



Alumni Newsletter



From the President of the Burgmann College Alumni Association

Burgmann College will enter its 49th year with an outstanding reputation as a vibrant and egalitarian place to enjoy an education at one of the world's great universities. We now have close to 10,000 alumni who have been successful in many fields of life and have taken some of the Burgmann spirit with them on their journey.

I was a resident at Burgmann when the college turned 20 years old, and I have to admit, that the sands of time since then have made me a tad nostalgic. In 1991, Seinfeld and the Internet were brand new, we wrote out our essays by hand, and the Burgmann toga party was easily the best night of O-Week. Back in 1991, many unique Burgmann traditions had been established by 20 years of legendary Burgmann residents, and I'm sure over the last 30 years since then many more creative ideas have enhanced Burgmann's robust and engaging social, sporting and academic culture.

With nearly 50 years of alumni memories, the time is now right to reengage with the Burgmann diaspora to ensure they stay connected to their friends and also to current Burgmann residents. The College is developing a



▲ **1991 Commencement** - Back Left to right: Rosanna Comastri (née Rossaro), Hamish Allan, Nick Bray, Matthew Lobb. Front: Antonella McCarthy (née Amodio), Raelene Farrell, Lyndall Franks.

range of new initiatives to interact with ex-ressies and I am pleased to announce that the following Burgies were elected this year as members of the alumni committee:

- Andrew Mainsbridge**
- Zachary Mackey**
- Unity Paterson**
- Cameron Jarvis**
- Claudia Kevin**
- Will Crossing**

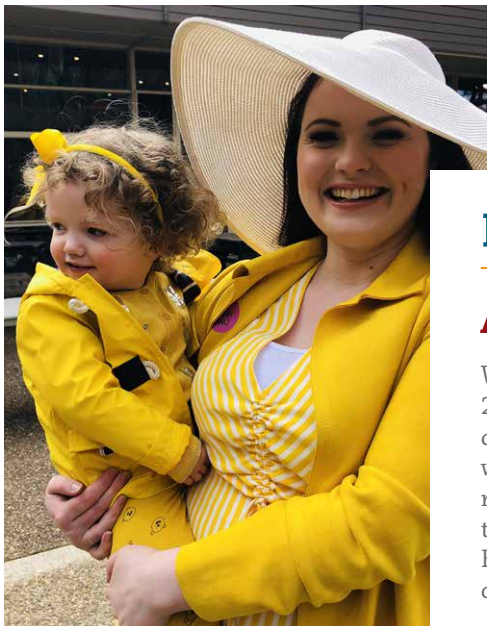
- Paul Fitzgerald**
Vice President
- Robyn Byrne OAM**
Vice President
- Ben Jefferson**
Ex-officio as BRA President

- Sally Renouf**
Ex-officio as Principal
- Greg Mills**
Ex-officio as Chair of Council

We will work to build some excitement for Burgmann's 50th Birthday celebrations in 2021. We will also look to extend Alumni social events beyond Canberra and develop better ways to stay in touch (maybe using the Internet). If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

See you soon!

Matthew Lobb



From the Principal

A Year in Review

What a full and vibrant year 2019 has been. As always, I am constantly impressed and delighted with the work our staff and residential leaders have done over the course of the year to make Burgmann the vibrant and inclusive community we all love.

Highlights this year have included welcoming Professor Asmi Wood as a Residential Fellow in our Postgraduate Village, Ms Lara Nicholls and her family as a Residential Fellow in our Undergraduate community and Paterson Boyd, as College Dean.

Professor Asmi Wood

BE LLB (Hons) PhD Law, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law, International Law, Religion

Asmi is a descendant of the Torres Strait Islands, and grew up on the mainland. Asmi is a Professor of Law, an ANU Distinguished

Educator and the Interim Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies.

Asmi's research and publications include areas such as Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous people in Australia and Indigenous Participation in Higher Education.



Lara Nicholls

MA, BA(Hons) Australian Art, Curatorship

Lara Nicholls is an Assistant Curator, Australian Paintings, Sculpture & Decorative Arts at the National Gallery of Australia and a PhD candidate

▲ *Image credit: John Gollings*

at ANU in the Research School of Humanities and Arts majoring in Art History and Visual Studies. She is a graduate of the University of Melbourne and holds a Masters of Art (Art History) awarded in 2000 for her thesis, *The Duc d'Aumale and his Orientalist Paintings*. Lara loves College life and was formally Fine Arts tutor and curator at Trinity College, University of Melbourne where she wrote the catalogue for the College's art collection.

Paterson Boyd

BA of Exercise Sports Science, Clinical Exercise Physiology (UQ) and Masters of Business and Applied Finance (QUT)

Before coming to Burgmann, Paterson was the Dean of Students at St Leo's College, University of Queensland from 2015 – 2018 and President of the National Association of Australian University Colleges (NAAUC) from Oct 2013 – Oct 2014



▲ **Paterson Boyd,**
College Dean



Further highlights have included Andrew McCormack's 35th year of service in the Maintenance Department, the **EH Burgmann Lecture delivered by Julian Burnside AO QC**, catching up with alumnus Peter Garrett at his Reconciliation Day Concert in May, celebrating our Back-to-Burg Alumni weekend, and winning the AFL men's grand final against Johns.



▲ Earlier this year at Peter Garrett's Honorary Doctorate conferral ceremony at the ANU; L-R Honorary Fellow Judy Middlebrook, Peter Garrett AM, Principal Sally Renouf and Council Secretary Robin Brown; with a gift from the Burgmann community, carrying messages from residents on the box.

In 2019 we also embarked on an ambitious but much needed building refurbishment project. A building condition report revealed that the accessibility and fire egress of our undergraduate building needed upgrading. The works have involved removing the four internal stairs from Homer and Barassi and creating three new external stair towers, installing a lift and linking Homer and Barassi wings on each floor. More information about the works can be found [here](#).

It is important to let the wider community know the lengths our residents went to in order to facilitate these works. Residents endured constant noise and disruption, not to mention a record 33 fire alarms. However it was the twelve fine souls who lived - for an entire year - in temporary accommodation on the lawn between the Common Room and

John XXIII who are the true MVPs of these works. Their commitment reminded me of the story of our first residents carrying bricks up to the builders when Homer and Barassi were first being built - everyone pitched in.

The building project we have been undertaking will allow us to better provide the unique and distinctive Burgmann residential experience that equips young people with the self-knowledge, interpersonal and intellectual skills that will best serve them to excel academically and make their most valuable contribution to the world.

In 2021, Burgmann College will celebrate half-a-century of our founders' vision: an independent, egalitarian and inclusive home for the students of the Australian National University. We look forward to celebrating this

milestone with Council, alumni, residents, families, friends and the broader community. There is much to celebrate, yet this is also an important opportunity for us to build upon the 50-year legacy of Burgmann, in order that, as the world changes around us, we too adapt the experience we offer.

I hope you will consider ways you might like to connect with Burgmann, be it through the new **alumni app**, our **Alumni Mentoring Program**, through events including next year's Back-to-Burg Alumni weekend on the weekend of 21 - 23 August 2020.

Best wishes,

Sally

Sally Renouf

PRINCIPAL



◀ *BRA President Beck Long with a copy of the original BRA constitution gifted to the College by a member of the Burgmann alumni this year.*

BRA President Update

This year has been a big one for BRA! We've had a focus on policy and governance, starting with Burgmann establishing a Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure. We had a huge amount of student input and it was really heartening to not only see meaningful student involvement in policy, but to see our community banding together over such an important issue.

We also amended the constitution this year. I received copies of our original constitution early in the year from one kind alumni and it's amazing to see how far we've come, and that the constitution is still being worked on and used today! We also updated our electoral regulations to be more inclusive and gender diverse. So overall our governance is being kept up to date and reflective of the needs and values of BRA.

Our Green Rep has also started great initiatives this year, including recycling all the cans and bottle from bar events and the bar for the 10C rebate, not only saving the environment but increasing the green budget in the process!

Our VP's also instigated some new traditions, with our inaugural Prom Night. We had a week of prom-prosals and it was hilarious to see people being proposed to in lectures, at the gym and in one memorable occasion someone riding a pool inflatable down Sullivan's creek.

In terms of our relationships with other colleges, we're currently sitting at third on the Interhall Sports and Arts shields, following our teams placing in the top three more often than not!

Our Sports Reps also coordinated the annual Burgmann v Basser rugby matches to raise money for Burgmann's Doomadgee partnership, and John's Mutitjulu Trip. It was great to begin second semester with such a meaningful and important event as the Basser Games. Over the last year the association with Basser has only grown with John's College joining in support of Mutitjulu. The success of the matches is a testament to BRA's commitment to both the event and Burgmann's relationship with Australia's First Nation Peoples.

Overall BRA is pretty proud of the work we've managed to do in support of our Burgmann community and enrich the lives of Burgmann residents.

Beck Long



▲ Residents and staff gathered on the front lawn of Burgmann College with Dr Matilda House and members of the House Family at the Smoking Ceremony in February 2019.



Reconciliation

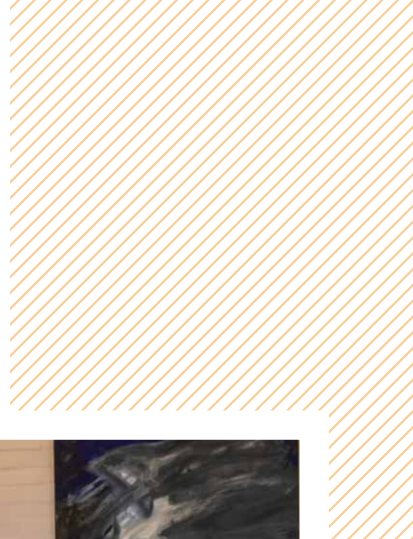
We understand the important role we have to play in reconciliation and hope to make an impactful and thoughtful contribution to reconciliation in Australia and at the ANU.



Annual Welcome to Country & Smoking Ceremony

In February 2019, our community was honoured to have Nggunawal elder Dr Matilda House perform a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony on the front lawn of Burgmann College. The first time in the College's history, we are delighted that this has become an important way to bring our whole community together before O-Week commences. Aunty Matilda and her family are a treasured part of the Burgmann community and we feel very lucky to have this connection.





Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2019, Deputy Principal Amelia Zараftis led the launch and implementation of the College's inaugural **Reconciliation Action Plan**. In March we were delighted to have Ms Nova Peris OAM OLY launch the RAP. Ms Peris delivered a public lecture on the importance of *Truth in Reconciliation*, the first lecture of an annual program of cultural and education events which acknowledge and elucidate the wrongs of Australia's past, and provide opportunities for people to share their knowledge towards the advancement of reconciliation.

In her lecture, Ms Peris, shared her personal and inspirational story, providing insight into the notion of inherited resilience. Ms Peris outlined examples of intergenerational trauma such as the trauma caused by the stolen generations, and shared her personal experiences of racism in Australia. Ms Peris explained that these stories are the truths on which her family's story now rest, and to deny or dismiss them to the past is to deny her family their story.



▲ L-R: Deputy Principal Amelia Zараftis, Residential Fellow Professor Asmi Wood, Ms Nova Peris OAM OLY and Principal Sally Renouf at the RAP Launch in March 2019. **Photo credit: Rittwick Visen**



▲ RAP Artist Mr Aidan Hartshorn. **Photo credit: Rittwick Visen**



You can download or view the Burgmann College Reconciliation Action Plan on the Reconciliation Australia website **here**.

Other work of the RAP has included hosting, 'Truth-telling in the Field and in the Museum, an 'in conversation' event with National Gallery of Australia Curator Kelli Cole'; an evening of poetry readings on the NAIDOC theme, 'Voice, Treaty, Truth' by Ali Cobby-Eckerman, Jeanine Leane and Meaghan Holt. Furthermore, the College's recently refurbished AR Maine Room housed an exhibition of works from Maruku Arts, a not-for-profit art and craft corporation located in Mutitjulu near Uluru.





Doomadgee Partnership going strong

The Doomadgee - Burgmann Community Partnership (DBCP) commenced in 2008. DBCP is an association within Burgmann College. DBCP's mission is to encourage enduring and meaningful friendships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, in particular, through Burgmann's relationship with key members

of the Doomadgee community in remote north-west Queensland. Central to the DBCP is an annual program of events, including an annual trip to the Doomadgee Community, and when possible, the hosting of members of the Doomadgee community at Burgmann College.



'New Beginnings' Bursary Fund

One of the priorities identified in the **College's Reconciliation Action Plan** this year is the establishment of an identified flexible bursary fund for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

Named 'New Beginnings' after the artwork in our RAP by Aiden Hartshorn, this flexible fund will contribute to making the College a welcome home for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

by supporting travel, transition and other costs associated with moving to Burgmann from their home city or town and living at College.

We are delighted that through the generous support of our community we have raised over \$20,000 for the fund in its first year.





Alumni Story – John CH Mitchell OAM

*Managing Director of Towong Hill Station Pty Ltd
Honorary Doctor of the University, The Australian National University, 2017
Bachelor of Arts, The Australian National University, 1982*

It is the people who make Burgmann what it is—an entire community of individuals dedicated to the development and growth of young people in a deeply supportive environment, and a family of alumni who go out into the world to make a difference. As an alumna myself, I've so enjoyed getting to know the stories of our alumni community.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to catch up with one of our alumni from the 1970s, Mr John CH Mitchell OAM. John told me about a time when College fees were \$42 dollars a week and fire alarms were nothing to be worried about given you could smoke in your room, the Dining Hall and the bar - around one third of the residents smoked.

John said when he was at Burgmann he worked for a Shire Council blowing up quarries and so had a powder makers licence. He would regularly park his old Holden ute at Burgmann with a tray full of nitropil and nitroglycerin explosives. I was reassured that he had taken the detonators and

stored them safely in his room – a safe enough distance away from his ashtray.

He told me about one time when he got a 44 gallon drum and a stick of gelignite from work and put it a 'respectable distance' from the College and lit it to see what would happen. The explosion brought Master Trevor Wigney out running, causing all kinds of havoc.

He was also part of a group of residents who regularly did sky diving. At bush week in August 1978 he and a fellow Burgie parachuted into the quad between Melville Hall and Chifley Library. They had permission from the University, it was advertised as part of the Bush Week program. He said there was no door on the plane and John looked down at Burgmann from the sky with his feet dangling out the door.

John got up to much mischief in his time at Burgmann but he says it was living at Burgmann which gave him a positive direction in life; the



support he was shown by his peers and the Master at the time came at an essential time in his life. He is now one of the most successful farmers and investors in Australia and has a passion for economics and reducing income inequality. Our community extends a hearty congratulations to John on his induction into the ANU College of Business and Economics Hall of Fame in November this year.

Stories such as these are the fabric which make up the culture of our College and are its reason for existing. If you have a story you would like to share with our community, please let me know at sally.renouf@anu.edu.au



What's all this construction about?

A Condition Report of the College's undergraduate residences was completed in 2017. The Report identified a number of issues relating to fire egress which need to be addressed as a matter of priority. There were also issues of accessibility to, and within the building, which required attention. Furthermore, before the College could turn its mind to upgrading the undergraduate resident rooms, we needed to address the issues of fire egress and accessibility.

What have the works generally involved?

To meet current fire safety requirements, our four existing fire stairs in the Homer and Barassi wings were removed. Three new fire stair towers were introduced, one at each end of the two wings and the third set in the middle of the two wings outside the Grenfell Price Room. To accommodate the third set of stairs, the two wings were joined on each level via a link and a lift is being installed. We will also have a number of accessible rooms on in the Barassi wing so all residents can enjoy being a part of our community upstairs. The scope of works included making the Barassi and main front entrance to College accessible for mobility impaired people, as well as putting a roof on the College which will greatly assist in ensuring heating and cooling regulation of the building. The works will see a small increase in the number of rooms we have available.



When will the works be finished?

The refurbishment works will be completed in February 2020. A huge thank you to all of our amazing residents for being so very patient during the construction!

2019 Back-to-Burg Alumni Weekend

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our alumni weekend in August. A video snapshot of the weekend can be seen [here](#).

We were delighted that over fifty people joined us for the trivia fundraising event on Friday night. Hosted by the hilarious Jeremy Jones and Jimmy Bernasconi (2014 alumni), together we raised over

\$7,000 for the *New Beginnings Bursary Fund* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents which helped us raise an annual amount of over \$20,000 this year.



▲ L-R Alice, Aran, Paul and Russell battle it out

Monsterbrain Round

The hugely anticipated Monsterbrain Round did not disappoint. For your enjoyment, please find the blurbs for each of our four contestants below:

1979 Champion Russell Patrick

A boy from Newcastle, a Burgmann resident in the disco years, and survived the punk explosion. He took out the 1979 Monsterbrain trophy, when Australia was ruled by the Chappell brothers and Countdown was on the telly. He was swallowed up by the legal profession where he remains still. Tonight like an old fighter who doesn't know enough's enough -- he's back -- to take on all comers !

Aran Srikantha

Arán was born on 1 September 1994. Very little is known about him. His name is a common source of confusion and ire on Burgmann dinner tables. While at Burgmann he was often spotted enjoying a triple shot black coffee with a champion ruby in the DOSA. Luckily, he has grown into a refined young man, known for enjoying an oat-milk coffee with a blueberry flavoured vape on Lonsdale Street.

Paul Fitzgerald

A coffee snob and hater of avocado and goats cheese from Melbourne, Paul moved to Canberra in 2016 and spent three years at Burgmann College. Paul spends his days trying to convince people that the lobbying

industry isn't entirely made up of crooks and that he isn't a political hack. Having never sat through a full game of trivia, but being well-versed in the fields of sport and politics, Paul will be a fighting force in tonight's Monsterbrain challenge provided his impatience doesn't get the better of him.

Alice Faulks

Alice is a Bachelor loving girl from Cootamundra. Your typical country gal, she added some geographic diversity to the College during her time despite the fact she hasn't lived on a farm since her first year. Having found herself during exchange to Prague, she has recently returned to Canberra with knowledge that will surely give her the edge.

New Alumni App - we need you!

From App Developer Chris Seidl

One of the most exciting things for me as a resident of Burgmann is being a part of the college's alumni network. In my role as Development and Technology Officer I have conducted dozens of interviews this year with members of our community. What I have learnt through this process is that we have a world class alumni network. Our community is comprised of professionals at the apex of their respective fields and is characterised by a relentless striving towards excellence. I felt this the first time I arrived at Burgmann and it was consistently identified as our defining feature in all of my interviews with alumni.

Given the immense potential within our alumni community I have worked with Sally and her team this year to design and build a custom digital platform tailored to celebrate our shared experiences and to serve as a living record of everything we as a community

have achieved. Most other institutions would use a general-purpose solution like setting up a Facebook group for alumni but we wanted to build something entirely new from the ground up to reflect the uniqueness of our community and play perfectly into our communities existing strengths and weaknesses. Our community is worthy of a tailor made social networking platform which was why we took the time over the past year to understand the dynamics of our community and design the perfect digital platform to accompany it.

We wanted to capture our shared spirit of excellence and encapsulate it within a smartphone app which you can carry around in your pocket everywhere you go.

The platform we have built works as an iPhone app and a website. At the moment the website is still under development but we are beta testing the iPhone app to help refine and perfect the concept behind the Burgmann Alumni App before the official launch. We are also looking to collect short stories of about 500 words from Alumni to feature on the app about your time at Burgmann and anything interesting you have done since.

If you are interested in being involved in testing the app please send an email to **BurgmannAlumniApp@gmail.com** with your full name and the

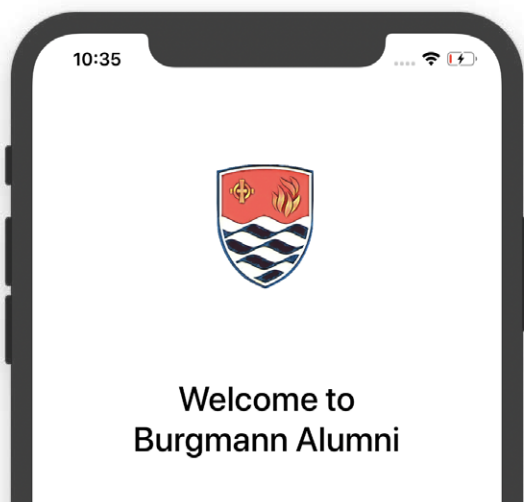


years you spent at Burgmann College and we will send you the details for how to set up your account.

Additionally if you are interested in submitting a short article for the platform which will only be visible to the alumni community please send an email to **BurgmannAlumniApp@gmail.com**.

Some potential topics for your articles could be:

- What was your most memorable experience at Burgmann?
- What was the most important thing you learnt at Burgmann?
- What is the most interesting place you've ever travelled to?
- What has been the highlight of your career?
- What is your profession and what would you recommend to current residents at Burgmann who are interested in entering your field?
- Why did you decide to come to Burgmann?
- If you could go back in time to relive your time at Burgmann what would you do differently?



Stay in Touch or Become a Mentor

Over 100 of our alumni generously share their expertise and life experience with current Burggies each year. For details on how to become a mentor, please see [here](#), or email Deputy Principal Amelia Zraftis at amelia.zraftis@anu.edu.au. We are delighted to have mentors all around the world!

Don't forget you can keep up to date with what is happening at the College and update your details via our [website](#) and [alumni Facebook page](#).

Save the Date

2020 Back-to-Burg- Alumni Weekend is from 21 – 23 August 2020

2021 Back-to-Burg- Alumni 50th Celebration Weekend is likely to be one of the weekends in late August 2021, timing to be confirmed.

