



Burgmann College

Affiliated with The Australian National University

SPRING 2025

Alumni & Friends

Newsletter

Celebrating our 2025 Alumni Award recipients

We were honoured to announce our 2025 Alumni Award recipients at a special awards dinner during Back-to-Burg Weekend in September.

This year, our recipients' accomplishments encompassed achievements in biophysics, advocacy, academic enrichment, and more than two decades of dedicated service to Burgmann College.

Our Alumni Awards recognise, encourage and celebrate alumni, volunteer, and staff excellence across a broad range of criteria, for endeavours both inside and outside the College community, and at different levels of accomplishment and life stages.

Congratulations to our 2025 recipients!

[Read more about our 2025 Alumni Award recipients >](#)



▲ **2025 Burgmann College Distinguished Alumni Award**
Prof Graham Farquhar AO, FAA, FRS, NAS (1971)



▲ **2025 Burgmann College Outstanding Alumni Award**
Ms Sarah Rosenberg (2015–2016)
Laura Rowe, attorney and advocate for sexual abuse victims, received the award on behalf of Sarah Rosenberg.



▲ **2025 Burgmann College Volunteer Award**
Dr Brett Davies, Visiting Fellow (2024–2025), LL.M, MBA, SJD
Angus Arbuthnott, Editor of the Burgmann Journal, received the award on behalf of Dr Brett Davies.



▲ **2025 Burgmann College Staff Recognition Award**
Mr Steve Mundy, Burgmann College Housekeeping Manager (2001–2024)

[Click the recipients' images to watch their video interviews](#)



Acknowledgement of Country

Burgmann College acknowledges the Ngambri and Ngunnawal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which the College is situated. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

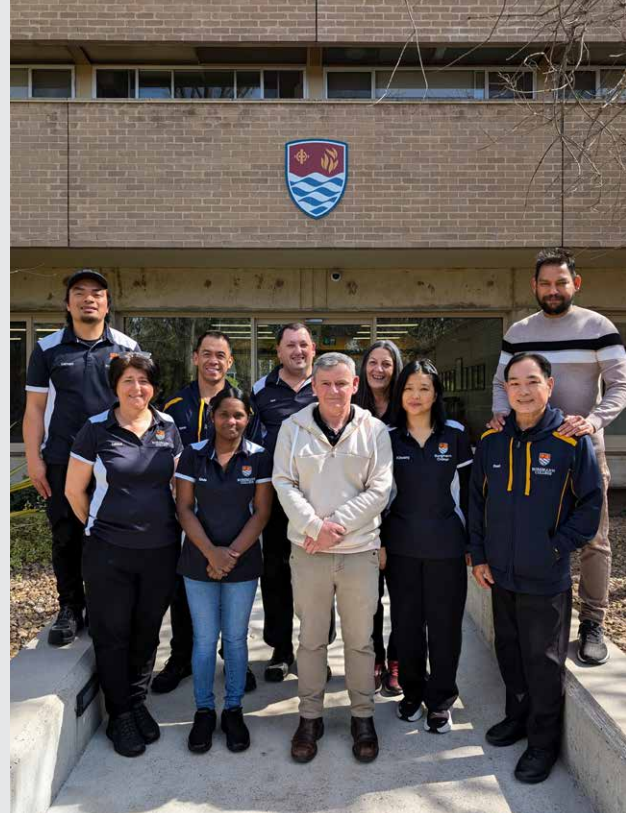


Key Updates



▲ Top: (L–R) Ralph Nixon (Volunteer for the College and parent), Eloise Rudge, Tess McClintock, Kalará Pringgoharjono, Fiona Nixon (Advancement Volunteer, BCAA Committee Member, and parent), Milly Dynan, Broderick Morgan (Friend of the College), Leo Burgess, and Gabriella Imperial (2014–2016).

Bottom: Russell Schneider (1983–1985) greets Melinda Twyford (Friend of the College) and Athol Opas (1993–1996) at Back-to-Burg 2025.



▲ Steve Mundy (centre) with members of our cherished Housekeeping team.

Beloved Housekeeping Manager Steve Mundy retires after 24 years

After 24 years of dedicated service, Housekeeping Manager Steve Mundy has retired from his position at Burgmann College.

Steve started at Burgmann in a casual role, and was made permanent within months, and Housekeeping Manager within five years. His diligent, compassionate approach informed his leadership of the Housekeeping team and his support and care for residents, and he also presided as our fearless Quiz Master for our daily Staff Morning Tea. He will be greatly missed!

2025 Back-to-Burg Weekend

Our 2025 Alumni & Friends Weekend brought our community together in a spirit of joy, reflection and recognition. The highlight of the weekend was the Alumni Awards Dinner, honouring the outstanding achievements of Burgmann alumni, friends, and staff.

[Read the full recap and view photos from the event on our website >](#)



You're invited: Special Melbourne dinner event in 2026

We are looking forward to welcoming together Burgmann alumni and friends from across the decades for a night of celebration in Naarm Melbourne in 2026. We invite you to register early for a special reunion dinner event at the Lyceum Club from 6.00pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026.

This dinner is an opportunity for Melbourne-based alumni and friends to meet Principal Dr Brenda Holt and hear from guest speaker Kate Roffey AM (1986–1988), CEO of State Sport Centres and Deputy Chancellor of Victoria University and former President of the Melbourne Football Club.

[We would appreciate your early registration here >](#)

◀ Alum Kate Roffey AM carrying the Melbourne Football Club's 2021 premierships trophy in 2022 with AFL legend Ron Barassi.



▲ Resident Kalara Pringgoharjono delivers a moving speech during Back-to-Burg 2025.

Resident Kalara Pringgoharjono's reflections on finding a home at Burgmann

We were honoured to feature Burgmann resident Kalara Pringgoharjono as a guest speaker during our Alumni Awards Dinner at Back-to-Burg 2025. Kalara has graciously allowed us to share her beautiful speech with our wider Burgmann community.

I'm a second-year student studying International Relations and Commerce. I feel very privileged and excited to be here right now to speak about my time at Burgmann so far.

To tell you a little bit about myself, Australia is actually the fifth country I've lived in, and Burgmann is the seventh place I've called home. Every three years of my life, I have moved in some way. By the time I got here, change was nothing new.

So, when I came to Burg, I thought I had it figured out. I was a bit dismissive and even a bit arrogant, thinking I knew exactly who I was and what I was here to do. I thought that this was just another place to adapt and assimilate into (something I had previously felt obligated to do?). Pretty much somewhere to sleep while I studied. I had learned how to adapt everywhere else, and I assumed that was enough. It has become very clear to me that I had confused adaptation with belonging.

“Burgmann is a place where opportunity and support are built into the very environment.”

[Read Kalara's full speech >](#)



▲ (L-R) Residents Max Dewhurst, Tess McClintock, Matilda Moorman, and Chris Lovell.

Residents attend National Leadership Forum at Parliament House

Four Burgmann residents attended the 2025 National Leadership Forum in late August at the Australian Parliament House.

Hosted by Federal Parliamentarians and dedicated to developing future leaders, the forum draws promising young attendees from across Australia and the greater Pacific region.

Burgmann residents Christopher Lovell, Max Dewhurst, Tess McClintock, and Matilda Moorman attended the forum, and Christopher Lovell said of the experience:

‘Attending the National Leadership Forum was an extraordinary experience and one I will treasure for years to come.

‘A highlight was hearing from Audette Exel, Director of Adara Group. I was challenged and inspired by her enterprising perspective on utilising established systems to transform lives for the better across the globe.

‘I look forward to sharing this experience with others at College so they may also benefit from this marvellous opportunity.’

Register early for our 2026 reunion in Sydney

Our Alumni & Friends Get-Together in Sydney is back in 2026! Join us at The Library Bar on Saturday 21 March, starting from 4.00pm. Hosted by Principal Dr Brenda Holt, BCAA President Matthew Lobb, and Director of Advancement Amelia Zeraftis, this event offers a wonderful opportunity to meet our new Principal and hear updates on recent BCAA activities and College news.

[Register here >](#)

(L-R) Barry Jenkins (1981–1985, 1989–1991), Linda Martin (1986–1990), Rosanna Comastri (1988–1990), The Hon Dr Peter Garrett AM (1971–1973), Rachel Evans (1988–1990) and Acting Principal Taryn Stasakova at the 2025 Sydney Alumni & Friends Get-Together.



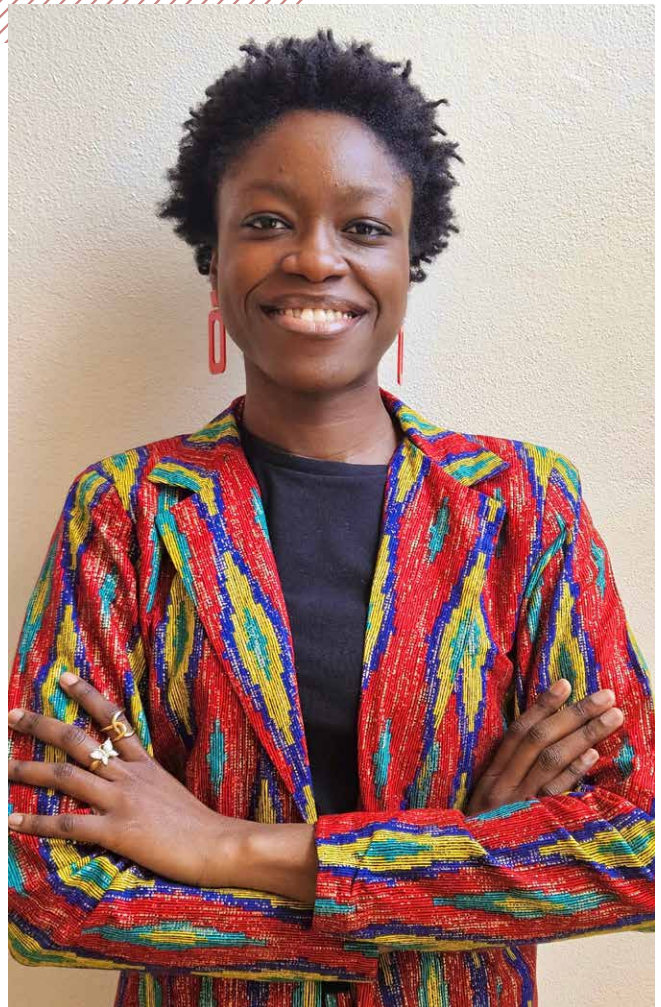
Alumni Profile

Rita Agha champions awareness and policy changes around menstrual health in Nigeria

I was born and raised in Osun State, Nigeria, and over the years, I have held roles including Media Correspondent, Researcher, and Assistant Lecturer in media and academia before starting my PhD at the ANU. At first glance, these may seem like separate roles, but they reflect how my curiosity has grown around women's health and representation in Nigerian society, especially in advocacy and research on 'menstruation' as a holistic issue. Growing up, I personally experienced and witnessed others who struggled with menstrual health problems, often worsened by systemic bias and a lack of research-backed solutions.

What started as a desire to raise awareness about the importance of evidence-based solutions to menstrual health issues, such as dysmenorrhea and period poverty, soon became a drive to challenge how menstruation is portrayed in the media, which influenced my master's degree research. The research findings also revealed a gap in evidence-based approaches to policy, practice, and sustainable interventions. This journey has influenced my work across both media and academia, particularly in my PhD research in Science Communication at the Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science at ANU, where I am researching contextually sustainable approaches to menstrual care.

Read Rita's full Alumni Profile on our website >



▲ Alum Rita Agha (2023–2024).

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Alumni & Friends in the News

Burgmann alum co-authors new bestselling book on innovative thinking

Congratulations to Burgmann alum and cognitive scientist Tessa Forshaw (2008–2010) on the publication of her book, *Innovation-ish: How Anyone Can Create Breakthrough Solutions to Real Problems in the Real World*.

Co-authored with Harvard and Stanford colleague Rich Braden, *Innovation-ish* pairs an Australian 'get "stuff" done' approach with rigorous, cognitive-science-backed tools teams can use on a Monday morning. *Innovation-ish* is for anyone interested in learning flexible and actionable strategies for bringing innovative thinking to any real-world problem.

Find out more on their website >

Professor Graham Farquhar AO, FAA, FRS, NAS jointly awarded the Royal Medal in Biological Sciences by the Royal Society of London

Professor Graham Douglas Farquhar AO, FAA, FRS, NAS (1971), recipient of Burgmann's 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award, has been honoured with a Royal Medal in Biological Sciences by the Royal Society, awarded jointly with Professor Susanne von Caemmerer FAA, FRS. Together, they were recognised for their complementary and transformative research into

photosynthesis, spanning from the biophysics of leaves to global carbon and water cycles. Their work has reshaped our understanding of crop productivity and climate change.

We are immensely proud to celebrate Professor Farquhar's extraordinary achievement.

[View video interview with Prof Farquhar and Prof von Caemmerer >](#)



▲ Prof Graham Farquhar AO, FAA, FRS, NAS. (Photo by Stuart Hay, ANU)



▲ Mr Zhi Soon, Member for Banks.

Alum Zhi Soon elected Member for Banks

Congratulations to Burgmann alum Zhi Soon (2006–2009) on his recent election to the House of Representatives as Member for Banks (Labor). In 2005, Zhi was appointed to the NSW Board of Studies, the youngest member ever appointed, and was awarded the Young Australian of the Year (ACT) in 2008.

Sarah Rosenberg awarded a Churchill Fellowship

Congratulations to our 2025 Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Sarah Rosenberg (2015–2016) who has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship.

'It's no surprise that I'll be continuing my research into independent legal representation for victims of sexual violence', said Sarah in [her announcement on LinkedIn](#). 'What began as my own fight to survive the criminal justice system has evolved into a commitment to systemic change for victims across Australia.'

'Excited to follow in the footsteps of fellows before me—many of whom are my friends—and contribute to a changing Australia. Thank you Winston Churchill Trust (Australia).'

[Read about Sarah's plans for her fellowship on the Winston Churchill Trust website >](#)



▲ Alum and Churchill Fellow Sarah Rosenberg.

Waratah Super Battery launched with Burgmann alum at the helm

Burgmann alum Paul Curnow (1991–1993) is the Managing Director and Chief Commercial Officer at Akaysha Energy, 'a leading Australian company that develops, owns, and operates utility-scale battery energy storage projects globally.'

Akaysha Energy recently debuted the Waratah Super Battery in NSW, a large-scale super battery (850 MW/1680 MWh) offering more low-cost clean energy to Australian consumers.

[Read more >](#)



▲ The Waratah Super Battery.

Campus News

Burg Ball 2025

By Charlotte Taylor, 2025 O-Week Chair

On 21 August, Burgmann College came together for one of the most anticipated events of the year. Residents, ex-residents, and their plus ones gathered for a night of music, dancing and celebration. Burgmann Ball was held at the stunning Gold Creek Station, a rustic and welcoming venue that has become a favourite for the Burgmann community.

The theme for 2025 was 'A Night in the Secret Garden'. Guests were greeted with fairy lights, candles, and a flower arch that created an enchanting atmosphere.

Read the full write-up and see photos from the 2025 Burg Ball on our website >

▼ **Attendees of Burg Ball 2025 having fun and capturing memories in the photo booth.**



Elliot Wilson crowned 2025 Dawborn Champion

By William Darlow, 2025 Dawborn Chair

For many, the highlight of the calendar year, Dawborn, returned in Semester 2, 2025, for another year of the highly-anticipated competition. The Common Room saw bleachers brought in to create an arena-style spectator zone, as Burgies dressed up to the theme 'Business Up Top, Party Down Below'.

Expectation was high as the prior rounds of games saw a high level of talent go head to head. Hearts were broken and dreams crushed but ultimately our grand finalists appeared.

Read the full recap and see more photos from Dawborn 2025 >

▼ **Elliott Wilson eyes a billiard ball during Dawborn 2025.**



▲ (L-R) Residents Alexa Moss, Scarlett Zerbe, Nikki Ballinger, Oliver Payne, Evie Tilley, and Anita Lockwood.

Civic2Surf 2025

With enormous gratitude to dedicated Burgmann residents, the Nixon family, and supporters from the ANU and batyr, Civic2Surf returned in 2025, reviving the fundraising relay from Canberra to Bowral.

Led by Burgmann alum Nikki Ballinger (2022–2024), the team raised over \$2,200 to support **batyr**, a mental health organisation dedicated to smashing stigma around mental health issues.

Congratulations to these incredible residents and their stellar efforts to support mental health awareness and understanding, and thank you to all who supported their fundraising efforts!

Read more about the event and see additional photos on our website >



▲ **Julian Twigg, College Reception Summer 2025, watercolour on paper.**

Between Bush and Building: Julian Twigg on Canberra

Thank you to alum Poppy Thomson (2020–2022) for her insightful essay on artist Julian Twigg's exhibition at Burgmann College. We're honoured to share her words here.

It is perhaps no coincidence that a residency undertaken in two stages has led Julian Twigg to unearth two essential truths about Canberra. First is that, although Canberra is a capital city, you are never far from the bush. The second is that its architecture holds a strange paradox: the eclectic façades appear frozen in time yet quietly signal its passage. Both Twigg's two-week stays at Burgmann College fell during the student break, lending the campus a stillness. Out of this emerged a series of paintings whose joy is evident, as the artist has observed Canberra with a subtle but canny insight.

Read Poppy's full essay on Julian Twigg's exhibition >

Spotted on Campus: Alum Jeremy Kirkwood

We were delighted to welcome Jeremy Kirkwood (1981–1983) back to Burgmann for a campus tour and a visit to Julian Twigg's exhibition *Back-to-Burgmann Artist Residency 2025*. Both Jeremy and Julian were residents in the 1980s, during which time Jeremy served as BRA President, Vice President, and Captain of the Burgmann rugby team.



▲ **Alum Jeremy Kirkwood.**

Returning to College after 40 years, Jeremy explored many of the changes to the campus, including the Postgraduate Village, the Chapel, and The Link. He also enjoyed revisiting Burgmann's history through the collection of framed play posters, including several from his own time at College like *Perfidy in the Parish of Port Picton* and *Boy's Own McBeth*.

Memories of Burgmann

Burgmann College vs Bruce Hall 1988



During his time at Burgmann, alum J. Dieter Klamann (1988–1989) was the photographer for many Burgmann sports events, and recently shared these amazing photos from the 1988 Burgmann vs Bruce Women's and Men's footy games. J. Dieter also attended this year's Brisbane Alumni & Friends Get-Together wearing his original '80s-era Burgmann jersey!

Do you recognise yourself or someone else in these photos? See these images in a larger, clearer format on our [website](#) and [email us](#) if you can help identify the Burgies in these photos!

▲ Alum J. Dieter Klamann at the 2025 Brisbane Alumni Get-Together, wearing his original '80s-era Burgmann jersey.



▲ The 1988 Burgmann Men's football team.



▲ The 1988 Burgmann Women's football team.



▲ Alum Dr Elif Su Yilmaz.

In memory of Dr Elif Su Yilmaz

We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Burgmann alum Dr Elif Su Yilmaz (2016–2017). She was pursuing a Doctorate in the History of Art, Design, and Visual Culture at the University of Alberta at the time of her passing.

During her time at the ANU, she was a resident at Burgmann College while pursuing her Advanced Master's in Curatorship and Art History. She was a remarkable woman who drew from her lived experience and passion for social justice as inspiration and motivation for her academic research and personal life.

She will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by our Burgmann community.

To learn more about Elif's life and work, please visit drelifsuylmaz.com >

Gifts can be made in her honour via the University of Alberta's Dr. Elif Su Memorial Fund in Art and Design >

Giving to Burgmann

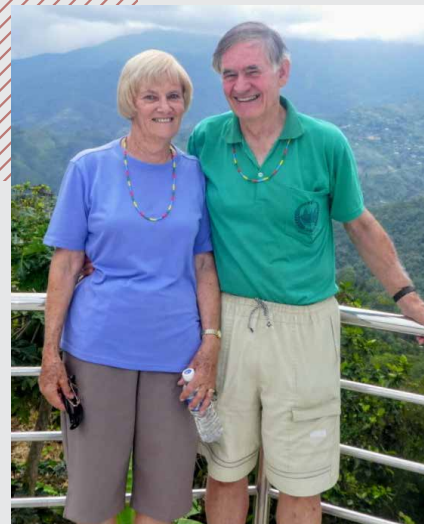
Enduring love and a lifelong commitment to giving back Honouring Gwenyth and Kevin Bray

Gwenyth and Kevin Bray's connection with Burgmann College began in the late 1960s when the College was still only a concept. Decades later, Gwenyth volunteered as a member of Burgmann College Council and served on the Bursary Committee. During our 50th anniversary celebrations in 2022, Gwenyth and Kevin reconnected with the College and soon after began to support our Bursaries and Scholarships Program.

The College is honoured to share this story of Gwenyth and Kevin's loving partnership, and their inspirational lives of generosity and selfless service.

“ So many people have the ability to excel, but don't have the opportunity. It's a crucial thing, I think, to provide money for the people who need it. And [it needs] to start at an early age. ”

[Read their story >](#)



▲ Gwenyth and Kevin on a holiday trip to the Malaysian State of Sabah in 2019.

Your Door, Shared History Make your indelible mark within Burgmann's walls

We were excited to launch the new Name My Door project at our 2025 Back-to-Burg Weekend.

For every room at Burgmann, there is an intergenerational line of residents whose experience and memories are forever linked by a shared room number.

We invite you to make that shared history visible by putting your name on your door—and making a gift ensuring

many more generations of students can unlock the same doorway to possibility and transformation.

For a gift of \$585, your name and years of residency will be engraved on a brass plaque and join the names of fellow residents.

Your gift to the Principal's Priorities Fund will support resident programs, pastoral care, and improve communal spaces.



Adding your name will help create a story through the decades, inspiring a sense of belonging and community for each new resident who opens your door to embark on their own journey.

[Find out more >](#)

Staff Bake Sale for the Harriet Nixon Scholarship

Burgmann College is proud of the strong community that underpins everything we do, and our recent Staff Bake Sale was a perfect example of our community spirit in action.

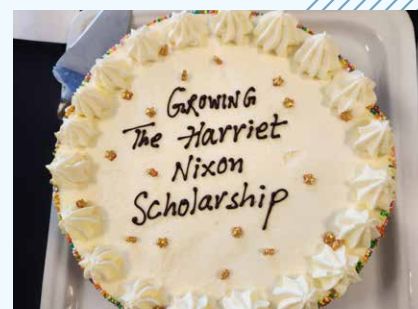
What began as a thoughtful idea from Housekeeping Staff member Lence Razmoska became a meaningful event to support the Harriet Nixon Scholarship, which provides financial assistance to Burgmann residents from rural Australia.

With gratitude for the contributions of baked goods from dedicated staff across the College, including Lence herself, and the generosity and goodwill of our resses who

supported us by both purchasing delicious homemade treats and offering additional donations, the Staff Bake Sale raised \$551.50 for this heartwarming cause.

We're grateful to all who supported the initiative, whether by baking or buying. This is just one of the many ways the Burgmann family is uniting to grow the Harriet Nixon Scholarship.

[Support Growing the Harriet Nixon Scholarship >](#)





My friend Harriet Nixon had an energy and warmth that would light up a room. She was smart, interesting, kind and caring. And she had a passion for regional Australia, its people and communities, that was just infectious. There was no doubt she had a very bright future ahead. This scholarship is such a fitting way to honour her memory through two of her passions: opportunities for regional students and Burgmann College at ANU. What a wonderful way to continue her legacy and empower a regional student to pursue their dreams.



GROWING THE
Harriet Nixon
SCHOLARSHIP

– Dom Hopkinson

Former Chairman | NSW Young Nationals



Get Involved

BCAA Committee 2025 meeting dates

Burgmann College Alumni Association meets regularly throughout the year. Please email alumni@burgmann.anu.edu.au if you would like to join our final 6:30pm meeting for 2025: **5 November (Zoom)**

Have you checked the Lost List for your cohort on our website?

Your help reviewing the Lost Lists and identifying our missing Burgies keeps us in contact with our alumni, and maintain accurate records of their time at Burgmann College.

Thank you for your help reviewing the Lost Lists and putting us in touch with alumni you know.

[Review the Lost Lists here >](#)

Class Notes

News from alumni around the world

Kelvyn Dunn (1983–1985)

Kelvyn Dunn began his career as a secondary school teacher of mathematics and biology in Queensland and Victoria. He later worked as curator of the herbarium and arthropod collections for the former Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Burnley and Knoxfield campuses) in Victoria, contributing to the organisation and preservation of important and historical scientific specimens. Over the years, he undertook contract roles with Deakin University, Melbourne, Harvard University, Cambridge (MASS) and the BBC in London, providing field, diagnostic and scientific advice in entomology. He also worked as a

research assistant at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Griffith University (Nathan Campus) in Queensland.

Kelvyn has written several books, booklets, book chapters, and technical papers, mainly focusing on Australian butterflies and the parasitic wasps associated with citrus scale insects and mealybugs. His work reflects a long-standing interest in natural history and a commitment to sharing knowledge in the field.

He has since dedicated over 20 years of service as a Psychiatric Nurse with Monash Health in Melbourne.

[Read more Class Notes on our website >](#)



▲ **Kelvyn Dunn.**

These 'Class Notes' are shared for publication through the **Update Your Details** form. Share your own update for the next issue of this newsletter!