



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards



**make
history.**

Order of proceedings

Opening

Mrs Liz Hawkins
Executive Director, Advancement

Welcome to Country

Cliffy Wilson
Kuma Kaaru

Welcome address and special award presentation

Professor Peter Høj AC
Vice-Chancellor and President

Presentation of awards

Professor Jessica Gallagher
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement)

Alumni Fellow Award

The Honourable Catherine Branson AC SC, Chancellor
Professor Peter Høj AC, Vice-Chancellor and President

Tirkapena Indigenous Award

James McWha Rising Star Award

Outstanding Alumni Contribution to Sport Award

Distinguished International Alumni Award

Distinguished Alumni Award

Closing remarks

The Honourable Catherine Branson AC SC
Chancellor

Professor Peter Høj AC, Vice-Chancellor and President, invites you to join Distinguished Alumni Award and Alumni Fellow recipients, and University staff for a cocktail reception.

A special thank you to our music performers Elinor Warwick on violin, Bridget McCullough on viola, and Clara Gillam Grant on cello, for sharing their talents with us this evening.

About the awards

Distinguished Alumni Award

Recognises the outstanding and sustained contributions made by alumni in their local communities and beyond.

Tirkapena Indigenous Award

Named after the Kaurna word meaning 'a person inclined to learn, understand, know, perceive', the Award recognises an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alumna or alumnus whose significant achievements have impacted their profession and/or community.

James McWha Rising Star Award

Named in honour of Professor James McWha AO, former Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Adelaide, the Award recognises young alumni (35 years or younger) who are making a significant contribution as emerging leaders within their profession and/or community.

Outstanding Alumni Contribution to Sport Award

Recognises the outstanding and sustained contributions made by University alumni in sporting communities.

Distinguished International Alumni Award

Recognises the outstanding and sustained contributions made by University alumni in international communities.

Alumni Fellow Award

In recognition of alumni who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of the University's Alumni Relations Program.

Honorary University Fellow Award

An award exceptional in nature and conferred on a member of the broader University community to recognise significant meritorious service to the University.

“

What we do know is health outcomes for Mob are better when they are treated by Mob.”

Dr Jessica Manuela

Dr Jessica Manuela

Bachelor of Dental Surgery 2012

Tirkapena Indigenous Award

Dr Jessica Manuela is a proud Palawa Tasmanian and Niuean Pacific Islander dental surgeon and a nationally acclaimed advocate for oral health equity. She champions culturally safe, Indigenous-led healthcare and advocates for essential systemic change.

In 2014, Jess opened her first practice, Dental South. Between 2015 and 2016, she collaborated with the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania and the Southeast Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation to establish a bulk-billing program that provided Indigenous adults with access to dental care.

“What’s inspired me to focus my career on health equality is just the unfairness of it all. The social injustice. We’re the First Nations people of Australia – the oldest living culture in the world – and we’re still the sickest, the most incarcerated, the most underrepresented in university.”

In 2018, Jess was named the Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year in recognition of her work. By that time, Dental South had grown to serve over 4,000 patients and employed a team with 13% Indigenous staff. Jess is passionate about improving outcomes in Indigenous oral health by ensuring aspiring Indigenous dentists are supported to succeed.

“What we do know is health outcomes for Mob are better when they are treated by Mob,” she says. “We should be, at the very minimum, three percent representation in

university dental courses, and also in the workforce. Right now, Indigenous dental graduates are 0.5 percent of the total workforce, which is about 150, compared to 27,000 non-Indigenous graduates. I’d like to see a change over my lifetime.”

From 2019 to 2023, Dental South sponsored the First Nations Young Achiever Award, reflecting Jessica’s commitment to supporting Indigenous excellence. Since July 2021, she has served as Co-Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons Advisory Council, and since 2022 has been a Director of the Indigenous Dental Association of Australia (IDAA), where she advocates for First Nations people, supports Indigenous dental students, and mentors graduates.

Jessica’s vision is deeply shaped by her heritage. “Being a proud Palawa woman, my background has definitely shaped the way that I approach care and who I am, because I’ve had lived experience of racism.”

Jess is wholly dedicated to ensuring justice and equity in healthcare, shaping a future where Indigenous practitioners and patients alike don’t experience the immense structural challenges she has encountered in her career. “The future of Indigenous-led health care needs to evolve so that it is led by Indigenous people *completely*.”

Natalie Wade

Bachelor of Commerce in Management 2011; Bachelor of Laws 2012

James McWha Rising Star Award

Natalie Wade is a visionary leader whose work has profoundly shaped the legal, social, and policy landscape for people with disabilities in South Australia and across the nation. A recognised expert in disability human rights law, Natalie's career spans legal reform, public advocacy, and inclusive policy design.

Currently serving as Associate Commissioner and Chief Legal Counsel, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Natalie has dedicated her legal career to advancing the rights of people with disability – a commitment that is “both personal and professional.”

In 2019, Natalie founded Equality Lawyers, a pioneering legal service dedicated to people with disability and their families. “It was really important to me to offer the disability community an opportunity to be represented by a person with disability on areas of law that affected their human rights,” she explains. She sought to create a new pathway to justice and empower clients to realise their rights through accessible legal services.

Natalie's influence extends well beyond the courtroom. She served as Expert Advisor to the Disability Royal Commission (2019–2023), chaired the NDIS Systemic Working Group, and was a member of the South Australian Premier's Council for Women. In 2023, she delivered Australia's inaugural disability leadership

oration and, in 2024, she was appointed to lead the NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce under the Albanese government. In 2025, she represented Australia at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Conference of States Parties.

Her advocacy has driven major reforms, and she has steadfastly championed the rights of women, girls, and migrants with disabilities. Her 2021 publication, *Disability Rights in Real Life*, remains a vital resource for empowering individuals to understand and assert their rights.

Natalie's passion for justice was ignited early. “I distinctly recall, when I was in year 12, putting a picture of Bonython Hall on my door at home, and really aspiring to want to be a student of the Adelaide Law School.” Reflecting on her studies, she recalls, “It was such a wonderful experience... where I learned about traditional law, but also unique approaches to access to justice.”

“I'm inspired by people with disability who, despite facing constant and consistent structural and systemic barriers and challenges, they persevere... they continue to contribute to change in Australia.” Her ultimate goal remains clear: to dismantle systemic barriers and create a society that deeply values and anticipates the full participation of people with disability.

“

I'm inspired by people
with disability who...
continue to contribute
to change in Australia.”

Natalie Wade

“

**What motivates me is seeing
the real-world impact my
work has on people's lives.”**

Dr Erandi Hewawasam

Dr Erandi Hewawasam

Doctor of Philosophy in Agriculture 2018

James McWha Rising Star Award

Dr Erandi Hewawasam is a highly accomplished early career researcher making significant contributions in maternal and renal health. She completed her doctorate in 2018, receiving the Dean's Commendation for Doctoral Thesis Excellence for her work examining effects of fish oil in preterm-born children.

From a young age, as the daughter of a health practitioner, Erandi was drawn to medicine and research. "I saw how my mum treated patients with such care and dedication day and night. That really inspired me," she reflects. Erandi says this early influence, combined with the guidance of inspiring mentors and supervisors such as Prof Shilpa Jesudason, shaped her career trajectory. "My path into research has been quite organic, driven by my interest, curiosity and care for others, and a wish to make a real difference."

Between 2019 and 2024, Erandi worked as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) with the Australia and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry (ANZDATA). During this time, she coordinated Pregnancy and Kidney Research Australia's (PKRA) research program, leading a landmark data linkage project of three million births across four states and partnering with people with lived experience of kidney disease and parenthood to improve

outcomes and care for Australians with chronic kidney disease. Her research, comprising 30 peer reviewed papers and approximately \$275,000 in competitive funding as either chief or co Investigator, has informed national guidelines and helped shape clinician training programs in Australia and internationally.

In 2024, Erandi joined the National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit within the Centre for Big Data Research in Health at the University of New South Wales as a Research Fellow. She is the Program Manager for the Fertility Medicine Data Asset for Australia (FM-DATA), a national platform integrating reproductive and administrative health datasets funded by the Medical Research Future Fund. Through this work, she hopes to advance reproductive medicine and maternal health, improving care for families. "What motivates me is seeing the real-world impact my work has on people's lives," she says.

Erandi is passionate about impact not just for patients, but also for future researchers. She teaches biomedical sciences, supervises students, and as a STEM Champion she mentors high school girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. "Their excitement and big smiles at the end of a session remind me why this work matters, and why I love doing it."

Matthew Cowdrey OAM

Bachelor of Media 2014; Bachelor of Laws 2014

Outstanding Alumni Contribution to Sport Award

Matt Cowdrey OAM is one of Australia's most decorated Paralympians and a respected public servant whose career has spanned elite sport, law, and politics. Upon beginning his swimming journey in 1993, Matt didn't have plans to dominate the world sporting stage. "I never really made a choice or a decision to be a professional athlete by any stretch of the imagination," he reflects. "I happened to fall into a really good situation with fantastic coaching... and was lucky enough to be on a trajectory and a pathway that Paralympic sport was growing at the same time that I was."

At just 15, Matt made his Paralympic debut at the 2004 Athens Games, winning seven medals including three gold. The following year, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. His dominance continued at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, where he claimed five gold and three silver medals and was named Australian Paralympian of the Year. In 2012, he cemented his legacy at the London Games with another five golds, becoming Australia's most successful Paralympian with 23 career medals.

Matt says that growing up without the lower part of his left arm was formative for his problem solving and sense of determination. "I had to find my way

to do things, just simple things that everybody else took for granted," Matt says. "I think [it] shaped my personality and shaped the way that I approached finding solutions and solving problems."

After completing his double degree and retiring from sport in 2014, Matt transitioned into public service. In 2018, he became the first South Australian Paralympian elected to state parliament and was subsequently re-elected in 2022. He was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 2019 and has been appointed Deputy Chef de Mission for the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Despite his sporting achievements, Matt says that he measures his success not by accolades, but by impact. "It's never been about medals. It's never been about positions or finishes... We don't have any influence on how fast other athletes are going to swim in the lanes either side of us. So, I've always measured myself against my own expectations."

"At the end of the day, the one thing that we have is our ability to impact and shape other people." Today, Matt continues to inspire young athletes, and the main pool at the SA Aquatic and Leisure Centre bears his name—a lasting tribute to his legacy of sporting excellence and undeniable impact.

“

At the end of the day, the one thing that we have is our ability to impact and shape other people.”

Matthew Cowdrey OAM

“

To me, success means
living an impactful life.”

Dr Eilly Lau



Dr Eilly Lau

Bachelor of Dental Surgery 1984

Distinguished International Alumni Award

Dr Eilly Lau is a pioneering paediatric dentist whose career has spanned over four decades of clinical excellence, public health advocacy, and humanitarian outreach. Based in Hong Kong, Eilly has dedicated her life to improving children's oral health through practice, education, and volunteer service across underserved communities in Hong Kong and mainland China.

"Being the eldest child instilled in me a sense of care and responsibility for others, cultivating a career path that centres around people," Eilly reflects. After completing her dental studies in Adelaide, she returned to Hong Kong to specialise in paediatric dentistry. "Paediatric dentistry later became more than a profession. It is a vocation... a calling and a duty to serve the vulnerable and be a part of their day-to-day health improvement."

Eilly's humanitarian impact has been profound. Since 2000, she has led outreach programs in remote areas of China and across Asia. A pivotal moment came during a visit to an orphanage. Eilly says, "Witnessing the children's joy at mealtimes made me realise that by restoring their dental health, we could enhance their daily happiness." This inspired her to launch Happy Days from Healthy Teeth, a territory-wide initiative mobilising over 1,000 volunteers to deliver free dental care to thousands of seniors and special needs patients.

Her ongoing work and commitment have raised public awareness and influenced government policy, which led to the government setting up the Elderly Dental Assistance Program to provide free removable dentures and related dental services to low-income elderly community members. At the end of September 2019, disbursements under the program since its September 2012 commencement were approximately HK\$885 million.

Alongside her humanitarian efforts, Eilly has remained committed to the advancement of dental education and care. She founded Cheers Dental Care in 2003 and currently serves as Director and Principal Surgeon. She is widely recognised for developing Hong Kong's standard protocol for monitored anaesthetic care in children and for mentoring the next generation of dental professionals. A Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Dental Surgeons, she has served as Honorary Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Hong Kong and was formerly President of the Hong Kong Society of Paediatric Dentistry.

"To me, success means living an impactful life. Finding peace within myself, and being able to sleep soundly at night," she says. Eilly's legacy continues to shape lives through her compassion, innovation, clinical excellence, and dedication to underserved communities.

Dr Samantha Pillay OAM

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery 1992

Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr Samantha Pillay is a trailblazing urological surgeon, award-winning author, entrepreneur, and filmmaker whose career spans clinical excellence, public health advocacy, and creative innovation. Samantha was the first woman selected to train in adult urological surgery in South Australia. Upon completing her fellowship, she was among just 4% of surgeons in Australia who were women – a reality that shaped her lifelong commitment to gender equity. “I’ve been driven to break barriers in gender equity because I lived it myself... I wanted to change that for the next generation.”

Born with congenital hip dysplasia, Samantha’s early experiences sparked her lifelong interest in medicine. “I had the patient’s perspective,” she recalls. Her father, a community GP for over 50 years, also inspired her path as a child. During work experience in cardiothoracic surgery at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, Samantha had the opportunity to witness an open bypass surgery – a pivotal moment for her that truly ignited her passion for surgical practice.

In 2002, Samantha founded *Continence Matters*, a pioneering practice at Calvary Hospital North Adelaide focused on specialised incontinence treatment and education. She has devoted her career to ending the stigma surrounding urinary incontinence and pursuing her mission:

“to inspire others to be their own best advocate and help people achieve at the best life they can, whether it be through their health or otherwise”.

Samantha’s advocacy extends beyond medicine. She authored a series of six children’s books beginning with *When I’m a Surgeon*, complemented by activity books, songs, and music videos – all aimed at dismantling gender stereotypes. “My son is probably my biggest inspiration,” she says. “I think anyone who’s a parent is inspired to be the best person they can in their children’s eyes.”

In 2024, Samantha launched *AI Film4Good*, the world’s first AI film studio for social impact, producing award-winning films including *An Incontinent Truth: Breaking the Silence*. In 2025, Samantha was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) and was the South Australian winner and National Finalist in the Telstra Best of Business Awards (Accelerating Women), for her service to urology, a recognition of her wide-reaching impact. This social impact is the driving factor behind Samantha’s choice to take her professional ambition beyond the surgery to reach more people through storytelling and film.

“Success, to me, is measured by the number of lives I can impact – whether through surgery, education, or inspiration.”

“

**I've been driven to break
barriers in gender equity
because I lived it myself...”**

Dr Samantha Pillay OAM

“

**You see people with
disability become leaders
in their communities.”**

David Lewis OAM

David Lewis OAM

Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture 1976;
Roseworthy Diploma in Agricultural Technology 1977

Distinguished Alumni Award

David Lewis OAM is a distinguished leader in international development. He has dedicated his career to humanitarian responses that centre vulnerable populations, often in conflict zones, and has also championed sustainable practices in global health systems to help address the impacts of climate change on the world's most vulnerable populations.

In 1989, David and his family moved to West Africa to work with CBM Australia. During the Diamond War in Sierra Leone, witnessing the profound disadvantage and hardship faced by people with disability shaped David's lifelong commitment to disability-inclusive development. His leadership and advocacy for disability inclusion in foreign aid and development policy subsequently played a pivotal role in shaping the Australian Government's Development for All strategy in 2008.

David's career has deepened his conviction that by listening carefully to what is truly needed on the ground and ensuring that the basic medical and rehabilitation needs of people with disability are being met, we can ensure that all people can actively participate in wider social initiatives and thrive within their communities. With these development approaches, he says, "people with disability gain access to dignity. You see stigma and discrimination reduced. You see people with disability become leaders in their communities."

Known for his, inclusive approaches, dedication, and relentless energy, David

remains deeply engaged in volunteer work today. He is currently volunteering with a program ensuring women in Gaza have access to seed and other needs, enabling them to plant fast-growing vegetables for their families wherever they are displaced to.

David lost his wife Cate to cancer in 2020. His three children and their partners, his grandchildren and his own siblings are like-minded in their determination to make the world a better place. Today, David's family and some close friends are his inspiration and joy.

Throughout his career, David was deeply inspired by the dedication, cooperation and resilience of the local teams he has worked with, who are determined to uplift their own communities. "Our team of people who worked on the ground – as well as being totally, totally committed to our work – were also often supporting their extended families living in poverty... they were a huge motivation to me."

As he continues to support aid and development projects working with vulnerable people, David reflects on the power of compassion and the importance of the next generation in continuing this work.

"I think the biggest motivation for me... is working with younger people and seeing their enthusiasm.... it's very important for me to keep being hopeful, being positive, encouraging young people that they can make a difference in the world."

Dr Sarah Cannard

**Bachelor of Science 2003; Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) 2003;
Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering 2011**

Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr Sarah Cannard is a distinguished engineer in the Australian space sector, with a career spanning more than two decades dedicated to advancing space exploration and technology. Her professional journey has been marked by a passion for space that began as a child and has led to her involvement in groundbreaking projects that have shaped Australia's presence in the global space community.

Throughout her career, Sarah has contributed to a wide array of initiatives, from hypersonic rocket launches and spacecraft re-entry missions to autonomous vehicle development. Most notably, she led the engineering team behind one of Australia's first lunar rover missions for NASA and played a pivotal role in the development of Kanyini, the country's first state government-funded satellite, which delivers Earth observation imagery to South Australia. "Leading the lunar rover team as an engineer was one of my proudest moments," she reflects, "because it was really at the cutting edge of space exploration for Australia – it's the most complicated space mission Australia's ever undertaken. And I love a challenge."

Sarah's early inspiration came from fellow University of Adelaide alum, Andy Thomas – the first Australian-born NASA astronaut. "Andy Thomas was most definitely my first ever

inspiration to actually follow a career in space, and not just dream about it," she recalls. His example provided a tangible path from Adelaide to the solar system and guided her toward a career in engineering and science.

Her motivations have evolved over time, shifting from a childhood dream of finding aliens to a broader mission of using space technology to benefit Earth. "What motivates me is really the understanding that we don't know everything about the universe... And being an engineer in the space sector, I get to contribute to improving on that understanding," she explains.

Sarah is also a passionate advocate for women in STEM, emphasizing the importance of visibility and mentorship. "I think it's incredibly important to have female role models in STEM and in space," she says. Today, she draws inspiration from the women she works alongside – scientists, engineers, and leaders – who demonstrate resilience and dedication in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Through her leadership, technical expertise, and unwavering commitment to exploration, Dr Cannard continues to shape the future of Australia's space industry while inspiring and encouraging the next generation of innovators and explorers.

“

I think it's incredibly
important to have
female role models in
STEM and in space.”

Dr Sarah Cannard

“

What inspires me...
really the answer to
that is my patients.”

Dr Geoffrey Thompson AM

Dr Geoffrey Thompson AM

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery 1969

Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr Geoffrey Thompson has dedicated nearly five decades to advancing medicine in Australia, both as a pioneering sports physician and as a flying doctor serving remote communities. Born in Denmark, South Australia, Geoff's early experiences shaped his lifelong commitment to healthcare, and after breaking his arm falling off his bike, he declared, "Dad, I would like to be a doctor."

After completing his medical studies, for which his entire family relocated to Adelaide, Geoff joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a flight surgeon. In 1974, following Cyclone Tracy's devastation of Darwin, he played a crucial role in overseeing the RAAF evacuation effort. His career trajectory continued to blend medicine and aviation when he joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service in 1979 as both pilot and Chief Medical Officer. Well known for flying himself into Arnhem Land, Geoff delivered medical care to isolated communities and First Nations peoples. He founded the Thompson Medical Practice in Darwin in 1980, which became a cornerstone of healthcare in the region.

Geoff was among the earliest practitioners of sports medicine in

Australia, beginning in 1971 – decades before the specialty was formally recognised. In 1984, he co-founded the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Sports Medicine Federation. His distinguished career includes serving as Consultant Medical Officer for Australian Paralympic teams, Chief Medical Officer for V8 Supercars in Darwin (1999–2009), and Chief Medical Officer for the Australian Paralympic team, a role he is deeply passionate about.

Geoff's contributions have been widely recognised. He was named Northern Territory Australian of the Year in 2020, awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021, and listed in the NT Sports Awards Roll of Honour. Yet he measures success differently: "What inspires me... really the answer to that is my patients. My patients don't need motivation because most of them want to be better and doing what they love to do – yesterday!"

When asked about retirement at this point in his five-decade career, Geoff says, "I'm not sure I like the word. I don't think doctors retire...we might slow a little bit. You can't take a passion out of a person who's loved every working day of his life."

Keith Conlon OAM

“Mr South Australia”

Bachelor of Arts 1968; Bachelor of Laws 1968

Honorary University Fellow Award

Keith Conlon, affectionately known as “Mr South Australia,” has been a defining figure in the State’s media, cultural, and educational landscape for over six decades. A University of Adelaide graduate with degrees in Arts and Law, Keith began his career as a talk radio host and ABC television reporter and in 1971 was appointed as the founding manager of 5UV, Australia’s first educational and community radio station, founded by the University of Adelaide.

From the 1980s, Keith’s media career flourished across ABC and commercial radio and TV. His most iconic role was as host/writer of Postcards SA, a tourism-orientated program celebrating South Australia’s people, places, and history.

Over a remarkable 16 years on air, the show attracted top ratings and national and local awards.

Keith has said he is particularly proud of that body work and also his involvement at the University radio station, given that 5UV provided outstanding continuing education opportunities for the community and extensive training for volunteers. The station also helped pave the way for the Australia-wide community and multicultural radio movement. Keith was inaugural Chair of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia in 1975.

Beyond broadcasting, Keith has held leadership roles in heritage, education, and philanthropy, including chairing the SA Heritage Council, the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild, the Adelaide Girls Choir, the One And All Sailing Ship Appeal, and the Crows Foundation for children in need through its first decade.

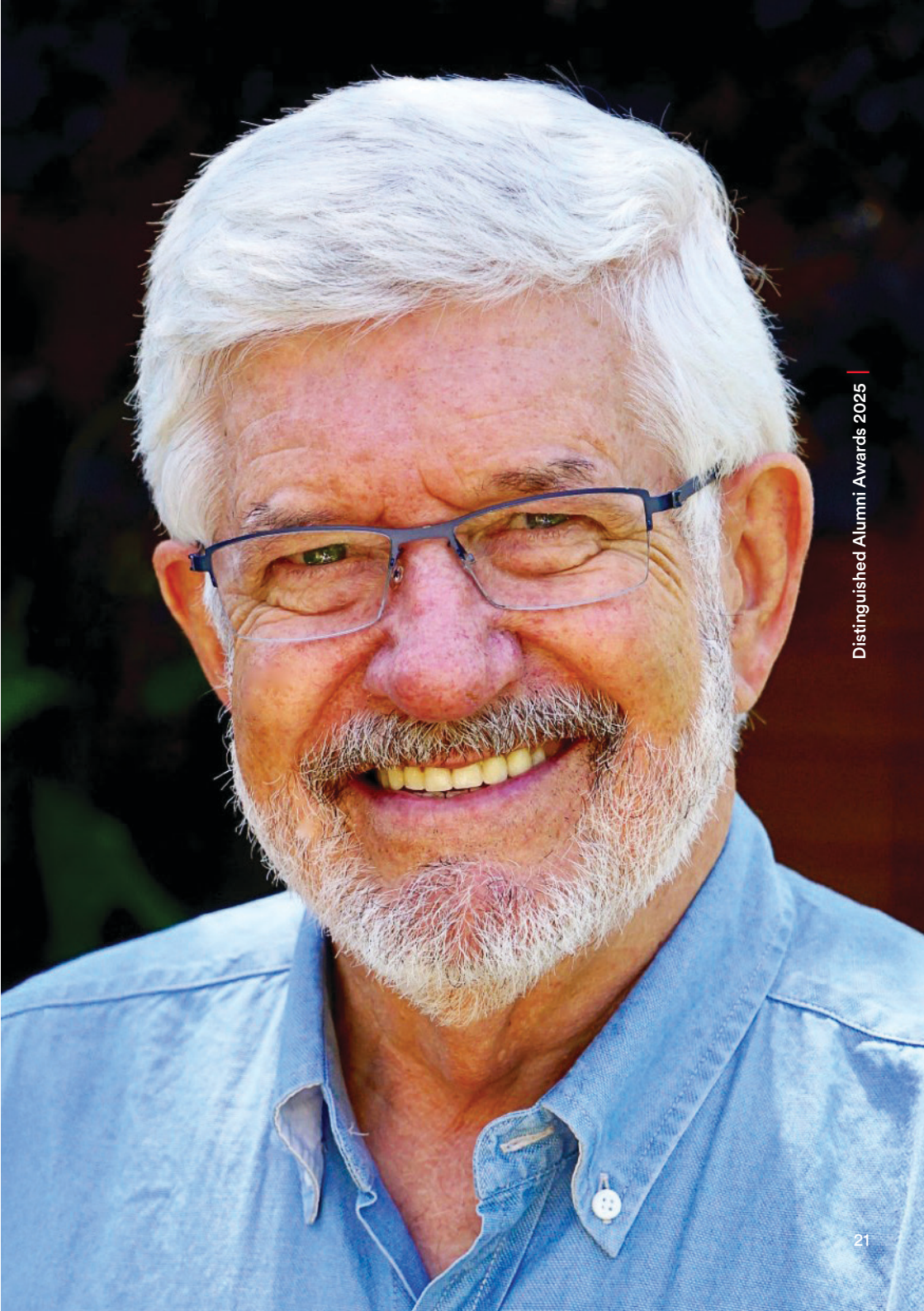
He has contributed to the University of Adelaide for more than 50 years and continues to lead campus tours during the significant events.

Keith’s accolades include the Medal of the Order of Australia (2003), a Distinguished Alumni Award (2012), a Logie, City of Adelaide Citizen of the Year (2022) and Key to the City in 2025.

As a passionate jazz drummer, he has performed in the Adelaide Christmas Pageant since 1964.

A lifelong advocate of South Australian history, he is a guest lecturer for future teachers at the University of South Australia. On his weekly free community bike ride that has been running for 12 years, there is always a dash of history and heritage. He is still telling our stories daily on social media.

Keith’s enduring impact on South Australia’s cultural identity and community spirit cements his legacy as one of the State’s most beloved public figures and a worthy recipient of the Honorary University Fellow Award.



Alumni Fellows

Distinguished Alumni Awards 2025



Julian Audras

Bachelor of Commerce in International Business 2016

Julian Audras has shown outstanding commitment to alumni engagement, dedicating extensive volunteer hours to connect early-career graduates. Joining the Young Alumni Network (YAN) Committee in December 2020, he quickly rose to Secretary and then President by December 2021, leading through pandemic disruptions with remarkable success. His strategic leadership delivered impactful events and

strengthened alumni ties. In recognition, Julian was appointed to the University's Alumni Council in 2023 and currently serves on the Adelaide University Alumni Transition Advisory Group. His expertise in governance, project management, and stakeholder engagement has been instrumental across his roles, fostering an agile and collaborative mindset while focussing on meaningful outcomes for the alumni community.



Her Honour Judge Emily Telfer

Bachelor of Arts in Jurisprudence 1994; Bachelor of Laws (Honours) 1996

Her Honour Judge Emily Telfer has made a transformative contribution through her leadership of the John Bray Alumni Network. As President, she expanded the Network's reach, strengthened its financial base, and championed key initiatives including the Law Alumni Network Prize, a \$15,000 scholarship, and the inaugural John Bray Medal. She led the committee to advance the Continuing

Legal Education Program, securing resources to ensure all funds benefit alumni initiatives. Emily also launched a student mentoring program, fostering meaningful connections between alumni and future legal professionals. Her service reflects innovation, generosity, and a deep commitment to nurturing alumni and the future of the legal profession.

Alumni Fellows

Distinguished Alumni Awards 2025



Dr Rachel Spencer

Bachelor of Arts 1985; Bachelor of Laws 1986; Master of Laws 1994

Dr Rachel Spencer, President of the Friends of the Library (FOTL) since 2022, brings over 30 years of legal and academic leadership to the role. She has revitalised the committee, expanded alumni engagement, and led successful fundraising initiatives, including the acclaimed Robert Barr Smith film screening. Rachel's advocacy has forged partnerships across the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums

(GLAM) sector and supported student mentoring, resulting in high attendance for network events. She has attracted new committee members and launched a 2025 author webinar series. A skilled public speaker and lifelong learner, Rachel is also a valued member on the Adelaide University Alumni Transition Advisory Group and maintains several board positions including Writers SA.



Elyce Pate

Bachelor of Nursing 2008

Elyce Pate was appointed President of the Adelaide Nursing School Alumni Network (ANSAN) in 2023 and has been a driving force behind its growth and impact. She played a key role in launching ANSAN in 2022 and has championed initiatives that support nursing graduates' wellbeing and professional development. Elyce has fostered strong connections across academia, industry, and global alumni,

leading collaborations with the Joanna Briggs Institute and securing event speakers on critical topics like sustainable practice and global leadership. Elyce's efforts have expanded alumni engagement, mentoring, and networking opportunities for nursing graduates, making her a standout leader in building a vibrant nursing alumni community.

Alumni Fellows

Distinguished Alumni Awards 2025



John Hancock AM

Bachelor of Laws 1969

John Hancock AM is a distinguished law graduate whose decades-long commitment to the University's Alumni Relations program has had global impact, especially in Southeast Asia. He served on the Alumni Council (2010–2017) and founded the University's Alumni Network in Thailand, where he continues as Honorary Advisor to the committee. His numerous accolades

reflect his exceptional leadership and dedication to fostering Australian-Thai relationships, particularly through his instrumental role in developing and sustaining alumni engagement in Thailand. John's enduring advocacy and mentorship have strengthened alumni ties and elevated the University's international presence.



Past recipients*

Distinguished Alumni Award

2024

Peter Clark
R D A 1973

Tirana Hassan
LL B 2002

**Emeritus Professor
Derek Frewin AO**
M B B S Admitted
Ad Eundem Gradum
1967, MB 1971

2023

Nik Nasha Damia
LL B 2011

Dr David Lam
M B B S 2012

Adam Liaw
B Sc (Jur) 1998, LL B 2000

John Scanlon AO
LL B 1983, LL M (Env) 1995

2022

**Professor John McNeil
AO**
MBBS 1971

David Reynolds PSM
B Ec 1992, B Ec (Hons) 1993

**Professor Nicola Spurrier
PSM**
MBBS 1990, PhD
(Med) 1999

2021

Dr Brian Croser AO
B Ag Sc 1971, D Univ 2007

**Dr Leanna Read FTSE,
FAICD**
B Ag Sc 1976, B
Ag (Hons) 1977

**Professor Jane Taylor
OAM**
BDS 1984, B Sc
(Dent) (Hons) 1998,
M Sc (Dent) 1992

2020^

2019

**Emeritus Professor
Denise Bradley AC**
Dip Ed 1965

**Dr Michael Llewellyn-
Smith
AM KStJ JP**
PhD (Arch) 2010

Dr James Muecke AM
MBBS 1988, D Univ 2022

2018^

2017

Professor John Beard
MBBS 1979

Mr John Crosby AM
RDA 1971

Ms Moya Dodd
LLB (Hons) 1988,
D Univ 2022

Ms Léonie Ebert
B Sc 1968

Mr Simon Hackett
B Sc (Ma Sc) 1987

Dr Anthony Lake AM
BDS 1970

**The Honourable
Margaret Nyland AM**
LLB 1964

Distinguished International Alumni Award

2024

**Her Excellency
Dr Serey Chea**
Ph D (Ec &
Econometrics) 2021

2023

Peter Ong
B Ec 1984, B Ec
(Hons) 1985

2022

Dr Mercy Mwangangi
Grad Cert Ec 2014, M
Health Ec & Policy 2015

Tirkapena Indigenous Award

2024

Talisha King
Grad Cert Pub Hlth 2019

2023**Lesley Salem AM**

Grad Cert Nurs Sc (Aph)
2002, M Nursing Sc 2008

2022**Tiahni Adamson**

B Sc (Wildlife Cons Bio)

2021**Dr Jared Thomas**

Grad Dip Creative Writing
1999,
M A (Creat Writ) 2007,
Ph D (H&SS) 2011

2020[^]**2019****Dr Claudia Paul**

MBBS 2016

2018[^]**2017****Dr Kali Hayward**

MBBS 2005

Outstanding Contribution to Sport Award

2024**Dr Amber Halliday**

B Soc Sc 2000, B Media
2004, Grad Dip Psych Sc
2013, B Health Sc (Hons)
2014, Ph D (Psych) 2019

Graham Winter

B A 1977, Dip App Psych 1979

2023**Juliet Haslam OAM**

B com 1995

James McWha Rising Star Award

2024**Dr Hannah Wardill**

B Health Sc 2011, B Health
Sc (Hons) 2012, Ph D (Med)
2016

2023**Dr Sarah Boyle**

B Sc (Biotech) 2010,
B Sc (Hons) 2011, Ph
D (Bio Sc) 2015

2022**Dr Angela Alder-Price**

MBBS 2011

Professor Phiala Shanahan

B Sc (High Perf Comp
Phys) (Hons) 2011, Ph D
(Physics & Astro) 2015

2021**Luisa Pannuccio**

B E (Civil & Arch)
(Hons) 2018

2020[^]**2019****Associate Professor****Kristin Carson**

PhD (Med) 2015

Hannah Wandel OAM

B Media 2010, LLB 2012

2018[^]**2017****Annabel Crabb**

BA 1997, LLB 1997

* To see the full list of
Distinguished
Alumni Award recipients
from 1992 visit [ua.edu.
au/alumni/recognised/
distinguished-alumni-
awards](http://ua.edu.au/alumni/recognised/distinguished-alumni-awards)

[^] No awards held

Further enquiries

The University of Adelaide SA 5005 Australia

enquiries alumni@adelaide.edu.au

phone +61 8 8313 5800

web adelaide.edu.au/alumni

Disclaimer The information in this publication is current as at the date of printing and is subject to change. You can find updated information on our website at adelaide.edu.au The University of Adelaide assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information provided by third parties.

Australian University Provider Number PRV12105

CRICOS Provider Number 00123M

© The University of Adelaide

November 2025 Job no. UA31710

Kaurna acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people, the original custodians of the Adelaide Plains and the land on which the University of Adelaide's campuses at North Terrace, Waite, and Roseworthy are built. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs. The University continues to develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with all Indigenous peoples in Australia, and with other Indigenous peoples throughout the world.