



June 2024

# SUIHAA Newsletter

## A Message from the SUIHAA Committee Executive

Welcome to the June 2024 SUIHAA Newsletter. There is such an abundance of news to convey in this issue that we have added a Table of Contents, so you can start with the articles that most interest you.

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

- The exciting news that the IH Cabin is now available for booking by IH alumni.
- The request for your input regarding any updates needed to the 2019 recommendations to the University regarding the key characteristics for the redeveloped IH.
- The upcoming virtual event to meet the judges for the Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition, plus the deadline for the 2024 competition.
- How to view the recording of the Walter Westman Lecture if you missed it.

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

Anne Gotsis  
Michael Hirschhorn  
Margaret Lemoh  
Ros Madden  
Taz Rahman

We are especially interested in younger IH alumni who desire to help with work of the SUIHAA Committee. If this interests you, please express your interest in a message to [SUIHAA.exec@gmail.com](mailto:SUIHAA.exec@gmail.com).

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

On behalf of the SUIHAA Committee,

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

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*Message from  
the SUIHAA  
Committee  
Executive*

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## Exciting News Regarding the IH Cabin: from Dennis Schatz

### Some History:

Two years ago, the University was considering getting rid of the IH Cabin in the Belanglo Forest. They thought there might be better University-operated facilities in the bush that could provide the kind of experience desired for IH residents when IH reopens. As the SUIHAA representative on IH Council, I was tasked with determining who was using the cabin and for how much of the year.




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*IH Log Cabin  
news*

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Fortunately, Faith Gamban-Sevilla, who was the IH Registrar right before the House closed, was still at the University and could provide information regarding the use of the cabin for the six years from 2015 through 2020. While IH residents used the cabin, there were three other high-level users of the cabin, some more than IH residents. These were the MacArthur Astronomical Society, plus two IH alumni: Iqbal Qureshi and Sean Kristoffersen. What Faith also conveyed is that Sean and Iqbal both offered to be caretakers of the cabin until IH reopened.

After I had conversations with Sean and Iqbal, and then with University staff, the University indicated its willingness to pursue a way for Iqbal and Sean to assume responsibility of the cabin. After significant conversations with the University, the Forestry Commission that provides the permit to use the land, and the

assistance of Craig Collie, IH Council Deputy Chair, we are now ready to convey exciting news.

### **The Exciting News:**

Thanks to the University agreeing to cover the personal liability insurance for the cabin, the Forestry Commission issued a permit to Iqbal and Sean to be the caretakers of the cabin until IH reopens. Much progress has already been made, especially by Iqbal, to get the cabin ready for IH alumni to book stays at the cabin. Recent progress includes:

- New mattresses purchased and placed in the cabin
- Lawn mowed
- Cleaned and vacuumed inside, including both the bathroom sinks and showers
- Cleaned and wiped kitchen bench, microwave, kettle, fridge, and stove.
- Cleaned the toilets.
- Cleaned all the cobwebs from the front of the cabin.
- Fixed the outside wooden benches and made another one
- Old carpeting removed and new carpet to be installed in June
- Washed the front of the cabin and will then spraying soon to keep the insect and spiders away
- New doors for the toilets to be installed soon

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***IH Log Cabin***  
*news*

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### **Booking Your Stay at the Cabin:**

Anyone wanting to book a stay should email both Iqbal ([iaqureshi@hotmail.com](mailto:iaqureshi@hotmail.com)) and Sean ([seank@gmp.usyd.edu.au](mailto:seank@gmp.usyd.edu.au)) to express your interest. The cost is 2 nights for \$180 and 3 days for \$240. Alumni can book for family and friends, with the condition that on the booking form the alumnus puts their name as the hirer so the responsibility rests with the alumnus.

Finally, a BIG THANKS to Iqbal and Sean for taking on this caretaking responsibility, plus a thanks to Craig and staff members at the University that helped make the permit process possible.

## Seeking Your Input Regarding the 2019 Message to the University

From Taz Rahman

In 2019, SUIHAA sent The University of Sydney a document that listed the critical criteria for the nature of a redeveloped IH. This document focuses on the general characteristics of the house, including its programs and philosophy, rather than the specifics of its architecture.

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**2019 SUIHAA**

*document:  
seeking input*

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The SUIHAA Committee is looking to submit a new document this year to the university, with the goal of re-emphasizing our desires on how we would like IH to be once redeveloped. For example, many alumni agree that a common dining room and program space needs to exist in the redeveloped IH.

We are asking for comments and suggestions to the document from fellow alumni. **Please send your ideas/comments/suggestions for any changes to the attached 2019 document to [tasnim.rah@gmail.com](mailto:tasnim.rah@gmail.com) by Friday 28 June.** We look forward to your input for us to collate, discuss, and update in a revised set of recommendations to the University.

## Recording of Walter Westman Lecture by Warren Yates

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**Walter Westman  
Lecture recording**

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We were delighted with the number of people who could join us for the 2024 Walter Westman Lecture featuring Warren Yates. As a veteran climate campaigner, he reflected on the role that scientists, politicians, impacted businesses, civil society figures, climate activists and ordinary citizens have played in responding to the challenge of global heating over the last two decades.

You can view a recording of Warren's presentation at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wItGIAcGhKtbIOyNF9HiIIsIG9DcHa\\_Y/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wItGIAcGhKtbIOyNF9HiIIsIG9DcHa_Y/view?usp=sharing)

## Zoom Session with the Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition Judges

Join the three Competition judges to hear their perspectives on what excites them about the award-winning photos submitted to the Competition during the past couple years.

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*Zoom with  
Rosemary  
Berrick  
Competition  
judges*

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When: Saturday, 13 July 2024 at 11:00am Sydney time

Where: Via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89900512540>

This is the perfect gathering if you are considering an entry for this year's competition—see deadline in separate article—or if you just enjoy looking at interesting photographs.

Specific suggestions for capturing eye-appealing photographs will be offered during the hour.

They look forward to seeing you there.

## 2024 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition

Last year's Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition was a great success, with many more submissions than the year before. We look forward to your submissions this year.

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*2024 Photo  
Competition  
update*

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**Win \$\$\$\$ for Your Photos**

**Enter the Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition for Sydney International House Alumni**  
(organised by SUIHAA)

**\$100 for each of 2 winning entries**  
**\$50 for each of 2 runners up**

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**Winning photographs will be used in next year's SUIHAA newsletters**

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**Competition Rules**

1. Each photograph must have a title and the location (including country) where the photograph was taken
2. There is a limit of three entries per person
3. Photos must include name, nationality and email address of entrant
4. Photographs must be between **1 and 5 MB** submitted in jpg format via email to [dschatz@pacsci.org](mailto:dschatz@pacsci.org).


**Competition Deadline is 26 August 2024**  
**Results Announced by late October**



2023 Award Winner  
Joining the Fun



2023 Award Winner  
Downtown Downpour



Please see information above with details regarding the 2024 competition rules and prizes. The best of the photos will be featured in future SUIHAA Newsletters. **The submission deadline is 2 August 2024.**

The winners will be announced by October. We look forward to seeing your photos!

## IH Redevelopment

### Redevelopment Update

You may have been reading about the challenges with university students finding affordable housing, both for international and Australian students. Since the last newsletter, the *Australian Universities Accord Final Report* was issued, which identified two key recommendations related to improved housing and services for international students.




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## *IH Redevelopment update*

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Citing these recommendations, the SUIHAA Committee sent the message below to Vice Chancellor Scott and USyd Chancellor-elect Thodey indicating the value of a redeveloped IH in satisfying these recommendations and the importance of redeveloping IH as soon as possible:

29 March 2024

Memo to: Vice Chancellor Mark Scott  
University of Sydney Chancellor-elect David Thodey

From: Sydney University International House Alumni  
Association (SUIHAA)

SUIHAA represents more than 5000 alumni of the Sydney University International House from the years 1967 to 2020. The SUIHAA Leadership Committee members read with interest the recent *Australian Universities Accord Final Report*. We were especially interested to see these two recommendations:

**Recommendation 22** – A strengthened international education system, with higher quality courses that are better aligned with Australia’s skills and migration needs, more diversified international student source markets, more international students studying in regional campuses, and improved alumni engagement programs and research networks.

**Recommendation 23** – Ensure trust and integrity within the Australian student visa system is maintained and ensure providers have appropriate risk management strategies for international education including managing demand volatility and access and availability of affordable student housing.

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**IH**  
*Redevelopment*  
*update*

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The importance of providing appropriate and affordable international students housing has not only been recognized in the *Accord* report, but in many other publications (e.g. *Australian Financial Review*, 11 March 2024). It is clearly a high priority need for the University.

SUIHAA suggests this need for international student housing is a reason for the University to rethink the priority of International House redevelopment. International House is a recognised success story of the University: fifty plus years of running a harmonious, multicultural co-ed residence and international program, with highly satisfied residents and alumni who attest loyally to the value of the IH model to their lives.

We appreciate the desire to systematically consider what should happen with the area between the Wentworth Building and the Seymour Centre. At the same time, we believe that the need for international student housing, and the conditions of the International House Trust Deed that mandates an international house on the current site, should encourage the University to plan without delay for a redeveloped International House.

An International House serving 500 to 600 residents with a common dining area and appropriate program spaces, like other international houses around the world, can serve as a nexus for



building relationships between Australians and international students. In addition, if the area on the corner of City Road and Cleveland Street is thoughtfully developed, other services for the University's international students, such as counselling and English language help, can also be effectively provided, making this part of campus a hub for international students.

The alumni of International House are convinced that the redeveloped International House will be a vital addition to the University's services for international students and enhance its reputation as a top provider of university education. The alumni and are ready to assist the University in any way to hasten the re-establishment of International House on the current site.

Cc: Professor Joanne Wright (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education)

Professor Susanna Scarparo (Pro-Vice Chancellor, Student Life) -

Stephen Phillips (Vice-President, Operations)

Greg Robinson (Chief University Infrastructure Officer)

Greg Houseman (Chair, International House Council)

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***IH***  
***Redevelopment***  
***update***

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More recently, the Australian government proposed the possibility of capping the number of international students at each university, citing the lack of appropriate housing as a significant reason for this proposal – see the recent article in The Guardian at [Australia's international student cap has been called 'chaotic' and 'populist' – so how would it work? | Australia news | The Guardian](#). We followed up with USyd staff to see if this new issue will result in a quicker redevelopment of IH.

We should learn more when the University's Project Control Group (PCG) for IH meets in July where they will discuss the implication of these two reports with regards to IH redevelopment. The PCG will also get an update on the progress of the Wentworth Redevelopment as the first stage of the City Road Redevelopment Masterplan. IH Council leaders Greg Houseman and Craig Collie are on the PCG. They are both IH alumni, so the interests of IH will be represented.

We will be sure to keep you updated in future SUIHAA Newsletters with any new developments.

## Personal Perspective from IH Alumni (1971–1973) Birute Don (formerly Leveris) Regarding the Accord Report - Renovation, rehabilitation, rebuild or sale?

The Australian Universities Accord Final Report released in February 2024 has 47 recommendations for Government consideration and aims to create a long-term reform plan for the higher education sector to meet Australia’s future skills needs. Recommendation 23 clearly places responsibility on providers, like the University of Sydney, to have “*appropriate risk management strategies for international education including managing demand volatility and access and availability of affordable student housing.*”

International House at the University of Sydney closed in December 2020 and it has been vacant for over 3 years. Its future is even more uncertain given there is no approved funding or plans approved for the redevelopment of the site or buildings.

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**IH**  
**Redevelopment**  
**personal**  
**perspective**

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In March 2024, the SUIHAA Committee sent an excellent message to the University of Sydney urging it to “*hasten the re-establishment of International House on the current site.*” SUIHAA and others have offered to help the University to “*rethink the priority of International House redevelopment.*” Given the current labour shortages and higher construction costs, it would be quicker and cheaper to renovate International House rather than totally demolish it.

More recently, in May 2024, the Australian Government announced a budget focussed on the need to increase the supply of housing and related it to migration and the need to place a cap on international students. It also announced its intentions to force universities to increase their supply of student accommodation for domestic and international students.

The Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024 if passed, could place a cap on international students. This cap may be able to be exceeded if additional student accommodation is provided by a university. A draft International Education and Skills Strategic-Framework for international education shows that the government intends to allow “managed growth” of overseas student numbers when enrolment caps are applied from 2025. Since the University of Sydney has recently relied on international students for nearly 50% of its income it needs to give higher priority to re-establishing International House as soon as possible.

In April 2024, various Australian newspapers had articles on the SIRIUS building in the Rocks area of Sydney. It is a stunning building with magnificent views of Sydney harbour. The property was previously owned by the NSW Government and used for public social housing for about 50 years.

The current NSW Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson, considers “it was an outrageous transaction to sell the Sirius building but at least it was not demolished.”

To address the shortage of rental accommodation, the City of Sydney has released for comment a Local Environment Plan to encourage build-to-rent and co-living dwellings as the solution to increasing the housing supply. Council has also suggested the conversion of vacant investment properties, especially offices into residential use. It is less difficult, less complex and less risky to convert former residential buildings, like International House, into residential use.

International House is on NSW Government land since the University of Sydney is a public university. The building has the same “brutalist” or modern architecture as the Sirius building. It was also extremely well built and structurally sound since leading builders and architects built it. International House, like Sirius, was built to last. And that’s unlike the housing we’ve seen go up in the past 10 years with the serious defects making them uninhabitable or unsafe (e.g., Mascot Towers which is still vacant and various buildings with combustible cladding).

Demolition of IH would be a negation of the work that went into establishing International House mainly by the Rotarians.

International Houses around the world have been successful in fostering the ideal ‘That brotherhood and sisterhood may prevail’. Redeveloping International House on its current campus site would reduce the pressing need for student accommodation while at the same time testifying to the importance of bridging cultural and national differences. Sydney University is less complete without International House. This is especially important given the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the recent protests at universities about these inhumane wars.

Hopefully, the University of Sydney will reconsider its priorities and be able to obtain funding for the re-establishment of International House on its current site and keep the majority of the building intact. Renovation or rehabilitation is preferable to demolition and rebuild on so many factors; environmental; economic; socially among others. I

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*IH*

*Redevelopment*

*personal*

*perspective*

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am reminded of my mother's words of wisdom, which have often been quoted by others:

- *"Waste not want not"*
- *"Use it or lose it"*
- *Que sera sera (whatever will be will be)*
- *Money isn't everything*

## Photos of Merit from the 2023 Photography Competition

We announced in the last two SUIHAA Newsletters the top five winners of the 2023 Rosemary Berrick Photography Competition. As mentioned in the Newsletters, the three judges were sorry they had to choose just five from the many outstanding submissions. Thus, in the next couple Newsletters we will feature other photos that the judges thought deserved recognition. We hope you enjoy these beautiful worldwide images from your fellow IH alumni, and will consider submitting your own photos for the 2024 competition.

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*2023 Photo  
Competition:  
photos of merit*

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**Ian Raphael Gutierrez** lived at International House during 1996-97 when he studied for a Master of Economics. He currently lives in Brisbane. He moved there in 2018 after living in Sydney for almost 20 years. He now enjoys life at a slower pace pursuing many personal interests while working in a not-for-profit purpose-led organisation (after a busy 25-year career in management consulting and banking)



*Photo: Look at Me Look at You (4 January 2023 - Bohol Island, Philippines)*



Tarsiers are among the smallest animals in the world. They are nocturnal animals and are typically 10cm to 15cm long. What fascinated me about them is how scary they look but in reality they are shy and may even be scared of human beings.

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*2023 Photo  
Competition:  
photos of merit*

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**Stylianos Rafailidis** lived at International House in 1983 while studying for a master's in mechanical engineering. He now lives in Hamburg, Germany where he is Principal Engineer in the Institute for Smart Engineering and Machine Elements of Hamburg University of Technology.

**Photo: *Bridge Into Paradise* (August 2007 - along the mountain roads on the Pindus Mountains between Thessaly and Epirus, Greece)**



## Alumni Highlights

### From Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton (1974–1975)

After seeing the photographs from the February reunion at The Duck, Prabhati sent photographs from her time at IH, along with some stories to share. She and her husband, John Milton, met at IH and now live in Melbourne, so were not able to attend the February reunion.

The photos she sent are from Steve Chang's birthday celebration in 1974. She identified a number of the people, but if you know names for unidentified individuals, please send that information to [SUIHAA.exec@gmail.com](mailto:SUIHAA.exec@gmail.com).

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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Prabhati Milton*

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Front row from left to right – David Slater, Steve McGlynn, Mei Ling (Ong) McGlynn, ???

Back row from left to right – Michael Bennett, Michael Bennett's girlfriend, John Milton, Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton, ???, Steve Chang, Bosco Fung, ???



From left to right – Michael Bennett girlfriend, Michael Bennett, John Milton, ???, Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton



From left to right – John Milton, Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton, ???



From left to right – Erica Taylor, Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton, Steve Chang

Prabhati writes about the birthday celebration:

We were a very silly bunch of kids, but had great fun! We all walked back from Dixon Street after a Chinese meal to

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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Prabhati Milton*

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celebrate Steve's b'day. Steve's room was crammed totally with newspapers while he was away and he could not even open the door, amidst whoops of laughter! I think Steve Chang was thrown into a pond as well.

It was a home away from home for us.

More recently, Prabhati wrote:

She invited Jocelyn (McAllister) Atcliffe, who was in the room opposite hers on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of IH to come with her husband Phil Atcliffe to have lunch with us – after 40 years. Jocelyn and Phil also met at IH. They used to live in Melbourne, but left for London 40 years ago.

Jocelyn noticed Phil in 1976 (or so) when Geoff Burchfield smuggled a baby kangaroo into his room at IH and needed help to walk the joey in the little backyard of IH! Phil was helping to walk it up and down. Jocelyn had thought that Phil was so nice to do that!!!!(😊)

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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Prabhati Milton*

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Jocelyn (McAllister) Atcliffe, Prabhati (Abeywardena) Milton and Phil Atcliffe today

As overseas students who came here at that time feeling very nervous, we really appreciated the friendships of the local students (e.g., Erica took us home for BBQs and we cooked curries there!).

### **From Birute (Leveris) Don (1971–1973)**

I have been delighted to enjoy reunions with various Alumni friends since I moved out of International House in 1973. Although I have lived and worked in Melbourne as a Town Planner for about 50 years, I



make regular visits to my family and friends in Sydney. This has enabled me to maintain friendships with various Alumni.

In December 2023, at the University of Sydney Alumni Festival or at Women's College, I was pleased to be able to catch up with Ruth Shatford (former Director of IH and former Principal of Women's College), Rod Thyer (SUIHAA Treasurer and former IH Council member) and Roger Wescombe. (former Deputy Director IH).

In March 2024, Peter and I had a brief reunion with Pauline Lyle-Smith and her partner Richard while they were visiting Melbourne from London. Pauline, like me was a resident of International House and Women's College at the University of Sydney at different times in the early 1970s with a year overlapping when we became friends. I have benefited by living in purpose built residential colleges on campus in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.




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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Birute Don*

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Well managed residential colleges can be safe community residences for students and staff. Residential colleges with communal dining rooms and events encourage fellowship and an understanding of different cultures. It helps to have a balanced a mix of domestic and international students living together as a community.

On the way to Sydney in March 2024, my husband Peter and I visited Graeme de Graaff (Inaugural Director IH) and Lauris Elms (AM OBE) who now live in Harden about 130 kilometres north of Canberra.



In the photo, Graeme is holding a book titled “International House Melbourne 1957–2016”. I recommend purchasing this book from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria using the following link: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/product/international-house-melbourne-1957-2016-sixty-years-of-fraternitas-by-frank-larkin/>

Soon after our visit Graeme sent me the following message that reminds us to take photos to preserve our memories:

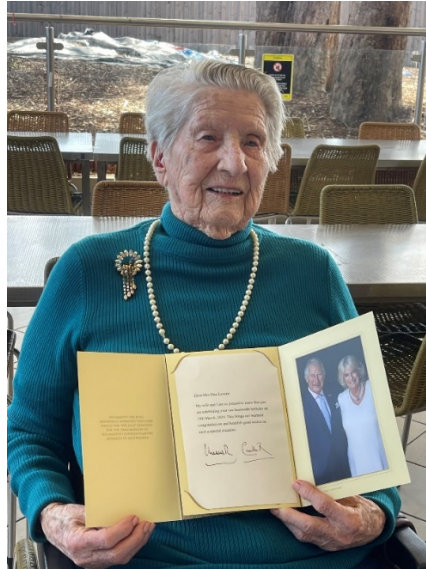
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*Alumni*  
*highlights:*  
*Birute Don*

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*I wish I had had the sense to take a photo the other day when Brian Farmer (original resident and sometime Chair of IH Council) who brought Ruth Shatford (3<sup>rd</sup> Director of IH) and Jessica Carrol (4<sup>th</sup> Director of IH) for lunch (a long trip for just one day!) A busy weekend just finished with family. I try to act my age. Odd - I have no previous experience of being 92.*

My visit to Sydney in March 2024 was particularly special as it included the celebration of my mother’s 100th birthday and reunions with family from Queensland and NSW. I have included a photo of my mother with her congratulatory card from the King and Queen. Mum also received congratulations from the Lithuanian Embassy and various politicians.



I have included a photo from 1971 since it includes my parents at the “passing of the light” candlelit ceremony at International House.




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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Birute Don*

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This ceremony was held at International House on the last Friday of the year. Unfortunately, the lights are now out since International House closed in 2020. Many Alumni still honour the pledge Harry Edmonds wrote for the first candlelight ceremony in New York which was as follows:

*We who have come from many nations to live at International House  
promise to carry the light wherever we go.*

Other opportunities to connect with IH alumni include seeing John Gascoigne and Kathy Bock



My husband, Peter, and I also enjoyed a dinner with IH alumni at the Paramatta RSL Club.



Front row (left to right): **Colin Morris, Harry Bergsteiner, Peter Don**

Back row (left to right): **Christabel & Roger Wescombe, Birute Don**

I will be returning to Sydney 15–19 June and 19–24 October this year. Please let me know if you can meet with me in June or October by email ([donbirute@gmail.com](mailto:donbirute@gmail.com)).

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*Alumni  
highlights:  
Birute Don*

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