

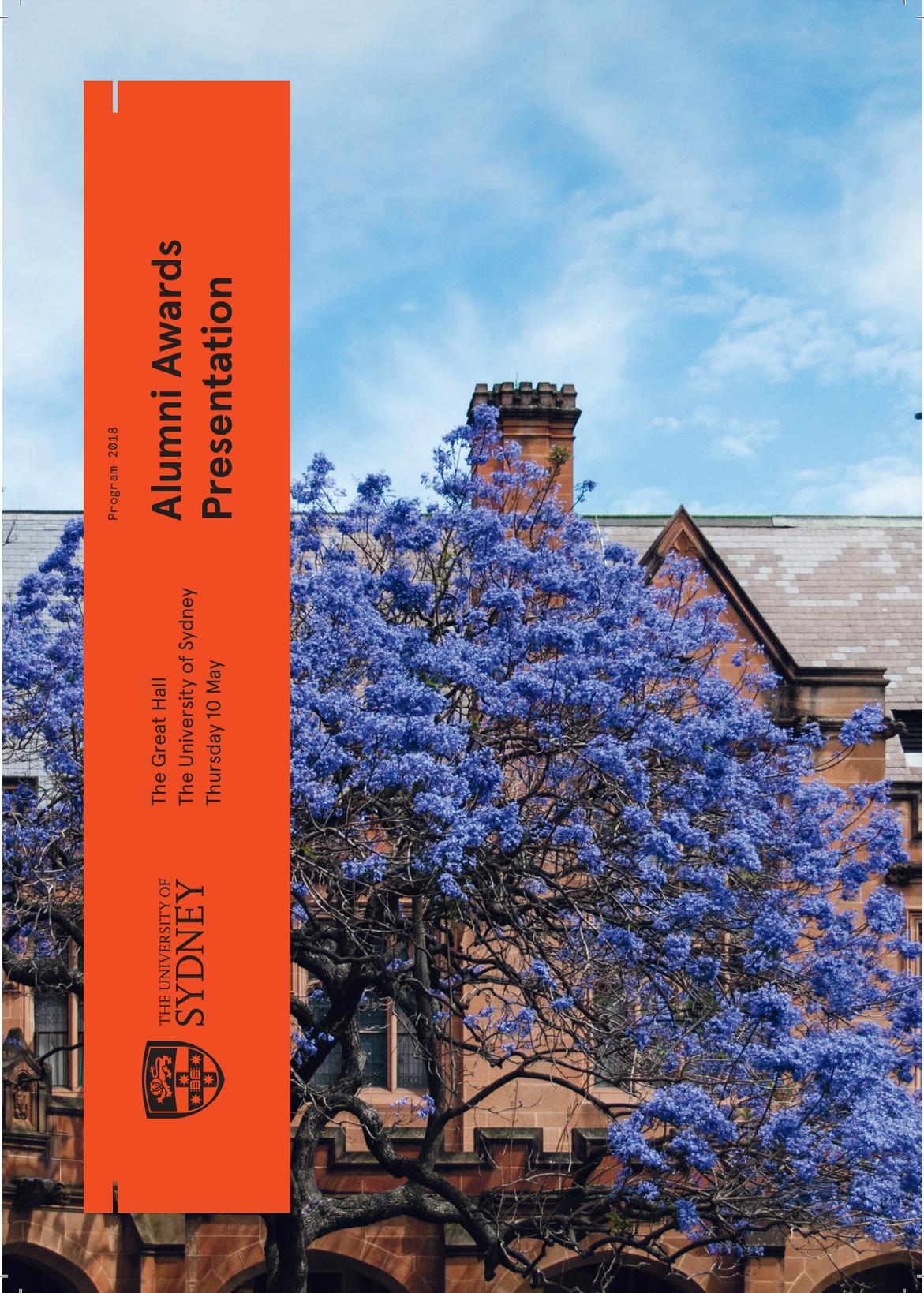
Program 2018

# Alumni Awards Presentation

The Great Hall  
The University of Sydney  
Thursday 10 May



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**





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



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

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# Alumni Awards Presentation

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# Alumni Awards Program 2018

The annual Alumni Awards program celebrates the achievements of our alumni and honours their contribution to the University and wider community.

Tonight we will acknowledge the recipients of the Alumni Achievement Awards and announce the winners of the Graduate Medals.

## Order of proceedings

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<b>6pm</b>	<b>Cocktail reception</b> Drinks and canapés served
<b>6.20pm</b>	<b>Formal proceedings commence</b> <b>Welcome</b> Mr Eddie Woo (BEd(Second)(Math)(Hons) '08) Australia's most famous mathematics teacher Winner of the 2017 Outstanding Achievements of Young Alumni Award Master of Ceremonies  <b>Chancellor's address</b> Belinda Hutchinson AM (BEc '80)  <b>Graduate Medals presentation</b>  <b>Alumni Achievement Awards presentation</b>
<b>7.35pm</b>	<b>Formal proceedings conclude</b> Drinks and canapés served
<b>8.30pm</b>	<b>Event concludes</b>

# Honouring our outstanding alumni

## Alumni Achievement Awards

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The Alumni Achievement Awards recognise and celebrate the success of graduates who are established in their careers.

### Alumni Award for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

This award recognises alumni who are forward-thinking leaders in their industry, profession, field of research or area of expertise. The award celebrates the visionary and the daring across any field.

### Alumni Award for International Achievement

This award recognises the outstanding contributions that alumni have made to international society through community service and/or professional achievements that have made a significant global impact.

### Alumni Award for Professional Achievement

This award recognises outstanding achievements of alumni in their professional fields.

### Alumni Award for Cultural Contribution

This award recognises alumni who achieve excellence in arts, creative sectors and culture, and/or whose efforts promoted the understanding and valuing of cultural diversity.

### Alumni Award for Service to Humanity

This award recognises the personal contributions of alumni who, through service to philanthropy, improve the lives of those in need. This award also seeks to recognise the significant involvement of our alumni in projects that enrich local or international communities.

### Outstanding Achievements of Young Alumni

This award recognises outstanding achievements made by alumni aged 35 and younger (at close of nominations).

## Graduate Medals

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The Graduate Medals recognise the academic excellence and contributions to the University of Sydney's diverse intellectual life from our most recent graduates.

### Convocation Medal

For undergraduate achievement

### Edmund Barton Medal

For master's by coursework achievement

### John C Harsanyi Medal

For international student achievement

### Nigel C Barker Medal

For academic and sporting achievement

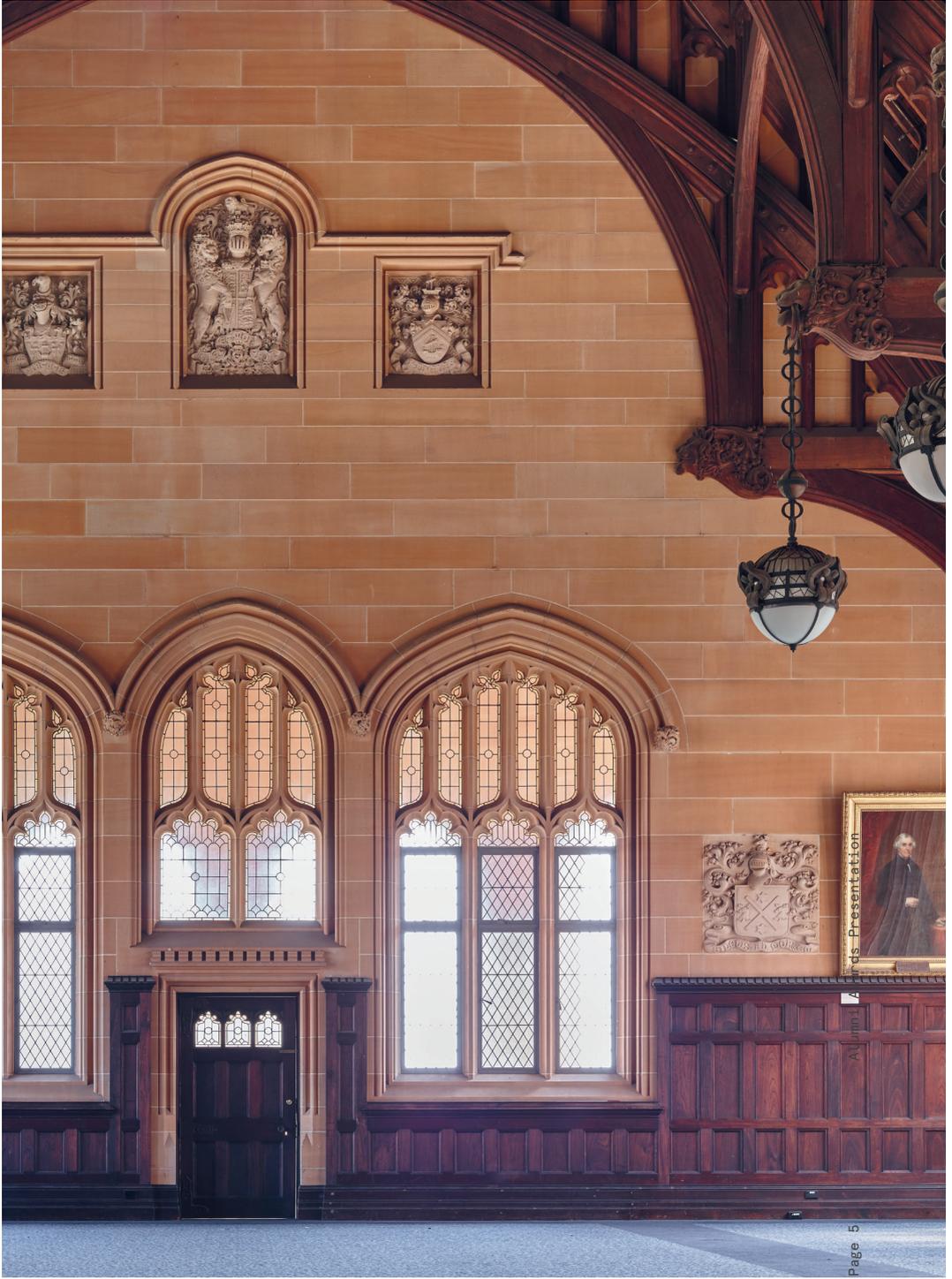
### Rita and John Cornforth Medal

For PhD achievement

### Sister Alison Bush Medal

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement





# Alumni Award for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

## Nick Molnar

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### BCom '12

Run a business from your bedroom, get a degree, work as an investment banker, start another business, get married, list your company on the stock exchange. Celebrate your 27th birthday.

The CV of Nick Molnar (BCom '12) is enough to exhaust the most ambitious millennial. And his latest business just happens to be the highly successful Afterpay, a company offering a 'buy now, receive now, pay in four instalments' service to its retail consumers.

The company's rapid rise has surprised no-one more than Nick himself. As CEO, he has pedalled hard to build up the business infrastructure while dealing with runaway demand for its services. He often operates on very little sleep and gives the impression of having a tireless appetite for work. Yet he still manages to have a relaxed nature and easy smile.

The company's latest financial results attest to the success of the Afterpay business model. It has 10,000 retailers on the books – ranging from boutique operators to massive retailers – and more than 1.3 million consumers. The *We Love Afterpay* Facebook page is further testament to the company's popularity, being a hub for retailers to tout their wares to a 100,000-plus following.

It was a rugby scholarship that brought Nick to the University of Sydney, where he enrolled as a commerce student majoring in finance and international business.

"My studies gave me the basis for many of my key decisions in my journey at Afterpay," Nick says. "My finance major provided analytics, financial modelling and attention to detail."

He dovetailed his study with his first e-commerce enterprise, leveraging his parents' business relationships with jewellery suppliers so he could also sell jewellery, but on eBay. When he was 19 and working out of his bedroom, Nick was the biggest eBay seller of jewellery in Australia.

Despite his success as an e-tailer, Nick still felt the need for a "real job" after leaving university. He kept the business going, but became an investment banker.

"I was making more money selling jewellery than in the investment banking job," he says. "It reached the point where my employer said, 'I'll keep your job open for 12 months, but you should be running the jewellery

business full time'. He actually pushed me down the entrepreneurial path and for that, I am forever grateful."

When Afterpay Touch Group listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in June 2017, its shares traded at \$1. They now trade at \$6, helped by the fact Afterpay has signed up major retailer, Wesfarmers, expanded into New Zealand, and made the move into the travel industry via an agreement with Jetstar.

If Nick feels the pressure, he doesn't show it, saying he's humbled and energised by what he does. "As you keep peeling back the layers, there's just so much more opportunity, and the chance to build a positive legacy," he says.



# Alumni Award for International Achievement

## Dr Vandana Joshi

MPHith '99



When Dr Vandana Joshi (MPHith '99), was enrolling in her medicine degree, her mother showed her a photo of her nine-year-old self wearing a stethoscope around her neck, with a big smile on her face.

“Being a doctor was my childhood dream,” Vandana says.

Growing up in a small town in India, she remembers wanting to be like the only doctor in her community. Her desire to help others was strong.

After graduating from university in India, Vandana worked for four years in a community clinic, often without electricity. She applied for an AusAID scholarship at the University of Sydney, and on 20 October 1994 at 2pm, she remembers receiving the call that would change everything. “It was the happiest moment of my life.”

She is a public health professional but her CV reads like the script of a television mini-series. In 2000, while working with tuberculosis patients in Kashmir, a bomb blast occurred just 25 metres away from her. People turned to her for help.

“To be honest, I was scared, but I pretended to be brave,” Vandana says. “Sometimes life doesn’t give you choices – you have to act.”

In 2005, she was sent as a team leader to provide humanitarian care in tsunami-affected Andaman and Nicobar island, often spending nights out in the open as protection against aftershocks.

Then, in 2014, UNICEF sent her to the Ebola 'red zone' in Sierra Leone, to help fight the biggest health crisis on the planet at the time. When she joined, the infection rate was 100 percent, with the death rate among health workers at 90 percent. She lost two of her co-workers during the early response period.

When asked how she can bring herself to work in these disaster zones, Vandana has a very pragmatic response: "If not me, then who?"

After many years in the field she has armed herself with practical steps to staying sane: trust your team, ask for help when you need it; stop sometimes, eat your dinner and go to bed. She tears up as she says, "All humans need to take care of themselves before they can take care of anyone else."

With hard work and grit, she has made it through years of working in emergency situations and war-torn countries. It isn't easy, but there's one thing that keeps her motivated. "It's because of the look in people's eyes, the love in their eyes – and you keep going."

Vandana's dedication and professionalism has brought her many awards, including the *Time* Person of the Year 2014, awarded collectively to the Ebola Response Team, and the 2014 UNICEF Global Staff award.

Right now, Vandana is in Bhutan, working to make it the first country in the region to have zero mother-to-child transmission of HIV – an admirable goal that is within reach.

Her working life might read like a story of disaster and struggle, but the way Vandana tells it, it's a story of hope. "Saving lives and spreading smiles are the most important things for me."

# Alumni Award for Professional Achievement

## Professor David Black AO

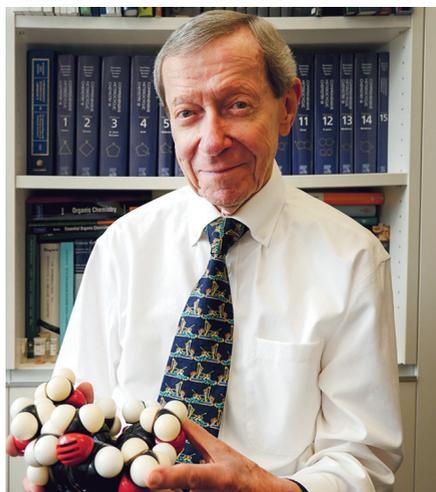
**BSc '59 MSc '60**

To fully appreciate the work of David Black (BSc '59 MSc '60), your perspective has to be both molecular and global.

His achievements in research and teaching have been built around his widely recognised expertise in organic chemistry. But his parallel mission has been to help guide and shape some of the world's peak scientific organisations.

Speaking from his office at the University of New South Wales, where he is now an emeritus professor of organic chemistry, David describes his research work: "I think it's simplest to say that I am a molecular architect. We can take existing molecules and turn them into completely new ones. That's the kind of chemistry I do."

Creating new organic molecules can lead to new pharmaceuticals. For example, in cancer research, the search for treatments needs a



constant supply of different molecular starting points.

David's years of building molecules has seen him receive numerous awards, including, in 2017, the David Craig Medal from the Australian Academy of Science, the highest accolade for chemistry research in Australia. In 2012, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia.

While the value of David's research is immense, it is matched by his contribution to the broader scientific community.

His keen insight, hands-on approach and attention to detail saw him become President of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, before moving to the international stage where he became the Secretary-General of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) in 2003, and the Secretary-General of the International Council for Science (ICSU) in 2011.

The roles were often hectic, but David knew the value in what he was doing. "These organisations are critical in bringing together people with similar or related specialisations who can develop collaborations, which then drive scientific progress," he says.

As he prepares to retire from his role at the ICSU, David's final project for the organisation has been literally transformative. After months of difficult planning, negotiation and statute development, the ICSU and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) are merging to form the International Science Council.

This historic merger will provide a single, global voice for all the sciences at a time when science is evolving and looking for answers to some serious problems.

"It doesn't matter what scientific discovery you make, it's going to have a social consequence," David says. "The sooner you start thinking about what those consequences might be, the better. That's why the merger with the social sciences is important."

As honoured and "amazed" as David is by his Alumni Award for Professional Achievement, there is a sense that his greatest career reward comes from guiding his students. He has been described as the father of a generation of Australian chemists; a quality that came from his own gratitude for the academic foundation that the University of Sydney gave him as a student.

"The first-year chemistry lecturers I had were absolutely brilliant, world-class people," he says. "I came to Sydney to do maths, but was seduced into chemistry. I believe you need a strong foundation if you're ever going to have real professional achievement."

# Alumni Award for Cultural Contribution

## Michelle Leonard OAM

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### BMusEd '93

As the founder and driving force behind the Moorambilla Voices young people's choir, Michelle Leonard (BMusEd '93) has one goal: to give children an opportunity that, as a child, she herself took for granted: the opportunity to make music.

"When I was growing up in Coonamble, lots of towns had a marching band and did musicals every year. That's all gone now," she says. "Now kids just watch other people making music on YouTube."

In March this year, Michelle spent three weeks on the road delivering skills development workshops to 3861 children in 77 schools. The children learned to read and make music, observed by parents, teachers, community members and Aboriginal elders in support of increasing the children's music literacy.

A composer describing Michelle's energy might use *allegro* (lively and fast), or *capriccio* (free form and skilful). Anyone else might say her energy seems "inexhaustible".

Visit the organisation's website and you'll see pictures of ambitious staging, serious instrumentation and young people focused and energised by what they're doing. You'll also see the involvement of professional musicians, composers and choreographers.

What Michelle has started is a cultural shift where boys and girls are willing and eager to sing, dance, create and put in the real work that is needed. Even the toughest schoolground peer groups approve. It has also had a positive effect on school attendance in places where truancy can be a problem.

“You have to be at school to attend Moorambilla,” Michelle points out. “For some of my candidates over the years, that has been the single determinant of why they stayed in the education system.”

With four children of her own, the demands on Michelle are significant. Her other choir, the Espresso Chorus, located in Sydney’s inner west, is a place where adults from across the community can take part without the pressure of an audition. It reflects Michelle’s belief that music lovers and music professionals should not be locked in their silos.

The chorus will be 20 years old this year. Through the generosity of the choristers themselves, 20 new works have been commissioned to revisit Handel’s *Messiah*, and reframe this most famous choral work using a contemporary perspective.

“The music coming from the composers is sublime,” Michelle says. “I see this project as positive risk-taking, artistically, and I’ve never been frightened of that.”

Michelle’s singular dedication stretches back to her time at the Conservatorium of Music, when expectations were high and resources stretched thinly.



“I was in the old Con building,” she remembers. “You could hear a lot of music-making because nothing was soundproofed – it was wild. The Conservatorium significantly shaped me. My lecturers told us that we were the people who would make changes to our society and its artistic vibrancy – whether we were ready to or not.”

The change that Michelle has made is in transforming the lives of young and older people all over New South Wales. And her mission continues. “We have something that we know works now, and it’s worth sharing.”

– [www.moorambilla.com](http://www.moorambilla.com)

# Alumni Award for Service to Humanity

## Professor Rose McGready

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### MBBS '90

After graduating from the University of Sydney, Professor Rose McGready (MBBS '90) was keen on volunteering in the tropics, probably Africa.

In the meantime, she was training at Royal Darwin Hospital to become a District Medical Officer which mandated an obstetrics component. She also completed a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. A placement in Thailand came up in 1994. "I only went for six months," Rose says. "Things went well and I was invited to stay on, which I accepted." Some 24 years later, she is still there.

That "things went well" is a classic understatement of the hardworking, pragmatic and deeply compassionate Rose. She has trained a generation of midwives, nurses and doctors and supervised the antenatal care and delivery of thousands of babies. Then there's her work with malaria.

Rose initially worked with vulnerable people in the Shoklo Refugee Camp on the Thailand-Myanmar border. Conditions were basic and malaria was rife. Pregnant women were particularly at risk: a pregnant woman is twice as attractive to mosquitoes as a non-pregnant woman, Rose says.

"She's also more vulnerable because she's not as good at fighting infection," she says. "It's multifactorial – mosquitoes like carbon dioxide and the moisture exhaled with the increased respiration of pregnancy, and they like certain smells that become volatile with the increased heat of a pregnant woman's body."

Over time, resistance had evolved to the conventional malaria treatments, quinine, fansidar and mefloquine. The only remaining drug available was artemisinin, but there was one big problem: animal studies revealed a high risk of early miscarriage.

“If a pregnant woman failed quinine and mefloquine and was sick again, we ended up using it – just slowly, slowly – and making sure we saw her baby at delivery,” Rose says. “We started to build a picture that the drug was as efficacious as in non-pregnant women and didn’t do what the animal studies suggested.”

Rose’s groundbreaking finding meant the drug could be used safely in pregnancy by adjusting the dose between trimesters, leading to the establishment of World Health Organization guidelines for treating malaria in pregnant women. Rose is now widely recognised as one of the world’s foremost experts on malaria in pregnancy.

Through all the hardships, Rose says one thing has kept her going: a pumpkin. When a patient experienced complications giving birth to twins, Rose led a hospital transfer. But the babies had other ideas, necessitating a roadside delivery. The first was born, but as the second arrived – in breech position – the first stopped breathing. “We didn’t have any equipment, so I had to give mouth-to-mouth,” Rose says. The babies (both boys) survived, and so did their mum. This alone speaks volumes of the doctor who says she was once “afraid of obstetrics”.



To thank Rose, the mother brought her a pumpkin she had grown. “It was all she had,” Rose says, clearly moved. “I love pumpkin, and that was her gift, she had so little but still wanted to give. It made me cry – tears of happiness. I cooked it and shared it.”

There is still considerable work ahead: fake drugs are having a “murderous” effect, Rose says, and resistance to artemisinin is rising. But consider this: when Rose arrived on the Thailand-Myanmar border, pregnant women were “dropping like flies” from malaria, but now she hasn’t seen a malaria death in a decade. Thousands of women and children (some of whom are now adults), are alive today thanks to Professor Rose McGready.

# Outstanding Achievements of Young Alumni Award

## Dr Mohit Tolani

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### BMedSci '10

Growing up on the Gold Coast, Dr Mohit Tolani (BMedSci '10) often came to Sydney to visit family. When he was in year 12, the bus he was on stopped outside the University of Sydney's main gate. "I thought, 'what is this beautiful place – it looks like Oxford'," Mohit says. Determined to come here, he studied hard for his HSC and gained a scholarship to Sydney for a medical science degree. Thus, a brilliant career was born.

Mohit loved his mix of studies, ranging from biology and pharmacology to Hindi and an honours year in pathology. Graduate medicine or dentistry beckoned, but he also loved research. So he did some serious soul-searching before choosing.

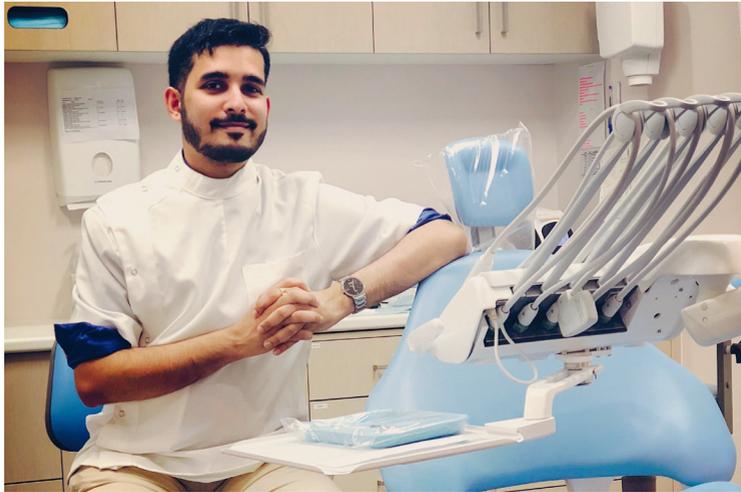
He realised he liked working with his hands, talking to people, networking, and seeing projects through from start to finish. "I decided on dentistry and I've never looked back," he says.

He loves the manually dextrous, finely tuned work and cracking jokes to ease his patients' anxieties.

Mohit was an excellent scholar but he did far more than study. He became secretary of the Science Society and reignited the Medical Science Society. He also participated in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience and the Australian League of Immigration Volunteers program. He even joined Rotaract because it encourages students to create positive change.

Community service is Mohit's idea of a good time. "You meet new people and use your knowledge to help them grow and develop," he says. He was delighted when some kids he worked with taught him hip-hop.

Working at Goulburn Valley Health in regional Victoria, Mohit taught himself to drive the big van that was kitted out as a dental surgery. With a



nurse, he'd head out to places where it was difficult for people to get to the dentist. "We'd open the back and people would come – we did it for old people, we did it for children," Mohit says. "That van holds a very special place in my heart."

In 2013, Mohit led an international project on Oral Health Literacy to reduce inequities in healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants and refugees. Having worked with asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Syria who'd never seen a dentist, Mohit wanted not only to educate but also to inspire. "We need to empower people to take charge of their own health," he says. "If people can take charge, how many issues could be prevented?"

Mohit's work has considerable impact. One unemployed patient hadn't seen

a dentist in 30 years. He was in pain and anxious but wouldn't turn up for appointments. One day he came in ready to do things differently.

Mohit gave him a toothbrush and taught him an oral hygiene routine, and the patient managed to keep the teeth Mohit initially thought he would lose. The patient began to take more care of his appearance and his confidence grew. Eventually he found full-time work.

Later, he brought flowers to Mohit. "You're like a candle that has shone the light on me," he said to Mohit. "Now I'm not scared to face the world."

As Mohit accepts this award, he and his wife are expecting their first child. Life is about to give him even more caring to do.

# Convocation Medal

For undergraduate achievement

First awarded in 1980, the Convocation Medal honours bachelor's degree graduates who have shown strong leadership and enriched the diverse life of the University of Sydney.

For more than three decades, the recipients have played an integral role in our continual quest to improve the academic and student experience that Sydney offers, transforming people, lives, outlooks and the community.

The term 'Convocation' is enshrined in the University's history and its founding Act of Parliament. Accordingly, Convocation is an important part of the University's fabric, and the medal reflects the considerable contributions of the recipient.

# Edmund Barton Medal

For master's by coursework achievement

The Edmund Barton Medal honours master's by coursework graduates who have achieved academic excellence and enriched the diverse life of the University and the broader community.

Sir Edmund Barton PC GCMG QC (MA 1870) was the first Prime Minister of Australia and founding Justice of the High Court of Australia.

His greatest contribution to Australia was arguably his management of the federation movement through the 1890s. Elected at the inaugural federal election in 1901, Sir Edmund resigned from the position of Prime Minister of Australia in 1903 and became a judge of Australia's High Court.



Sir Edmund Barton

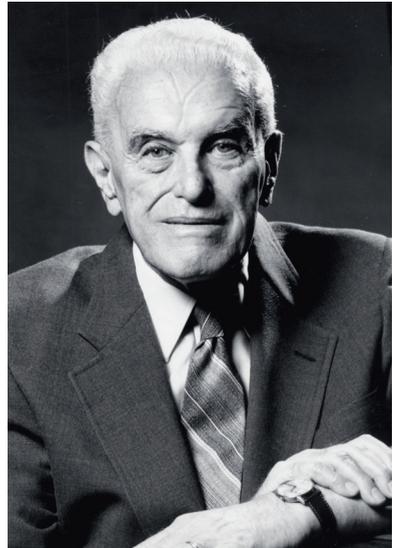
# John C Harsanyi Medal

For international student achievement

The John C Harsanyi Medal honours academic excellence and contribution to the diverse life of the University and the broader community by an international student.

John Charles Harsanyi (MA 1953, DScEc 1995) was a Hungarian–Australian–American economist who won the 1994 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics (with John Nash and Reinhard Selten). A survivor of the Nazi Holocaust and a refugee from Stalinist Hungary, he emigrated to Australia in 1950 and put himself through postgraduate evening classes at the University of Sydney to graduate with a Master of Arts in 1953.

John is best known for his contributions to the study of game theory, decision theory, utilitarian ethics and the philosophy of mathematics, and the practical application of these concepts to economics, sociology, political science, and political and moral philosophy.



John C Harsanyi

# Nigel C Barker Medal

For academic and sporting achievement

The Nigel C Barker Medal honours graduates who have achieved academic excellence and enriched the diverse life of the University and the broader community through sporting achievement.

Nigel Chase Barker (BE 1909) was an outstanding all-round athlete and sportsman. He represented the University and New South Wales on a number of occasions.

Nigel competed in the 1906 Intercalated/Interim Olympic Games in Athens where he was the most successful Australian, winning bronze medals in both the 100m and 400m races. Although the International Olympic Committee subsequently decided not to recognise the 1906 games in Athens as an official Summer Games, Nigel is arguably the University's first Olympian, Olympic medallist and world-record holder in athletics.



Nigel C Barker  
Image courtesy of the University of Sydney  
Archives, Ref: G3\_224\_1101

# Rita and John Cornforth Medal

## For PhD achievement

The Rita and John Cornforth Medal honours PhD graduates who have achieved academic excellence and enriched the diverse life of the University and the broader community.

Sir John Warcup 'Kappa' Cornforth AC CBE FRS (BSc 1938, MSc 1939, DSc 1977) and Lady Rita Cornforth (BSc 1937, MSc 1938) were among the most outstanding students of their respective years and had a profound influence on the study of penicillin during the war. John had been deaf since his teens, and Rita relayed speech to him by lip reading throughout their life together.

John won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (with Vladimir Prelog) in 1975 for his work on the stereochemistry of enzyme catalysed reactions. John was knighted in 1977 and awarded the Corday Morgan Medal in 1953, the Royal Medal in 1976 and the Copley Medal in 1982.



Sir John and Lady Rita Cornforth at the University of Sydney in the 1930s

# Sister Alison Bush Medal

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander achievement

The Sister Alison Bush Medal honours academic excellence and contribution to the diverse life of the University and the broader community by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander graduate.



Sister Alison Bush  
Image courtesy of  
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Sister Alison Bush AO, RN CM FRACOG (Hon) FRCNA (Hon) FCN (NSW) (Hon), was descended from the Ngalakan clan of Ngukurr (Roper River), in the traditional language group of Garawa Borrooloola. She and her twin sister Jennifer were members of the Stolen Generation taken to Groote Eylandt.

An icon and pioneer, Sister Alison was the first Aboriginal midwife to work at a major maternity hospital in New South Wales, delivering more than 1000 babies during her 40 years of service at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. She spent the final decade of her life travelling to remote regions in her role as Aboriginal liaison midwife, bringing compassionate and culturally sensitive care to Aboriginal mothers and their babies.

# Graduate Medal finalists

## Dr Jennifer Baldwin

Rita and John Cornforth Medal finalist  
BAppSc(Phty)(Hons) '09 PhD '17

Jennifer's passion for bettering the health and wellbeing of others stems from her personal experiences as primary caregiver to her father. Her outstanding research into neurological and musculoskeletal disorders will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of a great many more.

Jennifer's history of academic excellence began with her honours thesis, for which she was awarded the University Medal and the Australian Physiotherapy Association Research Prize. Her time at the University was also marked by her mentorship of undergraduate, honours and Indigenous students, both as a student representative and a tutor. Her doctoral research earned her the Australian Postgraduate Award and the University's Alumni Scholarship.

"Understanding 'normal' human function is critical to be able to diagnose and manage disease."

**Her greatest lesson:** "Never be afraid to ask questions. I've learnt there really is no such thing as a dumb question. As an academic, the single most important thing we do is question the world around us; this is how new discoveries are made."

## Sam Coggins

Convocation Medal finalist  
BSc(Agr) '18

Sam achieved outstanding academic results throughout his degree, including a high distinction average and a faculty merit scholarship.

Sam's time at Sydney is defined by his commitment to others. During a semester of study in Sri Lanka, he witnessed poverty and inequality first hand. This led him to create a social enterprise helping Sri Lankan farmers manage pests. He founded the Sydney Union Food Wastage Society in 2016, and is currently developing technology to help farmers dispose of pesticide containers. He represented the University in multiple sports, and has mentored with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) for the past four years.

"Most poor people are farmers; most hungry people are farmers and farmers produce almost all of our food."

**His greatest lesson:** "I tasted the unfairness of the world during my semester in Sri Lanka. I learned that achievements in my life will always originate from opportunities I was lucky to get. This lesson beat the arrogance out of me and made me commit to a career contributing to a fairer world."

## Joshua Critchley-Marrows

Convocation Medal finalist  
BSc '18 BE(Hons) '18

Joshua achieved exceptional academic results during his time at the University of Sydney, where he studied a Bachelor of Aeronautical (Space) Engineering and a Bachelor of Science (Advanced Mathematics). He was included on the Dean's list for Excellence in Academic Achievement and achieved an Honours Class I. His undergraduate thesis has developed into a dedicated University research group, developing a system for a test flight from the International Space Station.

Joshua has been active in university life beyond the classroom. He co-founded the University's Rocketry Team, where he served as president, and Astronaut Stories Australia, where he has contributed to nationwide programs that allow high school students to meet astronauts and find out more about university STEM programs. Joshua has published three academic papers as an undergraduate student, and made four presentations at international conferences. He now works for a satellite services company in the United Kingdom.

**His greatest lesson:** "Prepare yourself for anything. Life is unpredictable, and you have to be ready."

## Dean Cross

Sister Alison Bush Medal finalist  
BVA '17

The first in his family to graduate from university, Dean finished his Bachelor of Visual Arts with high distinctions in nearly every subject. Despite the financial hardship of moving to Sydney from Canberra, he maintained exceptional academic standards and took on important leadership roles.

Dean was a mentor with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) in 2015, and has worked with the Wingara Mura - Bunga Barrabugu program to mentor young Indigenous students, as well as creating public programs for NAIDOC week. He was awarded the Dr Charles Perkins AO Memorial Prize for his outstanding academic results, as well as the University of Sydney Indigenous Progress Award and the Indigenous Student Leadership Award in 2016.

Dean completed honours at the Australian National University, where he finished first in his cohort and was awarded a University Medal. "A visual arts degree with such a strong focus on Indigenous art has been immeasurably valuable."

**His greatest lesson:** "Back yourself and don't be afraid of what you don't know. Trust in the expertise of people around you."

# Graduate Medal finalists

## Alyssa Glass

Edmund Barton Medal finalist  
BIGS '13 JD '18

Graduating with a high distinction average is just one exceptional accomplishment in Alyssa's outstanding academic record. Selected as valedictorian of her graduating class, Alyssa was awarded the George and Matilda Harris Scholarship in 2016 as well as the prize for the Most Proficient Student in her Juris Doctor cohort.

Alyssa represented the University in the 2017 Philip C Jessup International Moot as part of the victorious team, and was awarded Best Oralist. She has devoted much of her time to mentoring younger law students, including coaching moot teams, and is currently developing a new women's moot program. She volunteered as a teacher in a remote Indigenous community in 2013, and ran programs for all students, designed to create an open dialogue about mental health.

"I shared my own experiences in order to reach out and hopefully create a more empathetic, practical and open atmosphere."

**Her greatest lesson:** "Never give up on yourself and remember that asking for help when you need it is one of the strongest things that you can do."

## Dr Fernando Gordillo Altamirano

John C Harsanyi Medal finalist  
MMed (InfnImm) '17

Moving from Ecuador to Australia to complete a Master of Medicine, Fernando faced many challenges. But in achieving high distinctions across all of his subjects, he was able to graduate with more than just an excellent academic record: Fernando has had two of his academic papers published, and was awarded a full scholarship to complete a PhD in Melbourne.

In 2017, Fernando was selected from more than 300 applicants to deliver a TEDxQuito talk in his native Ecuador, where he spoke about the importance of physician wellbeing and mental health, an issue close to his heart.

"It is a side of the medical education system that doesn't get talked about. I wouldn't want any young colleague to go through what I did. I have had struggles with mental health issues, which is why I'm very outspoken about the importance of mental and emotional health."

**His greatest lesson:** "Strive for balance. Having a successful career may be great, but it is not worth sacrificing your health, family and friends, interests and passions for."

### Dr Kylie Gwynne

Rita and John Cornforth Medal finalist  
PhD '17

Kylie has 30 years' experience in the design, implementation and evaluation of human services for vulnerable Australians. As former director of the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Kylie has worked at the forefront of research, teaching and service in Indigenous communities, including the Oral Health Therapy Program and career pathways projects for Aboriginal students.

Her PhD in Health Sciences has allowed her to explore better ways to effect health services for rural and remote communities. "I was inspired to draw on my many years of experience working alongside Aboriginal people and communities to co-design, implement and measure approaches that improved health outcomes."

She is currently Executive Officer and Company Secretary of Paediatrico, where she leads collaboration in paediatric research between the major children's research institutes in NSW.

**Her greatest lesson:** "Prior to undertaking my PhD, I relied heavily on instinct and experience, with some literature. I now rely primarily on rigour and research, informed by instinct and experience."

### Dr Shivaughn Hem-Lee Forsyth

John C Harsanyi Medal finalist  
PhD '17

Shivaughn's determination to make an indelible mark and effect tangible change in her region of origin (the Caribbean) made the challenge of undertaking a PhD worthwhile.

Inspired by the urgent need to address gender gaps in HIV and AIDS research within the Caribbean basin, Shivaughn was able to elevate levels of awareness regarding sexuality, sexual health and rights, both academically, and through community engagement programs. Her research and volunteer work continues to empower girls and women to overcome gender discrimination and lead healthier lives.

Shivaughn received an Australia Awards International Scholarship from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. She tutored in the Master of Public Health program throughout her PhD, was a mentor to international students and a student ambassador for Australia Awards. She has since returned to her alma mater, St George's University, Grenada, as a lecturer in public health.

**Her greatest lesson:** "No matter how huge a challenge may be, with perseverance, willpower, dedication, hard work, and a strong support network, anything can be realised."

# Graduate Medal finalists

## Grace Henry

Convocation Medal finalist  
BE(Hons) '18

Throughout her degree, Grace's commitment to engineering has led her from outstanding academic results to making a real difference in the community. As an active member of the University's engineering community, including as Engineers Australia Sydney University Campus Coordinator, Grace's work helped build a just and sustainable future. This work ethic is reflected in her establishing and leading a StreamWatch group that tests the water quality in her local bushland reserves.

Her passion and drive extended beyond the lab. While completing a Bachelor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, for which she achieved First Class Honours, Grace was a member of the University's Elite Athlete Program and was awarded a Sydney University Blue. She played football in the women's national soccer league – the W-League. She also undertook two overseas placements in Saudi Arabia (Dow Chemical) and India (EWB).

**Her greatest lesson:** "Always be proactive with your career and study and never be afraid to ask for advice from experienced professionals and academics in your area."

## Matthew Hood

Nigel C Barker Medal finalist  
BEc '16 MMgt '18

A passion for business and entrepreneurship inspired Matthew to undertake a Master of Management, where he achieved a distinction average.

Leadership has held him in good stead beyond his study. He represented Australia in Rugby Sevens, the result of his dedication to sport, supported by the University's Elite Athlete Program.

Matthew was awarded the University of Sydney Business School and Sydney Uni Sport & Fitness Scholarship for outstanding academic and sporting achievement, as well as the University of Sydney Business School Postgraduate Scholarship. He also mentored students through academic tutoring and via coaching clinics.

"The two degrees I completed gave me the knowledge, skills and courage to start my own business."

**His greatest lesson:** "Ironically, it's the importance of learning lessons. I learned the value of evaluating performance, whether as a student or on the rugby field, and learning from mistakes. This ensures I am always improving and moving forward."

## Nicholas Hough

Nigel C Barker Medal finalist  
BIT(Hons) '17

Having competed for Australia in hurdles at the Commonwealth Games and the World Championships, Nicholas is at home on the global stage. His passion for computer science has also seen him build his own software company from a fledgling startup to a global organisation with more than 500,000 customers worldwide.

“I wanted to use my research to help students around the world with their education, regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances.”

Nicholas has always worked hard to balance his love for sport and study. He achieved first class honours while overcoming injuries and disruptions to become Australia’s fastest 110m hurdler. He was named University of Sydney Sportsperson of the Year three times, and received a Sydney Uni Sport & Fitness scholarship. Much of his free time was spent mentoring and coaching young athletes.

**His greatest lesson:** “Too often we limit ourselves to what we think we can achieve, when success is often found pursuing goals that may not even be achievable.”

## Georgina Kreutzer

Edmund Barton Medal finalist  
MArch '17

Georgina’s passion for art began long before she moved from a small country town to Sydney. Since then, her drive and ambition has led her to become a successful artist and architect in Australia, New Zealand, North America and Europe.

Having been approached by the gallery project Abode to create art, which was publicly displayed in New York, Georgina was commissioned by Lexus to work as an artist in Italy. She developed an art business and has used it to benefit students worldwide through free workshop and tutorials. She currently volunteers for Rotaract as a community leader and functions director.

“Architecture is a form of art set alight, a discipline interwoven with science, philosophy and humanity.”

**Her greatest lesson:** “Our lecturers and tutors are an invaluable resource – they have experience and insight, so ask them questions! Engage in the class conversation, email them, and keep in contact, especially with those who resonated with your strengths and supported your vision. Think and work professionally – you may work alongside them one day!”

## Graduate Medal finalists

### Dr Andrew Stuart Lane

Nigel C Barker Medal finalist  
MQHR '15 PhD '17

Academic achievement and sporting achievement have always gone hand in hand for Stuart, who has swum competitively since his teenage years. Competing and studying simultaneously have become part of his life; finishing his PhD in medicine while preparing to swim the English Channel was something he happily embraced.

Stuart's English Channel swim raised \$12,500, which will go towards the establishment of Australia's first intensive care unit follow-up clinic. His interest in this field is reflected in his research, as a specialist in intensive care medicine, and his work as a full-time clinical academic. Stuart also completed a Master of Qualitative Health Research, with distinction, while undertaking his PhD, and has presented his research at education conferences around the world.

"I have managed to ensure that my career is not simply defined by my clinical work, but also by my research and teaching."

**His greatest lesson:** "Be honest with yourself and reflect on your actions appropriately. This means talking to the right people, even if they might tell you what you don't want to hear."

### Dr Marnee McKay

Rita and John Cornforth Medal finalist  
BAppSc (Phty) '93  
MHlthSc (Sports Physio) '01 PhD '17

While completing her PhD, Marnee was already supervising postgraduate teaching fellows and honours students. Her record of academic excellence comes with a long history of leadership and mentoring, reflected in her establishment of peer-to-peer mentorship programs for postgraduate students.

Marnee has had many peer-reviewed papers published, authored two high impact articles in the prestigious journal *Neurology*, and been published in *The Conversation*. She received a travel grant from the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre, as well as the Helga Pettit postgraduate study award, and a scholarship that enabled her to complete her PhD on painful and disabling disorders.

"The University provided me with all the resources I needed to complete my PhD and gave me opportunities to learn new skills to equip me for a successful career."

**Her greatest lesson:** "I learned so much beyond that which is contained in my thesis. I learned that stepping beyond my comfort zone and challenging myself far beyond what I had ever done before is exhilarating and slightly addictive!"

## Dr Kieran Muir

Edmund Barton Medal finalist  
MD '17

Being accepted into the University of Sydney School of Medicine allowed Kieran to pursue a career which had interested him since childhood. The opportunities that came with studying medicine provided a path to leadership that saw him become the Deputy Convenor of the Australian Medical Student's Association National Convention and Postgraduate President of Sancta Sophia College.

Kieran completed his Doctor of Medicine with a distinction average, having topped his cohort's stream in two subjects, and undertook placements in Orange, South Africa and Nepal. He co-created the Sydney University Critical Care Society, and dedicated a large amount of his time to helping other students, academically and otherwise.

"I have taken every opportunity presented to me and these have cascaded into increasingly more fascinating and challenging roles."

**His greatest lesson:** "If you make every post a winning post, you can only ever improve and move towards bigger and better things. Make every role or task, regardless of how small, your most important, and dedicate yourself fully to it."

## Michael Rees

Convocation Medal finalist  
BA(Hons) '18

As a University Medallist for his first class honours thesis in Philosophy, and the recipient of an Outstanding Achievement Scholarship, Michael's exceptional academic record speaks to his deep commitment to study. Beyond academic circles, his contribution to university life has had an equally important impact.

In 2014, Michael was an editor of the student newspaper, *Honi Soit*. In 2015, he was elected as a director and later (in 2016) President of the University of Sydney Union. He was involved in the 180 Degrees charity consulting program as a team leader, mentored for the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program, and competed for the University in debating, winning the Australian Intervarsity Debating Championships twice.

"Many academic insights come when you are distracted by something quite non-academic."

**His greatest lesson:** "Nothing significant is achieved alone. There is no greater asset than capable and motivated colleagues who share your values and goals. Their criticism makes you wiser and their support makes you better. Surround yourself with good people."

# Graduate Medal finalists

## Holle Maree Shillingworth

Sister Alison Bush Medal finalist  
BOH '18

Witnessing the impact that poor dental health had on her community inspired Holle to study a Bachelor of Oral Health, to help others address their health problems. Her high academic standard and dedication to her studies saw her receive the Dr Lawrence Smith Scholarship for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Dentistry, the Waterman Scholarship and the University of Sydney Indigenous Progress Award.

Holle's desire to give back to her community is demonstrated by her mentorship of fellow Indigenous students in the Mentoring Our Brothers and Sisters (MOBS) program, as well as her role in oral health community programs in Blacktown and Mount Druitt, where she built far-reaching community links in health, education and welfare.

"Being able to contribute and help others face their fears and anxieties drove me to this area of study."

**Her greatest lesson:** "If you can dream it, you can achieve it. Don't second-guess your ability. Surround yourself with like-minded and positive people, and don't isolate family and friends when you are stressed; ask them for help or talk it through."

## Drew Trahms

John C Harsanyi Medal finalist  
MPolEc '17

Having grown up witnessing the impact of poverty on her own community, Drew's commitment to social justice informed her decisions to take a vow of poverty as an AmeriCorps VISTA, undertake a Native American reservation deployment, and move to Australia to study a Master of Political Economy. The latter has given her the skillset to build a rewarding humanitarian career.

Drew lived at Sancta Sophia College while studying; acting as a mentor to arts and dance students. She was awarded the Jo Martin Prize in Political Economy, the Sydney International Achievers Scholarship, and founded an organisation called 'Believe We Are One', which funds 25 scholarships for students from rural Nicaragua.

"I hope to be an example that if you dream big, you can come from something small and do incredible things."

**Her greatest lesson:** "Be gritty and never be afraid to fail. Building resilience is more valuable a lesson than any course you'll ever pay for, and you'll never know the quantity or quality of what you can achieve unless you try with everything you have."

## Hope Williams

Convocation Medal finalist  
BA '15 LLB (Hons) '18

In her first degree, Hope achieved a high distinction average and received six academic prizes. In her second, a Bachelor of Laws, she received the highest weighted average mark in her honours cohort. She has been invited to present her thesis at two national conferences.

Academic excellence has defined Hope's time at the University, but her involvement in the community has also meant a great deal to her. Her work at Lou's Place, a women's refugee in Kings Cross, includes teaching drama, fundraising, and serving on multiple committees. She has been President and Vice-President of the Sydney University Law Society, and mentored young women at the Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre.

"I am especially proud of the supportive atmosphere my executive fostered for women through initiatives like the Women's Mentoring Program."

**Her greatest lesson:** "Lawyers often acquire reputations as 'naysayers', who unduly stifle innovation through excessive regulation. I hope that my time at the University of Sydney has taught me to be a lawyer who views the law as a tool of progress, rather than as an impediment."



# Nominations for 2019 Alumni Awards

Help us acknowledge the outstanding achievements of our graduates by nominating them for a 2019 Alumni Award.

– [sydney.edu.au/alumni/awards](https://sydney.edu.au/alumni/awards)





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