



*Sydney University
International House
Alumni Association*

*Celebrating 50 years
of International House*

Preamble

In this document, we celebrate the history of International House and the achievements of some of its Alumni, and offer ideas about its future. International House is dedicated, via its constitution, to international understanding and friendship – a mission which it fulfils through both its residence and its broader activities as an international centre. The future will see the House evolve and expand its contribution to the life of the University and wider community as an international gateway for a growing number of international students, visiting academics, IH residents and Alumni, as well as local students and community members with an interest in international issues, networking and knowledge exchange.

History

International House at the University of Sydney celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. As a vibrant and constantly evolving community of resident and non-resident students, scholars, and staff from all around the world, International House is now half a century old, with a rich and successful history that will rightly be remembered, retold, and taken as a shared source for discussion and reflection at the many celebratory events taking place throughout the year. As a concept, however, IH is considerably older.

Prelude: Laying the Foundations

The idea of building a dedicated residence in Sydney for both foreign and local university students was first aired publicly in January 1953, when a short-lived organisation known as the Overseas Students' Bureau (OSB) announced its plan to raise funds for an 'International Student House' that would accommodate around 500 students from the University of Sydney and the University of Technology (as UNSW was called at the time). Although the OSB soon faded into obscurity, its scheme garnered genuine

interest from the University of Sydney Students' Representative Council (SRC), which had long been preoccupied with the pressing issue of how to improve and expand the provision of adequate student accommodation. The Chancellor of the University, Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn, highlighted this problem in February 1957 when the Rotary Clubs of District 29 held its annual conference in the Great Hall, and the District Governor, George Proud, asked how Rotary could best express its gratitude to the University. Blackburn's suggestion "that something could be done to alleviate the shortage of residential accommodation ... in particular for overseas students" sowed the seeds of an idea that would ultimately bear ripe fruit.

Over the next four years, the SRC became actively involved in the first tentative steps towards the creation of IH. Although its own fundraising campaign, launched in 1962, went on to raise only a little over £8,000, a fragment of the requisite amount, the SRC deserves credit for bringing the idea to the attention of the University

Graeme de Graaff, first Director of International House, University of Sydney with Harry Edmonds, founder of International House New York, 1977





International House from Victoria Park, 1967

and its Senate. The most important step, however, was Blackburn's formal proposal that Rotary might devise, launch, and oversee an appeal to fund IH. This suggestion, discussed at the District 275 Conference in February 1961, was approved 'in principle' by the University Senate on 5 June that year. The next five years witnessed a flurry of activity. In July 1961, the Senate earmarked a site in the 'Special Uses' area in Darlington; Walter Bunning was appointed as architect in April 1963; and a Provisional Board of Management was formed later that year, meeting for the first time in 1964. The Board comprised high level administrators and business people, who skilfully navigated the road to completion, ultimately arranging to borrow funds to ensure that the building designed by Walter Bunning could be realised. Graeme de Graaff was announced as inaugural director in February 1965; amended plans were approved on 5 October of that year; and construction of IH officially began two weeks later.

None of this would have been possible without Rotary's "Universities

International Houses Appeal", launched to great fanfare and widespread publicity in September 1962. This campaign ran concurrently with, and rapidly outstripped, the SRC's own appeal, which seems to have petered out by early 1964. Employing "every fund-raising activity known to man", according to one Rotary historian, the Rotarians of Districts 275 and 268 had their work cut out for them. After a gruelling four-year effort, described at the time by E. Seymour Shaw as "the greatest thing ... that has ever been attempted by Rotary in Australia", the Appeal surpassed its initial £200,000 target, raising a total of \$466,787 for International Houses at both the University of Sydney and UNSW, just as the final touches were being put to the former. Crucially, this success obliged the Australian Universities Commission to follow through on its promise to supply £2 from state and federal government funding for every £1 raised by the Appeal. The Deed of Trust governing the Appeal specified that IH was to be 'managed and controlled by an independent Board of Management constituted by the Governing Body of each respective University'. Thanks to

the enormous generosity of hundreds of organisations, foreign governments and individual donors (some of whom, such as the Fairfax and Packer families, gave considerable amounts), the enthusiasm of the Rotarians and smaller groups like the SRC, the tireless activities of women's committees, and the years of hard work from all involved in the project, IH was about to become a reality, built using the funds raised externally and on a site provided by the University.

The formative years 1967-1980

International House was officially opened on 16 June 1967 (although open to its first residents in the preceding months). Those who brought this to pass infused IH with an idealism that was to be part of the House's DNA – a commitment to promoting international understanding and friendship which was to be realised through Australians and overseas students living together as well, it was hoped, through the House

The first International House group photo, 1967



acting as a base for activities which would make overseas students feel welcome in Australian universities. How, subsequently, did the House grow and develop?

Of the two goals enshrined in IH's constitution, its role as a hall of residence for Australian and overseas students overshadowed its role as a meeting place for overseas students from across Sydney. As a residence, IH pioneered a new form of student experience which differentiated it from the more traditional colleges. It was not church-affiliated and lacked such

symbols of hierarchy as high tables and gowns. It was also co-ed (still innovative in the 1960s), open all year round and, in the early days of the House, it took only students in the latter stages of their undergraduate degrees and postgraduates. This created a tone which encouraged a fair measure of student responsibility so that IH was spared such afflictions as 'fresher bashing' or (much) excessive drinking. Its sense of identity as a new form of



collegiate living was strengthened by contact with other International Houses, particularly that at Melbourne, the first Australian IH. Such solidarity with other IHs was reinforced by the 'corroborees' at which students competed in various sports and debating. In the early years, rituals which embodied the ideals of the House were laid down with such events as the annual Candlelight Dinner

and International Night. These activities, which gave the House its character and life, were – and continue to be – driven by the IH Members' Association (IHMA), the residents' representative body, established in the House's founding year. Its constitution reflected a continuing feature of IH life: the representation of different floors of the House, since each floor has its own character and forms of conviviality.

The early years of the House, then, established ways of doing things which were to continue to shape IH and to preserve its identity. These were robust

Invitation to the IH Ball, 1967

enough to embrace some of the changes which came with the 1970s, such as the expansion in the number of residents and, accordingly, buildings. In 1972, the East wing was built and in 1979 the Elkin wing, thus expanding the student body from 120 to 190. These new wings also brought with them some variation in the types of rooms available: the East wing provided bathrooms for every two rooms in contrast to the communal bathrooms on other floors, and both provided accommodation for married couples (including children), a significant change in the House's makeup. They also mixed men's and women's rooms in contrast to gender-specific floors of rooms elsewhere in the House – though such segregation was gradually eliminated. In 1972 too, the IHMA amended its constitution to ensure that floor representatives included a quota of overseas students. The IH expansion reflected the very real demand for accommodation which acknowledged the needs of overseas students. It is easy to forget that Australia's restrictive immigration policies favouring European migration were still being relaxed, a process not complete until 1973. In 1969, there were about 700 overseas students at the University of Sydney, almost 10 percent of whom lived at IH. This number remained at about the same level throughout the 1970s in contrast with the large number of overseas students today.

From 1979, residents could experience the Australian bush in the log cabin in the Belanglo State Forest near Berrima, about 200 kilometres from Sydney. The cabin was inspired by Assistant Director Mollie Burns' visit to Berkeley IH and



The International House Log Cabin, shortly after completion

its cabin in Yosemite. Its erection owed much to the generosity of that great patron of IH, the Rotarian, Ian Hudson, who provided the timber kit, and the design skills of alumnus Brian Farmer, together with the hard work of many residents. By the 1970s, too, another significant IH constituency had emerged: the Alumni, as represented by the Sydney University International House Alumni Association (SUIHAA). Integrating it into the life of the House took some time, but by 1980 it was represented on the House Council. In the same year, IH fellowships were created by the Council to acknowledge contributions to the House, in many cases by Alumni.

Responding to the growth in international student numbers, 1980 to the present:

The 1980s brought an expansion of the size of the overseas student body within Australian universities generally, as higher education became more and more a marketable commodity. The Overseas Student Charge progressively increased during this decade until by 1988 it was 55 percent of the full cost of a university place. The increasing marketing of places in Australian universities abroad led to overseas students becoming more and more an integral part of the life of the University. The House had always aimed for half overseas and half Australian students, but the proportion of Australian residents generally fell below 40 percent by the end of the decade. At the same time, the growing number of overseas female students enabled the House to achieve near parity of the sexes.

Oversight of IH passed in 1987 from Graeme de Graaff, who had done so much to establish the House and shape its character, to Geoffrey Andrews. Another significant departure was that of the founding Deputy Director, Rosalie McCutcheon, who, from the House's foundation, acted as 'philosopher, guide and friend' to residents. There were a variety of changing positions on the IH staff to assist the Director but one post that generally continued (with various incumbents) was the Assistant Director who lived in, and whose role was now to promote social interaction and a sense of community within the House. The keeping alive of the ideals of IH was promoted by a new ritual, the Flag Ceremony, initiated in 1984, and by the activities of SUIHAA which, in 1980, initiated the annual Foundation Day address. The need to further extend the forms of accommodation offered by the House led to the opening of the Maze Building in 1985. This provided a group of self-catering apartments overlooking a central quadrangle – hence they suited married couples and more senior residents. Contact with International Houses elsewhere in the world was cemented by the hosting by IH of the 1988 meeting of the heads of such institutions located in Australia, Japan and the USA.



Geoffrey Andrews, Director of International House 1987-1999

The 1990s continued a tradition of IH residents being expected to be good citizens of the House without too much in the way of direction from the administration, an attitude encouraged by Geoffrey Andrews, Director 1987–1999, who had come to know the House through his son, Richard, IHMA Chairman in 1985. Such an atmosphere was promoted by the age profile of the student body with the median age being over 26. Overseas students were in the majority which reportedly created a perception that the House was intended exclusively for international students and, in turn, a drop in Australian student numbers. The other side of this coin was increased representation of students from around the world, with about 40 nationalities represented by the late 1990s. One outcome of such diversity was the culinary range of the Food Fair which became a separate event from International Night in this period. SUIHAA was given a boost by the provision of an Alumni Room in the House in 1999, consolidating the work of SUIHAA President, Toshiko Mori, in completing an alumni database, and the launching of a website designed by her husband in 1998, and maintained for years by Richard Ng.

While the first two directors of the House were men, they were followed by the appointment of women as the next two directors: Ruth Shatford from 1999–2002, and from 2002 to the present, Jessica Carroll, who had earlier come to know the House as Assistant Director, from 2000. The 2000 Olympic Games brought many House reunions and contributions to the upgrading of both the log cabin and the rooftop facilities above the main building. The latter has since become one of the key venues for IH functions, offering sweeping views of the University and parts of the city. This was the site of some of SUIHAA's annual meetings, an increasing preoccupation of which in the 2000s was fund raising for the Bo Children's Hospital in Sierra Leone led by Nuli Lemoh, a former SUIHAA President.

Former Directors Ruth Shatford and Graeme de Graaff



The new century also brought new challenges for IH. Its founding mission to be a place of residence for overseas students remains vital, but its strategy may require rethinking now that international students can be found in all aspects of university life. By 2007, there were around 8,700 international students at the University, with about two percent living at IH. Another founding innovation of the House, admitting men and women as well as overseas students, has also become less distinctive with the passing years. Fifty years on, the House buildings increasingly need renovation



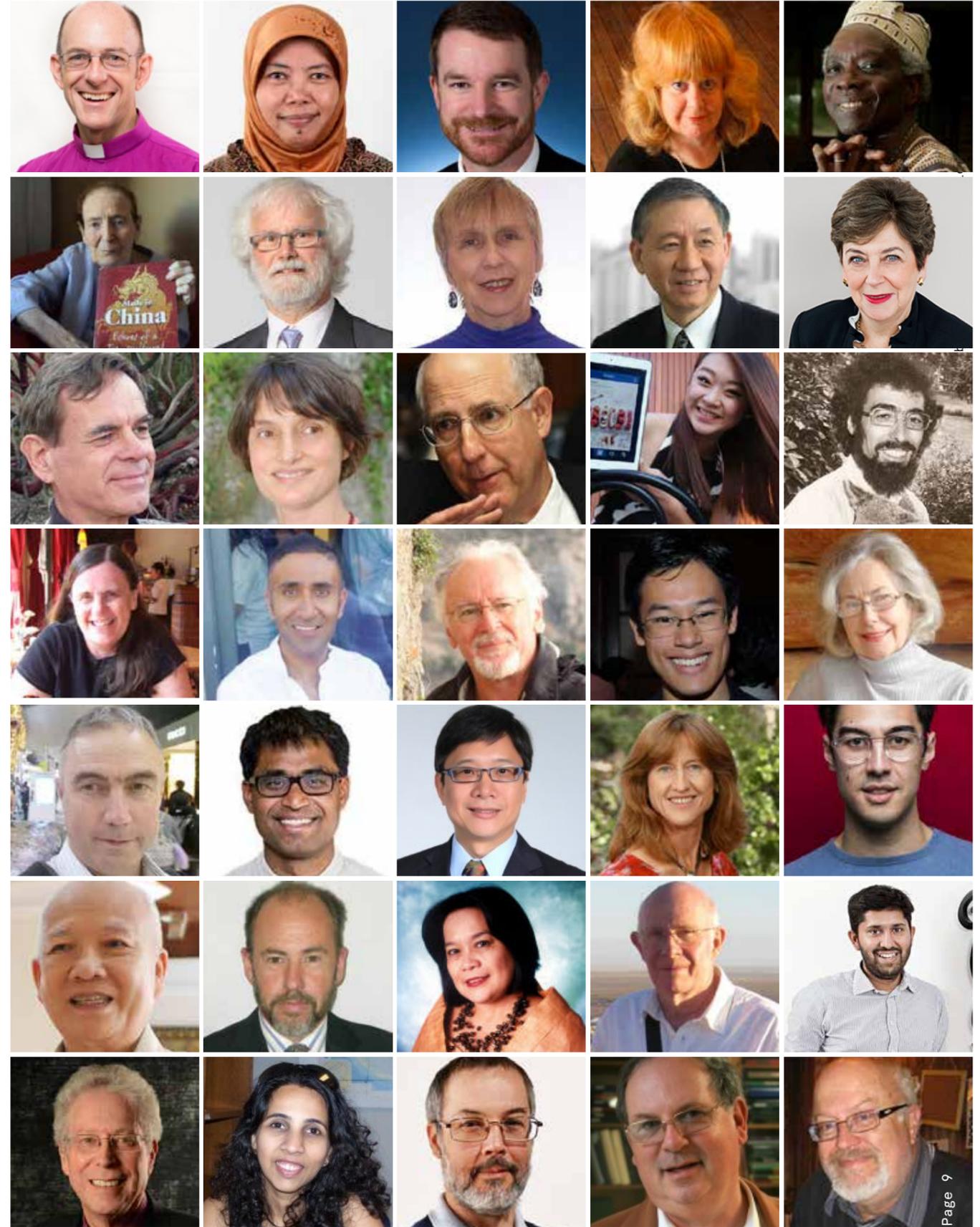
Jessica Carroll, current Director of International House

and the best way of achieving this while maintaining the character of the House is under active consideration. The need for remodelling is strengthened by the rise in student expectations about what a residence should offer. Some students are opting for self-catering facilities, and combining this with communal meals which are the heart of the IH experience will call for dexterous management.

So change is always with us. This year we are celebrating the lasting contribution and steadfast vision of IH, as well as its capacity to adapt over the 50 years of its life. It has provided a successful model for the way in which students of greatly differing cultures can live together and create bonds which can continue long after they have left the House. IH has also strived to reach out to the wider University community – the second purpose of its founding – in providing a venue for lectures on topical subjects, especially those related to international themes. One example is the SUIHAA-sponsored Walter Westman annual lecture series on environmental issues, established through the initiative of past SUIHAA President, Roger Wescombe. As it looks forward to its next 50 years, IH has a rich heritage on which to draw in fulfilling its central mission of promoting international understanding and friendship.

Alumni Achievements

Some of our notable Alumni from the last 50 years:



In the 50 years since its founding, IH has nurtured generations of leaders, achievers and global citizens. Many of our 6,000 Alumni, from 120 countries, have put into practice the ideals of IH through their demonstrated commitment to building international understanding and friendship, and have become leaders in diverse fields and endeavours. Here we celebrate just some of their achievements.

Danny Sriskandarajah is a global leader in the NGO sector, regularly representing civil society in international forums including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum. Diplomats include Richard Andrews (Australian Ambassador to Ireland); Mealy Truong (former Cambodian Ambassador to Japan, now Senior Advisor to the Cambodian government in charge of international relations); and Adrian Buzo (former Australian diplomat who served in both North and South Korea).

International arbitration and conciliation is the chosen field of one of our earliest residents, Michael Hwang who is among the most celebrated practitioners in the world.

Nuli Lemoh is another Alumnus of whom we are immensely proud. After working as a paediatrician in his native and adopted homes of Sierra Leone and Australia, he inspired both Rotary and SUIHAA to raise funds for the establishment of Bo Children's Hospital in Sierra Leone, helping to reduce child and infant mortality rates in the community. SUIHAA's early fundraising was vital to the first stages of construction.

Other Alumni who have contributed greatly to the international health arena are epidemiologist and public health advocate Agnès Fiamma whose work focuses on HIV/AIDS in South Africa; retired senior scientist in immunology Margo Honeyman whose research focused on the prevention of type one diabetes; and doctor and sexual health

specialist Anne Walker (deceased in 2017) who was highly influential in raising awareness of sexual health in Australia and Scotland during the seventies and eighties when it was still a neglected field.

“At International House I found a haven of peace from which to continue my studies. Discovering and delving into the world of public health was a bit like falling in love, finding the warmth and friendships I made at International House were like the cherries on the cake. Dancing on stage at the talent night with the brilliant women I befriended will always remain a fondest memory, I wouldn't have dreamt one could have such fun and learn so much from the academic side to the wonderful, enriching human experience.”

Agnès Fiamma

International collaboration has been a major element of the work of researchers such as John Webb, a distinguished Australian educator, scientist and international scholar,

who established collaborative regional research networks in Asia; and statistician Ros (Wood) Madden whose work with the World Health Organization on classification is helping to improve disability-related information and data nationally and internationally.

Alumni who have served as national leaders include Kay Patterson, National Age Discrimination Commissioner in the Australian Human Rights Commission and a former Australian politician; Bernard Narokobi (deceased in 2010), a Papua New Guinea politician and High Commissioner to New Zealand; Peter Pun, former Director of Planning in Hong Kong; and Sarinthorn (Jyoti) Sachavirawong, Deputy Director of the British Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. Greg Anderson is the Anglican Bishop of the Northern Territory in Australia.

“There are few things in life more enriching than sitting around the International House dining table full of people from different countries discussing their cultures, background and world events. It made me a global citizen in a way nothing else could have.”

Ruchir Punjabi

Trail blazing women who have made notable contributions in their respective fields include Denise Osborn who was recently appointed first female Secretary-General of the Royal Economic Society, one of the oldest and

most prestigious economic associations in the world; and Roseanne Taylor who is the first female Dean of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney.

There are so many other distinguished Alumni who have made their careers in research and academia, it is hard to know where to begin. Emeritus Professor Vaughan Pratt is a pioneer in the field of computer science, contributing to the founding and early operations of SUN

“I love the wonderfully egalitarian nature of IH. The round tables, where you'd find yourself discussing physics one moment and philosophy the next, everything from African society to Asian politics. An opportunity to learn much more than was simply offered in the University's courses.”

Nicholas Stuart

Microsystems at Stanford University; distinguished historian John Gascoigne is Emeritus Professor at the University of NSW, and a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities; Sid Gray is Professor of International Business at the University of Sydney, and a fellow of the Academy of International Business; Greg Houseman is Professor of Geophysics at the University of Leeds; Virginia Teodosio is Professor of International Relations at the University of the Philippines; and Peter Shaver was an astrophysicist who spent most of his career as a senior scientist at the European Southern Observatory in Germany.

In business, Allan Moss stands out as the former Managing Director and CEO of Australia's biggest investment bank, Macquarie Group. Paul Gottlieb is an internationally recognised physicist and engineer who has received national and international acclaim for developing automated mineralogy technologies and systems now widely used in the mining sector. Larry Kwok is a leading corporate lawyer and a global expert in business, corporate and regulatory matters.

“My year in IH was the first time I had felt a member of fully integrated community, if not a family, then certainly a village, and that village spirit is what IH should preserve for all time.”

Michael Hwang

Ruchir Punjabi is a young entrepreneur making waves as founder of Langoor, a digital agency of creative technologists with offices across Australia, India, Hong Kong and Singapore. In art and music, film and TV, we have a stellar cast. Lyn Woodger Grant is an award-winning artist, recognised for her contribution to environmental awareness. Winsome Evans is one of Australia's premier early music specialists. Shivam Chanana is Head of Online at India's largest music (and movies) production company, T-series. Australian film and television luminaries include Martin Williams (deceased) who was an Australian film and documentary maker, whose notable works included *Singles*, *Relative Merits*, and the documentary *So Close to Home*; Craig Collie (who showed early flair with film productions in the House in the late

60s) became series producer of 'A Big Country' and 'Quantum' at the ABC, and head of TV Production at SBS, before reinventing himself as an author of note; and Geoffrey Burchfield, the first dedicated science reporter on nightly TV news in Australia, and presenter, writer, story producer with ABC's 'Quantum' until it was replaced by 'Catalyst' in 2001.

IH has produced its fair share of notable journalists and authors. Nicholas Stuart has pursued his journalism career over a long period, inspirationally overcoming the challenges of serious injuries experienced while reporting as ABC's Indochina Correspondent in Thailand. Helen Townsend also worked at the ABC before becoming a fulltime writer, with an impressive bibliography of 17 books. Dennis Schatz is a celebrated science educator and children's book author in the USA.

Food was always a keen interest of IH residents. Hannah (Yiu) Houseman, Asian food specialist and Director of Oriental Merchant in Australia, and son Alex, founder and owner of the popular 'Over the Moo' vegan ice-cream company, have both created successful businesses in this field.

“I experienced the best aspects of humanity while at International House. If peace, respect and harmony could prevail in the microcosm of International House, why not in the macrocosm of planet Earth?”

Lyn Woodger Grant

Of growing interest to the IH community is social media. Here, our star Alumna is South Africa-born, Australia-based, Taiwanese-background Li-Chi Pan, a lifestyle blogger with more than half a million followers.

Vital to the achievements of these leaders is the importance of IH experiences, and their long-lasting effects for all Alumni. An Alumni survey conducted in 2015 revealed that Alumni from all decades have carried forward – in their personal lives and professional careers, in countries throughout the world – the ideals practised, and the relationships forged, during their time at the House. Of survey respondents, 70 percent still maintain contact with their peers from IH; 87 percent said that their IH experience encouraged them to explore other cultures, and influenced their personal views of the world; and 69 percent agreed that living at IH influenced their engagement in internationally-oriented work.

“My time spent at International House was a special one filled with so many incredible people, memories and self growth. It was a sacred place for me, my home away from home and the place which helped me to learn that being away from South Africa would be okay.”

Li-Chi Pan

It is impossible to do justice in a short document to the full range of achievements of IH Alumni. Please visit our growing web page for profiles of these and many more notable Alumni.

<http://sydney.edu.au/internationalhouse/alumni/notable/index.shtml>

“IH is where I learned about Australia and the world.”

Paul Gottlieb

Looking to the Future

In its first 50 years, IH has been highly successful in pursuing its constitutional vision of promoting “understanding and fellowship between people of different nationalities and cultures, including not only residents of the House, but other members of the broader University community, by social interaction and the exchange of knowledge”. It is governed by its Council, comprising representatives of the Senate, University administration, Rotary, IHMA and SUIHAA as well as independent members who round out the skill mix needed to guide and develop the House into the future.

IH was a pioneer in supporting international living via its recruitment of overseas students at a time of change in Australia’s restrictive immigration policies favouring European migration. It also pioneered equal education opportunities for women by serving a comparatively large female student population in a co-educational residential setting.

IH has embodied a supportive social and educational environment that facilitates productive intercultural interactions between Australian and international students within IH and beyond. This achievement is too easily taken for granted. When one looks at incidents in other locations around Australia, IH has a remarkable skill for encouraging a range of young people to reside together in a learning environment in social harmony.

The outcome has been the development of valuable long-term relationships and connections among IH alumni around the world. Many of our Alumni hold important positions in Australia and back in their home countries. They left IH with good feelings towards the University, and now function as its ambassadors.

The success of IH needs to be built upon, not only to ensure many more years of valuable service as a multicultural residential college, but also to deliver the IH experience more widely to the University and beyond.

A key strength of IH is its impressive track record in fostering intercultural understanding. This is significant given the University’s strategic focus on ‘cultural competence’ and its recruitment ambitions concerning overseas students, and the probable increasingly diverse cohort of international students in coming years. Student diversity will also increase as a reflection of the changing composition of the Australian population.

It is now accepted that the future of education will recognise the value of experience and rely on the acquisition of the “soft skills” required and increasingly valued, along with formal qualifications. These are the skills of being a team player, being “easy” to work with, and being a good communicator. “Soft” skills are best acquired by direct experience in informal learning and networking environments. This experience is exactly what IH has to offer. It is vital to build on these existing IH strengths in the ways illustrated in this document.

The future IH would do well to embrace an expanded role as the “international gateway” to the University by serving both as a multicultural residential college and as an International Centre providing facilities and support services for international students across the University, and for visiting academics from overseas.

There are two elements of this expanded future IH:

- First, IH will continue to provide high quality residential accommodation that meets the needs of a broad mix of international and Australian undergraduates, postgraduates and visiting academics. Looking to the future, the facilities could include rooms with ensuite bathrooms, shared apartments, and family apartments, consistent with good practice in many universities overseas. The overall capacity of such accommodation would be significantly expanded from what is currently available on the existing site, and the enlarged college would continue to be managed in traditional IH style, with a focus on providing a caring, safe and inter-culturally oriented learning environment for residents.
- Second, the future IH will enhance its role as an International Centre serving the needs of the University’s international students and visiting academics, as well as IH residents and Alumni. Potential pathways for achieving this enhancement could include: the establishment of an International Club with a restaurant/ café and other facilities for members, including physical meeting and lecture room spaces for social activities and inter-culturally related programs and events, following the example of International Students House and Goodenough College in London; and the hosting of a Centre for Global Citizenship, envisioned as an interdisciplinary centre dealing with Australia’s engagement with the world, following the example of International House Philadelphia and International House Chicago, among others. The international centre would leverage IH’s unique role in bringing people from diverse cultures together at the University, while making the most of its contacts with the international Rotary movement and the 17 members

of International Houses Worldwide. The Centre would strengthen IH’s community engagement through its links with countries from which members and visitors are drawn, and the involvement of non-governmental organisations and other supporters from outside the University.

Both aspects of this vision of the future IH complement each other. The International Centre could use IH’s meeting rooms and facilities for activities and events. Equally important, given the increasing significance of the internet and social media, it could use the IH website to stimulate wider discussion and interest in the topics covered. IH students are adept at using the internet and social media, and could provide a valuable source of content, energy and ideas to drive this effort. IH could also award non-residential Visiting Fellowships to other people with relevant knowledge, skills and experience to contribute. The fellowships (for academics and people with a business or non-governmental background) could enable Visiting Fellows to enjoy IH eating privileges on the understanding they mix with IH residents during meal times. They could work with IH to organise activities and events for the International Centre, and produce material for the website. This arrangement would ensure that Visiting Fellows help to advance the mission of IH, and enhance the experience of students.

IH has played an important role in building international understanding and friendship among Australian and international students over the past 50 years, as is evident by our ever-growing list of notable alumni working internationally. The challenge is to maintain that momentum going forward in ways that benefit the IH community, the University, and the wider community. Given IH’s remarkable first 50 years, it is in all our interests that IH should continue to flourish into the future.



Sydney University International House Alumni Association

28 June 2017