



# SUIHAA Newsletter, January 2019

Dear IH Alumni

Welcome to our new-format newsletter. The University's software changes do not accommodate our previous newsletter format, so now we can work in a freer style. We welcome feedback on the news and features you might like to see.



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## Thank you! And an update on IH future

Thank you so much to the many alumni who wrote to SUIHAA in response to Ros' letter 'IH Alumni, IH Future!'. Just a few excerpts from this correspondence from you are featured below.

We may have better news on IH future than featured in Ros' previous letter. The Vice Chancellor is now taking an interest in the future plans for IH and, after a recent meeting with Council Chair Steve Mark and others, he has agreed to continue the discussions into next year. The Council and the House will be working hard to develop good options for the future, based on stakeholder consultation including with alumni and residents.

### Alumni reactions from across the decades

- I think the shock of this news is reverberating across the IH alumni network. [**Philayrath Phongsavan 1990s**]
- I was extremely distressed to get the news ... about the decision of the university to abandon IH and its 50+ year history of not only housing students, but developing the kind of human understanding across cultures that is needed to live in today's globally connected – but currently very divisive – world [**Dennis Schatz 1970s**]
- What awful news! I don't know what we can do from across continents ... it's true to say that residency in Sydney's International House changed my life for the better (because my husband, Stephen White, and I met while we both were IH residents in 1980) ... It just seems terribly sad that the tall building at 96 City Road may be no more after the end of 2019." [**Ann Harris Davidson 1980s**]"
- "While organised activities like the formal dinners, food fair and discos were highlights, the day to day socialising - regular gatherings to watch a TV show, hanging out in the foyer and chatting over meals - were a big part of life there for me. As a Sydney-sider I'd like to think that part of my contribution to the House was to connect people from other places to the city where they had come to study. Whenever I go past IH on the bus I still think of it as home. The 5 years I was there I had a sense of purpose and belonging. [**Katie Brooks 2000s**]
- I am deeply shocked and disappointed about the University's decision to demolish the International House. I am still a student ... the International House means a lot to me (I especially realise this when I am on exchange now and all I wish is that Oslo has an International House which can provide me with instant friends and activities). [**Gordon Yen 2010s**]
- Happy to help in whatever way I can. [**Alex Houseman 2010s**]

## Heritage value of IH buildings

An important strand of our advocacy for the future is establishing the case for the preservation of the IH original buildings, perhaps especially the beautiful Rotunda building housing the Wool Room and the dining hall. Craig Collie, alumnus and now an IH Council member, is working closely with SUIHAA on this.

A number of organisations (National Trust, NSW Heritage Council, Sydney City Council) have recognised their heritage value, in terms of architectural, historical and cultural significance. Walter Bunning was a leading Australian architect in the Modernist movement and designed the National Library of Australia.

## SUIHAA communication and advocacy – and what you can do

SUIHAA is continuing to advocate for IH with University leaders, on your behalf. We are emphasising how much IH offers to the University, especially in terms of key policies they are developing, on student accommodation and improving ‘student experience’. For example:

“We are proud within IH to have been a proven best practice model in promoting engagement, belonging and cultural understanding. The diversity of countries represented by current and recent IH residents not only promotes a variety of engagement, but is also highly relevant to a sustainable business model for the University and its strategy of increasing diversity. In speaking to current residents we gain appreciation of the IH as being an ambassador for the University: students from diverse countries return home and encourage others to come to IH and to the University.”

If you would like to help with SUIHAA’s advocacy efforts, please write to [vice.chancellor@sydney.edu.au](mailto:vice.chancellor@sydney.edu.au) (Dr Michael Spence) and [dvc.provost@sydney.edu.au](mailto:dvc.provost@sydney.edu.au) (Professor Stephen Garton). Some information about your personal experience, and the benefits you gained from living at IH and how these carried forward into your professional and personal life would be of interest. Please also use any of the points in this newsletter and Ros’ previous letter (IH Alumni: IH Future!) Please copy us into your letter or forward a copy for our records (indicating if we may quote it in our advocacy efforts).

## IH 50 years ahead of its time – or what comes around goes around

We were fascinated to find a very recent article from Scott Walker, in a senior role at ANU, on designing student-centric accommodation, using a design process that ‘leveraged stakeholder consultation’. They plan to build two new halls of residence based on the resulting design. The plan sounds wonderfully familiar to us at IH:



*“In response to changing trends and modern student needs there’s a shift back to the Oxford / Cambridge model that includes more shared spaces. This change came about for a number of reasons, with the key reason being that the single occupancy apartments were failing to provide an experiential collegiate environment that fostered social interaction.*

*“By creating shared dining halls, open courtyards and large lounge areas the main idea is that students come to have dinner and bring their study. If they want to work in the dining room or courtyard with others, they can. There’s interaction places at small levels and high levels, where people get together, creating a sense of community.”*

If you would like a copy of the article please contact us at [suihaa@sydney.edu.au](mailto:suihaa@sydney.edu.au)

### Recent International House and SUIHAA Events

**Fellows Lunch:** The fellows’ lunch was held on 25 November, when International House acknowledged three of its alumni as new fellows: Allan Moss (1970-72), Peter Simpson (1967-69) and Harald Bergsteiner ((1967-70). To read about these outstanding alumni and see photos of the fellows lunch, please visit the following link:

<https://sydney.edu.au/international-house/news/2018/12/10/new-fellows-of-international-house.html>



**Farewell to residents 29 November:** SUIHAA and IHMA (residents association) combined to host this new event. An evening of music, food and conversation, with short speeches from Alumni president (Ros Madden), and outgoing and incoming IHMA Chairs, Breanna Watson and Jessica Sargent.

The event was considered by all to be a wonderful success and will be held again in the future.

## Upcoming events

### *A request for card and calendars*

As we do every year, we will be offering Cards and Calendars in 2019 to introduce the newest International House residents to SUIHAA as part of their welcome day. "We are always grateful for the contribution of those who send cards and calendars each year. New residents appreciate the notes and inscriptions many of you include.

Please send cards and calendars for the welcome to new residents - **by 10 February 2019!**

## People

Many alumni have been asking for news of the health of Graeme de Graaff and Lauris Elms.

Graeme supplies the answers:

*You have asked for a line from Lauris and me for the SUIHAA Newsletter.*

*I am happy to report that we are both in the land of the living. And even happier to say that the living is being exercised beside the Olympic parklands where we have been for 20 years.*

*We did move to a Nursing Home in country Yass in October. But by the third day we knew that we had made a Big Mistake. We moved back to Sydney. ...*

*All power to the House and its alumni.*

Lauris and Graeme

If you would like to contribute to 'people' news in the future please write a brief note, maybe with photos, for inclusion in this newsletter. Group and reunion news welcome!

### **Very best wishes for New Year!!**

Ros Madden, SUIHAA President; James Kane, SUIHAA Secretary and all the SUIHAA Committee: Nicole Dunn, Julia Krattli, Dominick Ng, Gwen Ng, Richard Ng, Paul Reisner, Brittany Ridley Karen Rowe-Nurse, and Lyn Woodger Grant. With ex officio members: Brianna Watson (IHMA Chair), Bradley Kunda (IH Residential Life Officer)

