



August 2025

SUIHAA Newsletter

A Message from the SUIHAA Committee Executive

Welcome to the May 2025 SUIHAA Newsletter. As usual, there is an abundance of news to convey. We continue to have a Table of Contents, so you can start with the articles that most interest you.

No matter where you start in the Newsletter, you won't want to miss:

- Save-the-date for the 8 November IH alumni reunion
- Redevelopment of UNSW IH: Interview with UNSW IH Dean, Charlene Griffiths
- Find SUIHAA now on social media!
- Sydney University Vice Chancellor support of international students: requesting your letters of support!
- Report from the latest meeting of the SUIHAA Book Club

As always, we want to thank the other members of the SUIHAA Committee, who keep the IH vision and mission alive, and organize the different SUIHAA-supported events:

Ian Gutierrez
Anne Gotsis
Michael Hirschhorn
Josh Lee
Margaret Lemoh
Ros Madden
Taz Rahman
Liz Wong

Enjoy the various articles in this issue of the SUIHAA Newsletter.

On behalf of the SUIHAA Committee,

Dennis Schatz (SUIHAA President)
Louise Trott (SUIHAA Secretary)
Rod Thyer (SUIHAA Treasurer)

Message from
the SUIHAA
Executive

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SAVE THE DATE: IH Alumni Reunion to be held Saturday 8 November 2025

from Taz Rahman

Join International House alumni for our second reunion event of the year at University of Sydney's all-day Community Festival. SUIHAA will have a few tables at Sounds Cafe, located inside the gorgeous Chau Chak Wing Museum on the lower ground floor, from 12.30pm-2.30pm.

Watch for a future email with details of the cultural and music kick-on event after 2.30pm. Thank you to all who responded to our survey on event preferences and hope to see you there.

**IH Alumni
Reunion:
8 Nov 2025**



Sounds Café in Chau Chak Wing Museum



Terrace outside Museum

SUIHAA going local - please share your views

from Ian Guitierrez

Being an IH alumnus brings me pride and joy to have a shared experience with many people who live around Australia and the world. I have been living in Australia for almost three decades and spent about two of those living in Sydney before moving to Brisbane in 2018. We would like to know your level of interest in organising a local chapter of SUIHAA in your home city - formally or informally! Please express your interest by emailing me at irggac@yahoo.com.

Connect with SUIHAA via social media

from Sen Ganbaatar

We're making it easier than ever for you to stay connected with the International House community. SUIHAA has launched an official Instagram account and would love for you to join us!

Local chapters
and SUIHAA
social media



Follow us on [@suihaa.official](https://www.instagram.com/suihaa.official) on Instagram and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/suihaa> to catch up on alumni news, find out about upcoming events, and relive some of your favourite IH moments. Additionally, we are seeking stories from our community. If you would like to share your updates or memories from your time at IH, please send them to suihaasocial@gmail.com.

In case you missed it: De Graaff Elms Roundtable 2025 recording now available to watch online

The 2025 de Graaff/Elms roundtable was a great success, with each speaker providing a different but useful perspective that nicely highlighted the many issues associated with the topic of student accommodation and the role of universities.



De Graaff Elms Roundtable

Left to right: Professor Alan Morris (Institute for Public Policy and Governance, UTS), Dr Deborah Seifert AM (Head, International House, University of Melbourne), Weihong Liang, (Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations), Nicole Gower, (Vice-President (Operations), University of Sydney)

This year's Roundtable event marked the return to a hybrid format for the first time since the pandemic, with the panel taking questions from both online participants from all over the world as well as alumni and students who attended in-person.

Thanks go to the key organizers who made sure the Roundtable went flawlessly – Ros Madden, Taz Rahman, Josh Lee, Greg Houseman and Margaret Lemoh.

You can access the recording of the Roundtable event on the SUIHAA YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@suihaa>. Additional photos from the event can also be found online [here](#).

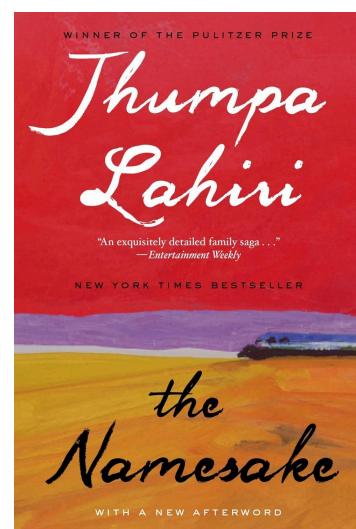
SUIHAA Book Club Update

from Gwen Ng

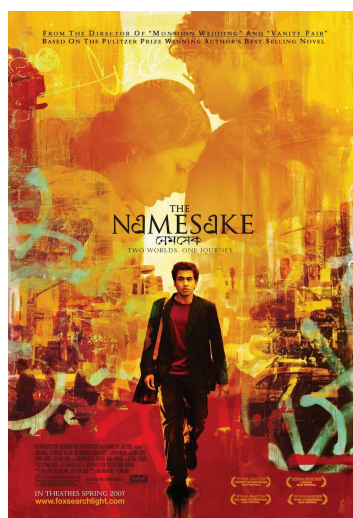
The SUIHAA online Book Club is proving to be a great success. It enables us to catch up with old friends, make new friends and read and discuss books which we may never have thought of reading without the input of an eclectic group. The only thing missing is the indulgent wine consumption integral/sacred to many home-based book clubs (!) - but so far we have survived this abstinence and enjoyed stimulating, wide-ranging discussions.

Our chosen book for July 2025 was *The Namesake* by British-American author Jhumpa Lahiri. This beautifully observed story follows the lives of a Bengali couple, who start a new life in Cambridge, Massachusetts within days of their arranged marriage in India - and traces the challenging journey as they adapt to their marriage and learn the unfamiliar expectations of their new lifestyle while also retaining the precious rituals, beliefs and behaviours of their traditional culture.

The book title refers to the son, Gogol/Nikhil, who struggles with his cultural identity when trying to reconcile the competing influences of his home life and that of the country in which he was born and educated. This subject is explored with great insight and sensitivity, no doubt because the author herself experienced a similar dichotomy in her upbringing.



SUIHAA
Book Club
update

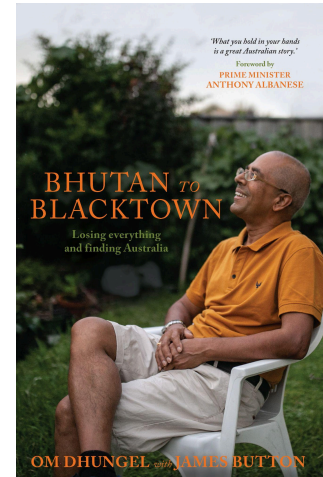


As a footnote, I would like to mention that I really loved the movie of this story - also titled *The Namesake* - which was directed by Mira Nair and released in 2006. The movie struck me as a very realistic and insightful depiction of the migrant experience which I have observed over the years in both Singapore and Australia. I also thought that the tender growth of a deep and loving marriage between the parents was captured beautifully. The movie is still available for viewing online.

(continued on page 7)

Our next zoom meeting will take place on Saturday 30 August 2025 at 10.0am (AEST). We'll be discussing *Bhutan to Blacktown* by Om Dhungel with James Button.

If you would like to join the SUIHAA Book Club, please contact Liz Wong on her email address: wongoonoo@hotmail.com



Future SUIHAA Book Club meetings and titles

22 October 2025	Grey Bees by Andrey Kurkov
27 December 2025	Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary by Anita Anand
28 February 2026	Bark Petitions by Clare Wright

IH Redevelopment

from Dennis Schatz

IH redevelopment update

There is not much new information from what was included in the last Newsletter. The IH Council will meet in early September to hear the latest from the efforts of the Working Group mentioned in the article about Craig Collie, and from the Program Control Group working on IH redevelopment.

We continue to be encouraged by the university's plans to increase its attention to the redevelopment of IH.

You will find of interest the next article regarding the redevelopment of UNSW's International House. It is also critical for you to see the article regarding the editorial written by Sydney University's Vice Chancellor (see page 15), and we encourage all alumni to write to him to encourage the urgent redevelopment of IH.

Redevelopment of UNSW IH: Interview with Charlene Griffiths

from Dennis Schatz

I had the pleasure to talk in early July with Charlene, who is currently Dean of International House at the University of New South Wales (UNSW IH), to hear more about UNSW IH and to get, and to get her perspective on what are the key attributes that make for a successful International House experience.

Charlene has been at UNSW IH for 3½ years and was the Acting Director at USyd IH from February 2004 to March 2005 while Jessica Carroll was on leave. The following is a summary of the key points from our conversation.



UNSW IH: Background and Accommodations

UNSW IH opened in 1968, shortly after USyd IH opened. It is located on campus across the street from the Roundhouse, a major theatre and a programming space that IH uses.

UNSW IH:
redevelopment
& interview



L-R: UNSW IH viewed from outside; UNSW Roundhouse venue used for large programs



L-R: UNSW IH courtyard and dining room

Photos courtesy of UNSW IH resident Vista Febriani - @nabilavistaf

(continued on pages 9-11)

The House serves 166 residents in single rooms and shared bathrooms. Fees this year are \$431/week, which is less than most other UNSW accommodations with full catering. For that fee, residents get three meals a day, seven days a week. Breakfast is continental style, while the other two meals each day include a hot entree. Meals include both a protein and vegetarian offering, plus a salad bar at lunch and dinner. While the House has its own dining room, food is prepared in a central kitchen elsewhere on campus.

Last year, 650 students applied to be residents, so IH could only accept about 25% of the applicants. Of the 650 who applied, 300 were asked to submit an interview video, which helped determine who was accepted. There is a predominance of graduate students, with 88% of the residents being international students, which come from 39 different countries.

When asked why students choose IH over other campus accommodations, Charlene said it was the central location, the good price and the full set of meals offered. About 20% of the residents mentioned the desire to develop more connections with international students.

UNSW IH Staffing

Staffing of the House is on the “slim side” for what services and programming they try to do. Besides her full-time position, there is a Deputy Dean, who works 12 hours a week, plus four Resident Mentors, who work eight hours a week. As noted on the UNSW IH website, the RMs are UNSW staff members who are “typically in their final years of study or already hold a degree. They live in the house and pay a reduced weekly accommodation fee. RMs provide daily academic and pastoral support. They aren’t teachers, but they’re a little like supportive older siblings with loads of experience to pass on and a willingness to help guide the residents.” Other key staff are shared staff with other parts of the University. This includes marketing, finance, catering and facilities staff.



Programs that involve the residents and have them interact with each other is a critical part of the House offerings. Most of this is organized by the Resident Society (ReSoc) Committee (*pictured*). These are House residents elected annually by residents to various leadership responsibilities that offer the residents opportunities to be involved in extra-curricular activities. The ReSoc has a small budget each year to provide cultural, sport, social, and charitable activities.

Events and Programming

Charlene indicated that they try to have programming similar to what existed at Sydney University IH. While they do not have a Candlelight Dinner like SUIH, they celebrate the beginning and ending of the year with opening and closing dinners to celebrate the year and “pass the mantel” from the current residents to future residents.



Opening Dinner 2004 in the Roundhouse

UNSW IH: redevelopment & interview

Other House program activities include Sunday Suppers/Cultural Nights, where groups of residents band together to prepare traditional food from their home country and present fun facts and figures to their fellow residents. The House has the typical intramural sports teams. Other House activities include a movie and book club and garden club, plus wellbeing events that include canvas painting, meditation sessions and visits from support dogs. The House has a highly competitive internal table tennis tournament, plus residents enjoy whale watching trips, harbour cruises, and coastal walks around the harbor and city. The fact that the Light Rail stops just outside UNSW means there is easy access to exploring the city.



L-R: Japanese Culture Night held in the dining room; UNSW IH residents ready for Mardi Gras

Much of the time, the dining room is used for House programs, but the House can also reserve the Roundhouse, a major programming space for groups across the campus. The Roundhouse is just across the road, so House programming there is convenient.

A New Building for UNSW IH

The University is planning to move UNSW IH into a new building. While it won't be as centrally located, it will be in a new accommodation building consisting of three resident towers. UNSW IH will be in the central tower with about the same number of residents. The plan is that the House will be able to operate until the new building is done, so the move can occur quickly without a House closure. The move is not likely to happen for five years, as the plans are still under development. Look for an update on the plans in a future SUIHAA Newsletter.

Attributes and Services of a Successful International House

Knowing that both UNSW and USyd are redeveloping their international houses, I asked Charlene what key attributes and services are important to having a successful international house? Her first comment was having a dedicated dining room for IH residents, featuring round tables, and large enough to host the types of House programs mentioned earlier. Other key attributes she mentioned were:

1. Residents have comfortable, soundproof rooms that are well ventilated and with lots of natural light.
2. Games room
3. Music room
4. Study spaces on each floor
5. Communal food preparation space on each floor
6. Sufficient staff and meeting spaces to support residents' needs and programming support

Although maybe not absolutely critical, Charlene would like to see a space for public events focused on international issues.

I will be sure to check in with Charlene in the future to learn about how the plans for the new UNSW IH are developing.

Alumni Highlight: Craig Collie (1968)

from Craig Collie

Craig writes eloquently below about the impact International House had on him. While he was a resident for one year in 1968, he is still active in IH affairs as the Deputy Chair of IH Council, the official Sydney University group that advises the University regarding IH. He was recently attached to the IH Working Group that meets regularly to plan the IH's redevelopment – see the update on IH redevelopment elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In addition to his many credits regarding TV programming, he is a prolific writer. His most recent book, *Where the Flaming Hell Are We?* was published in 2023. Look for his next book scheduled to come out next year.



Craig (on right) enjoying a meal with Chinese friends

Alumni
highlight:
Craig Collie

The Impact of International House

I grew up in bicultural New Zealand and my first two years of primary school were in a suburb with a significant Maori population. It was before the influx of Pacific Islanders into New Zealand. The Islanders weren't particularly welcomed by the Maori community who regarded them as their poor cousins.

Although we were taught much about Maori culture at school, the attitude to the earlier inhabitants of the country was rather paternalistic. I've been back there several times in the last couple of decades and it isn't the provincial and paternalistic New Zealand I grew up in. It's much better than that.

I think the biculture is more genuine now than it was then and it's tinged anyway with contemporary multiculturalism. It isn't two cultures living side by side in harmony but more two cultures, Maori and pakeha, merged into a shared culture. There's a uniqueness to New Zealanders that is common to both in equal measure.

(continued on pages 13-14)

How much that is somehow ingrained in me and how much it is only the product of memory and research, I don't know. I suspect the process had to start again and, if that's the case, IH was a major influence.

I doubt if my childhood in New Zealand had much to do with the acceptance of my application to IH and I had no demonstrable commitment to multiculturalism I could point to. Graeme de Graaff's approach was to find a cross section of Australians and I was a fairly typical Sydneysider. I had spent two months of a university vacation working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme dam and hydroelectric complex, with no obvious scars from the experience. There were no Australians among the thousand residents living in the temporary quarters at Island Bend, where people working on the Scheme lived. That may have assisted my application, although I can't recall if I thought to mention it.

There was no epiphany for me at IH but the idea of living among people of different cultures grew quietly and naturally during my time there with a few closer friends among the international students and many with whom I had a cordial relationship. In the nearly 60 years since I was living at IH (1968) I have maintained friendship with a number of people I first knew there, which says something about the importance of my experience there.

Going out into the world of television – or, more specifically, the white-bread Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) – I didn't use the social experience at IH to any conspicuous extent, but in making documentaries, I was probably using it more than I realised. As executive producer of the youth program, *Edge of the Wedge*, I think I started to give greater attention to multicultural Australia. It was clearly a factor in the lives of our target audience, young Australians. They had a different perception of it than older Australians.

Five years as head of TV production at the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) is where I think I discovered how much the IH experience had penetrated my subconscious. At that time (1999-2003), the number of NESB (non-English speaking background) Australians born in Australia had grown to exceed those born outside Australia (i.e., migrants). The first migrant generation had been overtaken by the second migrant generation.

This cohort had different ideas on how to reflect their background. They weren't interested in the folkloric representation of migrant cultures, the events that Granny insisted they go to until they were able to resist that as adolescents, but a fusion of their background culture with the prevailing, and by then evolving, mainstream culture. So, you have a series of youth-based subcultures, Greek-Australian, Lebanese-Australian, Vietnamese-Australian and so on.

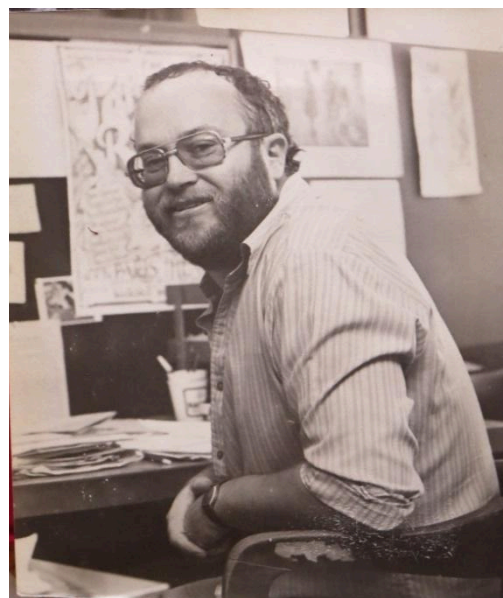


Photo: Craig around 1972 at 16mm film editing machine

**Alumni
highlight:
Craig Collie**

The policy at SBS-TV at that time was to increase the reflection in our programs of the second migrant generation. So, we had *Pizza*, a robust comedy series peopled with characters of all sorts of backgrounds (as well as cameos by B-list celebrities). It was a world familiar to a young audience, even if not to television executives.



L-R: Pizza series 5 cover; the cast of Going Home

A nightly drama, *Going Home*, featured a regular group of commuters on an intercity train, like to the Blue Mountains. Their improvised conversation covered issues in the news and their own lives, sometimes family issues. About half the characters were of non-Anglo background, but all of these appeared to be Australian-born. One of the actors, Khristina Totos, remarked to me what a change it was to play a Greek character using her own voice instead of a confected ethnic accent. Jason Chong played his character, an Australian-born Chinese like himself, in an Aussie accent

with an Asian lilt, the voice he used every day. John Gibson, dark-haired and olive-skinned, played a character called Mike Cortez, although he never referred to his presumed Spanish background.

Television at that time, and particularly the ABC, had been trying to embrace multiculturalism with token characters speaking in strong ethnic accents to make sure viewers got the message. On SBS, we had characters from all backgrounds going about their business not to make a statement about multiculturalism but because that's the way the world is, a world younger viewers would have recognised. I have no doubt my year at International House prepared me to readily understand the difference.



Pictured: Craig's most recent book *Where The Flaming Hell Are We?* published in 2023.

Alumni
highlight:
Craig Collie

USYD VC support of international students: requesting your letters of support

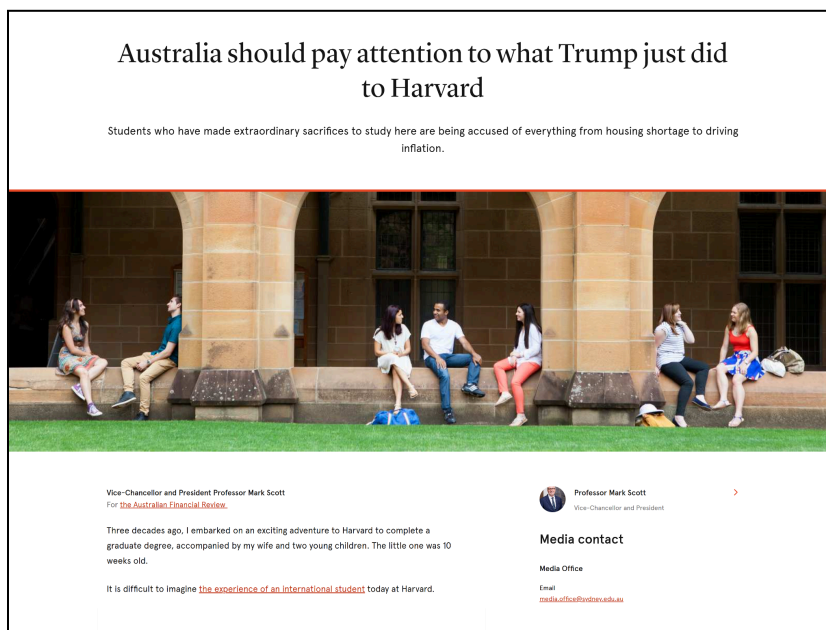
from Dennis Schatz

Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott recently wrote an editorial for the Australian Financial Review regarding the importance of international students at Australian universities. You can find the editorial online at:

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/05/26/australia-should-pay-attention-to-what-trump-just-did-to-harvard.html>

SUIHAA sent a message to the Vice-Chancellor (*reproduced in full on the following page*), using the comments in his editorial as a reason IH should be redeveloped as soon as possible, including the need to house more residents and to serve the broader international and Australian student community in building stronger international relations.

USYD VC:
requesting
your support



Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott's editorial from the University of Sydney website

What we ask of you now is to write a message to the Vice-Chancellor (mark.scott@sydney.edu.au with copy to media.office@sydney.edu.au) to emphasize the need to redevelop IH as soon as possible. While you may want to use some of the language in the SUIHAA message overleaf, your message will have more impact if you provide some statements regarding how important IH was to your success at the University.

Thank you for taking the time to send a message.

Message from SUIHAA to Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott

Dear Vice-Chancellor and President Scott,

The Sydney University International House Alumni Association (SUIHAA) read with interest your 25 May 2025 editorial in the Australian Financial Review - Australia should pay attention to what Trump just did to Harvard. We appreciated your concern about the treatment of international students during your time as an international student at Harvard, and your concern regarding how international students in the United States are being treated by the Trump administration.

We commend your recognition of the role international students play at Australian universities, and especially applaud your statement near the end:

“It’s important to acknowledge their importance and their contribution. Australia needs sensible policies to plan and manage their numbers. Universities need to collaborate effectively with government to maximise the benefits and opportunities that come from having global, world-class universities. And international students should be welcomed with gratitude and respect.”

USYD VC:
requesting
your support

The mission statement of Sydney University International House is exactly what you desire for international students and for the university community as a whole – a better understanding of their cultures, of the expertise that they bring to the university community, and the importance of welcoming them with gratitude and respect. For over five decades International House created a harmonious international community which fostered lasting personal and professional friendships and networks across the world.

We hope this recognition of the contribution and value of international students will highlight the urgency of redeveloping International House, to have it house more residents, and to serve the broader international and Australian student community in building enhanced international relations.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the International House Alumni Association,

Dennis Schatz

President, Sydney University International House Alumni Association

Two 2024 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition photos deserving recognition

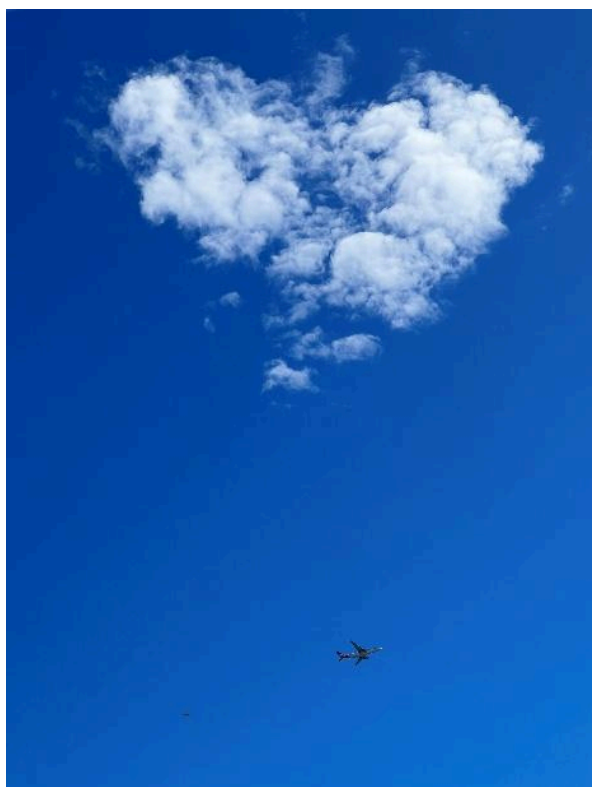
from Dennis Schatz

The top five winners of the 2024 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition were announced in the last two newsletters. As mentioned previously, the three judges were sorry they had to choose just five from the 70 outstanding submissions. Below are two of the photos also deserving of recognition. We hope you enjoy these beautiful worldwide images from your fellow IH alumni.

Davy Cheung lived in IH during 1987-1989. He studied for a Bachelor of Science majoring in Computer Science. He currently lives in Sydney. After graduating, he pursued a career in the IT field in Hong Kong. Following many rewarding years in the industry, he returned to Australia, where he is now enjoying the fresh air, scenic beauty, and more relaxed pace of life. To stay active and energized, he regularly takes part in sports events such as marathon and cycling, plus enjoys bushwalking to explore the natural surroundings. While embracing this new chapter, he is also open to meaningful opportunities. Currently, he works part-time as a school crossing supervisor, helping ensure the safety of students as they travel to and from school.



Rosemary
Berrick photo
competition



The photograph was taken in my backyard one quiet morning while I was watering the plants. As I looked up at the sky, a heart-shaped cloud caught my eyes, beautifully distinct against the clear blue backdrop. Just then, a plane appeared, soaring beneath the cloud. The timing felt serendipitous, and I quickly reached for my phone camera to capture the moment. I titled the photo "Flying with Love" to reflect the emotion it evoked symbolizing the journeys we take, and the love and connections that travel with us, no matter the distance.

You can contact Davy at davyinoz@yahoo.com.

Photo: Flying with Love (February 2023, Sydney)

John Diment lived in IH during 1968-69, studying for a PhD in organic chemistry. He lives in Cygnet, Tasmania where he has a 45-acre property keeping cashmere goats. He is happy to entertain any IH alumni who venture his way.

You can contact John at john@diment.org.

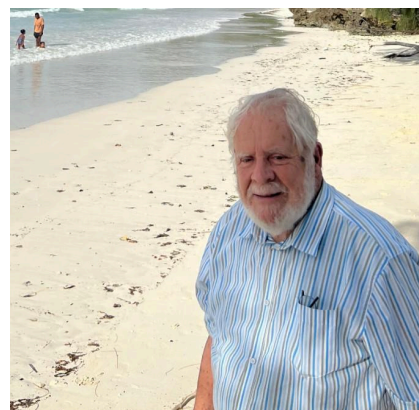


Photo: Malagasy Girls (September 2024, Amber National Park, Madagascar)

We went from Antisirana (old name Diego Suarez when it was a major French naval base) in northern Madagascar to the Amber Mountain National Park to see the famous waterfall and animals. The roads were atrocious but when we got there quite a few people had come to see the waterfall, including these two girls. We also saw lemurs and chameleons in the forest.

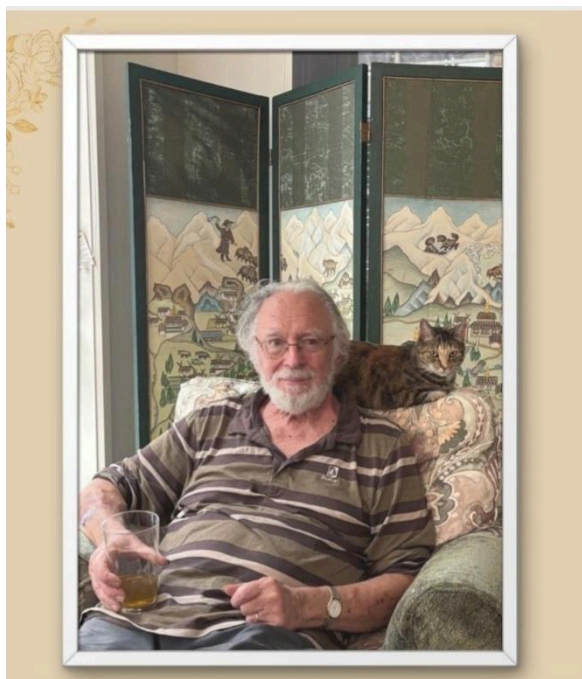
In Memoriam: Adrian Buzo and Bhaskar Mukherjee

Adrian Buzo (1969-71, 1975)

Adrian was one of the many IH residents that met his “match” in the House – Erica Sparks (IH 1974 – 1976) – who were married in 1977. An extensive profile of Adrian was in the December 2017 SUIHAA Newsletter, which you can read online [here](#).

(continued on page 19)

**Vale Adrian
Buzo
(IH '67-71, 75)**



We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Adrian Buzo on 13 August 2025, aged 76, after a courageous two-year battle with cancer. Beloved husband to Erica, father to Elizabeth, Michael, and Eva, and grandfather to Hugo, Max, and Emma. A great lover of music, books, films and cats.

Bhaskar Mukherjee (1987)

**Vale Bhaskar
Mukherjee
(IH 1987)**

Antonin Sebesta, IH resident with Bhaskar and close friend since they were at IH, asked us to let you know that Bhaskar died earlier this year. Both were active in SUIHAA activities, and Bhaskar submitted photographs to the 2023 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition, which were included in his memorial service on 30 July to celebrate his life and many great achievements.



Photo: Colored Glass Wall (Berlin, Germany - photo by Bhaskar Mukherjee)