Michael McDaniel
Laying the foundations for a new Australia
Page 18

Issue 1
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Contents

Your words
2 Two perspectives on pill testing
6 Living in hope
9 Q&A: The new poster girls in STEM
12 Bonjour!
15 All gender bathrooms
18 Laying the foundations for a new Australia

Features
22 B&B highway
26 What comes after technology?
30 Breathe
33 From the Tower to Tinseltown

Encore
36 Ozzie dream
40 The short story of you and I
Welcome to the new U magazine

We’ve spent the past few months re-designing the magazine, giving it a new look and feel, and hunting down inspiring stories about our community and the work we do.

We’ve also decided to focus our efforts on three editions this year, so that we give you more in each one.

In this edition, you’ll see many more stories and a collection of new voices from our community of staff, students and alumni.

We’ll still be bringing you great content focused on the business of being a staff member (like ‘Ask the exec’) online via StaffConnect News and Announcements - staff.uts.edu.au

We’re also always telling the stories of our community at:

- newsroom.uts.edu.au
- facebook.com/UTSEngage
- instagram.com/utsengage
- au.linkedin.com/school/university-of-technology-sydney

Acknowledgement of Country

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation and the Boorooberongal People of the Dharug Nation upon whose ancestral lands our campuses stand. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these Lands.
Does pill testing work or will it do more harm than good? We ask both forensic science and public health experts to give us their take on the debate. Their opinions may surprise.
Perspective 1

The public health expert
Daniel Demant

In the first week of 2019, 115 people were hospitalised as a result of ecstasy use. Most of these were young people, and as a result, many public health experts, including myself, have called for the introduction of pill testing to reduce harm, mortality, morbidity and to educate the public.

Pill testing is not a new concept. It was first introduced in the Netherlands in the early 1990s. Many other countries have followed suit, either introducing it as part of their national drug policies or by allowing not-for-profit organisations, such as The Loop which is based in the UK, to offer such services in controlled environments.

In NSW, Premier Gladys Berejiklian and her government went full Helen Lovejoy in the debate, seemingly unable to resist The Simpsons’ character’s good old pity plea: “Won’t somebody please think of the children”. But such remarks serve only to divert the conversation about pill testing away from the evidence and push it into the realms of morality.

Among politicians, particularly conservative ones, other common arguments are that pill testing provides a false sense of security and promotes drug use, leading to a higher prevalence of illegal drug use. Combining these claims could lead one to think pill testing will create a generation of drug-infested zombie-like-children.

These arguments are not new and were presented in every debate on drug use and harm minimisation over the past 30 years. If we look at needle exchange programs, for example, these were originally perceived as dangerous and promoting injecting drug use. Today they’re well-established and heroin use has declined dramatically in most western countries, while the percentage of those engaging in safer forms of injecting drug use has increased. A similar story can be told about injecting drug rooms.

When it comes to the pill-testing debate, it should be noted that almost all illicit drug users who died or were admitted to hospitals in the first week of 2019 were adults, not children as some might suggest. When I think about pill testing, I think about 20-something-year-olds at music festivals making sure their pills are safe and getting educated about drug use. I don’t think about pill testing in Sydney primary schools.

Furthermore, the evidence from countries with established pill-testing programs such as the Netherlands, France and Germany is clear – it works. Testing helps ensure that pills with dangerous fillers are identified, and young people have increased knowledge of safer drug use and the consequences of drug use. In addition, the quality of drugs has improved with the introduction of testing. This is because the pressure on the black market has made drugs safer, even for those who didn’t use pill testing. There’s also no evidence to suggest that pill testing leads to a higher prevalence of drug use. The opposite is actually true – educating young people about the potential dangers of certain drugs makes them less inclined to take them.

Pill testing will not solve all our problems and will definitely not prevent people from taking drugs. But it does offer a new harm minimisation tool. In the end, we have to remember that public health authorities don’t have the right to tell people what to do. Our mission is to promote evidence-based harm minimisation strategies and provide information that enables people to make informed decisions about their own health behaviours. Pill testing is one way to do this.
Substance misuse is a significant health problem in Australia and the world. The widespread use of drugs in our society is, at its heart, a public health issue that has led to drug use disorders, incidents of HIV and overdose deaths. Both Australia and our global neighbours now face an additional wave of dangerous synthetic drugs – new psychoactive substances (NPS), 800 of which have emerged in the illicit drug market in the past decade. More worryingly, the toxicological effects of these drugs are not widely known, making them especially dangerous.

This is why the spate of recent deaths and hospitalisations of young people from illicit drug use at festivals in Australia has prompted debate around the introduction of pill testing.

Pill testing, both on-site and off-site, has been conducted in several European countries for a number of years and, on the whole, it’s resulted in better-informed users. While Australia is recognised for its harm minimisation approach to illicit drug use, it has failed to introduce pill testing.

Opponents to pill testing argue that it doesn’t guarantee the safety of the product or protect a person from potential harm and, as a result, consumers may feel a false sense of security. Critics also identify the technical limitations of testing, such as the lack of sensitivity of field-deployable instruments or the concern that not all minor pill ingredients can be detected.
In general, on-site testing is less sensitive than lab testing. However, in recent years, available on-site testing technologies have advanced significantly. There are now a number of portable techniques that can identify the composition and dose of the pill and warn if unexpected compounds are present. These technologies have been successfully used in pill testing in many European countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain.

Scientists at our Centre for Forensic Science have developed a number of sensitive and specific colour tests for rapid and accurate detection of novel synthetic drugs such as cathinones (sometimes marketed as ‘bath salts’) which have strong central nervous system stimulant effects, and NBOMe substances, a class of potent hallucinogens.

These tests have the potential to detect drug classes even if the exact chemical entities or structures of the drug are unknown; this is particularly advantageous as different novel synthetic drugs are constantly emerging and are difficult to detect even by laboratory-based methods.

Resources permitting, some sensitive and sophisticated testing techniques such as chromatography coupled with mass-spectrometry can also be set up on a mobile platform and used for pill testing.

While testing does not make recreational drugs safer, it certainly helps mitigate some of the risks associated with it. We believe the benefits of pill testing outweigh the disadvantages. In our opinion, the main value of pill testing is to not only inform users about the substance’s content but to also obtain a strategic overview of the substances that are being consumed at festivals. This then helps guide the preventive messages authorities broadcast at that event or at future festivals.

For instance, if many pills are found to contain high doses of MDMA or an unexpected toxic substance, it could be brought to the attention of users by sharing information through social media. This would provide users with immediate knowledge of the issue.

The bottom line is that pill testing is consistent with the Australian harm minimisation policy, which recognises the risks of consumption and the need for users to be better informed. So why not go one step further and introduce testing to reduce the incidence of drug-related harm and ensure both users and our community are better protected.

The evidence from countries with established pill-testing programs such as the Netherlands, France and Germany is clear – it works.

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Shanlin Fu is Professor of Forensic Toxicology at the UTS Centre for Forensic Science.

Marie Morelato is a Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research Fellow at UTS’s Centre for Forensic Science.
Living in hope

‘Dangerous’ is the term often used to describe detention centres in Australia. At least that’s what journalism and law student Massilia Aili thought before she stepped inside Sydney’s Villawood Detention and Immigration Centre. Massilia explains what it’s really like behind those wire fences and how transformative it can be getting to know some of Australia’s refugees.

The most prominent memory I have of my first visit to Villawood Detention Centre was driving up to the precinct and seeing a seemingly endless stream of barbed wire fencing. It was followed by a throng of security guards who scanned and drug tested each of us and our food. I had never been more scared or nervous about what I was getting myself into.
I’d first heard about the ‘Villawood visits’ in July 2016. I was a budding first-year student who was determined to change the world and become the next notable ‘social justice warrior’. At the time, I was already volunteering as a refugee mentor, attending fundraising events and humanitarian rallies. That’s where I heard about a group of students from Sydney who visited Villawood Detention Centre during Ramadan to provide dinners to the fasting detainees.

I told my big sister Samira, who was also at UTS at the time and a budding social justice warrior herself (clearly it runs in the family), and we decided to go together. So, we completed the application process, put our names down to visit the centre on certain days and joined the volunteer group.

On the day of our first visit, I spent two hours rehearsing in my mind how I would interact with the refugees because I had never met ‘one of them’ before. When we walked into the visiting area, I remember seeing a long row of tables with chairs laid out for us, with all the detainees standing around it. They waited until we were all seated before they sat. They served us the food we brought for them before serving themselves and when we started talking, most were more interested in hearing about our lives rather than talking about themselves.

From the minute I sat down, I realised just how wrong my assumptions were and how much I actually had to learn from the detainees about strength, optimism and humility. From that point onwards, we were hooked. The irony of how such a dark and ominous place harboured some of the brightest and most wonderful personalities fascinated us and we couldn’t get enough of their energy.

Even as we started to develop closer friendships with them and they would share their stories about being beaten until they were deaf or escaping drug gangs or watching loved ones get killed, it was always followed by an ‘It could’ve been worse’ and ‘I am grateful to be alive’. A lot of them haven’t seen their family or friends in years so being able to have someone on the outside they can speak to and connect with means a lot to them.

It’s now been three years since that first visit. And I still go back. Almost every Saturday. The main reason - their inimitable sense of humility. For Samira, it’s more about seeing their journey and appreciating their strength and resilience. Regardless of how long they’ve been detained, they’re always hopeful. And yet, with every visit there’s always an ingrained sense of helplessness we feel when we

I realised just how wrong my assumptions were and how much I actually had to learn from the detainees about strength, optimism and humility.
go home and leave them inside. Something many people don’t realise is just how much it takes out of you when you hear their stories and all of the terrible things that have happened to them, and the best you can do is give them a hug and hope things start to turn around.

I always feel an overwhelming sense of guilt that I can choose to leave the centre and go home to my family and my comfy bed, knowing that’s a choice that they’ve never had.

But what I’ve come to realise, after three years, is that guilt only channels feelings of pity which these people have been experiencing their entire lives. Instead, what they need is support and confidence in knowing that there are people in the world who want to help make their lives better.

The way Samira puts it, is to be “open-minded, compassionate and understanding, and also boost their morale whilst not being able to help them in any way”.

One question that I’ve asked the detainees time and time again is what keeps them going, having experienced so much hardship and having no guaranteed secure future? The unanimous response I always get is that hope is one of the most powerful things in the world and you can achieve just about anything if you have enough hope.

**Massilia Aili setting off for her Villawood visit**

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**Massilia Aili** is a Bachelor of Communication (Journalism) Bachelor of Laws student at UTS.

**Samira Aili** graduated from UTS with a PhD in toxicology in 2018. She is currently the Director of the organisation, Refugees in Mind.

**Photographer:** Sissy Reyes
Five. That’s the age gender stereotypes about STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) can start to form in children. And it’s one of the reasons why education programs aimed at boosting the number of women in STEM have moved into primary schools.

Mick Rodley is a teacher at Erskineville Public School, one of the pilot schools participating in the Girls in STEM Primary School program run by UTS’s Women in Engineering and Information Technology. Mick shares his thoughts on the impact this program is having in the classroom.
Q: What does the pilot program involve at your school?

A: The program ties into our science curriculum. Each week our Year 5 and 6 students meet with Women in Engineering and Information Technology Program Coordinator Lauren Black and the female volunteers from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology in the school hall, to undertake activities aimed at helping students better understand the opportunities that exist for women in STEM.

Here, Lauren and her team task the students with real-world problems that they must use a design-thinking model to address. For example, one group is looking at the level of fishing waste that’s going into our oceans. Students work in groups to refine the problem, gather data, conduct an ideation process to come up with solutions, and evaluate ideas to prototype and test the solutions.

The UTS volunteers mentor students through the whole process and host discussions on their ideas. In addition, they teach them about various STEM resources such as coding LEGO Mindstorms robots and programming 8-bit microcomputers.

Q: How do you see gender stereotypes playing out in your classroom?

A: At the beginning of the program, students were asked to draw what they thought a STEM professional looked like and most drew a crazy old-man scientist, which is quite telling.

Similarly, if we’re doing a coding activity, the students who say “I don’t like doing this” or don’t seem interested are usually the girls.

Reflecting on my own upbringing in regional New South Wales, I remember the way that stereotypes affected people’s attitudes – not just to science and tech, but most things. I think there was only one girl in my HSC information technology class. Since becoming an educator, it’s really obvious that such stereotypes still continue to exist. However, I would add that a lot of the parents in this school work in professional fields and many in scientific fields, so I don’t see these attitudes as much here.
Q: The program is also designed to affect parents' attitudes. What is the purpose of that?

A: As part of the program’s research component, parents were asked to participate in a survey that gauged their interest and confidence levels around STEM topics, as well as more generally about their children’s interests. We also send weekly updates to parents, in the hope of driving meaningful discussions at home by giving them questions to ask their children. For example, we help them kickstart conversations with questions like, “I heard you and your group developed a problem today in the STEM lesson. What was the problem and what can you tell me about it?”

The hope is that these conversations will help bridge the school and home divide. There are some parents who don’t have much knowledge about STEM, so by bringing it to their attention they may be more inclined to encourage their children into those pathways if they show an interest in them.

Q: How has the pilot program changed your students?

A: I’ve noticed some of the less-interested students have actually become much more engaged with STEM-related activities. Getting the chance to work this way with their fellow students and mentors has definitely motivated them to be more engaged in STEM work, and shown them that people who work in science, engineering, et cetera don’t have to be men. The students are getting involved in a way that’s unheard of in more traditional linear tasks, and I’ve seen an increase in all of the students’ capabilities in coding and collaboration. Best of all, they’re often really excited to share their successes with their peers and teachers.

The mentoring they’re receiving by participating in the design-thinking projects equips them with the confidence to better manage future learning challenges and tasks.

And, they’re getting upskilled in using some of our existing school resources which makes it easier for us to integrate these resources into our regular curriculum. For example, now that they have basic skills in coding a microbit, (a pocket-sized computer suitable for entry-level coding projects), we would be more inclined to introduce a maths lesson that incorporates the programming of microbits – so students can apply that skill to a real-world context.

Our students are really fortunate to be able to work alongside the UTS mentors. The experience is invaluable. It’d be great if this program could be rolled out more extensively, as there is so much potential to build on the success of this pilot program.
Emily Mead is a third-year communication student who is currently completing her exchange year at Aix-Marseille University in Aix-en-Provence, France. She has been documenting her European experience via her Instagram page (@emilyjmead) which has over 31,000 followers. Emily offers her insights on the highs and lows of la vie en France.

In my first few weeks in Aix-en-Provence, I jumped in a fountain, used a corkscrew for the first time, and convinced at least three new acquaintances that dropbears were a real and ever-present threat to Australian society.

This tiny city is, of course, a wildly different experience to Sydney – there’s the architecture that’s hundreds of years old, the closely protected recipe of calissons (traditional French candy), the maze-like alleyways. Sometimes it feels like I’m in a fairytale.

I’m now four months into my year-long adventure in the south of France, and the learning curve has been steep. Before classes even began, our language skills were put to the test with countless French administrative tasks, and I’m still hoping I didn’t accidentally sign away the rights to my kidneys. That was the first indication that our learning was going to extend far beyond the classroom, and it would not be the last.
Each week, we have 18 hours of language classes. To clarify, that’s French language classes, something explained to me after I accidentally enrolled in a course for Arabic speakers. Studying French in more depth has been an experience peppered with steps forward and backward, but if you’d told me last year that I’d be performing a monologue from a 17th century French play in front of the class, I’d say you were dreaming. The play, *L’École des femmes* by Molière (or *The School for Wives*) is a bit like French Shakespeare, so I’d say I understand a good 12 per cent of it.

Venturing outside the classroom has brought its own wonders. I’ve marched along the streets of Marseille for a demonstration on International Women’s Day and talked to a bookseller about their store closing down. I’ve struggled through movies dubbed in French and joined an Ultimate Frisbee team (in both instances, my knowledge of French slang has improved tenfold).

But that’s only the beginning. I chose international studies because, as a chronically talkative communication student, I wanted to meet new people. This is my first time living in a student residence, and every evening our kitchen is filled with a cacophony of voices: broken French, of course, but also Russian, Spanish, Italian and more. It’s an amazing atmosphere. There are so many things I’ve learned from my French acquaintances that I never would have heard otherwise – “I’ll keep you in the juice”, for example, is a perfectly acceptable way of telling someone that you’ll keep them updated.
Travel, of course, is essential to the international studies experience. I’ve definitely thought about asking for an extension on an assignment because there are cheap flights to Venice. So far I’ve been hiking in the Calanques, jumped into the incredibly green Mediterranean and eaten macarons in front of the Eiffel Tower. Our Aussie France cohort also met up in Lyon, and it was almost strange to hear a roomful of familiar accents again.

My travels have taken me outside France as well. In our week break, I made my way to Spain and Andorra, exchanging cheese and baguettes for paella and sangria. Some of my travel has been with friends, some solo, and I’ve come to appreciate both. I’ve learned so much about language and cross-cultural experiences, but I’m also realising that so many of the things I was scared of become a lot easier once you tell yourself they’ll be worth it. Each photo I’ve taken so far has a story behind it, and though it hasn’t always been easy, they remind me how valuable it’s been to leave my comfort zone. I don’t know exactly where life will take me after I’ve finished my degree, but I do know that the world now seems a much bigger place than it did before.

After four months, I’ve made some incredible friends, had some amazing adventures and listened to countless wonderful stories. I can’t imagine the experiences I’ll have had after a whole year. But every time I think about staying here forever, the picture of the Tower taped to my cupboard reminds me just how much is waiting for me when I return.

Photos supplied by Emily Mead
2019 marks a watershed moment for inclusion at UTS with 10 all gender bathrooms opening on campus. Launched in March, along with our Trans & Gender Diverse Services Guide, it’s our most recent step in spearheading social change on campus and beyond.

And it underscores our already-strong track record of diversity and inclusion at UTS which includes initiatives like the Ally program (a visible network of people who are allies of staff and students identifying as lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, queer or intersex), our staff-focused Breaking the Binary: gender, sexuality and body diversity training and our PROUD social network for LGBTQIA+ staff.

Dashie Prasad and Erin Graves tell us how the all gender bathrooms have affected them personally and what more UTS can do for the community.
I’ve been harassed in gendered bathrooms in UTS; I’ve had people shout at me and ask intrusive questions around my gender identity. Even in situations where I haven’t been harassed, there are still the looks, the comments, the feeling that I don’t belong. So, I stopped using campus bathrooms. I would just avoid drinking water and use the bathroom when I got home or when I went to lunch.

But since the introduction of the gender-neutral ones, a lot of my anxiety around using campus bathrooms has disappeared. I now know there are spaces made for me, where I won’t be abused or shamed. And that’s a huge relief.

The dysphoria (or anxiety and deep sense of wrongness) that comes from using heavily gendered spaces, like bathrooms, is much easier to deal with when there are gender-neutral ones available. They are a way of saying to LGBTQIA+ people we know you exist.

Queer inclusion at university is essential. Having visible staff and students that offer support to the trans community signals to students who may be in the closet that you will be accepted. It helps communicate the idea that gender isn’t binary or fixed. By normalising the presence of trans and gender-non-conforming people, it improves the acceptance of trans people in university spaces.

Underpinning this with the continued enforcement of anti-discrimination policies will help ensure LGBTQIA+ students feel safer in their everyday college life.

And given the plethora of mental health issues that LGBTQIA+ people are more susceptible to, having that sense of community is critical. If a university environment feels inclusive, this positively impacts students’ mental health and wellbeing.

LGBTQIA+ staff and students should be at the forefront of policy decision making. For example, administrative tasks like name changes and gender marker changes on UTS systems should be easier.

A university community should acknowledge that we know best about the barriers we face in accessing spaces. The UTS community can ensure queer staff and students feel comfortable by ensuring that we’re involved in decision-making processes, so we can help shape spaces and systems to be more inclusive for us all.
Dashie Prasad
A Bachelor of Communication (Social and Political Science) student whose past bathroom experiences on campus have left them feeling uncomfortable and afraid.

Having all gender bathrooms on campus means the world to me!

I’ve had negative experiences using campus bathrooms in the past. For example, I was once wearing lipstick and walked into one of the men’s toilets where I could see a guy gesturing to his friend to look at me, so I walked out to use another facility. This incident made me realise that the threat of violence that comes with being visibly queer is something that still exists.

But the bathrooms are safe spaces where I can be me without having to discuss my identity or body, and that makes me feel much more comfortable.

UTS talks about being for everyone, so having gender-neutral bathrooms is a significant step forward in showing support for our trans and gender-diverse community.

We’re lucky that we go to a young university that supports us and has quite progressive models. The introduction of things like the Ally program and training, the Mardi Gras float, The Transgender Day of Remembrance activities, the LGBTQIA+ project officer and now these bathrooms and the transition guide for staff and students are all important support signals for our community. And while there have been times in the past when the university hasn’t done the best by us, they’ve always been willing to listen, learn and take advice from students and then put it into action.

Of course, I’d love to see the university go a step further by providing more accessible gender affirmation procedures, like supporting LGBTQIA+ students who do community work with a scholarships program.

College life can be challenging for anyone, but for students struggling with gender identity it can be particularly tough. I want them to know, though, they’re not alone and there is help available. The UTS Queer Collective is a student-run safe space that hosts regular events, as well as advocating for the welfare of queer students.

For further information about the all gender bathrooms including their campus locations, visit uts.ac/allgenderbathrooms
You can also read the Trans & Gender Diverse Services Guide online at uts.edu.au/tgdguide

Support services for students and staff identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer, and those questioning their sexual or gender identity include:

Equity and Diversity Unit
9514 1084
equity@uts.edu.au

UTS Counselling Service
9514 1177
student.services@uts.edu.au

The Ally program
equity@uts.edu.au

PROUD social network
jessica.mcgowan@uts.edu.au

The Queer Collective
queer@utsstudentsassociation.org

Photographer: Sissy Reyes
Laying the foundations for a new Australia
Michael McDaniel and school never got along. But today, he is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) at UTS and breaking new ground with the launch of Australia’s first university Indigenous Residential College. Michael shares how his early experiences shaped his outlook on higher education and why the college is set to contribute to a more inclusive and Indigenous celebrating society.

I left school at the age of 14. And like many Aboriginal young people, I’d had an unpleasant experience. I also initially left home at a very young age and did a number of short-term jobs – I was in the Army for six years, I was a security guard, I had a job sorting mail by night for the National Australia Bank. Then, I saw an advertisement for a university offering bridging programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There was nothing in my track record to suggest I’d succeed – I wasn’t very studious at school and had probably written only four or five letters while I was in the Army. I also wasn’t aware of any other person in my immediate and extended family who had been to university, but I thought I’d give it a go. And that bridging course completely changed my life.

You’ve got to understand, university isn’t part of the experience of many Aboriginal families. That’s why we have to raise the aspiration of young Indigenous people and help them understand how higher education can lead to a life of meaningful work and contribution to society.

While there are an increasing number of Indigenous students who are thriving in the education system, the reality is, many Indigenous students don’t obtain marks at the same level as their non-Indigenous peers, even when they do finish Year 12. It’s not that they’re not intelligent and not keen, but life circumstances tend to create an environment that’s not conducive to successful study.

The other challenge for Indigenous people is, of course, accommodation, particularly if they’re living in a rural or remote region. Imagine you’re a student living in a small country town, aspiration has been raised, you want to go to university, the alternative pathway is there, you’ve passed the testing and assessment, and an offer has been made to you. But, the one thing you don’t know is where you’re going to live.

The thought of moving away from home, from your community, and the questions of where you might live and how you might pay for your accommodation, may well deter you from taking up the offer. So, why would you put yourself in that situation?

That’s why we need to break new ground. What we’re proposing is the establishment of Australia’s first Indigenous Residential College. It will be a world-class facility with approximately 250 beds accommodating Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Indigenous students will be offered cost-covered accommodation, as we’re doing at the moment at our Wattle Lane residence, and provided a stipend to support their living costs. The other thing we’ll be doing is continuing to provide an accelerated tutorial learning development program. And that will be done through Jumbunna – a dedicated unit at UTS that supports the academic, social, cultural and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
The Indigenous Residential College is not an equity initiative. This is an excellence initiative. And it’s a new way of approaching Indigenous education. For the first time in history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be able to choose a college that has a celebration of their own identity, culture and traditions at its heart.

I think, anecdotally, many would consider UTS a leading university in terms of Indigenous education and research, if not ‘the’ leading university. The philosophy that drives that success is our belief that Indigenous education is for all Australians. It’s not about the three per cent of the most disadvantaged Australians, it’s about all of us. It’s about nation building.

While many Australian universities are struggling in terms of Indigenous higher education – struggling for answers, struggling to find models that really work – we’ve found models that work in every single area of Indigenous interest and the results show this.

For example, we’ve seen significant improvements in Indigenous student retention rates and currently have a retention rate of 81 per cent, noting that the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is closing. The number of Indigenous research students at UTS has increased 400 per cent between 2011 and 2018. Our Indigenous research student retention rate sits at 95 per cent, which is significantly higher than that of non-Indigenous research students. We have one of, if not the, largest Indigenous professoriates in Australia with rising Indigenous research output and impact to match. And, excitingly, we’ve also seen a significant expansion in Indigenous research across UTS with the number of Indigenous research entities growing, including increased success in relation to research grants.

Regarding the university more broadly, since 2015, we’ve been rolling out an Indigenous Graduate Attribute project that involves a commitment that all UTS graduates will have a professional capacity to work with and for Indigenous Australians. And, we’re committed to sharing our successes across the sector.

I imagine the college in 10 to 20 years’ time having graduated thousands of people in middle to senior levels in the public service, private sector, community organisations and, possibly, even in government all networking together, all sharing a vision. It would have been ridiculous to propose a college like this 20 years ago, even 10 years ago. But, now, I think there’s a new way of being Australian.

I don’t think we can fully appreciate the degree to which the college will impact Indigenous Australians. I like to think what it might be like in the future when a grandparent accompanies their grandchildren to Sydney while they’re encouraging them to stay at school and do their best. They will be able to point to this college and say there are lots of Aboriginal people from all over the country in there who are all going to be great people and are proud of their culture and identity. And in this building, this community, there’s a place for you when you’re ready. I think that’s going to be exceptional!
The college is set to be built in Ultimo on the land of the Gadigal people and aims to be open by 2023

The estimated $100 million world-class Indigenous Residential College will offer:

- Approximately 250 beds for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Scholarships and cost-covered accommodation for Indigenous students
- An architect-designed landmark building and contemporary interior design, informed by Indigenous designers with Indigenous culture and identity at its core
- Publicly accessible cultural, arts and community spaces celebrating Indigenous traditions and heritage
- Program of events and opportunities in collaboration with a range of education, cultural, community, industry and government partners
- Ongoing mentoring and leadership development

Find out more at indigenouscollege.uts.edu.au
Imagine you’re far from home. On a mission to complete one of the world’s most important jobs. You’re hungry, thirsty and tired. You can’t go on much further. You need somewhere to rest and to recuperate.

You’re a native Australian bee. You belong to one of 1700 native bee species. And, you’re an ‘expert’ pollinator.

It’s pretty difficult to do your job in the city where many of the trees and shrubs you use have disappeared.

But there is hope. Sheridan Powell reports.
The Sydney area is home to hundreds of varieties of native bees, including the hive-building native stingless, and the solitary blue-banded and teddy bear bees. All of them, and many of their insect cousins, cannot fly long distances and need regular access to year-round flowering plants. Due to a lack of food and places to nest or rest, we are now seeing dramatic drops in the number and variety of insect and birdlife (who rely on insects as a key part of their diet) both locally and globally.

Without them, many of our crops and ecosystems will die.

It’s why researchers have teamed up with local communities to establish a networked ‘highway’ of bed and breakfasts for birds, butterflies, bees, and biodiversity (B&Bs for short).

These bespoke gardens and insect ‘hotels’ provide important rest points for our pollinators, helping to improve their health, and the health of our planet too.

“We need to create these corridors across Sydney to improve the situation. We’re at a tipping point, and need to move quickly to ensure Sydney is a sanctuary for both its people and pollinators,” says Judy Friedlander, a PhD student in the Institute for Sustainable Futures.

Inspired by bee highways in Oslo, Belfast and Vancouver, Judy has been working with a team of dedicated volunteers as part of social and environmental not-for-profit FoodFaith: Planting Seeds. They’re working to establish new gardens across Sydney filled with a range of plants pollinators love, such as tea tree, flowering gum and lavender.
We’re at a tipping point, and need to move quickly to ensure Sydney is a sanctuary for both its people and pollinators.

Judy explains, “Insects are the ‘building blocks’ of entire ecosystems. It’s estimated that one in every three bites of our food connects to pollinators, which means losing these creatures would have a significant impact on our day-to-day lives.” A recent journal article published in *Biological Conservation* reported a study showing an astounding 75 per cent reduction in insect biomass in 27 years.

Judy notes how infrequently she now sees the insects that she remembers as a child, “I used to see an incredible array of beautiful insects, lady beetles, cicadas, and beautiful butterflies.”

The number one driver of this habitat loss caused by intensive agriculture and urbanisation, and if it continues at the current rate of decline, we could lose all insect life on the planet in 40 years. This means losing the plants that insects need to reproduce, the birds and mammals that eat them, and a tremendous amount of the planet’s biodiversity.
The project is off to a strong start, with eight B&B gardens across Sydney already completed or in progress. Locations include the original interfaith garden in Lane Cove, a garden collaboration with Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency that engages migrants, refugees and emerging communities in the area, and six gardens supported by a Federal Government grant in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.

A current crowd-funding campaign aims to raise funds to build at least 12 more, as well as pay for horticulture, permaculture and native bee experts to maximise the gardens’ effectiveness. Judy and the team hope to target specific Sydney locations where pollinators are in serious decline, as well as collaborate with academic research and citizen science.

If you’d like to help create Sydney’s super-highway for pollinators, you can donate to the crowd-funding campaign at startsomegood.com/BandBHighway.

To volunteer, collaborate, or suggest a potential location, email the FoodFaith: Planting Seeds team at info@foodfaith.com.au.

By developing community gardens, FoodFaith: Planting Seeds aims to provide food sources and habitats for our city’s insects and birds – but Judy’s objective is broader than that. These gardens are designed to bring people together, by getting communities more involved in nature and giving them actionable ways to address what Judy identifies as “a dire situation”.

The gardens are set up in public, shared spaces, and depend on volunteers to tend them. By locating the gardens at a range of schools, faith and cultural centres and community housing areas, they create places of communal gathering to host regular meet-ups and share “seeds, honey and tips”.

“Sustainability has a number of meanings,” says Judy, “and we want to talk about both environmental and social.” By running events targeted at bringing people of diverse cultures, faiths and backgrounds together, FoodFaith will help the people of Sydney “celebrate our differences, our commonalities and our common home”.

Illustrations: Sophia Lau

Judy Friedlander is a postgraduate researcher at UTS’s Institute for Sustainable Futures.
What comes after technology?

Technology. It will change your life, but not always in the ways you expect. Since the 1990s, Australian artists have been chronicling the rise of various technologies and how they’ve influenced not only our bodies, but our cultures, communities and identities too.

Eleanor Zeichner explains.

A woman’s legs fill the frame, her manicured red nails in stark contrast to the white floor underfoot. At the heel, her bare feet morph into a fleshy pair of stilettos.

Overstepping (2001) was created by Australian contemporary artist Julie Rrap as a critique of the impossible body standards held up for women, and as a playful exploration of new forms of image-making borne from digital manipulation.

It was also the inspiration behind After Technology – an exhibition at UTS Gallery in early 2019 that explored how Australian artists have registered the rise of technologies since the 1990s; from the emerging science of genetic testing and the effect of military technologies on civilian life, to the bleed between life online and real life. The exhibition looked back at a ‘history of the future’, and considered how cultural responses to technology have shifted over time.

Tega Brain, Being Radiotropic, 2016, open WRT wifi routers, wooden boxes, peace lilly, candle, moon rock cast in concrete. Courtesy the artist.
“We wanted audiences to consider the ethical, material and cultural dimensions of technology,” explains co-curator Stella Rosa McDonald. “It’s a provocative position to take, considering we work in a university of technology, but we want our exhibitions to speak to their setting and extend beyond that to include diverse perspectives and unexpected methodologies.

“Whether we use technology to shape our own bodies or build new ones, make connections or disengage, the problem of technology remains a human one,” Stella explains.

Patricia Piccinini’s 1996 photographic series, Your Time Starts Now, envisioned a future of human reproduction manipulated by profit-driven multinational biotech companies. The series is an early example of the artist’s ongoing interest in the expanded possibilities of human and animal reproduction, foreshadowing the now familiar ethical debates related to gene-editing, celebrity and consumer culture.

A powerful work by Yhonnie Scarce, who belongs to the Kokatha and Nukunu peoples, looked back at the devastating impact of nuclear technology on the Indigenous community at Maralinga. Fragile glass forms shown in vintage neo-natal hospital cribs, reference the human toll of British and Australian atomic testing in the 1950s and 1960s.

The exhibition drew interest from academics from across the university who each saw it as an opportunity to expand their perspective as well as those of their students.

For Aaron Seymour, a lecturer in Visual Communication in the School of Design, technology is a prompt to consider the systems that govern our daily lives. “We encourage our students to think critically about how they use technology, and the underlying power structures in which it’s embedded. For many students, the technology they use is invisible to them, it’s just a part of their everyday experience.”

Julie Rrap, Overstepping, 2001, C-type photograph, 122.5 x 122.5cm. Installation view. Patrick Corrigan collection, on loan to UTS Art Collection.
As a practising artist Yvette also has insight into how the technology Grant uses opens out the possibilities for current photography students. “This is a great piece of work to reflect on as it presents a digital construction but it’s also very photographic. It offers a really good jumping off point for students in terms of transitioning into moving image, video, gaming, into all sorts of things. It’s also thought-provoking because it’s challenging authorship, and the idea of the photographer.”

For Eva Cheng, Senior Lecturer in the School of Electrical and Data Engineering, a piece by artist Tega Brain offered an opportunity to reflect on the possibilities and challenges of digital technology. The work Being Radiotropic (2016) presented three wireless routers manipulated by environmental systems, from moon cycles to candlelight. For example, one router is controlled by a plant that carries out network attacks on unencrypted websites, embedding images of itself like a weed finding a crack in the concrete.

“I love the idea of inanimate objects that are digitally active, that are surreptitiously changing your digital life, and possibly without your consent,” says Eva. The work gave Eva cause to reflect on how artists can articulate the social impact of technology. “I would definitely send students to the gallery to give them a different understanding of technology, and think about how engineers and technologists can work together with artists. We need to consider the purpose, impact and consequences of our work, and from day one of the design process. Artists and designers are great collaborators for that kind of thinking.”

Experiencing this work also felt like an interesting reframing of expectations. “The objects don’t do what you expect, and that’s what I like about art. It can push the boundaries of what technology can do, and also question what technology should and shouldn’t do,” adds Eva.

The UTS Gallery hosts a number of exhibitions throughout the year, you can view their upcoming events by visiting art.uts.edu.au

Photographer: Jacquie Manning

Eleanor Zeichner is Assistant Curator at UTS Art
Whether we use technology to shape our own bodies or build new ones, make connections or disengage, the problem of technology remains a human one.
One capsule, once a day. Now, that’s all it takes to ease the symptoms of chronic breathlessness. Fiona Livy uncovers how the world-first treatment, Kapanol®, works and why it’s set to change the lives of 300,000 Australians.
Take a breath in. Now, take in another on top of that. Slowly exhale only that second breath and then inhale a small breath again. As you continue exhaling and inhaling, your chest tightens, your pulse quickens, you can’t get enough air.

This is how thousands of Australians with chronic breathlessness feel. Every. Single. Day. And it doesn’t take much for that suffocating sensation to set in. Some struggle to walk 100 metres. Others find it difficult to get dressed. Many won’t leave home.

“It is an incredibly frightening experience,” explains Professor of Palliative Medicine David Currow. “Just imagine the times that you’ve been acutely short of breath – you may have had a bad attack of asthma or a case of pneumonia or you simply had to run so hard that you couldn’t catch your breath for the next half hour. What if you weren’t able to control that?

“Add onto that the slightest insult – an upper respiratory tract infection, a cold, a flu or a really emotional time where suddenly you’re confronted with things that others take for granted, like crying or laughing. Their worlds shrink and that really creates a social death – they’re not getting out to see their friends and family as much and those friends and family tend to give up seeing them too.

“That’s a horrifying and ever-present, incredibly limiting and disabling problem that people experience day in and day out.”

Until now.

Kapanol® is the world’s first approved treatment for chronic breathlessness. David says, the once-a-day capsule is “filled with little yellow hundreds and thousands. It dissolves very rapidly in the stomach, in seconds, and each of those little hundreds and thousands has a mechanism that gently releases morphine into the gut, and from the gut into the bloodstream, over the next 24 hours.”

It works by supplementing the body’s own morphine-like chemicals. “When you and I get breathless,” explains David, “we start to make these endorphins to reduce that sensation.” People with chronic breathlessness benefit from augmenting their body’s own processes.

Kapanol® has been available for more than 20 years in Australia for reducing pain and David and his team started their research on Kapanol’s® effect on chronic breathlessness in 1998. Scientists, however, have known morphine can treat breathing difficulties since the 1800s.

“Morphine was discovered in the first decade of the 19th century,” explains David. “But, as it was starting to be used much more widely in clinical settings after the Second World War, people also realised that it could cause respiratory depression; it could actually slow your rate of breathing down to a level that was very concerning.
“What we’ve done,” continues David, “is shift from what was available in the 1950s (which was either a liquid solution you would take by mouth or an injection you could give directly into the bloodstream, the muscle or under the skin) to a formulation that releases just a little bit of morphine right around the clock. So, there aren’t the same high peaks, nor are there the same low troughs that patients would get from morphine administered 70 years ago.”

Data already show two out of three patients who use Kapanol® experience clinically significant symptomatic relief. That’s great news for the 70,000 Australians diagnosed with severe chronic breathlessness and the 200,000 Australians with disabling breathlessness. The main causes of which are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema), advanced cancer, chronic heart failure and neurodegenerative diseases, like motor neurone disease.

“Health is not just the absence of disease, it’s actually about wellbeing. As physicians, if we have people, particularly with chronic conditions whose wellbeing is impaired on a day-to-day basis, what are we here to do? Our role is to decrease that suffering safely and effectively, and improve everyone’s quality of life.”

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“The other group that is affected,” adds David, “is people late in any life-limiting illness who are starting to lose muscle strength. As you see them losing weight, they’re losing muscle. So they often experience this sort of chronic breathlessness.”

It’s why chronic breathlessness is a condition that will affect most Australians at some point in their lives. As our ‘disease profiles’ change and we become better at treating the illnesses and infections that caused our ancestors’ deaths, David says, “most of us will have warning of our death. Making chronic breathlessness an area that requires ongoing research.
From the Tower to Tinseltown

Not many people can count A-listers like Jake Gyllenhaal and Vince Vaughn among their friends. But alumna Tanya Cohen can. Jennifer Kiely reveals how the Ultimo-educated film buff took an ultimate leap of faith and wrote her very own Hollywood story.
“Movies were the only thing I was ever truly passionate about,” explains motion picture literary and talent agent, Tanya Cohen. “I grew up watching Disney and Spielberg movies on repeat and always knew that one day I wanted to work in the film business, but just didn’t know in what capacity.”

Tanya got her first taste of the entertainment world at 16 years of age when she joined the Australian Institute for Performing Arts and had the opportunity to tread the boards in local and overseas productions, including the musical *Back to the 80’s* at Disneyland, Los Angeles and a production of *Rent* in Australia. But when it came to making a call on her career, she realised she was more interested in the behind-the-scenes action.

“I was intrigued by what happened on the other side of the screen and the various roles that bring the magic of movies to life,” says Tanya.

Deciding that UTS’s Media Arts and Production degree was the best way to springboard her career, Tanya threw herself into the course, undertaking writing and production workshops as well as internships with local directors.

“It’s so important for students to do internships and work placements and to also support your fellow students’ work, because we all end up working alongside each other in the industry. When I was a first-year student, I helped the third-years with their short films, which was a great learning curve and helped me build valuable connections. For example, I’m still in contact with Takaya Honda, an actor who’s doing great things in Australia.”

Tanya’s early work experience proved instrumental in building her skill set, but it was her final-year exchange program at the University of California (UCLA) in 2009 that transitioned her to America and kick started her career. “Despite the fact that UTS had no existing program with UCLA, they were incredibly supportive and helped me structure my exchange so I could finish my degree at UCLA’s communications school,” Tanya says.

“The advice we got from industry professionals at UCLA was to begin at the bottom. If you’re not sure what part of the business you want to get into start in an agency mail room or work as an agent’s assistant. You get to see from the ground floor how movies are put together so you can figure out what area to specialise in.”

Heeding this advice, Tanya secured a job at a small agency called Paradigm within three weeks of graduation where she earned her stripes working in the mail room and doing coffee runs. From then, she moved to an assistant role for a literary agent in the movie department of a talent agency, a job she immediately fell in love with. “My time spent working at an agency gave me absolute clarity that’s what I wanted to do,” enthuses Tanya.

“I can’t control the future and don’t know what the Tanya of tomorrow will do. But I know that the Tanya of today loves what she does.”

Tanya Cohen

Features

34
Tanya’s career has since skyrocketed, and she’s now an agent at leading Hollywood talent agency, William Morris Endeavour. But climbing the ladder came with its challenges. “My journey was at times terrifying,” recalls Tanya. “Moving to a country where I knew nobody and having to deal with the immigration process was daunting, especially since my own family had emigrated from South Africa to Australia when I was 12 years old and now I was doing it on my own.”

But Tanya persevered, and her leap of faith paid off. In 2017, Tanya secured a spot on the Forbes 30 under 30 Hollywood and Entertainment list. An advocate for celebrating female talent, Tanya is “incredibly passionate about working with female writers, directors and artists of different nationalities and ethnicities.”

“It’s my job as an agent to ensure the underrepresented are represented so I make it my duty to ensure that the talent list of writers, directors and actors we pitch to studios reflects fair and equal opportunity,” she adds.

Tanya is especially proud of projects such as Hala, a coming-of-age drama, developed by female writer and director Minhal Baig, and produced by Jada Pinkett Smith. The film premiered at Sundance in 2019 to rave reviews and was Apple’s first feature film acquisition.

She’s also proud of the work she did to support twin screenwriters Aaron and Jordan Kandell in getting the job to craft the story of Moana. Tanya says, “Seeing the incredible impact that movie had makes me so proud to have represented those brilliant creators.”

Tanya has also been a proud supporter of fellow Aussie talent, helping first-time feature filmmaker Grant Sputore to develop his sci-fi thriller, I Am Mother starring Hilary Swank, which is soon to feature on Netflix.

In terms of forward planning, Tanya is both reflective and realistic. “I can’t control the future and don’t know what the Tanya of tomorrow will do. But I know that the Tanya of today loves what she does. And as long as I get up every day and my heart is still fluttering for what I do, I’ll keep following my passion.”

“You have to believe that anything is possible. I’m an example of what happens when you follow your dreams. I didn’t know one person when I moved to the United States but in spite of that I’ve built an incredible career that inspires me every day. It just proves that if you work hard and never give up, you can achieve anything.”

Photographs (T Cohen): self supplied

Tanya Cohen graduated from UTS in 2009 with a Bachelor of Communication (Media Arts and Production).
Through meticulous compositions of “generic made-in-China goods” and objects from her own home, Juliet Wong dissects what it’s like being a second-generation Australian and how she’s come to feel comfortable in her own skin.

Born in Australia to Chinese immigrants, Juliet Wong has always found it hard to articulate her complex connection with her heritage. She reflects that, “growing up speaking English with my parents means I’ve kind of lost that Chinese side because it’s understanding the traditions. A lot of things are lost in translation because of it.”
Beyond the initial superficiality though, these photographic works tap into rich visual traditions of still life, where the objects—regardless of their mass-production—take on complex symbolic meanings in the context of their arrangement. Centuries of still life painting used motifs like fruit, falling petals and burning candles to represent the passage of time, morality and religion. Juliet subverts and modernises these well-established symbols to make them unique to her experience.

In Dinnertime, tins of pickled leeks and canned ham sit in front of a ceramic black stallion draped in strings of plastic pearls. First impressions of formality and pomp soften to reveal the fake: the papery bouquet of dyed roses and plastic baby’s breath, beige melamine chopsticks and shiny, cheap jewellery. However, the mass-produced origin of each item is outshone by the care and domesticity of this arrangement, as if each object is a treasure presented with pride. Such placement allows Juliet’s individuality to come to the fore—not only as an artist, but in communicating how being born and raised in Australia has been both interesting and, at times, disorienting. “My parents’ reaction was that they could understand why my personality and my experiences being born and raised in Australia are completely different to how they saw Australia.”

Juliet’s self-portrait, Where Are You From?, further crystallises her experiences growing up. Centred on a lemon-yellow background with tightly wound braids and a flimsy tiger mask obscuring her face, Juliet creates a character with a rich narrative to share.

While this divide had Juliet struggling to put her feelings into words, her studies in photography provided a unique opportunity for her to explore her individual experiences, as well as broader experiences of what it’s like growing up Chinese-Australian. In OZZIE DREAM (2018), her photography graduation project, Juliet set out to find out if true belonging is improved by putting her feelings into words, her photography made it clear that being half Chinese and half Australian is not comfortable to look at, may be confronting too. It’s not like this genuine connection that I have with my heritage. The objects are a bad attempt at connecting with my cultural identity. It’s not like this genuine connection between that seem to float in space, which she says creates a blend of false realities mirroring her cultural identity.

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The precision and control afforded by studio photography are key to Juliet’s practice. Brightly lit candy-coloured backdrops set the scene for a mix of treasures and junk that seem to float in space, which she says creates a blend of false realities mirroring her cultural identity. It’s not like this genuine connection that I have with my heritage. The objects are a bad attempt at connecting with my cultural identity.
While the happy colours and frills of silky bows invoke a fun occasion like a birthday party, the eye of the tiger piercing through the mask challenges the viewer to contemplate a deeper meaning. Is this gaze embarrassed? Accusatory? Knowing?

Preliminary shots for OZZIE DREAM, also show Juliet’s experimentation with capturing movement. Pray delivers a scene in which dollar-store plastic candles stand watch over a glossy fake lobster as flimsy gold coins rain from above.

While still life (and indeed early photography) take a long time to produce, Juliet’s photos capture split-second environments which she describes as “temporal and very fast-paced”. These glimpses become another visual element Juliet uses to communicate her feelings on how she contributes to her culture.

Her 2017 series, Good Luck, Bad Luck, which was photographed against a red background, also explores superstitions from her Chinese ethnicity.

The duality of photography as a fast medium, and the methodical and ritualistic collection and composition of the items leaves Juliet’s work to exist in both states.

“It’s alright to not conform to being completely Chinese or completely Australian,” says Juliet. “And I think it’s hard, because a lot of people have different connections to both sides. The dialogue my work has opened is really interesting to listen to.

“A lot of people who have seen my photos tell me they feel similar. Being able to connect to people through shared experiences really encourages me to keep making work. My goal is to make the topic of cultural identity loss more approachable – it doesn’t have to be an awkward conversation that needs to be avoided.

“We’re comfortable being where we’re at. Chinese or Australian, I’m okay with being in the middle because that’s me!”

By Hannah Jenkins

Photographer (J Wong): Rose Wang
Photographer (OZZIE DREAM and Good Luck, Bad Luck): Juliet Wong

Juliet Wong is a Bachelor of Design in Photography and Situated Media student at UTS and a freelance photographer based in Sydney.
The short story of you and I is a new collection of poems by Richard James Allen about everybody and nobody; about you and me, and Richard who appears like a dust mote catching the sun in your peripheral vision.

I confess, I was left feeling somewhat unsated after reading this collection the first time – I had been instantly taken by his past collection, Fixing the Broken Nightingale (2014) and anticipated being similarly swooned by remembered lyricism, rhythm and wit. But, in the days that followed that first taste, these poems called me back between the covers – one, then another, then all – demanding degustation. I revisited ‘The Captain of the Men of Death’ first; at once intoxicating and beguiling, this poem is seductive and silk to the touch.

On subsequent reads, I realised it echoed the fragility of Richard’s previous work, with its haunting strains of resignation, resurrection and smallness in time and space.

Indeed, time and space ebb and flow throughout this collection of life’s small moments offered (with thanks) to the universe and all its gods. Richard reminds us (you and I) that when we reflect on life’s small moments, we realise they outweigh the whole – and there is much reflection (and love) in these poems. Much contemplating and imagining the here, the now, the then, the future and the might never be/have been. So much so, that at times I felt I was trespassing on the poet’s thoughts as he stood, say, on that platform at Central Station quietly observing the ghosts of Sydney’s past. (Trains, it would seem, provide Richard much time and rhythm for reflection.)

Richard reminds us too that we are the small moments – you and I – we are short stories, or as he puts it in ‘In the 24-hour glow’, flawed stories that unfurl as perfect wisdoms.

By Jacqui Wise

Richard James Allen graduated from UTS with a Master of Arts in Writing in 1999 and a Doctorate of Creative Arts in 2005.
Central Dreaming
By Richard James Allen

it is beautiful
watching someone think
that suspended moment
halfway through a sandwich
when something about
the smile on the face
in the poster
across the tracks
is a siren call
that drags time away
and before they take their next bite
everything on the platform
seems to stop
except the ghosts
from the old Devonshire Street Cemetery
the ones who didn’t move on
when their caskets were exhumed
and their bones reinterred
in cemeteries across Sydney
to construct the new
Central Station
in the early nineteen-hundreds
you can see them hanging
weighted and weightless
in the corners of the platforms
windless old winter coats
peering out from their unresolved darkesses
at the relentlessly colourful parade
of generation after generation
of newer and newer Australians
right up to the drag queen in the hijab
standing nervously next to you
everyone else stops
except the drag queen and the ghosts
who take this as an invitation to the dance
The Indigenous Residential College is not an equity initiative. This is an excellence initiative.