

# SUIHAA Newsletter, October 2019



**Greetings Alumni! In our October newsletter we bring you:**

- Recent events
  - iNight - August 31st
  - Walter Westman lecture - September 11th
  - SUIHAA AGM - September 22nd
  - Music of the World concert - September 22nd
  - Candlelight Ceremony and Dinner - November 8th (See next newsletter for details)
- Coming events
  - Candlelight ceremony - November 8th
  - STUVAC Coffee Cart
  - Fellows lunch - December 1st
  - SUIHAA/IHMA Farewell event - December 3rd
- IH Future, Alumni Advocacy
- News items
- Alumni news invited

SUIHAA

Sydney University International House Alumni Association

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## Recent events

### SUIHAA Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was well attended. Reports were received from the President, Treasurer, Bo CH Convenor and the IH Director.

In my (president's) report I thanked other members of the SUIHAA Executive as well as Jessica Carroll, Bradley Kunda, the IH staff and IHMA Executive. We are very appreciative of Jessica's tireless efforts and wonderful work. Outgoing Committee members were sincerely thanked: Dominick Ng, Gwen Ng, Richard Ng, and Lyn Woodger Grant. Dom and Lyn have agreed to continue serving as 'advisers' to the Committee.

There was considerable discussion of IH's future. We reflected on the strong involvement of alumni from around the world in our advocacy efforts and in their continuing commitment to IH ideals. We hope to continue to connect strongly and more routinely with alumni around the world and, rather than simply relying on Committee members based in and around Sydney, have invited alumni from elsewhere to join the Committee (none have so far nominated). We plan to run some (or eventually, all) of our regular Committee meetings via Zoom. It is envisaged that this will work particularly well for alumni in the Asia-Pacific region.

**The committee members for 2019-20 are:** Ros Madden (President), James Kane (Secretary), Brittany Ridley (Treasurer). General members: Karam Ali, Harry Bergsteiner, Nicole Dunn, Moe Hassan, Julia Krattli, Joshua Lee, Paul Reisner, Karen Rowe-Nurse. Two other new members may join the Committee but were unable to attend the AGM. While the Secretary and President are continuing in their roles for the time being, both are likely to 'transition out' over the coming year.

iNight - August 31st



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## Music of the World concert - September 22nd

The excellent Music of The World Concert was held in the Wool Room at IH on 22 September. Highlights are too many to mention individually but the array of music and the wonderful multicultural collaborations were a joy to see and hear. Residents and alumni were among the composers and performers as well as others, including soprano Rebecca McCallion and the Sydney University Graduate Choir. The finale of the program was re-performance of **There are three things that will endure in this world**, a mixed ensemble work for soprano, piano, flute, clarinet and choir. Chris Bowen conducted this new performance of his composition, originally commissioned by SUIHAA for the 50th anniversary of International House in 2017. The concert was devised chiefly by Dr Bradley Kunda, to whom we are extremely grateful. SUIHAA funded the event, including musicians' costs and catering (an afternoon tea following the concert).

## Walter Westman lecture - September 11th

**Clare Press** - author, podcaster and VOGUE Sustainability Editor – was the speaker for this year's Walter Westman Lecture on Science, Humanity and the Environment. Her topic was '**Can science solve unsustainable fashion?**' and uncovered the \$3 trillion industry behind what we wear, an enterprise which emits more greenhouse gases than aviation and maritime combined. Clare's podcast, Wardrobe Crisis, focuses on the big issues of fashion including justice for garment workers, climate change and plastic pollution through weekly interviews with guests ranging from academics to fashion insiders.



## Workshop on life after IH

For the first time, alumni of International House gathered to provide hands-on and intimate advice to residents concerning the post-university aspects of their lives – something that is very often overlooked by both residents and University programs. It was a great session that actually went an hour over because residents were so engaged with what Brittany Ridley, Josh Lee, Moe Hassan and Ros Madden had to offer during this workshop. Due to the great response, SUIHAA hopes to continue offering such a workshop in the future.

## Coming events

Fellows lunch - 1 December – please register [online](#)

## IH Future and Alumni advocacy

**From Ros Madden:** As I reported in the last newsletter I am a member of the IH Futures Steering Group, due to make recommendations to Senate about the future of the House by the end of the year. I am encouraged by progress made during the life of the Group. The intention appears to be that there *will* be a future IH with similar idealistic purposes; it will have a program similar to the present one, a dining facility, and will be located on the present site. Plans are not complete, and ongoing care and discussion will be needed for some time into the future.

SUIHAA advocacy has continued, chiefly via the new Steering Group as well as the IH Council. Our document Alumni ideas on IH future, prepared for the Steering Group, was presented to them at their first meeting; the document had been included in my report to Council for August and in our August newsletter to Alumni (and is re-attached here). It was prepared on the basis of: SUIHAA strategic work, meetings and consultation since early 2017; correspondence with alumni; letters from alumni to the Vice Chancellor; a special meeting in June where participants focussed on three key ‘things’ they want to see in a future IH.

On the basis of this document we prepared a further document for consideration by the Steering Group at their second meeting. We expanded on the idea of an ‘International Village’ and provided a simple illustration of how the main elements could be accommodated on the current site:

- the existing Rotunda as a public building for small conferences, and performances and meetings;
- a University ‘welcome’ building including teaching, concert and meeting spaces for use by the university community;
- a plaza of cafes, restaurants and retail outlets with an international flavour;
- a new IH multi-storey residence including dining and common areas – mainly private space.

Thank you once again to all Alumni who have become involved in SUIHAA’s advocacy work!

## News items

### Alumni Wedding



**Stephanie Wong** (IH 2007–2009) and **James Kane** (IH 2007–2009) were married at Bendooley Estate near Berrima in the Southern Highlands of NSW on 18 August 2019. The day was about as perfect as they could have hoped for, and they were very happy to celebrate it with their family and friends, including a big group of IH alumni from all around the world: Josh Lee, Meenal Mahtani, Nicole Dunn, Deni Correa (MC for the reception), Andrew Hilliar, Gagandeep Kaur (bridesmaid), Sam Ferraro, Samantha Yari, Philippa Perry, Dominick Ng (groomsman), Shalini Fernando, Suranjan Perera, Sarah McLain, David Potter, Jess Edington, and Ji-hyun Kim.

SUIHAA extends sincere congratulations to the happy couple!

### Alumni news invited

If you would like to contribute to ‘people’ news in the future please write a brief note (to info@suihaa.org.au ), maybe with photos, for inclusion in this newsletter. Group and reunion news welcome!

**Best wishes to all IH Alumni**

Ros Madden, SUIHAA President; James Kane, SUIHAA Secretary; Brittany Ridley, Treasurer, and all the 2019–20 SUIHAA Committee

# **International House: Alumni ideas on priorities for the future**

## **Purpose**

This paper outlines key priorities for consideration by the IH Future Directions Steering Group, and represents the consolidated views of IH alumni. The Sydney University International House Alumni Association (SUIHAA) represents over 6,000 former residents of IH over its 50+ years, people who have been inspired by its objectives and benefited from the IH experience. IH is a success story which enhances the University's domestic and international reputation.

**Alumni ideas** on the future IH are outlined: its program and culture; the spaces necessary for the community to flourish; how to engage with the university and the wider community. Sources are: SUIHAA strategic work, meetings and consultation since early 2017; correspondence with alumni; letters from alumni to the Vice Chancellor; a special meeting in June where participants focussed on three key 'things' they want to see in a future IH.

**Alumni acknowledge** that IH's Hall of Residence should grow, perhaps to as many as 500 residents, and the IH program must be further developed to accommodate this growth, and to spread its reach and relevance to the wider university community including international students.

**Planning and timing** are vital. IH would face an uncertain future if housed for an unspecified period in the Regiment Building. The retention and stability of the IH program will be a challenge. In meetings with Deputy Vice Chancellors (2017 and 2018) SUIHAA has urged the University to commit to a certain future for IH well before the present buildings are vacated.

## **1. Program and culture**

**1.1 The core mission and values** embodied in IH's constitution should be preserved: the provision of suitable residential and associated facilities and the promotion of understanding and friendship between people of different nationalities and cultures.

**1.2 The IH Hall of Residence must remain a home** for residents, not just a dormitory. Alumni and current residents all speak with emotion about IH as their home while at the university, characterised by safety, understanding and friendship, as well as fun and extraordinary cultural stimulation. This atmosphere has been integral to IH philosophy and a hallmark of its success over the years.

**1.3 The IH program provides a rich experience** for some 200 students currently (see Dropbox papers on Residence Life Program model and evaluation, and Nous summary). Specific measures will be needed to sustain this valued experience into the future with a larger number of residents and a potentially wider membership. A wealth of ideas – introductory events in smaller groups, group activities to promote engagement of all residents and a potentially broader membership – can be developed and discussed with residents and alumni.

**1.4 Residents should continue to be a mix** of Australian and international students, from diverse cultures and countries, and of post- and under-graduate students. Further diversity could be provided with family friendly accommodation. Indigenous connections and scholarships should continue to be fostered.

**1.5 Non-resident membership** could be re-introduced, taking account of the rights and needs of both residents and non-residents. IH could offer a home-away-from-home base for students from distant places living in rental accommodation and at risk of isolation. Staff-student contact is a valued part of the current IH program. Its expansion and availability to non-resident members of IH should be considered.

**1.6 The IH program should be further developed** to ensure its attraction to a wide variety of residents, non-resident members and ‘villagers’ (see 3.1) – maintaining the present intellectual tradition and fostering of inquiry to complement the social and leisure aspects of IH and its surroundings. Visiting academic and postgraduate residents, as well as IH staff, can further enrich the program. Concerts, Roundtables, lectures and more, valued in the existing program, can be opened to a wider audience within the university and the community.

**1.7 Governance** of IH has worked well, and should continue to reflect the stakeholder composition of the existing Council as set out in the constitution, including representation of residents and alumni. SUIHAA will review its constitution in the future, for example, Committee membership of overseas-based alumni or non-resident members, and fund-raising capabilities.

## **2. Spaces that enable community: physical design, facilities, infrastructure**

**2.1 The physical and social infrastructure** of IH is key to its positive student experience and to the overall success of IH. Successful features of the residence should be built on, and potential new features researched, including those in other IH models around the world. Spaces that enable community connection must be designed into the future IH.

**2.2 Communal dining opportunities are essential.** Shared meals and the IH round tables have featured in alumni reminiscences and evaluations, as key promoters of mixing and understanding (see SUIHAA celebration document in Dropbox). Berkeley IH, with a resident population over 500, recognises the importance of ensuring there are good dining facilities for many social and cultural reasons; their dining hall has recently been redeveloped to seat 340 and offers extended dining times, serving some 1800 meals per day.

**2.3 The heritage and aesthetic value of existing buildings** designed by Walter Bunning (architect of the National Library of Australia), most notably the Rotunda, should be factored into future designs. Public spaces, as now provided by the Rotunda, should be carried over into the new IH, offering meeting and tutorial rooms and small-medium function/conference facilities. Some of these facilities could become profit-making enterprises of IH (as with other IHs).

**2.4 The IH/SUIHAA log cabin** in the Southern Highlands has the potential to be more widely used, following renovation, for specialist ‘stays’, for example, in small retreats, environmental courses and leadership programs.

**2.5 Student-centric design** is essential, to be achieved by effective consultation with current and recent residents.

**2.6 Spaces that attract the university and wider community to IH** must be designed in parallel with the redesigned and expanded program outlined above

### **3. Outreach and relevance to the university and wider community**

**3.1 An International Village** of selected cafes, retail outlets and other commercial enterprises, within the City Road precinct and adjacent to IH, would complement IH public facilities (cultural, social, meeting and seminar spaces). The Village would provide an integrated attraction for students and staff with its multinational emphasis, and would connect IH to the surrounding university community.

**3.2 The new IH should be developed on the present site.** An international village and residence is a highly appropriate gateway to the University of Sydney, sending a message to the wider public of the values the University promotes. Its proximity to Victoria Park and pool has been valued for many years by IH residents.

3.3 IH could also anchor a **Global Engagement Hub**. The hub would focus on practices that foster positive practical outcomes, including international engagement, understanding and friendship, via learning, experience and practice. Its relationship to other similar entities within the university, as well as its possible involvement in interdisciplinary research into the outcomes of the practices developed by entities of the Hub, could be further explored. Visiting academics, including residents of IH, would contribute to the intellectual life of the House and of this Hub or Centre.

Written on behalf of and in consultation with the IH alumni community and the SUIHAA Committee for 2018-19:

Ros Madden, SUIHAA President; James Kane, SUIHAA Secretary; Brittany Ridley, SUIHAA Treasurer; and other members of the 2018-19 SUIHAA Committee: Nicole Dunn, Moe Hassan, Pippa Herden, Julia Krattli, Dominick Ng, Gwen Ng, Richard Ng, Paul Reisner, Karen Rowe-Nurse, and Lyn Woodger Grant. With ex officio members: Jessica Sargent (IHMA Chair), Bradley Kunda (IH Assistant Director)

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