



Greater Stick-Nest Rat photo courtesy of Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Only 3000 left – save me from 6 million feral cats!

A bold project to save native animals from the threat of feral cats, vital research to prevent refugee suicide and an innovative rehabilitation program for stroke recovery are the three projects that are leading UniSA's new crowdfunding campaign. [more...](#)



#BeBoldForChange

The World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won't close entirely for another 170 years. This is too long to wait. 2016 UniSA Alumni Award recipient, Senator Penny Wong, speaks about why we should all #BeBoldForChange to reduce the gender gap and create a more inclusive society. [more...](#)



Welcome to the Class of 2017

Congratulations to March graduates and welcome to the UniSA alumni network. [View graduation gallery...](#)



Carving out a global career in franchise marketing

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Business (Marketing), Rob McKay has enjoyed a globe-trotting career marketing some of the world's leading franchising brands. [more...](#)



Watch: Chronic Pain Management

In this Enterprising Partnerships lecture Professor Lorimer Moseley, Research Leader at UniSA's Sansom Institute for Health Research discusses the need for a 'revolution' in acute spinal care. [watch...](#)



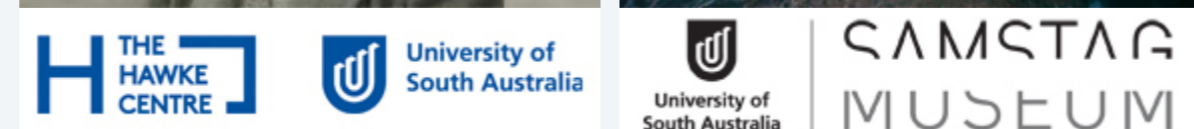
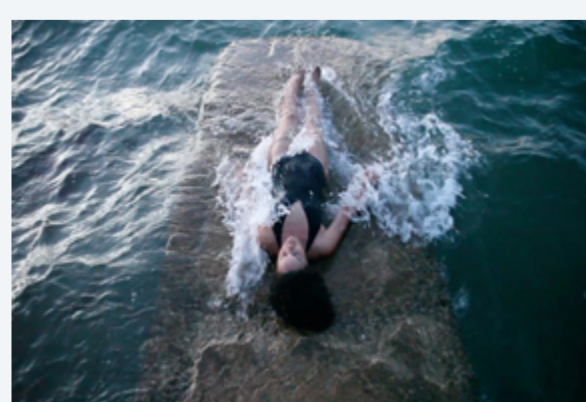
The changing face of PR in Malaysia

Masters of Communication Management alumnus Raj Kumar Balamaniyam is celebrating the success of his small public relations agency, Impact Communications, which recently won two Gold awards in the Malaysia Public Relations Awards. He talks about aspects of corporate communications in the Malaysian market. [more...](#)



Alumni events

- 13 APR** **Embracing Technology: Successful Ageing Seminar – Adelaide**
Prof Mark Billingham and Dr Ross Smith will talk about virtual reality and other innovative technologies which have the potential to improve the lives of our ageing population.
- 19 APR** **France and Australia: Together in a Time of Challenges and Uncertainties - Adelaide**
France's Ambassador to Australia HE Mr Christophe Lecourtier will explore how both countries can stand together to confront the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century.
- 9 MAY** **Alumni Cocktail Reception – London**
Join the Vice Chancellor Professor David Lloyd and catch up with your classmates.



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>>Stay Connected The best way to reap the benefits of being an Alumnus of the University of South Australia is to keep us up to date with your changes of address or workplace.



UniSA crowdfunding invites community engagement

A bold project to save native animals from the threat of feral cats, vital research to prevent refugee suicide and an innovative rehabilitation program for stroke recovery are the three projects that are leading UniSA's new crowdfunding campaign.

These three projects have been launched as UniSA's first foray into crowdfunding.

Professor Tanya Monro, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation at UniSA, says the initiative is an opportunity for the wider community to gain an insider's view of the research world. She also sees it as a way donors can play an influential role in driving scientific discovery in the fields that are most important to them.

The projects chosen for the first round of UniSA crowdfunding include:

Engineering Nature's Defences to Save Native Animals

Dr Anton Blencowe, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, is leading a team in the School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences to develop a novel approach to protecting vulnerable native animals from feral predators.

"There is a critical need for improved population protection techniques to ensure the survival of our most vulnerable animals," said Dr Blencowe.

In partnership with conservationists from the University of Adelaide and Biosecurity SA, Dr Blencowe is using a native Australian plant to protect native animals from introduced predators. With donations to the campaign, the research team will trial their technique to protect native animal repopulation efforts in South Australia.



To find out more and lend your support: www.chuffed.org/project/save-aussie-animals.



Preventing Asylum Seeker Suicide

Professor Nicholas Procter, Chair: Mental Health Nursing, is leading a team of mental health specialists to develop a targeted suicide prevention training tool for caseworkers and volunteers working with asylum seekers.

"Few people realise that suicide is now the leading cause of premature death in the asylum seeker population in Australia," said Professor Procter.

The training tool will teach those who work closely with asylum seekers how to identify and intervene when a client is suicidal. With further research this program will also identify key warning signs for this at risk population.

To find out more and lend your support: www.chuffed.org/project/preventing-asylum-seeker-suicide.

Re-imagining Stroke Rehabilitation

Associate Professor Susan Hillier, Dean of Research, is seeking to trial a promising new approach to stroke rehabilitation that was developed in collaboration with the Australian Dance Theatre (ADT).

"The technology creates real-time illusions that trick the brain to reform some of the lost neural connections caused by trauma," said Associate Professor Hillier.

Initial trial patients have described their experience with the system as enlightening and fun and highlighted how it has greatly reduced pain.

Donations to this campaign will facilitate a wider clinical trial which could change the face of stroke rehabilitation therapy.

To find out more and lend your support: www.chuffed.org/project/dance-technology-for-stroke-rehabilitation



Crowdfunding@UniSA facilitates direct communication between researchers and the wider public, and gives donors the ability to engage with the work that they deem most important.

Donors can also choose a 'perk' associated with the funding level they wish to provide. Perks include becoming a 'Quokka Defender', a 'Rock-Wallaby Superstar', or having the opportunity to have their name acknowledged in a research publication, or to facilitate a seminar at their workplace with the project leader.

UniSA has also pledged a further 20% of funding to each project that meets its target. Please consider getting behind the campaign and donating and/or sharing your favourite projects with the tag **#UniSAcrowdfunding** to help each project reach their objective.



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Penny Wong inspires Boldness for Change on International Women's Day

The World Economic Forum predicts the gender gap won't close entirely for another 170 years. This is too long to wait. 2016 UniSA Alumni Award winner, Senator Penny Wong, speaks about how International Women's Day reminds us why we should all #BeBoldForChange to reduce the gender gap and create a more inclusive society.



Senator Penny Wong hosted the 2017 United Nations Women Council IWD Breakfast in Adelaide - the largest International Women's Day Breakfast in Australia. Some 2000 people turned out to hear guest speaker, former Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard.

Senator Wong tells us about the importance of finding your own voice and using it to stand up for the rights of others.

This year IWD used #BeBoldForChange to draw attention to the gender gap. Why do you think this initiative is important?

International Women's Day allows us to honour the women who have gone before and given us so much, but also recognise how far we still have to go to achieve equality.

As the United Nations Development report found, "the disadvantages facing women and girls are a major source of inequality. All too often, women and girls are discriminated against in health, education, political representation, labour market, etc." Women bear the brunt of poverty, especially single women raising children.

Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages. And around a third of women across the world are subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence which causes long-term physical, mental and emotional health problems.

I've lived a very privileged life in this country, but even here, the gender gap issue is pervasive and structural.

Women, supporting women, in their workplace, their community and across the world are a powerful force for change.

But, this issue will not be resolved without men taking responsibility for it too. Men must accept that their wives, their partners, their daughters, and their sisters will never enjoy true equality unless they join with women to end the gender gap.

What do you see as the primary challenges and lessons that can be learnt from forums like UN Women National Committee IWD Breakfast?

Overcoming entrenched discrimination that denies women their equal place in parliament and in their workplace, and too often, even in their own homes are some of the primary challenges that women are faced with around the world.

Australians can support women's rights on a global scale by leading through example here, and by standing up in international forums against discrimination and violence against women and advocating for equality.

We need to teach the next generation that the opportunities they have today have been hard won, and should never be taken for granted. To respect those who came before, and honour their struggle by continuing to fight for women's rights everywhere.

Who has inspired your dedication and passion to seek equality for underrepresented groups?

Nelson Mandela, not only for his political achievements, but also the generosity of spirit he showed personally, and the reconciliation he was able to inspire in a nation.

Joan Kirner, for her unwavering commitment to supporting women in politics, and helping to make our parliament, at least on the Labor side, more equal and more representative of the community.

And also Paul Keating. Over the years we have seen our community come together and start to engender a national identity that was truly inclusive. Critical to this was the articulation of our place in the Asia-Pacific region by Paul Keating.

Who have been the most influential women or role-models in your life?

My Mum and my dad's mother, or "Poh Poh" as she is known.

My mum is one of five strong, caring, and independent sisters, and such an extraordinary woman for her time. Mum is a farmer's daughter and a descendent of the first European settlers in South Australia who married a Chinese man in the 1960s, just as the White Australia policy was being dismantled.

Mum's keen sense of justice, her intrinsic belief in fairness and willingness to stand up for her values, notwithstanding the consequences, has taught me a great deal.

"Poh Poh" was a diminutive woman with an indomitable spirit. Most of the family died during the Second World War and she was left alone to care for my father and his siblings in unspeakable circumstances, which she did through extraordinary determination and a will to survive.

She was barely literate; she was humble and compassionate but the strongest person I have ever known. Above all she taught me perspective. "It can never be as bad as the war" she would tell me, and she was right.

You are a role model to many young University of South Australia alumni and students. What advice could you offer them as they move through their careers and face challenges like the gender gap?

Do what you enjoy and above all, find your own voice. I originally intended to become a doctor, but found that was not for me.

You have achieved what you have because of your ability. You have every right to be where you are, and as much right as your colleagues to seek to advance your career. Speak up.

In light of Kate Ellis' announcement shortly before IWD, how do you think parliament could better support parents juggling family responsibilities?

All families in Australia are confronted with balancing work and family responsibilities. For most families this juggle is much harder than it is for politicians.

The hardest thing for me is the emotional toll of being away from my family so often.

On a lighter note, you are known for your love of living in South Australia. What are your five favourite places or personal treasures of living in Adelaide?

I love the great food, and the vibrancy and multiculturalism of the Adelaide Central Markets. Also, the fantastic sense of community at the Goodwood Farmers Market.

Clare Valley Riesling (and the Clare valley, and Barossa reds of course).

My kids running barefoot through the Botanic Gardens during WOMA Adelaide.

Fish and chips with the family at Henley Beach.

Carrickalinga on the Fleurieu Peninsula. Just walking on the beaches and the rocks. It's a chance to get away from everything for a few days in a beautiful spot.

Your favourite books to read to your children at bedtime?

I've loved reading Mem Fox's "Where is the Green Sheep?" to both of my girls. "Hairy Maclary" is also a favourite and now Alexandra is getting older, we've enjoyed the Pippi Longstocking stories.

Your favourite holiday destination (when you have a spare moment)?

My dream experience right now would be getting away (with Sophie) for a few days of fine wine and fine food in the Barossa, Clare or any of our great wine regions.

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Carving out a global career in franchise marketing

Rob McKay

Bachelor of Business (Marketing)

General Manager Retail, Beaumont Tiles

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) in 1989, Rob McKay has enjoyed a globe-trotting career marketing some of the world's leading franchising brands.

Rob commenced as General Manager Retail with family-owned company Beaumont Tiles in 2015. Since then, Rob and his team have opened over 20 new stores, including two new Beaumont Studio 'concept' stores to target an evolving market, which is showing no signs of slowing down. The company's association with national television renovation shows, like 'The Block' and 'My House Rules' has also served to drive connection of the Beaumont Tiles brand with the market.



The Beaumont Tiles group now turns over more than \$200 million annually and employs more than 800 people. It has over 110 stores in SA, Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales—a third of them company-owned and the rest franchise partners.

"The one thing that is certain about Beaumont Tiles is that we will continue to grow—where that growth is geographically will be determined in time," says Rob.

Rob's journey has been one of constant learning and growing, sparked by a conversation he had with his first boss at Coca-Cola.

"I remember feeling so young arriving at South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT) when I was just 16. I didn't have a driver's licence and I couldn't 'legally' enter a bar. I went from a feeling of comfort and control at high school to a feeling of uncertainty and anonymity at University. However, the first Monday after my final exam, I walked into my first job at the Coca-Cola Company and I felt ready—my degree gave me a way to think, a problem-solving approach and the ability to take on uncertainty to find clarity," says Rob.

"My first boss told me to always ask myself if I'm growing. He said growth wasn't always enjoyable, but if I ever found myself answering 'no', I had to go out and find something to help me grow," he says.

Rob has been setting himself short-, medium- and long-term goals ever since, with the ultimate driver to work internationally, which has led to him experiencing a wonderful variety of opportunities across the entire spectrum.

During his time at Coca-Cola in Adelaide, Rob set and reached his goal of moving to Sydney, bringing him one step closer to his first international stint with the Chevron Corporation—the parent company of Caltex and Ampol — where he spent the next 14 years working throughout Asia, Africa and the United States of America.

In 2008, he returned to Australia with his wife and their young children to take up the role of Group General Manager of Marketing for Asia Pacific and Africa with Luxottica—an Italian company that manufactures eyewear brands like Ray Ban and Oakley, sold through retailers including OPSM and Sunglass Hut stores.

In 2010, Rob took on the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Retail Franchise Group, the parent group of Wendy's, a South Australian ice-cream chain. His leadership of the Wendy's franchise system through four of the toughest years of internal and external conditions resulted in its sale to Singapore-based Global Food Retail Group as part of plans to expand into Asia.

"I enjoy working with people and leading change to achieve things that people did not think possible, and this has led to so many things I am hugely proud of in my career," says Rob.

His achievements speak for themselves. He was a member of the small team that developed the Original Star Mart Convenience Store Concept for Caltex in Australia, a model that is still proving successful. He was responsible for leading the team that turned the performance of US Chevron Extra Mile Franchise on the US West Coast. He steered the team that developed the OPSM AFL Umpire Sponsorship to connect with the most significant market opportunity — males aged 35 to 55 years who do not accept their eyesight is deteriorating, except of course when they are watching the footy.

"The greatest experience I take from working globally is the opportunity to work with different cultures—the work is the same, but the difference is how to align, motivate and drive different teams to achieve things they did not think possible. Working with people from Asia, Africa, Middle East, Europe, US and Latin America has helped me to understand that we all think and work differently," says Rob.

"The challenge is to appreciate the differences and to understand how to make things happen. People come to you from different backgrounds, skills and biases, which means they have different strengths, passions and drivers. My job as a leader is to understand these dynamics and provide support in the areas most needed."

"I am a proud South Australian with a passion to prove to the rest of the world that SA is a great place to do business, that's why in addition to my role as General Manager of Retail at Beaumont Tiles, I also sit on the Rundle Mall Management Authority Board and am a member of the UniSA Business School Advisory Board."



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The changing face of PR in Malaysia

Raj Kumar Balamanickam

Master of Arts Communication Management 2003

Managing Partner and Senior Consultant at Impact Communications

Masters of Communication Management alumnus Raj Kumar Balamanickam is celebrating the success of his small public relations agency, Impact Communications, which recently won two Gold awards in the Malaysia Public Relations Awards. He talks about aspects of corporate communications in the Malaysian market.



The awards were for two campaigns developed for Unilever (Malaysia) Holdings Berhad: a Consumer Launch Award for a campaign to launch Comfort, a fabric softener, to the growing market of hijab wearers in Malaysia; the other was an

Environmental Award for a campaign to encourage recycling among school children, for the Wall's Paddle Pop ice cream brand.

"Winning the awards were a real boost for the team, especially since it was our first time submitting for an award, since being established 10 years ago. Time was never on our side to participate previously. As a small agency, we are humbled for being chosen over some top competition but at the same time the award is validation of the level of work that our agency is capable of," says Raj Kumar.

The Environmental Award was for a Wall's Corporate Social Responsibility campaign called the 'Paddle Pop Young Builders Award 2016' directed at primary school children.

"The initiative is Unilever's global business strategy called the Sustainable Living Plan. With the endorsement of the Ministry of Education, the strategy by the team at Impact Communications saw the entries from schools quadruple from the previous year. The client was immensely happy with the result as it helped position the CSR-driven competition as a key national level competition promoting recycling through creativity and art," says Raj Kumar.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), is an important part of public relations (PR) in Malaysia in terms of reputation and brand management and the work that he does, but Raj Kumar says CSR is not done correctly most of the time.

"In fact, the term CSR is misused. Many businesses engage in a one-off charity event and call it CSR. We are happy to have the opportunity to work with clients who know that committing for the long term to create a better future makes better business sense.

"For our clients with a global presence, their CSR blue-print is crafted at HQ. Our role is to look at the pillars and see how we can help the company make an impact on localised issues that are aligned with the company's CSR blue-print. We also help companies look for partners to work with such as social enterprises. We research and talk to them on behalf of the client and then chart a long-term plan to ensure that the collaboration is beneficial to the community and is managed well."

Consumers are exercising more influence on brands via social media and Raj Kumar says this means that "the work has expanded to include more places where we need to land our client's story. We have to always consider how we engage with the audience and how we can create a brand experience for them that is fresh and yet still keep to the brand's key messages."

"The unique or distinguishing factor in public relations in the Malaysian market is the rapid change towards digital campaigns. This strong growth is gradually changing the landscape of the PR industry in Malaysia. While there is still demand for traditional media, agencies are now focusing on aggressively building up their digital and social media offerings," he says.

Raj Kumar has a background in fundraising, project management and communications and was attached to the National Cancer Council as a project manager when he decided to study for an offshore Master of Communication Management with UniSA. Upon graduating, he won the role of General Manager of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation (MAF), responsible for communications, administration and fundraising.

He and his wife Angie combined their event management and PR experience and established Impact Communications in 2007.

"We took on the challenge even through the tough times, but perseverance and tenacity paid off. In 2009 we had an opportunity to migrate to Canada but we decided to stay on and see this through," says Raj Kumar.

Raj Kumar joined the University of South Australia Malaysia Alumni Chapter in 2004 and was President from 2008 to 2010. He believes that the most important role that alumni networks can play in developing careers is to act as a bridge for alumni to interact effectively, through networking activities like social gatherings and professional career talks by alumni, where alumni get an opportunity to be exposed to business opportunities.

"The respective Alumni Chapters should provide a platform for graduates to be able to perhaps have experience sharing, which may pave the way for good understanding of the respective professions, the industry and changing job landscape that can assist members in the current working and economic environment and will indeed help them in their career path," he says.

"This year, Impact Communications celebrates its tenth anniversary, and we are proud of the work that has gone through, and thankful to friends and clients for their support, and we look forward to doing better. We have grown from a staff of just two to a strong force of thirteen," says Raj Kumar.

"We regularly host student placements from various universities in Malaysia, and the students do their industrial training with us for public relations or event management."

He advises new graduates looking to work in public relations to focus on core skills and build a credible reputation.

"Foundation is still key – good communication skills, good story-telling skills, drive, passion and commitment. Be a keen observer but also participate. Do take ownership of your own personal brand and your reputation too. If you are going to be a guardian to protect the reputation of the brand/company you are working for, you have to take the role seriously, especially in today's media landscape where things can escalate. Don't be shy to ask questions and learn from your team members. The older ones on the team will certainly value your input and your perspective, so do open up too. Be on top of current news from credible sources. If you can do all this, you will succeed."



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