receives information about my culture, people and our place in modern Australia. I absorb, untangle, stretch, push and pull, putting together artworks and collections that speak to the political and social injustices," Kate explains.

Konstantina is represented in galleries around the world and has been a finalist in several seminal art prizes, most recently the National Emerging Art Prize. Last year Kate was awarded

the prestigious Sir Sydney Nolan Trust Residency in Wales, United Kingdom, and has recently held a solo exhibition in Paris.

Whilst studying interior architecture at university she was seeking to combine her fascination with geometry and intricate patterning with exploration of the histories of people and place. But the engineering and mathematics underpinning the degree were not for her, and she left university for a start-up role at Nova and the bright lights of a media career.

Over the next two decades, Kate became an industry powerhouse, excelling in top roles at Nova,

Macquarie Media Network (Radio 2GB) and Foxtel. She completed a Graduate Certificate in Commerce and then an MBA at Charles Sturt.

At the peak of her career co-founded independent creative, content and strategy agency KONTENDED, working with a varied stable of high-profile brands including Coke, Xbox, PlayStation, Optus, Telstra, Suncorp, and many more.

During this time she also founded FOSTERED art and music collective and short-form entertainment network SnackableTV. But five years after the birth of her first son, Kate felt the visceral pull back to painting,





Konstantina's artwork digitised for public production *Connection* at the Lume, Melbourne in June 2023



black AND white
Konstantina
1 May - 3 June 2023

Konstantina at *black AND white* exhibition - Cooe Art Redfern, Sydney

“Challenging people’s perceptions using art rooted in academic research and deep listening and learning is necessary to shift the modern narrative we have unwillingly woven into in the fabric of Australia.”

Kate Constantine

Master of Business Administration, 2011 | Grad Certificate in Commerce, 2010

leaving the corporate world behind to immerse herself in her artistic career and raising her young family on Bundjalung Country in Byron Bay.

Central to this artistic yearning was her personal journey through identity as a Gadigal woman. In her 2021 TEDx talk entitled ‘Am I Black enough?’, Kate shares her truth of growing up a fair-skinned Aboriginal in a family where her father – born into abject poverty and raised in fear of being removed from his parents’ care – didn’t identify as Aboriginal, creating a deep and enduring chasm in her family.

“He doesn’t, hasn’t and won’t participate in any Aboriginal culture because it was denied to him; it was an absence in his life, a complete erasing of truth. But it is his denial that fuels my power

for positivity, and desire to allow my children to connect with, learn and share their Aboriginal heritage,” Kate told a captivated audience.

“I threw myself into my culture, into my research, my learning, my listening (and) painting. I won’t be the forgotten generation that slips through the cracks. I will not allow my culture to creep towards extinction.”

Deeply embedded in Kate’s practice is a slow reclaiming of language and culture through reading, yarning, and connecting through the creative arts. She is proudly learning her traditional Gadigal language and teaching it to her three young boys.

Driven to bring colour into the lives of cancer sufferers, Kate was inspired by the work of cancer survivor Emily

Somers through her company Bravery Co. and in 2021 forged a collaboration to produce vibrant signature headscarves. Soon after, somewhat ironically, Kate was herself diagnosed with thyroid cancer – thankfully diagnosed early and swiftly vanquished. She has since poured her newly heightened empathy for the anxiety wrought by a cancer diagnosis into her subsequent creations.

Kate has recently taken a bold leap into the world of publishing, with her coffee table book *Gadigal Ngura* soon to hit bookstores and a series of children’s books in the works for anticipated publication in 2024/25.

It is the next frontier in her creative voyage, taking her reclamation narrative to an increasingly diverse audience.

Campus news

Find out what's been happening at our campuses.

Digital Agrifood Summit

In October, Charles Sturt University and Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre hosted the Digital Agrifood Summit and welcomed over 400 producers, industry, government, students and research partners to our Wagga Wagga campus, including 22 sponsors, 28 exhibitors and over 50 world-class speakers.

The Summit also attracted international guests from New Zealand, Canada, Kenya and the United Kingdom, cementing the University as a global leader in Agriculture and innovation thought leadership.

The event exemplifies the level of collaboration that the University is focussed on to ensure we are connected to our regions and beyond, delivering course and research outcomes that benefit the community at all levels.

The Summit was an outstanding success. In addition to showcasing our world-leading agri-tech facilities, the event also established new partnership and research opportunities for our Gulbali Institute and Global Digital Farm project, exposed hundreds of school students to a career in agriculture and fostered multiple networking and collaboration opportunities for our delegates and AgriPark partners.



Charles Sturt welcomes delegates from three partner universities

Last month Charles Sturt University hosted delegates from our transnational education partners in China Jilin University of Finance and Economics, Yangzhou University and Yunnan University of Finance and Economics.

The Vice-Chancellor chaired the Presidents Meeting for strategic discussions on further collaboration in dual degrees, pathways, research and student and staff mobility.

A few campus highlights included:

- Lunch and wine tasting at the CSU Winery
- Tour of our Global Digital Farm
- Showcasing our expansive Wagga Wagga campus grounds

Charles Sturt to open Sydney campus in strategic partnership with global leader, Navitas

To be known as Charles Sturt University Sydney, the campus will initially offer a suite of business, accounting and IT courses, in both Bachelors and Masters.

Located in custom-designed learning and teaching space in North Sydney, Charles Sturt University Sydney will host both international and domestic students, with students to be offered the opportunity to undertake a regional experience as part of their degree.

Charles Sturt Vice-Chancellor, Professor Renée Leon, said Navitas – with more than 5,000 staff, 60,000 current students and 92 colleges and campuses globally – was the ideal partner to ensure the campus's success.

"Students at Charles Sturt University Sydney will have the opportunity to live and learn in one of the most vibrant cities in the world," Professor Leon said.

"They will also enjoy the same outstanding student experience as Charles Sturt students at our regional campuses, including access to our online learning resources and other services as required.

"Navitas is a highly regarded third-party provider with its own CRICOS registered institutes of higher education, VET and ELICOS operations, a global recruitment network, and a successful track record working with universities around the world, including in Australia."

Scott Jones, Group CEO, Navitas said: "We are thrilled to partner with Charles Sturt University, through our Careers & Industry division, to establish a new campus in vibrant North Sydney.

"The urban convenience and natural beauty of the area, combined with access to first-class education and student support services, will position Charles Sturt University Sydney as an attractive option for international students seeking a memorable and rewarding learning experience on Australia's east coast.

"Our purpose at Navitas is to transform lives through education. We are looking forward to working with Charles Sturt University to provide more students with opportunities to earn a degree, develop knowledge and learn the skills they need for future employment and success."

More information about studying at Charles Sturt University Sydney can be found at

→ www.sydney.csu.edu.au



Building a Legacy: The Growth of Communications

The influence and impact of the 'The Mitchell Mafia' – an era of successful communications graduates – prompted us to explore the history of Charles Sturt's School of Communication with Emeritus Professor David Potts (pictured, right), who founded the communications course over 50 years ago.

The Mitchell College of Advanced Education (MCAE) was established in 1970 - one of the first tertiary institutions in Australia to introduce three year, full time diploma programs in journalism and public relations. Emeritus Professor David Potts OAM BA MSc established the communications course. With no existing Australian model, Mr Potts wanted the course to be intense and demanding for students, with a focus on strong, specialist skills in communication.

"I wanted the courses to be very practical to overcome resistance in the profession (that journalists could not be produced in an academic environment). Journalism and PR students were encouraged during vacations to seek work experience in regional media, in-house PR departments and government."

"Our practical orientation has always been the hallmark of Charles Sturt's communication courses – and one of the main reasons its success. What would employers expect graduates to be able to do when they entered the workforce?"

In 1971 Mr Potts was given charge of Australia's first School of Communication, with three colleagues – Frank Ponton (drama), Tom Hogan (television) and Neil McDonald (film). Mr Potts was the sole lecturer in journalism and in public relations. The journalism and PR programs were flourishing within its first five years, and also saw Mr Potts create the Journalism Education Association.

The journalism staff had grown to include Roger Patching (ABC), Tony Ferguson (ABC), Robin Mitchell (a Melbourne print journalist), and Stuart Littlemore (ABC).

"Later, Dennis Shanahan, still a senior Canberra journalist with The Australian, joined. In the public relations field Tony Stevenson and Peter Harvey came on board. All made enormous contributions in their time at MCAE. We attracted guest lectures from high profile writers and journalists. Sir Asher Joel, founder of the Public Relations Institute of Australia, gave us an annual prize for a public relations student."

Between 1975 and 1976, Robin Mitchell and Tom Hogan were working hard on starting a community radio station 2MCEFM, on campus. Mr Potts had sought support from his former employer, Australian Associated Press, to provide a news feed on campus



so that students were getting live copy to edit – and for use on the fledgling radio station.

Mr Potts would take the college bus filled with journalism students down to Sydney for visits to the ABC and Sydney Morning Herald to meet with the cadet counsellors and get a feel for a working day in the media, giving MCAE a chance to showcase current journalism students to potential employers.

"Eventually the news media relaxed their negativity toward student journalists and, in fact, began to embrace them as competent starters in the profession."

The Mitchell courses became incredibly popular from the mid-1970's onwards. Mr Potts had to adjust the application process to deal with the sheer number of prospective students.

"Applicants had to supply a sample of their written work, to test their literacy skills, and a questionnaire to get some idea of their experience and career ambitions."

Reflecting on the first ten years of Bathurst's School of Communications, Mr Potts said, "Today, I'm proud to say, that graduates of communication courses around Australia are making their mark in the profession around Australia – and overseas."



Left: Adam working with Boys To The Bush



Boys to the Bush – The rural blokes connecting troubled youth to better futures

More than three-quarters of the 8.6 Australians who die by suicide every day are male, while males represent 92 per cent of prison inmates and four in five in the juvenile justice system¹. It's a bleak picture that Charles Sturt graduate Adam DeMamiel has made his life's work to turn around, one kid at a time.

"Everyone deserves to have someone in their lives that inspires them, guides them, and believes in them," says the CEO and Co-founder of Boys to the Bush (BTTB), a registered not-for-profit, community-based charity focused on preventative and early intervention strategies for disengaged young males.

BTTB is on a mission to help boys become good men. It provides boys with an environment free from the distractions of their everyday situations, surrounding them with positive influences, a sense of belonging, and life-changing opportunities.

"These kids have been through horrific stuff – parents in jail or addicted to drugs, witnessing friends die by suicide, family violence. We've had kids tell us they discovered their brother hung at their father's hands, witnessed their dad shoot their mum, a brother tell of his sisters being exploited by "dad's bkie mates". This is their normal, and it's just not right."

Adam brings his experience working with disenfranchised youth and personal mental health struggles to BTTB. Raised by community-minded parents and encouraged into teaching by his now wife Ange – both are Charles Sturt graduates – he was drawn to work with what he fondly calls "the ratbags" because he felt could have the most impact. The pair moved to Albury,

where Adam developed and delivered specialised programs in high schools for boys with behavioural challenges.

"Charles Sturt lecturer Laurie Crawford inspired me and advised me to study special education. It was through this major that I realised that I wanted to focus my career on working with kids with special needs, particularly behaviour" Adam recalls fondly.

He and BTTB co-founders Richard Leahy and Tim Sanson began running camps in 2017, and in 2019 Adam left teaching to focus full-time on evolving BTTB as its CEO. Today, the company proudly employs around 130 people – some are BTTB program alumni – across nine regional communities in both NSW and Victoria.

¹. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022)

BTTB's diverse and ever-growing portfolio of programs now also includes a range of specialised camps, partnerships with schools, and a high-impact one-to-one MENToring program pairing kids with BTTB employees and community mentors long term.

"We work on individualised outcomes for kids, but there are common themes across all the programs like basic life skills, respect for women, and Aboriginal culture."

BTTB is also accredited to provide alternative care for kids who would otherwise have been placed in motels, taking a risk on housing them in quality rented homes. Adam says the change in behaviour is extraordinary – far from trashing them, they become houseproud.

"We open their eyes to what their life can be, what they're worth. Some of these kids can't even talk, have never been to school. We homeschool them if needed, drawing on the community. We connect them to their village, give them purpose and belonging."

Across BTTB's programs, the stories of impact are astonishing.

"There's one kid from one of our early camps who we should have kicked out about 100 times over the week, but we persevered," Adam recalls.

"We gave him another chance next holidays without much improvement and weren't sure we were getting anywhere. But the next time his caseworker called was to say he'd been diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer and it didn't look good; she was calling me because the doctor had said to contact the most important people in his life. He'd listed me. And that was a real lightbulb moment that what we were doing was something more."

"Everyone deserves to have someone in their lives that inspires them, guides them, and believes in them,"

Adam DeMamiel
Bachelor of Education (Primary
– Special Education), 2005

BTTB supported him through his cancer journey. He defied all odds to fully recover and now works full-time for BTTB, finding his purpose in helping boys like him become good men. It's one of hundreds of success stories Adam could tell, one of countless lives that have been changed and saved.

And it's not only boys that stand to benefit. BTTB's model, founded on deep community engagement, has a remarkable ripple effect.

"Every single person in our communities has the opportunity to be part of the process. It's not just those working directly with the kids; others donate clothes, cook meals, let us bring them to their farms or businesses," Adam explains.

"Everyone is buying in. They're learning why these kids are the way they are and become part of the solution. We're not only fielding calls from kids we've helped and saved but from community members saying how it's enhanced their lives too."

Teaching boys to become good men helps break the cycle, so they won't beat their future partners or be absent fathers. Instead, through the influence of the BTTB program, they may hold down a job and be good role models to others. In this way, BTTB is helping girls, families, and communities for generations to come.

"It's a pure early intervention strategy. We're not magicians or psychologists, but what we're really good at is, engaging with often unengageable kids, and once we build connection and rapport, we use our networks to help them to thrive."

Adam is focused on expanding BTTB's impact, aiming to embed in 30 communities Australia-wide over the next five years. This will place them in front of over 100,000 kids, helping more troubled youths rise above their situations and realise their potential.

"We have a good business model that's really scalable. We don't rely on governments or other bodies for ongoing funding – the community sustains it in the longer term. But there are lots of kids out there that need help, so we're now calling on corporate and philanthropic Australia to help us to help more kids in more communities. As part of this, we've created our national campaign day, All on Board."

Whatever the future holds as BTTB grows, one thing is certain: the mission remains the same.

"Why we're doing it – the kids we're working with – has never changed and never will. We know who we are, who needs help, and how to do it. It's so bloody simple."

If you're interested in finding out more about BTTB, please visit their website at boystothebush.org.au

Stay tuned for their annual 'Wear your board shorts to work or school day' in November – a day to celebrate positive role models and help Boys to the Bush grow its vital impact. Find out more at allonboardbttb2023.raisely.com



Super proud – Tania finds her calling in superannuation

For accomplished Charles Sturt alumna Tania Rhodes, the best part of her work is educating people on financial security. Tania is passionate about helping her clients and customers best understand how to position themselves for a secure financial future.

But the journey to discovering her passion for finance was not a straightforward path. Like many, Tania worked across a range of career paths, spending a significant portion of her career working in the surf retail industry before finding her calling.

Growing up in the suburbs of Sydney, Tania originally moved to Bathurst to study her undergraduate degree in Organisational Communication at Charles Sturt University. Tania lived on campus for the duration of her degree and loved every minute. Tania describes moving to Bathurst as the time in her life when her entire world (and worldview) changed.

It was in Bathurst where Tania met a lot of students who hailed from a range of country towns.

“I left school and went to Bathurst, and it was just a life changer for me – absolutely unreal, it was so good. I was on campus for the three years of my undergrad and just loved the whole campus life, it was fantastic. I hung out with a lot of country kids and it was just a wonderful experience and very real community.”

As she visited the hometowns of her new friends from the country Tania engaged in the regional lifestyle – seeing parts of Australia that she had not experienced before.

As Tania witnessed her university friends graduate alongside her and move into roles that did not resonate

“I left school and went to Bathurst, and it was just a life changer for me – absolutely unreal, it was so good ... I hung out with a lot of country kids and it was just a wonderful experience and very real community.”

Tania Rhodes

Bachelor of Arts
(Communication), 1988
Grad Diploma of Education, 1992

with what she saw herself doing, Tania found herself questioning her own career choice. After graduating, Tania decided to embark on further study at Charles Sturt, pursuing a Graduate Diploma of Education.

Whilst Tania did not end up teaching students as a long-term career, she has spent over a decade educating in a different way. A friend inspired Tania to explore finance when speaking on the need for diversity in the industry. This sparked Tania's 15-year career in the Superannuation industry, joining the award-winning superannuation fund UniSuper in 2022. In an interesting turn of events, the majority of Tania's clients with UniSuper are teachers.



Above: Tanya enjoying uni life and making new friends in Bathurst, and on graduation day

Look forward. Think great.

"A big part of my job is connecting with people and educating them about superannuation. I focus on education and communication. I draw on what I did learn at university – in a more roundabout way than I perhaps expected when studying my undergraduate degrees!"

It was when she discovered finance, that Tania truly found her feet, helping Australians navigate the tricky world of superannuation and finance. Although it took some experimenting to find her true calling, none of Tania's learning was wasted. Today she combines her communication and teaching skills with her financial expertise to help build a better retirement future for many thousands of Australians.

"Whether it's that you feel more financially secure, you have a higher balance or you just feel like you're in control of your finances – that's my job to help increase engagement in super. We want to encourage people to come and talk when they're ready."

Tania takes great joy in teaching people from all walks of life about superannuation. Her role sees her travel across a large regional footprint – visiting schools and talking to teachers to educate them about securing their future with smart thinking about their super.

Tania has reflected on the change she has seen since she was first encouraged to join the superannuation sector – now with many inspiring women in senior leadership positions. Tania is super proud of the industry she is a part of, particularly with her employer UniSuper.

No longer only open to higher education and research workers, Tania is pleased to note that UniSuper is now open to everyone and is known as one of Australia's best superannuation funds. Tania has a simple formula that she recommends for anyone considering their superannuation choices:

"Look for a Superfund with information and advice services available to help you understand two things that can impact you over the long term: the fees that you're paying, and your investment returns. You really want to be with a fund that encourages engagement."



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One mountain, many stories

Kate Smith on uniting community through the arts

Mt Panorama/Wahluu is a place of complex and conflicting identity. Looming large in our national consciousness as the home of the iconic annual Bathurst 1000 car race, it is also of deep cultural significance to First Nations Australians as a cherished sacred site where Wiradjuri women offered their sons for tribal initiation. For the wider Bathurst community, it evokes diverse and multifaceted responses that speak to the spectrum of human existence and connection to place.

In her collaborative performance project *Fast Cars and Dirty Beats*, Dr Kate Smith – cultural producer, writer, actor, Charles Sturt graduate and long-time Bathurst resident – holds up a mirror to individual and collective perspectives around the mountain, harnessing the power of storytelling as a binding social force.

More than two years in the making, it grew from her idea for a comedic musical about Peter Brock and evolved with community division over the proposed building of a go-kart track on a sacred women's site at Wahluu/ Mt. Panorama.

"Everyone who lives in this area has a story about the mountain that goes way beyond the racetrack and the race narrative; many feel a deep connection to it," Kate explains.

"I wanted to create a work that could unify and surface different voices, to talk about the mountain and what it means to many people and bring all those perspectives to support the idea that the top of the mountain should be for everybody."

Kate approached then Creative Producer Kylie Shead at Bathurst Memorial Entertainment and Bathurst Regional Art Gallery Director Sarah Gurich with her idea and they jumped on board, supporting her to secure local, state and federal funding. Awarded a residency at the Hill End Artists in Residence Program, Kate gathered an inspiring group of professional artists, designers, composers, musicians and more – including several fellow Charles Sturt theatre media graduates to develop scripts and characters and explore ideas to engage community.

What followed was a triumph of collaborative community art-making – an innovative program spanning large-scale puppetry, comedic theatre and live music that unearthed countless stories of the mountain. It brought together in a colossal lantern-making project, established a drumming group, engaged a community choir, filmmakers and more, culminating in the magical, immersive Mountain Tales event at Tremain's Mill as part of the 2022 Bathurst Winter Festival.



Above: Collaborative community lantern-making project at 2022 Bathurst Winter Festival, *Fast Cars* cast; L to R: Catherine McNamara, Jack Dodds, Tim Hansen, centre front Jude Bowler.



Kate Smith as
Belle Farquhar



"I spent time yarning with the Bathurst local Wiradjuri Elders, engaged local crafters knitting galahs and crocheting flower hubcaps, established the Fast Cars Drummers, and 300 local school children parading their lanterns representing what Wahluu means to them. This community collaboration and engagement is so important; through this, we reveal everyone's unique stories and provide opportunities for meaningful – and fun – multigenerational involvement for people who might not otherwise have taken part," Kate says.

"That builds powerful understanding of where you're from and unites people via their connection to place, and from there, to realise the importance of caring for it."

A stunning collaborative digital artwork – Wiradyuri Ngayirr Ngurambang – Sacred Country 2022, created by visual artist Nicole Welch, and Bathurst Wiradyuri Elder Wirribee – Aunty Leanna Carr-Smith – was also debuted on the night.

The project's pinnacle in March 2023 was the staging of the theatre production that sparked it all. The high-octane musical comedy show, *Fast Cars & Dirty Beats*, centred around a Brock-loving family of battlers and the hilarity that ensues as locals get the chance to enter the great V8 race. Promising to get engines revving, toes tapping and hearts racing, staged in an old agricultural farm shed at Charles Sturt's Bathurst Campus over four sold-out nights, a captivated audience gave rapturous applause and standing ovations. The overwhelming sense was of celebration of a place that has much more to it than meets the eye.

"It was amazing... the ensemble cast, the music. It's fun, it's silly. The attacking birds are hilarious," Kate laughs.

"This community collaboration and engagement is so important; through this, we reveal everyone's unique stories and provide opportunities for meaningful – and fun".

Kate Smith
Bachelor of Arts (Communication),
1995
PhD, 2015

"I love that I was able to bring my experience of the race growing up, wanting to be a pit girl as a child and making theatre work for the race during university, and being able to play in that territory."

As the project draws to a close, the community spirit and connection it nurtured remains – and with it, a path to better understanding the varied relationships to the mountain and its importance in First Nations culture.

"Consultation and collaboration with our Wiradjuri Elders was intrinsic to the project; my first impulse was to seek their blessing and start a conversation about place there, where it must begin. It's about what is right and what is the respectful way. They have been exceptionally generous in yarning with me regularly through the process, and that has been fundamental in delivering a project the whole community can be proud of."

The *Fast Cars and Dirty Beats* project received funding from Charles Sturt under the Community University Partnerships (CUP) Grant Program – receiving two grants – alongside support from the Australian Government's Regional Arts Accelerator Fund, Arts OutWest, and Local Stages at Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre.



Research news

The latest research news from
Charles Sturt University

Helping farmers to improve their carbon footprint and reporting

A research project led by Charles Sturt University with Food Agility and other agribusiness partners aims to provide farmers with a transparent and credible tool to understand and manage natural capital and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Dr Mark Frost, Senior Lecturer in Agribusiness in the Charles Sturt School of Business, is the Chief Investigator for the project with the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).

He said farmers and agribusinesses are under pressure to demonstrate that they are improving the carbon footprint of the commodities they produce.

"Farmers need a credible way to demonstrate they are reducing their carbon footprints," Dr Frost said.

"Direct and indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from agricultural production is now a reporting requirement for all participants in the agricultural supply chain, and is an important factor in reaching environmental, social and governance (ESG) milestones.

"Furthermore, financiers are facing mounting pressure to both fund climate-related activities and report climate-related exposure, while consumers across domestic and international markets are gradually turning to products that are environmentally sustainable."

Dr Frost said the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework (AASF) designed by the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Farm Institute with funding from the federal government has been introduced to assist farmers to be able to understand the finance, supply chain and market expectations about sustainability and ESG reporting.



Project in Laos provides lasting economic and social benefits for river-dependent communities

A project in Laos led by Charles Sturt University scientists will benefit hundreds of Lao families and help preserve over 100 local fish species.

Professor Lee Baumgartner (pictured above, in green), Executive Director of the Charles Sturt Gulbali Research Institute of Agriculture, Water and Environment, leads the project, with implementation partners in Laos, Indonesia and Cambodia. It follows the success of earlier projects elsewhere in South-East Asia.

The project is part of a \$7.8m program co-funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Mekong-Australia Partnership, to rehabilitate fisheries in the Lower Mekong Region.

"Irrigation is an important source of rice production in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) but fisheries' resources are also an important source of nutrition and livelihoods," Professor Baumgartner said.

Professor Baumgartner said the project recently completed a Fishway at Nam Pok in the Vang Vieng district of Lao PDR. The technology aims to mitigate the environmental impact of irrigation development on fish migration, with lasting economic and social benefits for river-dependent communities.



Best in the world - Professor Sharynne McLeod

Sharynne McLeod, Professor of Speech and Language Acquisition at the School of Education, was named by The Australian's Research magazine as Australia's Research Field Leader in Audiology, Speech and Language Pathology and "best in the world based on the quality, volume and impact of work".

Over the past year, the research of Professor Sharynne McLeod and her team received several awards, among them are:

- Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences of Australia
- Fellow of the American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders
- Charles Sturt University Researcher/Research Team of the Year Award
- Charles Sturt University Research Excellence through Partnership Award

Find out more on Sharynne's research at earlychildhoodinterdiscresearch.blogspot.com



Paying forward the ticket to succeed

Charles Sturt Alumna, Marila Kozdra is having a full-circle moment. As a scholarship recipient in 2016, she experienced first-hand the life-changing impact of our donors, and now she is living her dream of paying it forward.

Marila Kozdra didn't go on a Schoolies trip or have a big European vacation after high school. She saved her money and made the 'smart' decisions because her eyes were always on the prize – getting into a position where she could give back.

Less than ten years after receiving a scholarship while studying for her Bachelor of Speech and Language Pathology (Honours), she has established the Marila Kozdra Allied Health Excellence Scholarship to support health students to acknowledge the difference a scholarship can make.

"When I received the scholarship, I felt a sense of relief. The financial pressures were alleviated, and I could just focus on my studies. It meant I could afford to live a bit while I studied and not stress so much. It just changed the whole experience, and it was my ticket to succeed. I honestly don't know that I would have completed my degree without it."

Marila credits her Charles Sturt degree to unlocking opportunities in her career and fast-tracking her to a position where she is able to give back, but she says her scholarship is about more than just giving back to the University. Her passion in going

the extra mile to give back to her community reflects the sacrifices her family made in creating opportunities for her and her brother.

"My grandparents are Polish and came to Australia from a Prisoner of War camp following WWII. They were welcomed in and supported by the government and the community, so gratitude was a constant theme in my family growing up. This scholarship is also a way of giving back to the community that received my family and ensuring that legacy lives on." Thanks to Marila's generous donation, the Marila Kozdra Allied Health Excellence Scholarship will provide recipients with the opportunity to learn without stress and excel in Allied Health.

"I hope with this support, scholarship recipients can take the time to decide what area they are really passionate about and where they can make a difference and focus on that."

The Marila Kozdra Allied Health Excellence Scholarship aims to recognise students enrolled in allied health courses who are achieving excellence in their academic programs. The scholarship will see one first-year student receive \$5,000 per year toward their study.

"University is a tough time for many – having to juggle studies, employment, family commitments, personal life, and overhanging deadlines. I believe that scholarships have played a pivotal role in my success thus far at university and have allowed me to accomplish goals along the way while simultaneously investing in my future."

– Harrison Maher, The Marila Kozdra Allied Health Excellence Scholarship recipient 2022

If you're interested in giving back, there are many opportunities and we would love to hear from you. Check out our Alumni Give program at alumni.csu.edu.au/alumni-give

The human heart of AI

Positioning regional Australia at the digital futures nexus

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data are already deeply embedded in most aspects of our lives, and capabilities continue to evolve at an unprecedented pace. With the majority of AI-driven research initiatives taking place in major cities, ensuring our regions are not left behind is crucial.

This is a fundamental focus of the recently created Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Futures Institute (AICF). Based at Charles Sturt's Bathurst campus, it aims to become a world-class research centre of excellence in data science, AI, and cybersecurity. Pursuing a unique agenda of regional discovery, it will demonstrate how AI developed beyond our cities can enrich not just rural and regional communities but our society as a whole.

Designing a better future requires a holistic approach that forgoes traditional silos of thinking and working. With Executive Director and trailblazing behavioural data scientist Professor Ganna Pogrebna at the helm, the AICF is poised to address global challenges in building secure, sustainable, responsible, and inclusive technology to maximise human potential and wellbeing.

Designing for humankind

Ganna has assembled a multidisciplinary team of experts spanning data science, physics and machine learning, cyber-physical systems, digital health, supply chain, ethics, law, and more. The most recent star hire is Dr Juliette Tobias-Webb, as Professor of Practice, Behavioural Science and Translational Research.

"As a behavioural scientist, I delve into the intricacies of human decision-making and behaviours, utilising those insights to reshape the environment to shift thinking and behaviour in ways that benefit individuals, organisations, and society," Juliette explains.

"Humans are at the forefront and end of everything we do. By harnessing human psychology, we can build tools that motivate and incentivise behavioural change and deliver much better outcomes in the short and long term."

Juliette brings with her a PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Cambridge (UK) and a wealth of experience using behavioural insights and methods to solve complex challenges for major corporations. As a consultant, she has worked with top-tier clients including Citibank, Mastercard and Atlassian on a range of projects.

She also spent over two years in-house at Commonwealth Bank, where she developed and implemented a range of highly effective in-app features to encourage better consumer financial decision-making including a user-activated gambling credit card block.

"I'll be working with other researchers in to understand how behavioural science can inform the future across AI, cybersecurity, robotics, and technology in general, and explore how we can connect."

Dr Juliette Tobias-Webb

Future focused

Juliette's role at AICF is threefold. One aspect will see her combine her behavioural science expertise with her experience lecturing in Kaplan Business School's MBA program to develop executive leadership training, equipping leaders with the skills to understand and navigate the future of work. The second centres around research, working with major corporations, governments, and defence around behavioural challenges from connection, diversity, and inclusion to behavioural addictions. Consulting is the final piece.

"I'll be working with other researchers in AICF and beyond to understand how behavioural science can inform



the future across AI, cybersecurity, robotics, and technology in general. I will also explore how we can connect with individuals and communities as well as corporates, government and defence to protect the future and positively shift the dial.”

A gifted communicator and forger of fruitful partnerships, Juliette is an inspiring young leader in STEM. She was selected to join Science & Technology Australia’s prestigious Superstars of STEM program in 2019. She is a Board Director of the not-for-profit Kindness Factory, and is one of 74 female STEM professionals from 18 countries who set sail for Antarctica in November as part of Homeward Bound’s The Island Sky Voyage 2023.

“The global leadership initiative aims to enhance the visibility of women in leadership positions around the world, particularly in the face of climate change. We spent 19 nights on the boat, seeing the impact of climate change on Antarctica and converging to develop ways we can begin to hopefully reverse this impact and change the outcomes.”

As she reflects on her voyage, Juliette is energised by the environment and possibilities at AICF.

“To be part of a multidisciplinary expert team with an inspiring leader like Ganna is such an exciting opportunity. Being able to draw on diverse expertise as we design for better outcomes utilising behavioural science offers incredible potential for scalable impact.”

Connect with Juliette & AICF

Juliette would love to connect with alumni looking to explore sticky behavioural problems in their organisation and better understand human behaviour. AICF also encourages organisations seeking presentations or partnerships, or alumni interested in pursuing a PhD or postdoctoral research in the Institute, to reach out.

→ LinkedIn: [juliettetobiaswebb](#)

→ Email: jtobias-webb@csu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University's impact on an international career

A recent visit to the Wagga Wagga campus prompted our catch-up with Dr Chittrapa Kundalaputra.

Chittrapa was well-established in her career as the head of research and evaluation at the Thai Ministry of Education at the Office of the Rajabhat Institute Council when her academic journey with Charles Sturt began in 1998.

Chittrapa speaks highly of her time visiting Australia after pursuing higher education through at Charles Sturt, a decision made after careful deliberation, noting Charles Sturt University as a leader in the field of distance education.

Charles Sturt facilitated gaps in her English language skills and provided educational and psychological support systems for her during what would otherwise have been an anxiety-inducing and stressful period. Chittrapa says the University prioritised supporting her needs as a distance education student, allowing her to undertake her thesis and reach her full potential. This support allowed her to excel as a professional in her field.

"Having the opportunity to present research at an international conference was a dream of mine from the time I pursued my master's degree. Presenting research on the international stage has been quite challenging for Thai students and few have done so over the past 30 years or more.

The subjects that Chittrapa undertook provided a framework for her thesis and she found that travelling to Australia and Bangkok for on-campus workshops provided a valuable resource for supplementary learning. Gaining valuable knowledge and skills that could be applied immediately and directly to her job at the Ministry of Education. Chittrapa found her ongoing learning both relevant and worthwhile and demonstrated the value of study by distance education to upgrade the qualifications of staff in new universities.



Her thesis involved a comparison of the educational outcomes for government-involved sponsorship of two cohorts of Thai students studying in doctoral programs across the United Kingdom and Australia. Through her thesis, An Evaluation of Two Joint Degree Programs, the UK cohort of Thai students were engaged in a traditional PhD program while those in Australia pursued a Doctor of Education. The findings from this study showed that those Thai students who participated in the Australian program achieved outstanding results, contributing valuable knowledge to those responsible for the Ministry of Education.

During her studies, Chittrapa was presented with the opportunity to present her research findings at several international conferences across Asia, Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand beginning at a conference in Tasmania. This was a fruitful way for her to network and establish partnerships across communities where English is spoken as a first language. With the persistent encouragement from Associate Professor Dr. Doug Hill, Associate Professor Dr. Noel Stonehouse, Professor Tony Moon, Dr. Ian Ling and also some high executives from New Zealand including Mr. David Lyte and Mr. Hone McGregor from NZQA, Chittrapa was able to work with researchers and present on an international stage – far wider than she could ever have imagined. These opportunities, in conjunction with the various seminars provided by Charles Sturt University, allowed her to exercise and improve her English language and literacy skills.

“I gained valuable experience, knowledge, and expanded my network of friends. I also had the opportunity to work with world-renowned researchers such as Professor John W. Creswell and his colleagues, which was beyond my wildest dreams.”

After completing her Doctor of Education at Charles Sturt, Chittrapa's stellar career saw her receive the

Distinguished Alumni Award from the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, where she had studied for her bachelor and master's degrees. This award recognised her national and international reputation in representing research findings across Thai media channels.

Since graduating, Chittrapa has made a substantial impact on Thai and international educational communities. In 2001, Chittrapa was asked to assess the Thai initiated project The Village Fund Project – set up to help disadvantaged villages in Thailand. Under this project, each of the 84,000 villages were provided with a Graduate Development Project to assist residents in achieving better tertiary level educational outcomes while working to improve the village fund's efficiency.

Recognised for these accomplishments, she was invited to co-direct a PhD program at Phranakhon Rajabhat University. Since 2006, she has served as the first director of the University's Research and Development Institute, lecturing students and managing research projects for government and other agencies. She served as secretary for the 38 Rajabhat University Presidents from 2012 for three years, working towards their development and cooperation with other local universities to enhance performance. While working at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Chittrapa assumed the role of Vice President and became a member of the University Council.

Looking back, Chittrapa notes the profound effect that both the careers of her father and mother had on her. This effect can be seen through the professional timeline of her life – like her father, she has pursued a career as an intellectual, whilst her mother's profession of teaching is reflected in her postgraduate studies. Today, Chittrapa currently works as a consultant, specialising in academic assessment, research, and research support. She also continues her work with developing Thai villages, assisting with building sustainable and self-sufficient economies.



“I gained valuable experience, knowledge, and expanded my network of friends. I also had the opportunity to work with world-renowned researchers ... which was beyond my wildest dreams.”

Dr Chittrapa Kundalaputra
Doctor of Education, 2002

Alumni authors

European Nonsense: The French Connection

Jeff Stoward

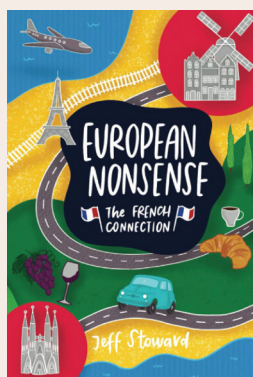
Master of Business
Administration, 2007

A laugh out loud page turning travelogue in the tradition of Bill Bryson and Tim Moore, *European Nonsense: The French Connection* is a quirky travel writing book with a difference – for all of us on the wrong side of 50 and finally free of those pesky children that have bled us dry for years.

If you have ever sat in a work meeting and thought “what a complete waste of time?”, followed – almost immediately – with “what the hell am I doing with my life?” then this book is for you. Suffering from a peculiar mix of ennui and wanderlust, he has an epiphany – life is short and work takes up far too much of it.

Reasoning that there must be more fun travelling, he convinces his long-suffering wife to take a sabbatical and travel the classic 18th-century European route.

With each chapter serving up a new question, he dishes out condensed nuggets of history along with lashings of humour, sometimes even answering the question.



Leadership Matters Stories and Insights for Leaders, Achievers and Visionaries

Peter Baines

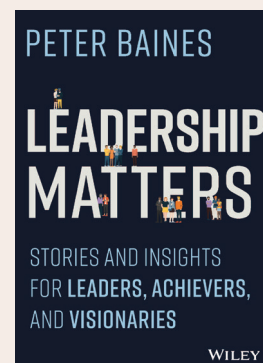
Master of Applied
Science, 2004

Become a courageous leader and learn how to take risks, defy limitations and inspire the extraordinary.

In *Leadership Matters*, celebrated humanitarian Peter Baines OAM shares remarkable stories and unique insights about leadership in challenging times. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience in leading others through crises and disasters, Peter demonstrates how great leaders rise above adversity. He unpacks how leadership skills such as courage, compassion, and integrity are essential for finding a way forward and triumphing against the odds.

Leadership Matters shares the leadership lessons that have emerged from Peter's decades of work in international counterterrorism and disaster response.

Leadership Matters: Stories and Insights for Leaders, Achievers and Visionaries shows how great leaders can find their purpose and make a real, vital impact on the world around them.



Who's Protecting the Protectors?

Grant Edwards

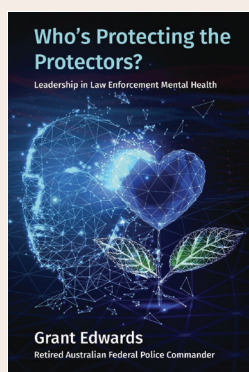
Master of Leadership and
Management (Policing and
Security), 2016

Retired Australian Federal Police Commander Grant Edwards pulls back the curtain on the urgent and often neglected issue of mental health within the law enforcement community.

A stark and powerful exploration of a hidden crisis, Edwards challenges the status quo, asking us to question – while we offer physical protection to our law enforcement officers, are we doing enough to shield their minds?

This book delves into the silent battle faced by those who stand on the front lines of society. Edwards eloquently unveils the significant yet under-addressed issue of mental health stigma within law enforcement, shining a light on an area demanding serious attention.

Who's Protecting the Protectors? is more than an exposé. It's a road map offering practical solutions to establish a sustainable mental health program that could truly benefit law enforcement officers.



The Promise

Rob Redenbach

Master of Arts (Terrorism
Safety and Security), 2014

From the trenches of the Western Front in World War 1 to special forces operations in Afghanistan's Chora Valley, *The Promise* explores the limits of courage and the legacy of sacrifice.

In the trenches of the Western Front during World War I, a soldier said to his dying mate, “I’ll look after the missus and kids.” This became known as *The Promise* – and it is still kept today.

All profits from the sale of *The Promise* are donated to www.corinfinitus.org – a veteran-led charity that provides dignity and respect to the families of those that have served Australia, either through the profession of arms or emergency services, and have taken their own life.

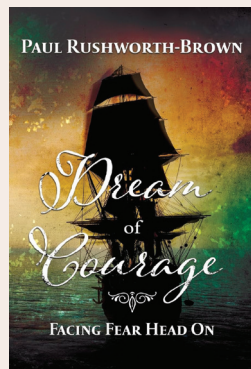


Dream of Courage Facing Fear Head on

Paul Rushworth-Brown

Master of Sport and
Recreation, 2007

In the heart of 18th-century England, on the moors and amidst the grimy alleys of Leeds, the lives of John and Robert Rushworth unfold in a gripping saga of ambition, danger and redemption.



Leaving the desolate moors behind, the brothers venture to Leeds with dreams of escaping poverty's clutches and carving their names into the annals of history.

In a world teeming with beggars, cutpurses and outlaws, the Rushworth brothers navigate treacherous paths, facing fear and uncertainty head on. Amidst the backdrop of a ruthless era, where murder and theft weave a web of ominous intrigue, the enigmatic tavern keeper, Smythe, holds their fates in his hands.

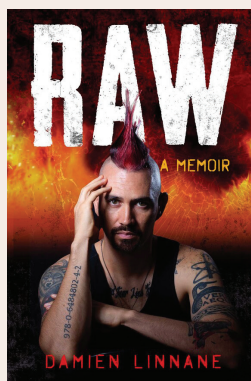
In a tale where historical fact merges seamlessly with heart-pounding fiction, Dream of Courage unravels a tapestry of suspense, intrigue and human resilience to be experienced.

Raw

Damien Linnane

Master of Information
Studies (Records and
Archives Management),
2020

Raw chronicles a childhood marred by physical and sexual abuse, and a man's subsequent search for identity in unhealthy places, such as violent gangs and the military.



Childhood trauma reaches a climax when Damien tracks down and firebombs the home of a rapist. He subsequently becomes an artist and writer in prison.



Legacy

We were honoured to launch our Charles Sturt University Legacy Society at a celebratory lunch on our Bathurst campus recently.

Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Renée Leon and Deputy Chancellor Dr Saranne Cooke were delighted to welcome a cohort of benefactors and bequestors.

Sarah Ansell, CEO of the Charles Sturt University Foundation Trust, was thrilled to bring together this group of generous and far-sighted bequestors to celebrate and thank them now for their future gifts, and give them insights into the impact their gift will have.

It was a privilege to hear directly from current scholarship recipient, Isabella Smith, on her deeply personal experience of how support from a bequest scholarship transformed her University experience and relieved pressure on her family.

We were also given insights by Dr Libbey Murray on the exceptional work being done at Charles Sturt to train the teaching workforce of the future through the Collaborative Teacher's Aide Pathway program.

Thank you to our inaugural members who were able to travel to join us at our Bathurst campus – and our thanks to our Legacy Society members who were not able to attend, but who have generously supported the University through a gift in their Will. We look forward to our next Legacy Society event to share both the impact of philanthropy at Charles Sturt and the joy of giving!

Find out

How you can create a legacy of your own

→ www.csu.edu.au/office/advancement/giving-to-csu/leave-a-bequest



2023 Alumni Sustainability Challenge

Throughout November we embarked on a challenge as an alumni community to see how much we could reduce our carbon footprint and minimise our contribution to the waste crisis.

There is no doubt that tackling the War on Waste is no small feat, requiring consistent dedication from all members of society.

In this challenge, we proved that even small steps make a big difference! No matter how tiny, every eco-friendly choice we make every day adds up.

How did we do it? Sustainability is all about taking action, but with such a big problem to tackle we knew we had to start small. It was all about accumulating really small habit changes – 2,748 little changes in fact!

A very big thank you to everyone who joined in the fun and shared their

sustainability journey with us. Special thanks to our staff, student and alumni ambassadors for your expert advice and support.

→ Head to our [facebook](#) page to see more action from the challenge!



153
PARTICIPANTS



8
COUNTRIES



2,748
SUSTAINABILITY
ACTIONS LOGGED



7,269kg
CO₂ SAVED



251kg
WASTE DIVERTED



78,000L
WATER SAVED



Cambodia

We are so proud to see Charles Sturt University's commitment to sustainability echoed in our alumni community around the world.

Charles Sturt University – Alumni Cambodia Association (CSU-ACA) regularly gather together with their families to make meaningful contributions to local communities.

As part of a recent Health and Environment Program, CSU-ACA opted for pedal power to make their way through beautiful Angkor territory to plant trees in the Banteay Srei Conservation Park.

What a fantastic effort!