



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI
AWARDS
2015

FINALISTS

#vualumni

 **VICTORIA**
UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS

Vice-Minister Dulce de Jesus Soares

Master of Arts International Community Development (Asia Pacific Studies), 2007

Dulce is an East Timorese politician committed to achieving positive change for women, families and communities. For her Master's thesis she worked with a group of youth policy advocates on a project aimed at engaging young people in decision-making. Emerging from an education system which gave limited options, there was a widely shared concern young people in East Timor were poorly equipped to make decisions about their future.

When the crisis of 2006 erupted in Timor-Leste, Dulce was invited by the Australian National University to speak at a symposium in Canberra on the impact of the crisis on women.

On her return to Timor-Leste Dulce was employed by UNICEF as a National Program Officer, and was appointed Vice-Minister of Education in 2012.

Her largest contribution to the Ministry of Education has been the road mapping of a plan to ensure equal access and quality of education for all children, especially in rural areas.

Ms Halinka Panzera

Master of Business Administration, 2001

Halinka is the founder and CEO of BDC Market Intelligence, and is highly regarded for her strong grasp of the changing consumer landscape. A recognised global business innovation thought leader, she is regularly called upon by multinational companies and government bodies to share her expertise as a future global trends expert.

She is a serial entrepreneur with two start-ups to her name - both built on a social enterprise model, as she believes in business connecting with and supporting local communities. Halinka is passionate about business and understanding what consumer's want and where the market is moving, and has been instrumental in helping clients create award winning global brand strategies.

Her LinkedIn profile is in the top 1% most viewed globally, and 2012 she released her first book *What's that Super Model doing in my Workplace*. Halinka is also an active member of the community and regularly mentors emerging leaders.

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Dr John Lasich

Doctor of Philosophy, 2010

Motivated by a desire to replace fossil fuel energy with a limitless supply of clean solar energy, John combines world leadership in science with business acumen.

Inspired by the elegance and simplicity of a limitless supply of energy from the sun, John built his first prototype solar power plant as a university student, and spent the next 30 years working on ground breaking ways to harness that energy.

A highly ethical industry leader at the leading edge of next generation solar power, he is a pioneer and recognised thought leader who wields great influence.

John's innovative thinking and entrepreneurial drive has enabled him to translate widely discussed ideas into simple and easy systems. He has made an enormous social contribution educating, inspiring and raising awareness about critical energy issues, and in collaboration with the CSIRO has helped bridge the divide between academia and industry.

Associate Professor Noel Cranswick

Bachelor of Laws, 2013

Noel is the Director of Clinical Pharmacology and the Australian Paediatric Pharmacology Research Unit at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Royal Children's Hospital. He is fully trained in both paediatrics and clinical pharmacology, and works as a General Paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital. In 2013 he graduated with a Bachelor of Laws, adding another discipline to his extensive field of medical expertise. Noel combined his studies with his demanding and high pressure work commitments, and graduated with 1st and 2nd class honours across all subjects.

He is widely published in journals, peer reviewed publications and books, chapters and manuals, and has presented and lectured nationally and internationally. Noel is a lecturer at the Royal Australasian College of Physicians at Melbourne and Monash Universities, and is a supervisor of doctoral and undergraduate students.

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

YOUNG ACHIEVER ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS

Ms Bianca Crocker
Bachelor of Arts, 2002

Bianca is an enthusiastic fundraising and philanthropy advocate, passionate about creating positive change in the world and sees herself as a Community Change Architect. She has ten years' experience in professional writing and communications, in advertising and the non-profit sector.

Bianca began her business Fish Community Solutions in 2011. It is built on the principle of sharing skills and knowledge within the non-profit sector. Through advice and coaching, she teaches small and emerging charities how to become financially sustainable, and helps socially-minded businesses looking to partner with non-profit organisations.

In 2012 Bianca was awarded Young Fundraiser of the Year by the Fundraising Institute of Australia for her outstanding contribution to the profession, and was a finalist in the International Fundraising Congress' Global Fundraiser of the Year. In 2014 she participated in the Emerging Leaders Pacific Dialogue, and recently qualified as a Certified Fundraising Executive.

Mr Maxwell Gratton
Master of Business Administration, 2012
Bachelor of Arts – Sports Administration, 2004

Maxwell is a sports administrator with a wide array of business, political and community expertise. After working in a number of roles at Football Federation Victoria, he was appointed CEO of Basketball ACT in 2014.

Having worked in sports business for over eight years, he has successfully managed all aspects of sporting operations, and has experience in not-for-profit and professional sport organisations.

Throughout his career and extracurricular activities, Maxwell has developed a range of competencies and skills that prepared him for the role of CEO. He is a proven team leader with strategic vision and business acumen, and possesses flexible and decisive work-style.

Maxwell has made an exemplary contribution to Victoria University. He is an avid supporter - employing graduates, hosting interns, advocating on behalf of the University and in a previous role he was instrumental in the creation and funding of two Achievement Scholarships.

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

YOUNG ACHIEVER ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS

Emma Cullen

Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management), 2006

Emma is an energetic and self-motivated tourism professional specialising in projects and marketing in the private sector. In her current role as Projects and Marketing Manager at the Eureka Skydeck, she has driven several initiatives including the highly inventive King Kong exhibit, the integration of Chinese New Year celebrations with the Docklands precinct, as well as continuing discussions around the tourism activation of Melbourne's waterways.

In 2014 Emma was awarded the prestigious Lynette Bergin Industry Fellowship Award, and on the recommendation of the Committee for Melbourne, recently represented the Yarra River Business Association at the River Cities Conference in Vienna.

Emma has played an important role guiding VU students with personal insights and reflections on her industry experience at lectures, expos and through mentoring. She has contributed to the development of a new industry mentoring group, and been an active supporter of the Work Integrated Learning Program.

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

OUTSTANDING STUDENT ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS

Mr Adam Bromage

Doctor of Philosophy – current
Bachelor of Science (Honours) (Psychology), 2014

After a decade in hairdressing Adam realised he wanted to achieve more intellectually and professionally, and decided to pursue tertiary education.

Most universities however, did not welcome him. He was advised that he was aiming too high and if accepted would most likely struggle and fail. Victoria University encouraged Adam to sit an entry exam, and he earned a place in the Bachelor of Science (Psychology).

He initially considered dropping out, but a mentoring program helped him build confidence in his academic ability, and through hard work and dedication he won the award for Most Outstanding First Year Student. Adam completed his degree with 23 High Distinctions and First Class Honours. He received a Dean's High Achievement Scholarship, and in 2014 was awarded the College of Arts Dean's Scholar Award.

Adam is now a PhD student in Psychology holding an Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship, and teaches psychology to dental students at Charles Sturt University - a rare honour for a student at graduate level.

Ms Brigitte Ellemor

Diploma of Nursing

Brigitte has traded the fast paced world of writing and editing for a career in public health, and brings to her study a wealth of life experience, high intelligence, and an enquiring mind.

In 2014 she was selected to travel to Vietnam on the Diploma of Nursing Study Tour. Brigitte's presence, ability to motivate and encourage other students and unobtrusive assistance to accompanying staff, helped create a valuable and memorable cultural experience for all participants.

Clinical facilitators have consistently remarked on her ability to connect with patients, and excellent communication skills on clinical placements. Her reflective writing is exceptional, and displays insight and passion.

She has a strident commitment to social justice and strong desire to care for the vulnerable and needy. Outside of her studies Brigitte volunteers as a Health Program Project Officer at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, where her professionalism and energy have a positive impact on everyone she encounters.

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

OUTSTANDING STUDENT ALUMNI AWARD FINALISTS

Ms Shannon Finegan
Bachelor of Laws (Honours)

Shannon is an enthusiastic and highly focussed final year law student with a successful past nursing career, who is driven by a strong commitment to social justice and human rights.

She has been awarded the Booth Medal for Best First Year Student in the College of Law and Justice, the inaugural Dictum Society First Year Writing Challenge and has participated in the Governor-General Essay Prize Competition. Shannon is a regular contributor to the student publication *Obiter* and has played an active role in the highly competitive College mooting program.

Shannon is a lively member of the College of Law and Justice student community, sits on the executive committee of the International Commission of Jurists, Victoria and volunteers at the Mental Health Legal Centre, Footscray Community Legal Centre and is a Senior Mentor in the Court Order Helper Program.

Mr Dylan Di Martino
Certificate III in Plumbing

Dylan proved he's among the best on the planet by this year winning a bronze medal at the International WorldSkills Championships in Brazil. He was awarded the medal after challenging 27 other national champions from around the world in a gruelling three-day competition.

Dylan earned his spot to compete on the Australian team, the Skillaroos, after winning gold in the nationals in Perth last September, and silver in the Oceania titles in New Zealand in April.

The competition colloquially referred to as the Tradies' Olympics, judges young tradespeople in diverse fields. The world contest required Dylan to order supplies, then design, build, and test various plumbing and gas systems alongside other competitors in Masterchef-like work bays.

He hopes to remain connected to WorldSkills either as a judge or a trainer for other up-and-coming plumbers in future competitions.

ALUMNI AWARD 2015

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD FINALISTS

Ms Lou Xiaocui (Catherine Lou)
Doctor of Philosophy – current

Catherine is a PhD candidate at Victoria Institute of Strategic Economics Studies in the College of Business, and a committed advocate for international students. Her enthusiasm and willingness to help fellow students, and the ability to engage and lead make her an outstanding student.

As a student leader, Catherine has been vocal on many issues that affect the lives of international students, including transport concessions, student accommodation, professional development and engagement.

She has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in both her curricular and extracurricular activities. She has served as President of the International Students Association, and Postgraduate Association, a member of the Council of International Students Australia, the Council of Australia Postgraduates Associations and Victorian Association of Chinese PhD Students and Scholars. In 2013 Catherine was recognised for her contributions to academic life and community development when she was named the State International Student of the Year - Postgraduate by the Victorian Government.

Catherine has recently been appointed as a lecturer in the area of Supply Chain Logistics within the College of Business at Victoria University.

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OUTSTANDING ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD FINALISTS

Dr Anne Riggs
Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

Anne is passionate about involving people in art for the joy it brings, skills it develops, and expression it enables. Deeply interested in art for its benefits to wellbeing and education, her doctorate examined how art-making could confront the long-buried feelings of sexual abuse victims, and empower them in ways other therapies could not.

Anne continues to work closely with victims of sexual abuse and family violence. Her use of art to blend creative expression with explorations of personal trauma and healing has improved countless lives and strengthened communities locally and internationally.

Her non-profit organisation, Artists in Community International, provides art-based programs and projects for vulnerable and marginalised populations like slum dwellers, sex workers and orphans in Australia and Asia. Anne teaches them how art is a personal expression that offers solace and meaning to each participant.

She is a recognised expert in this space, and currently teaches community development at Chisholm Institute.

His Honour Judge Philip Misso
Adjunct Professor, College of Law & Justice

Judge Misso signed the Bar Roll in 1979. He practiced as a barrister for nearly 30 years before he was appointed a Judge of the County Court of Victoria in 2007, and was recently selected as Chairman of the County Court Rules Committee.

He has conducted over 200 settlement conferences since 2008, and is presently the judge largely responsible for the development of alternative dispute resolution in the County Court. He has heard trials in the civil division of the County Court across a broad range of civil disputes.

Judge Misso has consistently and generously offered exceptional service to the student community of Victoria University. He has focused his service to three areas; the County Court Internship Program, guest lectures and moot training and programs. His appointment as Adjunct Professor of the College of Law and Justice is a testament to his significant contribution to the University.

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OUTSTANDING ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD FINALISTS

Mr Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM

Master of Education, 2005
Bachelor of Social Work, 1997

Kon is the CEO and founder of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), the largest asylum seeker organisation in Australia. Proudly Greek, the struggles of his parents and his own experiences of racism growing up ignited his passion for human rights.

He has worked at the grassroots with marginalised communities as a lawyer, social worker and teacher, and in 2001 founded the ASRC.

The ASRC is an innovative, one stop shop that delivers 23 programs across the pillars of aid, justice, empowerment and community. A team of over 800 volunteers and 40 staff have assisted more than 10,000 asylum seekers and provided in excess of 2.5 million hours of free assistance – all without Federal Government funding.

Kon's work has been recognised with an Order of Australia Medal, a Churchill Fellowship, and as a finalist for the Human Rights Medal and Australian of the Year in Victoria. He was invited to participate in the 2020 Summit, was voted one of Australia's 20 Unsung Heroes and one of Melbourne's 100 Most Influential People.

Dr Kumundini Heenetigala

Doctor of Business Administration, 2011

Since her arrival in Australia in 1993, Kumi has engaged in countless activities to support Sri Lanka, assist Sri Lankans settling in Melbourne and foster relationships and cultural traditions among the the Sri Lankan community.

Kumi has raised funds for victims of the Colombo Central Bank bombing, and villagers displaced by the Boxing Day Tsunami, co-ordinated a Bone Marrow Donation Campaign and played a key role in the establishment of the the Sri Lankan Women's Group – a group created to empower Sri Lankan women.

Kumi has served in numerous leadership and honorary roles in community organisations, and was recognised for her exceptional contribution to the well being of Sri Lankan women when she was appointed patron of the Visakha College Past Pupils Association.

In Sri Lanka Kumi has made valuable contacts for the University, resulting in recruitment of excellent doctoral students, and the development of links with professional associations and government. She has published widely and been an active national and international conference presenter.

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