

# International House magazine



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

—  
International  
House

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of COVID-19

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We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.

Editor: Laura Hibbert  
International House, the University of Sydney  
G06, 96 City Road, Darlington, NSW 2008  
ih.info@sydney.edu.au  
Cover: IH alumni reminiscing at the 50th anniversary in 2017.  
Photography by Daniel Kukec.  
Inside cover: IH residents looking at an image of the first IH cohort from 1967. L- R: Anthony Rice Jr, Pippa Herden, Alan Apfel, Senal Munasinghe.  
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# From the chair of council and director

It was evident by the end of March, that life at International House (IH) was not going to be what we anticipated for 2020. With the COVID-19 pandemic dominating everyone's daily life, it was a world turned upside down. Residents who were able to go home did so, with almost all classes now being delivered online, and social distancing regulations were implemented in the House. These social distancing requirements are sadly at odds with IH's traditions of conversation and communal activity. Indeed, we had to do the opposite of what we had been doing for over 50 years, encourage people to remain 1.5m apart and not hold social and cultural gatherings. It was a shock for all of us, but we have slowly adjusted and have managed to maintain some of our 'socialising' online while maintaining our physical distancing. Reserves of additional commitment and imagination are being drawn on to maintain the sense of engaged community that distinguishes IH. Residents have managed to adjust to the new normal. Life as we know it has changed for all of us and is most likely going to be different for a long time to come, especially in a residential community on campus.

It is in these strange times that the values of IH shine more brightly than ever. The mission of the House, to foster international understanding and friendship, is best fulfilled through the interactions of the residents

who come from so many different countries to join in this exceptionally diverse community. Undergraduates and postgraduates, from Australia and overseas, learn from each other in good times. Paradoxically, residents may be learning even more in these challenging days during which everyone has to focus on taking care both of themselves and of each other. The community is working to maintain both physical and mental health. Here, the diverse experiences of residents come into play to develop alternative perspectives on what may seem burdensome restrictions – not least the limitations on dining arrangements, for it is over meals and their accompanying conversations and debates that the spirit of IH is most readily found.

The IH community has the capacity to embrace that change and continue to 'pass the light' of international understanding and friendship. Now is the time, as in other times of disaster over the last five decades, that we can maintain a strong international community. Who knows what lies ahead for the rest of the year? For IH, living and working together as thoughtfully as can be, remains the goal that we know can be achieved.

Late last year, we indicated that the IH Council was working with the University to decide the future of IH. By the time this report is published, we anticipate that a final decision will be

communicated to the IH community. In saying that, we recognise that there are, and will continue to be, major challenges ahead, however, nothing is insurmountable.

We would like to thank every member of the IH community for their ongoing encouragement, support and commitment to the IH mission as we look to the future.

Yours,



**Margaret Harris**  
Chair, International House Council



**Jessica Carroll**  
Director, International House

## 200 residents from all over the world

### #HumansofIH

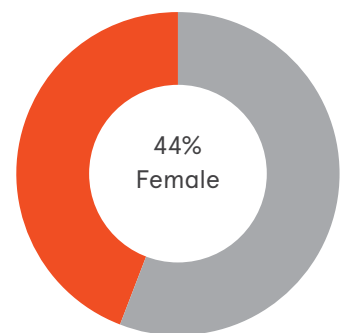
In 2020, we continue to see International House as a diverse home to students from Australia and around the world. Although some residents made the difficult choice to leave IH during the semester, we would like to acknowledge the diverse cohort we welcomed in February.

#### Student profile: Semester 1 2020

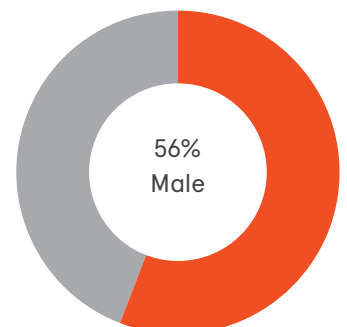
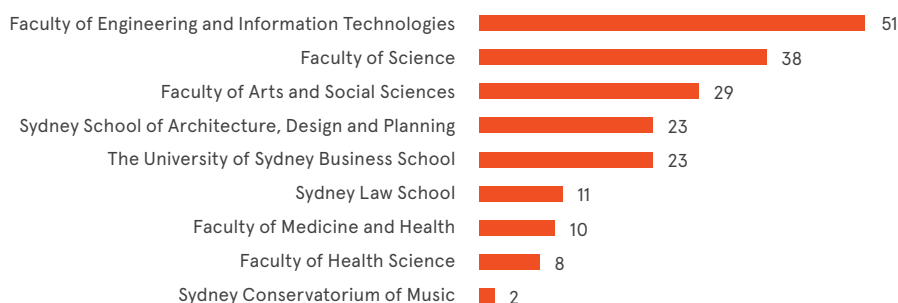
Number of residents per country/region

Australia	42	New Zealand	14
Bangladesh	6	Pakistan	1
Canada	1	Philippines	2
China	18	Puerto Rico	1
Colombia	1	Singapore	9
Czech Republic	1	Slovakia	1
Fiji	1	South Africa	1
France	1	Spain	6
Hong Kong	11	Sri Lanka	2
India	32	Sweden	1
Kenya	2	Taiwan	4
Korea, South	10	Thailand	1
Libya	1	Turkey	1
Macau	1	United Kingdom	3
Malaysia	9	United States of America	5
Mongolia	1	Vietnam	4
Nepal	1		

**20.8**  
average age



#### Faculty and school representation





# IH resilience in the time of COVID-19

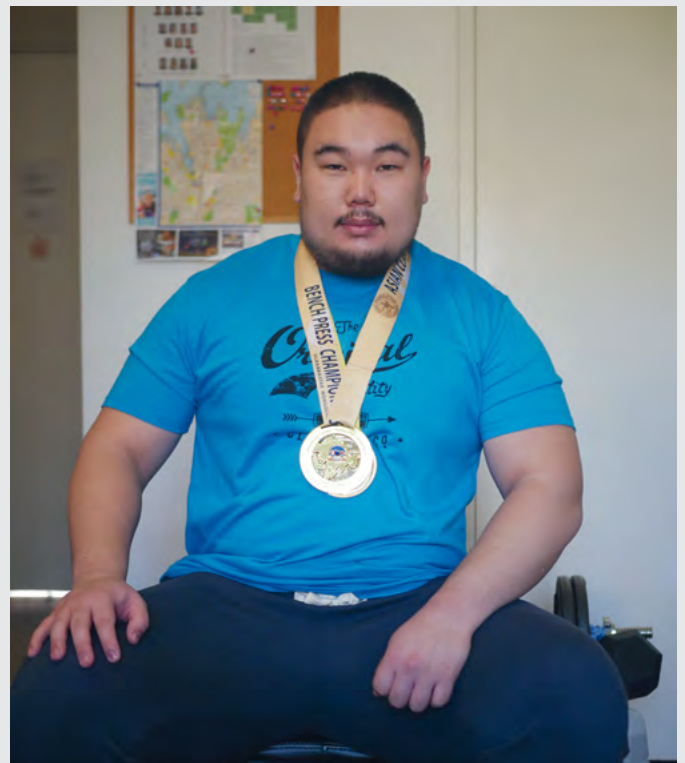


In true IH style, our residents have found inventive ways to continue living and studying while practising social distancing.

Photography by Matthew Smith.

“Surviving the COVID pandemic away from home is not easy, but I am lucky to have such an international community at IH and hope that we will overcome it together because nothing is permanent in this world. One of my big challenges has been the inability to do my powerlifting training because I need it as much as food and sleep. Thanks to IH for understanding and lending me gear! Now I feel motivated not only to survive isolation but also work toward my next competitions. I don’t have my usual heavy gear but I can increase the weight by tying up water tanks and dumbbells. To compensate for the limited weights, I have also increased the repetitions of my lifts and exercise at least five days a week for a minimum of two to three hours a day. As long as I can maintain my heart and muscle strength this way, I think I can easily shift to the extreme training when the pandemic finishes.”

**Tuvshinbaatar Bayasgalan**  
Bachelor of Advanced Computing





“When COVID-19 went from bad to worse, our lives were turned upside down. However, at the IH shop, the show must go on. Whilst social distancing measures meant that we could no longer host customers in our shop, we quickly turned things around. Armed with masks, distance markers on the floor, and a brand-new ‘open’ sign, we began to explore different ways to ensure that the residents of IH could get a break from their studies and a late-night snack. We implemented personal door-to-door deliveries to reduce physical contact, stocked up as much as we could, and business ran as usual (with as much distancing as possible).”

**Matthew Phang**  
Bachelor of Advanced Computing

“Amidst the pandemic and strict social distancing measures, I found solace in working on my fitness goals. I’ve been doing a 30-minute yoga session almost every day, often combining it with some Pilates or HIIT training. I’m no expert at yoga, but I love how it makes me feel physically and mentally. Best part — it can be done anywhere and at any time, with no equipment needed apart from a yoga mat or towel. Life in isolation has been a growth process that’s enabled me to listen to my body more and take better care of myself.”

**Keshni Haria**  
Bachelor of Science





# Postcards from home

With COVID-19 quickly becoming a global pandemic, some IH residents made the tough decision to return home at the beginning of the semester.



Wow' what a roller coaster of emotions it's been over the past few weeks! I never would have thought that I would complete this semester from home, but here I am writing to all of you from my comfy bed in the heat of sunny Singapore! \*waves from 6300km away\*

The best thing about being back home? My mum's homecooked food (yum!) and just simply being in the comfort of my family (except my annoying brothers, kidding! I love them). The worst thing? The heat is a HUGE NO (I miss the cold) and the time difference! It's not that big but it still does

affect me sometimes when it slips my mind, so I currently have two clocks in my room!

I must admit that the one thing I really do miss most is the motivation I receive from my friends when we study and hustle hard together. So friends, please invite me for Zoom study sessions!

Amidst everything, I am so grateful to be healthy. Let's keep the positive spirit alive and I can't wait to return to Sydney soon.

**Lyana Ana**  
Bachelor of Medical Science





Greetings from garden city, Bengaluru! It's been quite different since I returned as I've never spent so much time in my house. Usually I would go out driving in the bustling streets for my favourite breakfast meal, a local delicacy called "dosa", and then spend my mornings in beautiful Cubbon Park, which is a vibrant park that sits right in the middle of the central business district of Bangalore — the epitome of 'calm in the chaos'. Having said that, it's been great living indoors with the family, cooking meals, meditating and doing all house chores together. As I'm spending a lot of quality time with my family back home, I remember my family halfway across the world at 96 City Road. As I eat the delicious

homecooked food by my mum, I remember the dining hall and the mealtimes spent with all my friends. As I'm quarantined and confined to a room in my house, I remember the priceless moments spent with mates from literally every corner of the world. So far, 2020 seems to be the year of 'what could have been'. Thankfully, because of online classes and video calling my IH friends almost every day, it feels like I've been living in these two parallel worlds in Bengaluru and Sydney at the same time! Having said that, I can't wait to come back to Sydney soon (and smash Regiment in all intramurals!).

**Nimit Batavia**  
Bachelor of Design in Architecture



Hello from Guangzhou, I can't believe week eight is already history! I have been studying quite a lot and attempting some new activities to maintain my sanity. I find taking some small breaks in between my study sessions very useful: I walk to the balcony, grab one of my favourite drinks and also discover fashion boutiques on Instagram! I like looking towards the direction of Australia from my balcony and can't help thinking about those nighttime escapes from IH to enjoy the view of the Anzac Bridge. Before exams and deadlines, I used to go hiking to see ocean views and share Macca's Happy Meals with my friends. How I miss those days! This being said, I know it won't be long before I'm back in Sydney, so just let me enjoy the time at home for now.

A good thing about staying at home is that now I have the time to do things I was usually too busy for. I find my housework skills progressing along with my study. I also discovered some nice online shops and bookmarked them all for potential future use! These are the stress-relieving things that make me happy in the present and in the long run (self-improvement). If you are reading this: be nice to yourself, frame the situation as an opportunity to learn, and find new things that can make you happy.

**Yueting Zhan**  
Bachelor of Psychology



Hej från Stockholm!

I can't believe it was almost two months ago that I left IH. It was kind of an abrupt end. From one day to the next, I literally traveled through space to the other side of the world and eight hours back in time. I spent only seven weeks at IH, but those are weeks I will never forget. I especially remember futsal, the parties and just the daily meals in the dining hall. It was a privilege to live with all of you from around the world and share those moments. I hope you take care of each other, yourself and try to stay healthy. Sometimes life hits you in the face, and occasionally, like this time, the whole world is hit. Some things are out of our control, but our reaction, what we do about it, is in our hands.

This picture is taken from Skeppsholmen, one of the beautiful islands in the hearth of the city. On the other side is Gamla Stan, the “Old Town”, also located on one of Stockholm’s many islands. Once in a while I take my bike and sit down somewhere like this, just forget everything for a moment and enjoy the spring.

**Emile Lemaitre**

Postgraduate course work exchange student

Images supplied by students.



# In my room

Master of Electrical  
Engineering student and  
IH Senior Resident  
Udai Rathore takes us on  
a tour of his “board room”

Photography by Matthew Smith



1



2

## 1 My study area A.K.A. “board room”

As a postgraduate research student this is probably the most important space in the house for me. It's where I spend much of my time, my “board room.” It's where my mind meets its daily tasks and finds innovative solutions to satisfy them. This space has seen a lot of celebrations, disagreements, breakthroughs, setbacks, failures, high distinctions, blood, sweat and tears. Thus, this space has incrementally developed over the years to consist of things that constantly motivate my mind. One of the highlights include a picture of my family, to constantly remind me who I am and where I come from.

## 2 Photo Collage and Gifts

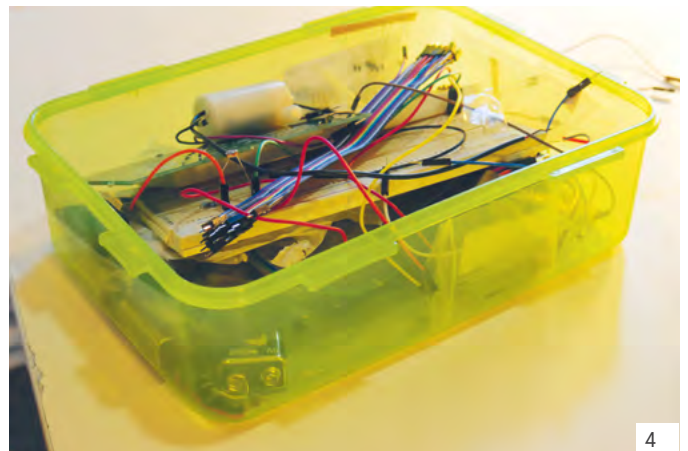
This wall, which is the highlight of my “board room” consists of the fondest memories during my time at IH. It consists of various gifts and photos that I have acquired over the years. There are posters with stories behind each, a dream catcher, birthday cards, my 24th birthday gift and a hand drawn portrait. All these gifts were given to me by my closest friends at IH.



3

### 3 Time Management

Being a postgraduate student and having an active social life is not possible without adequate time management. Thankfully, in my first semester at IH, I was taught how to manage my time effectively. This semester calendar, provided by IH, is an important part of my semester planning and is updated in every semester.



4



5

### 4 Toolbox

Ask any electrical engineer if they have a toolbox, and they'll show you something like this. My actual toolbox is a bit bigger than this and has more important equipment (like multimeter and soldering iron) but unfortunately that's locked up in the lab right now thanks to COVID-19. This box has all the important wires, diodes, transistors and resistors (electrical jargon) that I need on a regular basis to build projects or test hypotheses. Come into my room and you may have a rare chance to see me in my natural element having a conversation with electrical equipment!

### 5 The Greatest Show (I-Night 2019)

I'm 25 years old and for 24 years of my life I had never performed anything on stage, mostly because I'm an introvert. I-Night 2019 changed it all. For the first time in my life, I got up on a stage in front of approximately 100 people and danced. It was magical to say the least. And it would have never happened if my friends at IH had not pushed me to participate (Thanks Manasa!) Thus, this ticket sits on my wall, as a constant reminder that it's never too late to try anything new!



# Global Leadership Program Speaker Series: U.S. foreign policy in the age of Trump and beyond with Dr Gorana Grgic





## Joining us via Zoom, Dr Grgic gave IH residents an overview of U.S. foreign policy since World War Two before diving deeper into the nation's current global leadership strategy under the 45th president, Donald Trump.

### Read a snapshot of the talk below.

You only needed a subscription to Time Magazine over the past decade and a half to know that the next pandemic was around the corner. As recently as 2017, Time featured a headline predicting that we weren't ready for the next pandemic. Bill Gates gave a number of TED Talks on the subject, and even President Trump's own cabinet publications around disease prevention and control have been saying for the last year that we need to do more to shore up our response to a potential pandemic that's looming just around the corner.

This pandemic has posed global challenges for the United States and only accentuated Donald Trump's foreign policy trends.

The world is, unfortunately, growing much more Hobbesian, and that means that it's much more nasty and brutish, it's 'every man for themselves' and as states are looking more inwards, people are growing more suspicious of whatever is coming from outside their country.

Nowadays, nationalists have an excuse to close the borders to suppress minorities. We've seen it happen in various countries. This has been the initial impulse and it has also ramped up anti-minority sentiment. We've seen that in the United States and beyond. Populists are failing to provide the easy fixes on which their policies are based, and are consequently resorting to deflection tactics. This is exactly what Donald Trump has been doing by blaming China, blaming the WHO, blaming the media, blaming the Democrats, blaming the governors, blaming everyone but himself. But again, he's not alone in doing these things. This is the standard populist line.

Worryingly, both aspiring and established authoritarians are using this as a unique opportunity to augment and consolidate their power. We have seen maybe the starkest example of this in Hungary, where Viktor Orbán, as the Prime Minister, proclaimed himself a kind of unitary executive and disbanded the parliament, so he's ruling by what's virtually an emergency decree. But again, it's not just endemic to Hungary.

This sense of great power rivalry is just exacerbating. We've seen a lot of competition over what has now been called mask diplomacy. China and Russia have skilfully used this as an opportunity to throw themselves into the crisis and try to appear as white knights vis-a-vis the European Union or U.S. who have been unable to mount a kind of response to help the nations that were most in need. What's been more prominent is the help say Italy or Spain have been receiving from China or Russia, even if that help was often faulty or came with an invoice attached.

So, what does this mean for the future of U.S. foreign policy or U.S. politics in general? Back in the pre-COVID days, Donald Trump had a much greater chance of winning

with the tailwinds from a strong and resilient economy. However, now that within one month basically all of the gains on the stock markets and employment market have been wiped out, he is getting into election really lacking the platform of being the CEO of America and someone who has truly made America great again, as objectionable as that slogan was.

So, he can't use that line anymore, and this is where the narrative shifts towards Trump being a kind of wartime leader who is strong on defying China and who is a superior choice to Joe Biden.



We are already seeing this play out in the campaign. Trump decided to freeze WHO funding after accusing it of towing China's line. Certainly there is plenty of blame that should be ascribed to China, and perhaps even to the WHO, but there's a lot of blame that should be ascribed to Donald Trump as well, because he knew how great this threat could be in January but decided not to act decisively until it was too late, in March.

And Trump is now trying to portray Joe Biden as weak on China because he and the Democrats, in general, are not going to go play the China card because it's already stoking a lot of anti-Asian American sentiment in the United States.

The problem in the U.S. these days is it's a bit of a split screen. US society and polity is hugely polarised. And if you want some vivid imagery, it's one where Donald Trump was being impeached and there was a trial that would go on to happen in the U.S. Senate, and at the same time as the vote for impeachment was taking place, Donald Trump was holding a rally in Michigan with a bunch of supporters around him. It really didn't matter. If you look at some

of the news and opinion polls, you can see that Donald Trump has consistently, even at the greatest crisis of his presidency, had consistent support from his party.

At the same time, Democrats have been resoundingly anti-Trump and remain so. The only fluctuation here is what we see from the independents, and this is where some of the electoral fight is going to take place.

So, in absence of a crystal ball, I can just say there are a lot of known unknowns. We don't know how the economy will fare until November 3rd. If the U.S. goes into a real depression that we haven't seen for over a century, since the last Great Depression, it's real trouble for Trump.

But equally, there are a lot of theories that the depression might be so hard and huge that it depresses voter turnout even further rather than mobilising people to get out to vote to oust Trump. Or that there is going to be such an existential crisis if there is a second wave of the pandemic close to the elections, that we might not see the elections, or might not see them happen in person, and then we have





“There is a lot of contention around whether we could see manipulation of the vote count and ultimately, in that circumstance, not find out who the winner of the election is come November 3rd.”

to consider some of the questions around voter turnout and mechanics of voting, such as universal no-excuse mail-in ballots. And in relation to that, there is a lot of contention around whether we could see manipulation of the vote count and ultimately, in that circumstance, not find out who the winner of the election is come November 3rd.

These are all the questions that will really matter because obviously we have two stark differences in the vision for U.S. foreign policy and for U.S. politics in general depending on who gets to be elected in November. I would say that for each of the elections thus far in U.S. history, which are always called historic, 2020 is the election year that's existential due to not only the context in which it takes place, but also the huge distinction in the outlook.

**Dr Grgic is a jointly appointed Lecturer at the Department of Government and International Relations and the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Center for European Studies in 2018-2019. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer at the Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Education – School of Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia. Her research interests include transatlantic relations, U.S. alliances, conflict resolution and democratisation.**



# Reflections: Five years at IH with Senal Munasinghe



2019 I-Night

Senal has become such a familiar figure at IH that he has been voted ‘IH Dad’ three years in a row. From volunteering to be a floor mentor, working as a senior resident, and even jumping at the chance to write for the IH magazine, Senal epitomises making the most of university.

It all feels so surreal. Every year, every semester, has been filled with so many wonderful memories, adventures and lessons that I will hold close to me for life.

18th February 2016: the first day of the latest chapter in my life. The day I left Sri Lanka to move to Australia and study at the University of Sydney. The plan was simple: live at International House for the first year, get used to the surroundings and move out. Looking back, four and half years down the line, oh boy, I had no idea what was in store for me.

I completed my schooling in Sri Lanka in 2015, where I attended St. Thomas’ College for 14 years and most of what I had learnt, apart from at home, was from there. The education system in Sri Lanka, and to be fair most places worldwide, promotes one thing. No, I don’t mean learning; I mean the competition created among students to be better than each other. I was in that same mindset of being the best, not the best I can be, but rather the best among everyone. I was also encouraged to play sport by my parents. This made me realise the value of working as a team to be the best we can be together. Nevertheless, the mindset of doing better than others was drilled into my peers and me throughout my schooling years.

However, there was another side to me. The person moving away from home for the first time. Going back to September 2015, I remember how nervous and excited I was to decide where I would be living in Sydney. Looking through the on-campus accommodation options on the university website, International House caught my eye right away. The idea of moving abroad and starting a new stage of my life suddenly felt less daunting knowing I would be with other people going through the same experience.

So, there I was, calling the reception from the back door to be let in to IH, nervously excited. I recall that first fortnight very well because I have looked back at it so many times. I have refreshed those memories when talking to prospective and new residents about the orientation program offered by IH. Being an only child moving away from home for the first time, I was expecting to be extremely home sick and not adjust well to the new environment. However, the mix of taking part in IH and IHMA Welcome Week events, along with spending time playing games and chatting with new friends, only gave me just enough energy to drag myself to bed at the end of each day. You would think feeling that way for weeks would be exhausting, but I enjoyed it so much, especially because it left me with no time to be homesick. This is the reason I always talk so fondly about my first two weeks at IH to everyone.

A month in, I became a bit overwhelmed trying to balance university work and spending time with friends. This is when I had a chat with one of the older, more experienced residents in the house. During the conversation, I realised that I would regret only gaining a degree and nothing else out of my time here. Since that day, I have made a point of enjoying life and making use of the opportunities afforded to me here. This didn’t mean I was going to completely neglect my studies, but rather I would concentrate on doing well in class while also making sure to wind down, spend time with friends, play sport and work on other interests of mine. This is advice I have kept with me until today.

Besides my new friends around me, it was also extremely reassuring to know there was a support system at IH made up of volunteers. With a history of volunteering from my high school days, I knew that people volunteer because they care about the wellbeing and success of others. This, while comforting me, also motivated me to give back to IH. My floor mentor in 2016 inspired me to not only become a floor mentor myself, but to always do my best, even outside of the role. So, for the past three years, until I moved to the Maze in 2020, I was a floor mentor and thoroughly enjoyed welcoming students to IH and being there to assist them when they needed me.



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2

1 With Manasa Marasani (voted IH mum in 2018 and 2019) at the 2019 IHMA Ball.

2 With the intramural sports trophy, presented at the 2017 candle light dinner.

3 The IH Touch Football team at the 2018 intramural competition.

4 My family and I during my first visit to IH in January 2016.

Now you may be thinking, “didn’t he say he was going to leave after the first year?”. While I did initially arrive with that thought in mind, I don’t recall ever thinking about leaving. That is how much I loved the place, the community and the entire system upon which IH functions.

I was also lucky to work at the House while volunteering for IHMA. As time passed, I realised the true value of the opportunities afforded to us at IH. The experience I was able to gain working as a Student Ambassador, Orientation and Events Assistant and a Senior Resident prepared me to be successful both in the workplace and in life. Initially, other residents and I thought the employment opportunities offered by IH were an awesome thing to do while living at IH, a way to give back to the community, but they are more than that. On the job you realise

that you play a vital role in the running of the House and you are given quite a bit of responsibility. While this adds pressure, being able to do all of this at home adds a level of comfort which allows growth in the role. You find yourself becoming, not just better at the job, but also a better person in the process.

The organised pressures of working for IH are in sharp contrast to how IHMA roles work. This comes with it being the first opportunity for most of us to be on a committee and running all the student events by ourselves. Nevertheless, if someone says they didn’t have fun being on the IHMA committee they are either lying, or their heart was never in the role for which they volunteered. At the end of the day, IHMA roles will always involve a lot of last-minute rushing and panic, but more often than not, this resulted in a finale of beauty

with us in pure delight at what we were able to pull off. No, I am not just talking about I-Night, but most IHMA events.

Thinking about the various events during my time here, a long list of memories stream through my head. Unexpectedly, while I can recall a lot of big events, for every one of those, I can also think of five to ten other memories made at IH in the most random of times and places. Some of the best examples include getting food with friends on random weeknights, chatting away in someone’s room before realising it’s 6am and a study session in the Wool Room that ended with a trip to Victoria Park to see who’s the faster runner (though we only ran for 20 seconds before chatting there for hours). For me, these ‘small’ incidents and memories rank right up there with all the memories from I-Nights, cruises and balls.





**“The plan was simple and straightforward, live at International House for the first year, get used to the surroundings and move out. Looking back, four and half years down the line, oh boy, I had no idea what was in store for me.”**

While I have enjoyed making my own memories, I have also been fortunate enough to take alumni on tours of IH and to hear about the great adventures they had at IH. These alumni had such an amazing time at IH that they still come back even 40 years later to walk down the halls one more time and reminisce. Having heard and seen them do this, being a returning alumnus is something I was already thinking about from my second year.

However, IH didn't just give me good experiences. I have had my share of disappointments and down times here, too. I say this now as I think about all the memories I have made and my desire to come back, visit and reminisce myself, because one of the saddest feelings I had about IH was in late 2017. This was when I found out about the newest plans the university had to demolish the current building

at 96 City Road. While I heard of these plans, I was undoubtably very selfish in thinking 'but, I want to come back in 20 years and think about all the good times I had here'. That is truly how I felt, and that initial disbelief was followed by a lot of sadness. Yet, as I am sitting here today, over two years later, there is still talk about IH moving or maybe ceasing to exist, but that initial sadness, disbelief and annoyance has developed into an understanding that not everything will be around forever. We must appreciate what we have, when we have it. This isn't applicable to just IH or the situation surrounding IH. In fact, if this wasn't a sentiment you carried around with you before, the current COVID-19 restrictions would have introduced an appreciation for all the freedom and luxuries we had before and made you vow to not take this for granted ever again.

Now, being as nostalgic as I am, I've always taken the time to stop and think about memories. Most of the time, I am looking through my phone at old photos and videos while smiling to myself. However, this opportunity, not just to think back through my time at IH but also to put my thoughts and feeling to words, is something I have thoroughly enjoyed. Without a doubt these four and a half years have taught me so much and given me such great memories. No matter the future, International House will always hold a special place in my heart. To steal a line from our current chairperson, 'I do indeed love IH'.

# Alumni profile: Nick Bonyhady (2014)

## What drew you to International House?

I came to International House in 2014. It was when some of the University's residential colleges had bad reputations that I absolutely wanted to avoid. On the other hand, a friend from Newcastle, north of Sydney, who I'd met in high school had gone to International House and had an outstanding time. I'd stayed once in 2013 when she was away, and I was attending a concert in town (I grew up in Canberra). The place felt friendly, welcoming and unpretentious. So, that's where I applied and I'm very glad I did.

## You are an industrial relations reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald, congratulations on your success! What is your favourite thing about your job and what tips would you give to budding journalists who want to follow suit?

I love the fascinating people I deal with, from truck drivers to federal ministers; the competition of chasing a page one; the pressure of deadlines; finding out something important and secret; telling the stories of people who have no other recourse; the pace of the news; writing, writing and re-writing; being a part of massive events; giving both sides of a story; asking hard questions; and my colleagues. The Herald is a great place to work.



To start in the media, experience is essential, which can be a Catch-22 for people who aren't studying journalism already. So: write for student papers, do community radio and pitch freelance if you can. Take internships. Jot down notes. If you're interested in the business, shoot me an email: [nick.bonyhady@smh.com.au](mailto:nick.bonyhady@smh.com.au).

The other thing to know, though, is that the media is an industry in flux globally – which is really a euphemism meaning that many companies are not making money and having to lay people off. You should go into the business with clear eyes and a backup plan. Finish your degree, which will also help mightily with stories, at the very least. Work out if you can live happily on a journalist's salary and face a potential career transition if things go south. And then, if you want to do journalism (which can be really great and is incredibly important), go for it.

## How has your role changed in the past few months?

I've been in my role for about two months after a stint as a general reporter. Industrial relations and politics can be clubby spaces in Australia; the players know each other and the few reporters who cover the area well. I'd planned to start in the round by introducing myself and slowly building up my knowledge of the area. That has proved impossible. When the government announces a \$130 billion rescue package for Australian workers and arguably the largest, fastest shakeup of industrial laws, you have to sprint to keep up. That's what I've been doing ever since.



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**IH has a mission of international understanding, friendship and solidarity in challenging times, how relevant do you feel this is in the current circumstances?**

It couldn't be more relevant. Australia has a long history of intolerance (and tolerance) but some of the ugliest parts have come out of late. Fair and important questions are being asked of China's reaction to the pandemic but that also seems to have prompted some disgusting racism. Those high profile attacks are the tip of the iceberg. They convey little of the more subtle abuse that people of colour are copping as a result of the pandemic. We need institutions like International House to bridge divides and ensure students go into the world prepared to live tolerantly.

**Finally, do you have any particularly fond memories from your time at IH?**

One memory that stands out was a great day galivanting around South Head and scrambling down the rocks from the headland to the water. There were people from a bunch of countries there. A great day and uniquely IH.

1 Herald photographer Louise Kennerley took this photo of me before I set out on a 4550-kilometre trip from Hobart to Cairns up the east coast of Australia to take the pulse of the nation before the 2019 federal election. Courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald.

2 With Julie Chow and Owen James, two of my closest friends at IH at the 2014 end of year function.

3 With Garry Maddox, a mentor at the Herald, in late 2019 on the day I was given a permanent position at the paper.

4 A portrait out the front of New Parliament House by Herald press gallery photographer Alex Ellinghausen on the halfway point of my trip, which was called "bursting the bubble" — hence the bubble over my head. Courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald.





Taking advantage of a recently digitised archive, we've selected some iconic photos that have been taken at International House over the decades.

A special mention to Rosemary Berrick, former honorary archivist of International House, who was instrumental in establishing the house's library and photographic archives.







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1 International House Shop, 1969.

2 Residents being entertained in the Assistant Director's flat, 1985.

3 Weekend working bee at Belanglo State Forest putting up the log cabin for I.H. residents to stay in, 1975.

4 International House Soccer Team, 1981.

5 Malaysian Candle Dance at I-Night, 1985.

6 International House Ball. Tony Van Extel and unnamed resident, 1992.

7 I-Night performance by Nandani Naurathna and unnamed resident, 1995.

8 International Night, Pacific Islands. L-r: Ekonika Peni, Catherine Davani, Eric Thogole, Margartha Kafai and Sosiana Fonua, 1988.

9 I-Night, Abercrombie Bush Band, 1975.



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1 International Food Fair – Mexico, 1995.

2 House party. B-F, L-R: Larry Singer, Lavier Gomes, Greg Woods, Gary Pammer, Tony Weder, Paul Frezza, Kong Siew, Alain Rohan, 1980.

3 IH residents helping move furniture across City Road, circa 1988.

4 SUIHAA Annual General Meeting and alumni BBQ, 2003.

5 Buying food for the IH shop. L-R: Philayrath Phongsavan, Alan Murray, Neal Turner, 1988.

6 IH Food Fair, 1997.



# Message from the SUIHAA president

## SUIHAA Report

This is my first report as president of SUIHAA as I took over from the magnificent Dr Ros Madden, who stepped down from the SUIHAA presidency in February 2020. What an interesting time it is to be representing IH's wonderful alumni community. Who would have thought 2020 would begin with bushfires across Australia, turn to storms and rain in February and by March be in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. Where we will be by December is almost too difficult to imagine at present. In a normal year SUIHAA would be celebrating events with our current residents at the House but obviously this has not been possible under the COVID-19 lockdown.

In February, with the start of the new academic year, SUIHAA began with Calendarfest, much appreciated by the new and returning residents. I attended the Flag Dinner at the launch of Semester 1 and was delighted to be there. This will be the last Flag Dinner in the current IH configuration. It was a privilege to attend and see the enjoyment of residents and those who made the pledge of international understanding on behalf of their fellow residents. I always get quite emotional and this was made more poignant because of the future IH rebuild. I always feel inspired and slightly awed by all the residents who are at the beginning of

a magnificent adventure – a new city, a new university and new friends to be made. I am always grateful that as a young undergraduate I was nurtured by the house and mentored by some older and wiser residents who took a young would-be lawyer under their wings. It is my deepest hope that the current residents also gain this sense of nurture and support, particularly in this difficult year.

It is also my hope that SUIHAA members (new and old) consider coming together online to create that sense of support for ourselves and our current residents. There has been some interest in alumni mentoring residents in an informal sense and there are wonderful online opportunities for alumni to connect (or reconnect) in these difficult times. Zoom anyone? Please contact myself or any committee members if you would like to reach out. The SUIHAA committee will be coming together to develop a process of touching base with the SUIHAA community and also to develop plans for activities and social get-togethers in the future, although we are unsure when this will be. The current experience of social distancing has shown how important it is to stay connected and be with those who uplift and nurture us. We will be in touch soon.

## SUIHAA Advocacy

With the intended rebuild of International House, SUIHAA continues to advocate for an appropriate rebuild of the site. The University has confirmed that IH will be rebuilt on the current site and that is extremely good news. It is uncertain at this point in time how long the redevelopment will take. SUIHAA will continue to place the views of the alumni before IH Council (governing body) to ensure that the spirit of IH continues.

## A Heartfelt Thanks

I would like to thank Director Jessica Carroll and her team for their ongoing support of SUIHAA and the House. In this difficult time the residents have been well looked after and additional requirements of COVID-19 have placed difficulties on all staff and residents. All this occurring while the future of IH is still being worked on. It is a herculean task and one that we thank Jessica for doing in such a calm and gracious manner.

I hope to report in the next issue that many good things are happening and that life for us all is returning to some sense of normality. Until then, stay safe.

Yours,

**Karen Rowe-Nurse**  
President, SUIHAA

# Welcome week and semester one events

It might feel like a lifetime ago, but before social distancing, welcome week was a huge success. IHMA chairperson, Judd Zhan, gives us a rundown.

International House welcome weeks are always hugely successful and this year was no different! With dedicated IHMA members hosting over 30 events in just two weeks, a myriad of friendship-creating and memory-making opportunities were laid out for both new and returning residents alike. From exploring the Glebe Markets to chilling on Bondi Beach; from the razzle and dazzle of Mardi Gras to the gripping stories told in the Disney Slumber Party; from sightseeing every major attraction in Sydney to a truly “Amazing Race”; there was not a moment in the day when there was not an activity for the residents to get involved in.

Finally, as the end of the welcome week festivities drew near, International House celebrated a longstanding tradition of the Flag Dinner – exemplifying true acceptance of cultural diversity from all residents in the House – followed by a long awaited post-dinner celebration. If nothing else, by the end of these two weeks, I can firmly say that our message to all residents, new and old, was clear: welcome home to International House!

Sincerely,

**Judd Zhan**

Chairperson of IHMA







1 Maze residents, Ladan Zolfaghari and Maysam Namazifard, posing with their national flags after saying the pledge at the 2020 flag ceremony.

2 Behold the winning residence hall! IH residences celebrate a victory at the USyd welcome shield event.

3 IH men's football captain, Udai Rathore, giving words of encouragement to his team during half time at the USyd intramural football competition.

4 Old and new IH residents heading off on a campus tour.

5 Residents, Toby Wong and Udai Rathore, enjoying a freshly made coffee in the IH shop. This semester, Assistant Director Matt

Smith kindly lent the shop his espresso machine and taught our Senior Residents how to serve up delicious coffee for residents.

6 IH women's football team captain, Seon Ah (Shelley) Chu, receiving her captain's armband from teammates Abhay Agrawal (L) and Michael Schipani (R).

7 IHMA social representative, Asif Hasibish, hosting a speed friending event in the Wool Room for new IH residents.

8 Lukáš Tabák reciting the IH pledge in Slovakian at the 2020 flag ceremony.

9 Community Relations Advisor, Keshni Haria, leading a session during Orientation.



# International Houses go head to head

IH Sydney has taken on IH Darwin in the first ever interstate online championship.

IH Sydney does not shy away from competition! Just when the impending pandemic saw a freeze of intramural sports, we were at the top of the scoreboard and raring to play Regiment Building in the Men's futsal finals. This winning spirit and energy did not fade away. When conversations between IH Darwin and IH Sydney sparked the creation of a virtual championship, residents jumped at the chance to come together as a community and take on our friends from the north.

The IH Sydney vs IH Darwin virtual championship ran over two months and featured an array of competitions as diverse as the Houses themselves. Sydney won the online boardgames portion of championship, however, were pipped at the post during the FIFA final. We were runner up in the TikTok competition, which saw residents submit short videos with a 'social distancing' theme, however we managed to bring ourselves back on par with Darwin by winning two categories in the photography competition (pictured).

In the end, it all came down to a talent competition where residents produced videos of themselves singing, dancing, DJing, painting and playing instruments. As is well documented, IH Sydney attracts highly talented and enthusiastic students, so it is no surprise that they really came into their own during the final phase of the championship! Highlights included Avanish's soulful rendition of 'Why Georgia' by John Mayer and Joseph and Kevin's cover of Aussie favourite, 'Livin' next door to Alice' by Smokie. In the end, it was Astrid and Aashna's Bollywood-pop dance performance that took first prize and gave IH Sydney the points to win the championship overall.

A huge thank you to IH Darwin for participating and helping us all stay entertained during this strange time. Looking forward to a BBQ one this is all over!

1 Talent competition, first prize: Aashna Sethi and Di (Astrid) Liu.

2 Photography competition, first prize (portrait): 'Untitled' by Musau Kilonzo (@musau.kilonzo).

3 Photography competition, first prize (social distancing): 'Two to Tango' by Arnav Shetty (@laminarnavflow).



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## For more information

International House  
The University of Sydney  
96 City Road, Darlingtown NSW 2008  
ih.info@sydney.edu.au

## Our community

International House brings together Australian and international students from all over the world. Our diverse and close-knit community has been home to over 6000 students and scholars since we opened our doors in 1967.



Group photo being viewed by alumni at the 50th anniversary in 2017. Photography by Daniel Kukec.

# Support our community

International House welcomes donations to support our mission of international understanding and friendship.

By supporting IH and its distinctive residence life program, you will help ensure that the life-long friendships and deep cultural understanding that comes from living at the house continues to thrive in the hearts and minds of the next generation of residents.

[sydney.edu.au/donate-ih](https://sydney.edu.au/donate-ih)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**  
—  
**International  
House**