



A scholarship can change a life forever

Meet Sarah Nur. A proud Indonesian-Australian of Sasak descent. Her journey from a fishing village living in backpackers digs, to pursuing three maths and science degrees is a testament to the power of self-determination. This is how a girl from Lombok made her way to UniSA. [more...](#)



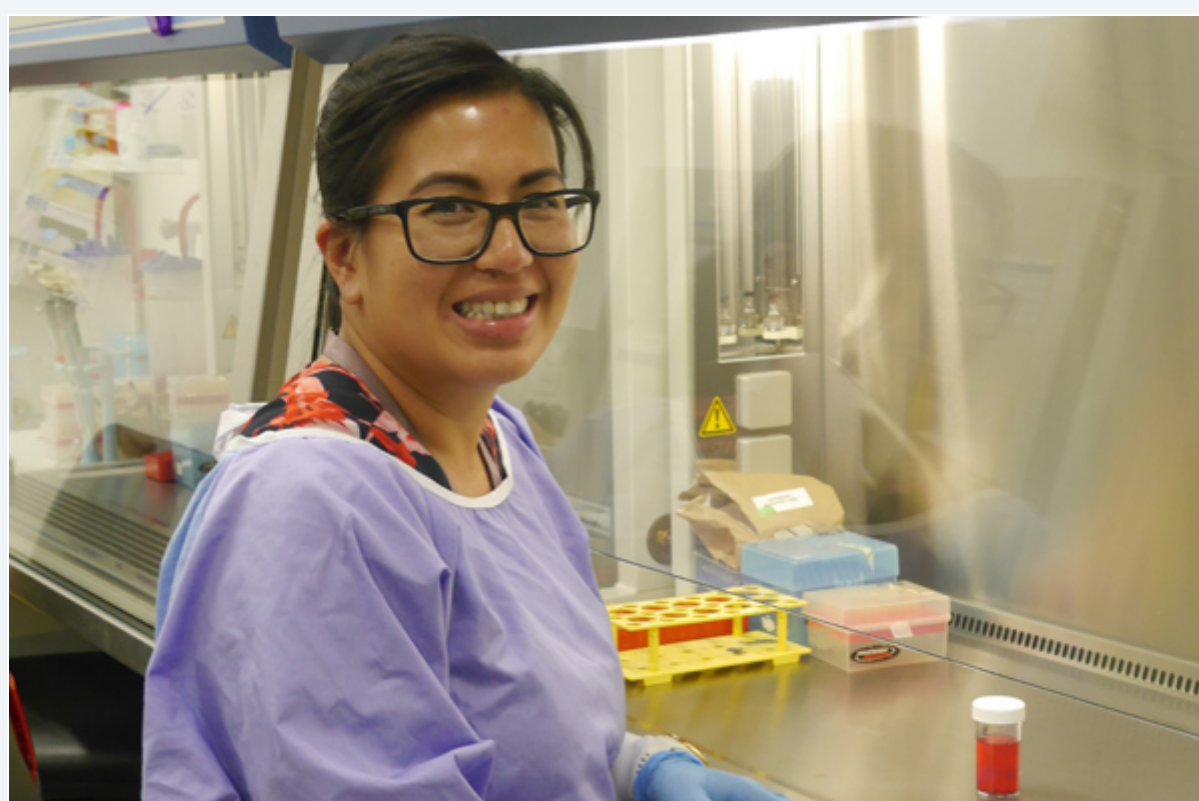
Revolutionising workplaces in the Asia-Pacific

Dr Caroline Burns is a trusted adviser and mentor for many colleagues and clients around the world. Caroline and her Workplace Revolution team have partnered with major corporate clients to support thriving businesses by optimising physical space to support their unique requirements and objectives. [more...](#)



Gin with an environmentally-minded conscience

With help from UniSA's ICC Venture Catalyst program, Lindon Lark and his business partner, Geordan Elliss, have established a premium, bespoke gin company – Blend Etiquette – on the back of their Snake Oil Tonics, all while completing their Studies at UniSA. [more...](#)



Vital funding for the deadliest cancers

A Research Associate at the Centre for Cancer Biology at the University of South Australia has been honoured with the 2019 Chris Adams UniSA Research Grant to support the Molecular Signalling Laboratory's vital research into brain cancer. [more...](#)



The Evolution of Social Enterprise

Former Premier of South Australia, the Hon Jay Weatherill, is a newly appointed Industry Professor with the UniSA Business School and here explains the major global shift taking place within business: traditional organisations embracing the ethos of social enterprises. [more...](#)



Alumni Events

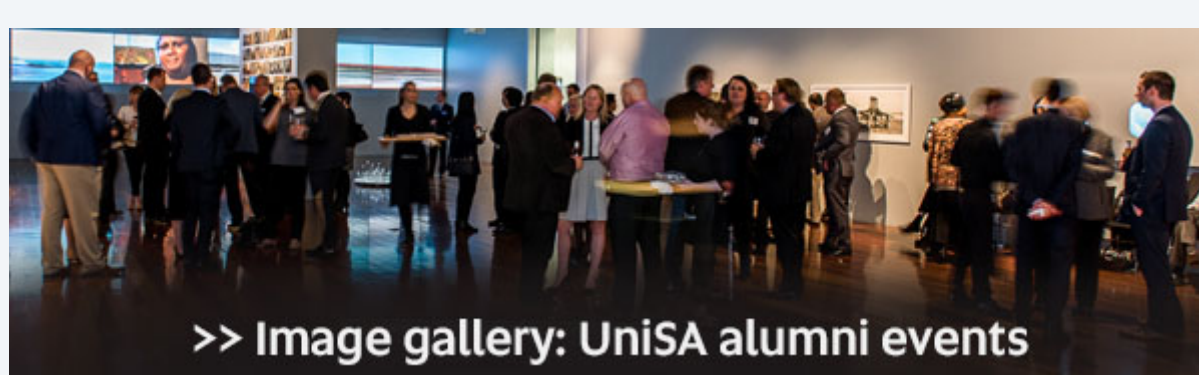
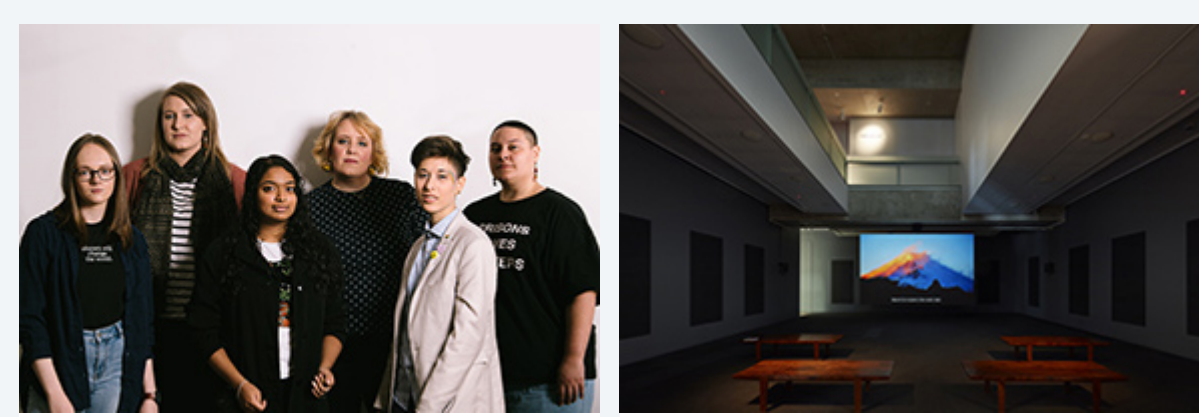
12 DEC **UniSA Alumni Networking Evening - Shanghai**
Get together with UniSA alumni to celebrate the end of 2019, 6:30pm – 8:30pm, at the Intercontinental Shanghai Pudong. Please RSVP to [Sara Jackson](#) to confirm your attendance.

Exhibitions

18 OCT. **Fiona Tan: Ascent**
The Samstag Museum of Art brings a concise selection of works by Fiona Tan to Adelaide for OzAsia Festival. Centering upon the Australian premiere of the 2016 work Ascent, this is the first significant presentation of the artist's work in our country in ten years.

06 DEC **Activism Now**
How has activism evolved and changed since women won the right to vote in the 1890s? What are the methods, the motivations, the outcomes? Activism Now explores contemporary activism through the stories of six self-identified women activists between the ages of 18 and 26.

20 NOV. **MOD. Seven Siblings from the Future**
Meet the siblings and help to shape the future of Eucalara through the choices that you make. SEVEN SIBLINGS FROM THE FUTURE asks what sort of future we want for South Australia. We consider the way that our personal values shape our decisions. How do these choices affect our community?



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A scholarship changes a life forever



Sarah Nur
Bachelor of Quantitative Finance
Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours) (Industrial & Applied Mathematics)

Welcome to the Summer of 2014. That's Sarah Nur in the pink dress at the opening of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank's new head office. At the time she was just twenty-five and was selected to speak alongside its Chairman, Managing Director, and (then) prime Minister, Tony Abbott.

Sarah is a proud Indonesian-Australian of Sasak descent. Her journey from a fishing village living in backpackers digs, to pursuing three maths and science degrees, rubbing shoulders with Australia's biggest business titans, is a testament to the power of self-determination and generosity.

Raised on the tiny picturesque island of Lombok in Indonesia amongst roaming chickens, sandy beaches, and the stunning backdrop of bright green rice fields and towering mountains, Sarah Nur could have never predicted where she'd eventually end up.

Now working as a Data Scientist in one of Australia's biggest retail banks – she's come a long way from West Nusa Tenggara.

The village Sarah and her siblings grew up in was basically an unsealed road with maybe 100 houses, separated by alleyways just wide enough for motorbikes to pass. Horse-pulled carts rambled alongside small covered pick-up trucks or 'bemos' loaded with vegetables for market, and fast food chains were non-existent.

While a happy existence, the opportunities an international education can bring were a world away.

After Sarah's parents' marriage breakdown, her mother who had always dreamed her children might receive an education in Australia, moved the family to Adelaide.

The cultural transition to a new country wasn't smooth sailing for Sarah though, and as a teenager trying to fit in, it was even more complicated.

"Coming to terms with a vastly different way of life in Australia was a big adjustment for a fourteen-year-old. On my very first day of school I came home and asked my Mum how to say, "I hate school" in English," says Sarah.

"Far from the high-achiever I had been all my life, I now grappled with subjects where I had to translate English back to Indonesian in my head to understand it."

For Sarah, only mathematics with its common universal language, felt familiar and it became her favourite subject.

"I have always had rather thick skin and gradually my natural resilience came to the fore. When I was teased for the way I spoke I would turn it around into a joke and make people laugh. I learnt not to take things personally. If I didn't easily fit, I would make my own way."



Sarah and her family on the beach near their home at Senggigi, Indonesia

However, Sarah's final year of school was devastating. Her father passed away suddenly and in dealing with his death, she didn't have the energy or inclination to think about anything long term.

That was until she stumbled upon an advertisement on the back of a Year 12 exam preparation book for the UniSA SA Water Hypatia Scholarship.

"It changed my life," says Sarah. "Until then, I wasn't aware that you could study mathematics degrees at university."

"I succeeded in achieving the requisite ATAR in my Year 12 results and was extremely honoured and privileged to be awarded the Scholarship over three years, commencing at UniSA in 2008."

The scholarship set her life on a completely different trajectory.

"It was more than just the money, what drove me was the knowledge that others believed in me and my potential to be successful as a woman in a traditionally non-female field."

"I think there's a lot to be said for sheer optimism and positivity in all situations and the belief that you can do anything if you're given the opportunity."



Sarah (4th from left) at the local school in Lombok

At UniSA Sarah thrived and her impressive academic achievements and the scholarship opened unimaginable doors for her.

"In my final year I was fortunate to participate in a Financial Mathematics semester exchange to the University of Twente in the Netherlands which was an amazing experience," she says.

"After returning I decided to enrol in a Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours) (Industrial and Applied Mathematics) which I completed in 2012 and I was selected into the graduate program at Bendigo and Adelaide Bank soon afterwards."

Still at the Bank today, Sarah was offered a role as a Financial Analyst after the graduate program and a year later successfully progressed to Product Analytics Manager.

She's since seen great success in her career. In the summer of 2014, Sarah was even selected to speak on behalf of staff at the opening of Bendigo and Adelaide Bank's new head office.

In 2017, still enthralled by the world of data and analytics, Sarah commenced a Master's degree in Data Science at UniSA and was later offered a Data Scientist position within the Customer Analytics and Insight team – a role she has been in for two years.



"I am very proud of working for a bank which has a strong regional presence and locally governed branches. Our Community Enterprise Foundation directs charitable funds into hundreds of causes, with profit going back to local communities," she says.

"This is important to me because I recognise that the generosity of others was transformative in my own journey. Generosity can make a huge impact."

"It can be the jump start that someone needs to pursue their passions and transform their world."

"My achievements are not just my own. They can be attributed to the sacrifices my mother made and the vision and support of donors. Looking back to the girl I was playing on that Indonesian beach, I am aware that I owe so much to the kindness of others."

UniSA is also proud of its commitment to social equity and academic excellence as number one in the state for the success of economically disadvantaged students and number three worldwide for reducing inequality (2019 THE University Impact Rankings).

Nearly 30 per cent of commencing students to the University come from an economically disadvantaged background and UniSA is the leading university in South Australia for first generation students in their families (2020 Good Universities Guide).

This is largely thanks to the generosity of scholarship donors impacting countless deserving individuals – helping write their success stories.

For disadvantaged individuals with worthy dreams and aspirations, a scholarship can be the one thing they need to change their life forever.

Our donors are helping write success stories

Behind every gift received is a person whose life is made better because of the belief and dedication of others.

Talk to us about how you or your company can support students like Sarah by visiting unisa.edu.au/supportscholarships, calling +61 8 8302 7375, or emailing giving@unisa.edu.au.

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Revolutionising workplaces in the Asia-Pacific



Caroline Burns
Founder & Managing Director, Workplace Revolution
Bachelor of Business (Property)

A self-described “serial entrepreneur and technology nerd”, Dr Caroline Burns has dedicated her professional life to providing corporate clients with bespoke advice in envisioning future business and workforce scenarios in the digital age across the Asia-Pacific region.

Workplace Revolution – a consultancy service intelligently transforming workplaces – is Caroline’s third business established in her fast-paced, consultancy career as a highly sought-after leader in the workplace and workforce profession.

She and her team identify and optimise opportunities for the transformation of “work + place” for competitive advantages in a company’s often cutthroat and saturated field.

Most of the world’s population (58%) spend one-third or 90,000 hours of their adult life at work (World Health Organisation), contributing greatly not only to an individual’s wellbeing, but societies at large and their effectiveness.

“We believe workplace matters and that an intelligently created workplace is a powerful business tool for supporting employee engagement, productivity and effectiveness,” Caroline says.

“It connects people to the purpose and values of the organisation, supports culture, and can be a powerful statement of identity.”

“All our clients in one way or another are grappling with the inherent tensions between aspiration versus operational capability, employee effectiveness versus experience, consistency and scalability versus customisation and personalisation, present functionality versus future flexibility, and increasingly, control of versus access to resources.”

“In essence, organisations are challenged to ensure they extract maximum value (in their terms) from their limited workplace resources.”

And that’s where Caroline and Workplace Revolution come in.



Caroline at one of her many speaking and mentoring engagements

Caroline originally decided to pursue a career in property development and real estate – earning a Bachelor of Business (Property) from UniSA – as it combined her love of design and architecture with her mathematics capabilities and knack for business.

After securing a fulltime job before her final exams as a Facility Planner at Woods Bagot, Caroline thrived on the variety, independence and trust that came with consulting for clients across the eastern seaboard which would set her up in good stead for her future professional career.

However, as an innate traveller and explorer, Caroline had her sights firmly set on Asia (even her final year thesis analysed the investment trends of Asian direct investment in Australia), so after a few attempts to relocate didn’t materialise, she seized opportunities to firstly to do projects in Asia, then permanently relocated to Singapore to establish and grow the Geyer workplace design and strategy business in Asia.

She hasn’t left since, finding the fast-paced, competitive and innovate mindset of Asia the perfect environment for Workplace Revolution.

“I love Asia because it’s incredibly diverse and a magnet for interesting, intelligent people from all over the world” Caroline says. “Everything here happens two to three times as fast compared to Australia, and often on tighter budgets, so it forces you to approach client service and business operations differently.”



Caroline in Tajikistan exploring The Silk Road and spice routes.

“It also suits my professional values and style as its very relationship and reputation driven – more so than Australia. If you invest in relationships and build trust you will have a solid foundation for long-term success.”

Caroline and her company as a result have carved out a brilliantly successful niche in the Asian market transforming and modernising a myriad of companies from Asian family-owned agglomerations to Fortune 100 organisations.

Continually seeking out opportunities to explore different aspects of “work + place” in the evolving digital economy, Caroline says the competitiveness of Singapore and Hong Kong being global hubs is constantly inspiring.

“You are always challenged to innovate and take calculated risks which I love – it’s never boring here!”

“I believe Asia will be a leader in the innovations that will profoundly influence the way we work and create communities. I am passionate about exploring how these changes may affect the environments in which we will work, live and play as well.

“I certainly never anticipated early in my career that this would be my ‘calling’, but I love the variety and independence, the opportunity to build longterm relationships within the profession, and the ongoing learning and accumulation of knowledge that is essential for any reputable consultant.”

The future of the workplace

Dr Caroline Burns is widely recognised as an independently-minded leader in the workplace and real estate profession and has written and presented extensively on a wide range of business topics.

As one of the foremost trusted experts and advisers in work + place transformation and organisational design, her extensive experience is sought-after by clients and colleagues worldwide.

Below we’ve asked her some questions and advice about workplace effectiveness and the future of work.

1. Could you take us through some workplace trends and changes you have seen in your career and what you believe we will be seeing in the near future?

Great workplaces are tuned into the unique mix of roles and types of people in an organisation and approach the environment holistically. Ensuring employees are engaged and know what to expect and that managers understand how to lead by example, investing in technology training and reinforcing office etiquettes (especially for open team areas) are essential ingredients for success.

I started my career in a private office in a prestige building in Adelaide, and now I work from anywhere and everywhere that work takes me around the world. By some measures I have therefore ‘lost’ a lot in twenty-five years, but to my thinking I have gained enormously! (I don’t have a dedicated office, I get to wear jeans not just on Fridays, I travel light and am constantly in touch with everyone I need to be connected with – and I find inspiration everywhere that nourishes our teams’ innovative and entrepreneurial spirit.

This is why I am loving this period of time on the brink of the digital age and see enormous opportunity to reimagine the typical ‘day at the office’ with our Clients and colleagues. It took most of my career to go from a private office, desktop PC and a suit, to jeans, a smart phone, and a favourite work café in every city.

Successful organisations in the new economy will use digital capabilities to improve processes, engage people and drive Innovation. They will make it easier for people to get work done and focus on what matters by overhauling work practices, policies, systems, and processes, and by driving a culture of trust and empowerment.

I am hopeful these business trends will bring more of a focus on how workplaces perform, not just how well they photograph!

I advise our Clients to be inspired but not blinded by other organisations’ “instagrammable” workplaces and current ‘design trends’. Be smart and dig into why the space works for them (and what doesn’t work) – are there parallels to your organisation or too many differences? Organisations and people are unique, dynamic, complex and reactive – your new workplace needs to be the same.



2. What do you think of the flexibility of the modern workplace, including trends like the rise of working remotely, open plan offices, and swapping formal spaces for hot desks and co-working spaces?

I’ve written and presented extensively on these topics (see my [website](#) or [LinkedIn](#)), so it’s hard to keep this short. I’ll just leave you with two quotes from recent articles that summarise my perspective:

These are examples of the trend towards the ‘on-demand’ workplace or ‘workplace as a service’ in response to the increasing need for flexibility, scalability, customisation and collaboration. This ‘trend’ is continuing to evolve in different directions in response to changing organisational and worker needs and preferences, and to different real estate/business contexts in different regions of the world.

There have been many articles recently (credible and not so credible) describing the negative effects of ‘open plan offices’ on productivity and experience in the workplace. But this is the wrong debate. Setting aside the fact that ‘open office’ is a very broad term that encompasses a hugely diverse range of workplace designs, like many things in life when done excessively it can be bad for you, but used in moderation in the right context for the right purpose, ‘open plan’ has a place in the workplace toolkit.

We should resist the temptation to get caught up in the ‘open plan is the enemy’ debate, instead of reviewing the facts available and applying these rationally to advance the quality of decisions about work environments. How we combine and apply the settings in the workplace toolkit can have a negative – even if unintended – influence on team effectiveness, so it is incumbent on advisers and influencers to avoid ‘groupthink’ and apply evidence from other workplaces thoughtfully.

Open plan environments may indeed be the enemy of workplace effectiveness and employee experience in many situations, but let’s ensure we don’t make critical workplace decisions based on ‘Take news’:

Conversely, cowering spaces challenge people to unlearn their old thinking around work, individualism and control. In this way, the cowering movement can help shift our relationship with work to be one that is more purposeful, collaborative, holistic, and self-directed.

This is the attitude people and organisations will need if they are going to successfully navigate the new economy. Human resources and corporate real estate leaders need to be part of the future of work discussion within their organisations, encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches to enabling great people to do great work. Increasingly, this work will be distributed across space and time, drawing on physical and digital resources, and access to people, inside and outside the control of the organisation.

3. What role do you think Artificial Intelligence will play (or is already playing...) in the future of our workplaces and professional life?

Change and technological innovation is not new in business. What is different about the period we are in now, compared to the dawn of the internet age at the start of my career, is that the rate and complexity of change, and the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) environment in which it is occurring means that the stakes are higher for everyone.

AI is still at the level of automation, robotics and machine-learning within fairly narrowly defined fields, experts suggest it will be a while before we have ‘general AI’ which could make a lot more jobs redundant.

So, for at least the next decade I believe knowledge workers will increasingly work with AI rather than be displaced by it, enabling us to focus on creative, collaborative, coaching and learning capabilities. For example, there is increasing investment in virtual assistants (such as Alexa for Business) and augmented reality in the workplace.

This means the places we work need to support these activities more effectively, especially constant, on the job learning and capability development. The internet of things and development of ‘smart buildings’ and ‘smart cities’ will also give rise to workplaces that are more intuitive, responsive, and hopefully healthier.

4. What are you most important insights you have discovered through your work that make a happy, successful business and workplace?

Trust and its opposite side, accountability.

It’s the foundation of everything good that follows.



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Gin with an environmentally-minded conscience



Lindon Lark
Graduate of Architecture and Founder Blend Etiquette
Bachelor of Architectural Studies
Master of Architectural Studies

What started out as a hobby and labour of love for Lindon Lark has now blossomed into a thriving beverage company. Blend Etiquette was first established with their bespoke premium mixer, Snake Oil Tonic Syrup, and now are developing with their very own gin, for even the most particular of gin connoisseurs.

With a little help from the Innovation & Collaboration Centre's flagship incubation program, Venture Catalyst, and access to the UniSA's Business School's best advisors and mentors, Blend Etiquette has gone from strength to strength. Their latest concoction, Gin Pangolin, boasts an Australian-focused seaside palette and an environmentally-minded conscience, collaborating with Save Pangolins to spread awareness and raise funds for pangolin conservation.

Lindon takes us through the inspiration behind the brand, the South Australian gin industry, and how he impressively managed his burgeoning business while finishing his Architecture degrees at UniSA.

You recently graduated from UniSA's Master of Architecture this year, but have already established a beverage company - how would you describe what you do?

I am currently employed as a graduate of Architecture across two offices, but in my spare time I co-manage Blend Etiquette. My business partner (and fellow UniSA graduate), Geordan Ellis, does the day to day management of stock, accounts and deliveries, where I spend most of my time working on the business growth and direction.

This involves for instance, researching and obtaining the infrastructure required to launch a new product. I am working through the logistics of financing our brand-new distillery as we speak. Fingers crossed it'll be launched before Christmas.

Why did you and your Geordan begin Blend Etiquette? Have you always been interested in Australian spirit industry?

I founded Blend Etiquette on my own with what began as more of a hobby. The interest initially was around business management and skills that I was hoping to acquire through a sandbox environment. However, along this journey, Snake Oil Tonics has become my little passion project. I love it.

The reason for starting with Snake Oil Tonics in the beginning, was hugely influenced by my father who, to this day, is a co-owner of Kangaroo Island Spirits. He introduced me to Tonic Syrups and gave me the fundamental recipe that we, unashamedly, still use today.



Image courtesy of Blend Etiquette

Blend Etiquette's most recent release is Gin Pangolin. It's a product with a conscience - could you tell us a bit about it, the campaign, and what you hope to achieve with it?

Gin Pangolin was created probably because of the complete saturation of gin in our lives!

Both my business partner and I work/ed at the Howling Owl as bartenders specialising in gin and gin-based drinks. We also watched good friends of ours - Lyrebird Distilling Co - establish their brand in the market and were able to see how they achieved what they did.

The key for us was to make a gin that was great neat. Above all else it had to be smooth and clean. With our recipe we drew inspiration from our coastal upbringing. With strong citrus notes and a slight saltiness, it sits very well in a martini. Garnish with two olives and a twist (there's a recipe on the back of every bottle).

The name was picked by my mother who has spent several years in and around Cambodia. She spent some time in a struggling eco-tourism village with ties to wildlife alliance, Chh Phat (Chee - Pat), it was here that she discovered the plight of the pangolins and the rest is history.

We made a trip last December to go and visit the wildlife centre my mother had visited and when we returned, we ran our [Poizable campaign](#), 10% of which went to Save Pangolins (a not for profit that works closely with the WCN).

We would love to get Gin Pangolin to a stage where we can dedicate a portion of all profits raised to help re-establish ex poachers with a sustainable source of income. We met a few of these in Cambodia, and with even the smallest amount of investment, it would be possible to generate some great change.

Blend Etiquette joined UniSA Innovation & Collaboration Centre's Venture Catalyst program in 2017. How did this impact or change the company? Could you tell us a little bit about your experience with the ICC?

ICC was game-changing of course.

At the end of 2016, we were awarded \$33,000 to establish Snake Oil Tonics and attempt to get it to an export stage. We still aren't there yet but being in the ICC helped us to start thinking bigger than operating out of our home kitchen.

Since winning Venture Catalyst, we have had massive exposure to the entire UniSA faculty, which has aided in getting advice from various departments. The ICC has provided us with advice on getting investor-ready, as well as giving advice on when it is a good time to take on an investor.

It has also strengthened our reputation within Adelaide as a small start-up due to the known support at the ICC. I had a mentor, Jana Mathews, who was fantastic and a big shout out to Jasmine Freudenburg for always being so supportive.



Lark (second from right) at the Innovation & Collaboration Centre's first birthday

You've just recently graduated from Architecture here at UniSA, congrats! How did you balance running a small business and your studies?

This was tricky, before going into my Masters I decided to give half of the company to my current business partner Geordan Ellis. This was stressful but was the best decision I've made. This gave me the flexibility to study, work and manage the business while Geordie was able to manage most of the day-to-day stuff and all the accounts.

We were able to launch our first batch of Gin Pangolin at my graduate exhibition late last year. That was a great conclusion to years of sweat and hard work.

Did your studies at UniSA - and what you were learning and experiencing - influence or bleed into Blend Etiquette at all?

Architecture has been surprisingly helpful. From the ability to draw up our own plans for development applications, to having an okay eye for basic graphic design. My studies have absolutely been a blessing.

Adelaide has seen its spirit and bar industry go from strength to strength in recent years. Why do you think this is and how does it impact you?

I should know more about this than I do! A few years back, after my father had started his distillery the Adelaide City Council handed out some ludicrous number of small bar licenses (something like 175). Since then we've seen the likes of Peel and Leigh St blossom, changing the nightlife scene in Adelaide to a more accessible and sophisticated one.

As a spirit producer, this is great, more people out there who want to know about your product, and if they believe in it, they take care of your customer education in the best way possible.

With the rise of gin, we have also seen a boost in gin dedicated bars, which in turn are churning out a new pedigree of young bartenders who really know their stuff. The next step for this generation (we hope), will be to take the small step from bartender to brand ambassador or become producers themselves.

If we were ever to hire a distiller, they would need to have a palate that can pull flavour profiles from 80% abv spirit as it's coming out of the still. Whether that's someone with a degree behind them or someone from the bar scene whose been tasting raw spirits every day for 3 years, who knows.



Image courtesy of Blend Etiquette

What would you like to see more of in the industry? What would you like to see less of?

Way more originality. Way less mimicking. Too often we see a great product released only to be followed up by six of the same things from other producers. Our plan is to launch two or three core products, and then just work on single release flavours.

What we love about the industry in South Australia though is the community. The only reason we have committed to the idea of a distillery is because we have always enjoyed and appreciated the people we work alongside.

A huge shout out to Prohibition Liquor for letting me work on their cellar door design with them and helping us with our logo and branding.

To 36Short for selling us empty bottles in the early days.

To Lyrebird Distilling for always being willing to split the cost of stalls at events.

To Never Never Distilling Co for the advice on the stainless Enolmatic head advice and for putting SA gins on the map again and again.

To Red Hen for just being the nicest guys in the industry.

To Ounce (Imperial Measures) for the advice of cellar door costs, investors, sorting us a distributor and helping make further connections in the industry.

To Adelaide Hills Distillery for the conversations around bitters and syrups at the first Tasting Australia we all worked at.

To KIS (Kangaroo Island Spirits), for everything.

And all the rest we haven't yet worked with but are looking forward to doing so.

What's next on the cards for Blend Etiquette?

Probably a nap.

And finally, what's your poison of choice?

An impossible question. But you'll find me at the Howling Owl most days after work, sinking an ice-cold Mismatch Session Ale.

The Innovation & Collaboration Centre: Venture Catalyst Program

VENTURE CATALYST

ICC INNOVATION & COLLABORATION CENTRE

Turn your idea into a business! Venture Catalyst is an incubator program designed to develop and grow founders with innovative or disruptive ideas.

Following the success of the University of South Australia's Venture Catalyst startup program which began in 2016, the new Venture Catalyst incubation program combines key learnings with technical and business advisers and one on one mentoring to deliver a program that supports early stage startup founders to plan and successfully execute their journey towards building a globally scalable and investment ready business.

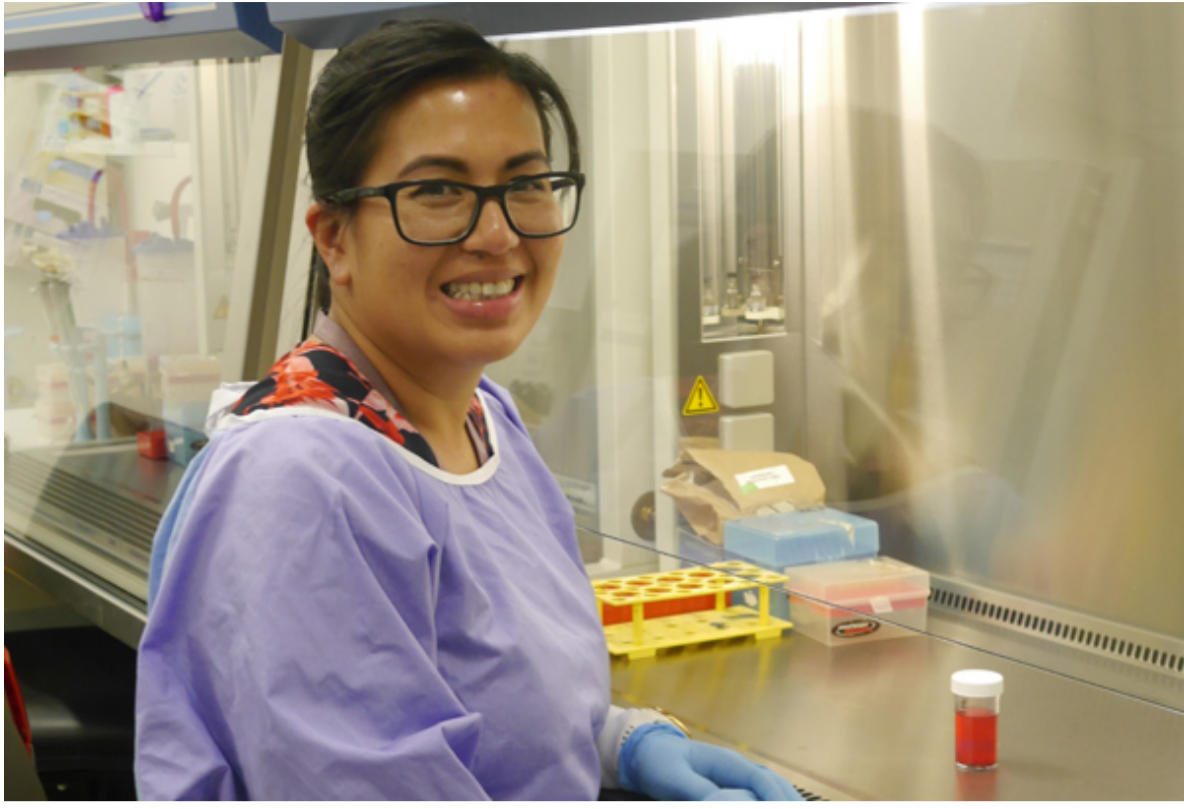
This six-month incubator program is delivered by the Innovation & Collaboration with ICC Entrepreneur in Residence Kirk Drage and his company LeapSheep. After 12 years at Microsoft in roles such as Head of Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Relations for Asia Pacific (based in Singapore), Drage spent time in Silicon Valley developing Artificial Intelligence products and services before returning home to Adelaide in 2015 passionate about supporting committed entrepreneurs.

For more information visit: icc.unisa.edu.au/programs/venture-catalyst/

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Vital funding for the deadliest and most unforgiving cancers



Dr Melinda Tea has been awarded the 2019 Chris Adams UniSA Research Grant to undertake overseas training into the highly-specialised and advanced use of the Bruker Micro-CT system instrumental in understanding the particular fatal brain cancer glioblastoma (GBM).

Dr Tea from the Centre for Cancer Biology (CCB) at University of South Australia (UniSA) is making strides towards both establishing a living glioblastoma biobank as a powerful resource to enhance glioblastoma research locally and nationally and using this resource to develop novel therapeutic strategies to combat glioblastoma.

The Molecular Signalling Laboratory recently established an advanced preclinical model of GBM through support from the Neurosurgical Research Foundation (NRF) and their burgeoning partnerships to combat one of the most powerful and unforgiving cancers

GBM is the most commonly diagnosed malignant brain tumour in adults, affecting approximately 1000 Australian adults annually. With very few treatment options available, it is a highly fatal cancer with a median survival of less than 15 months and less than five per cent survival after five years.

The survival rates for brain cancer have barely changed over the last 30 years, therefore there is a desperate need to identify new and improved targeted therapies against GBM, so Dr Tea and the Molecular Signalling Lab have set their sights on learning more about this devastating disease.



Dr Melinda Tea, Cherie and Marty Adams, NRF Executive Officer, Ginta Orchard and NRF Chair of Brain Tumour Research, Professor Stuart Pitson at the Grant Recipient Afternoon Tea

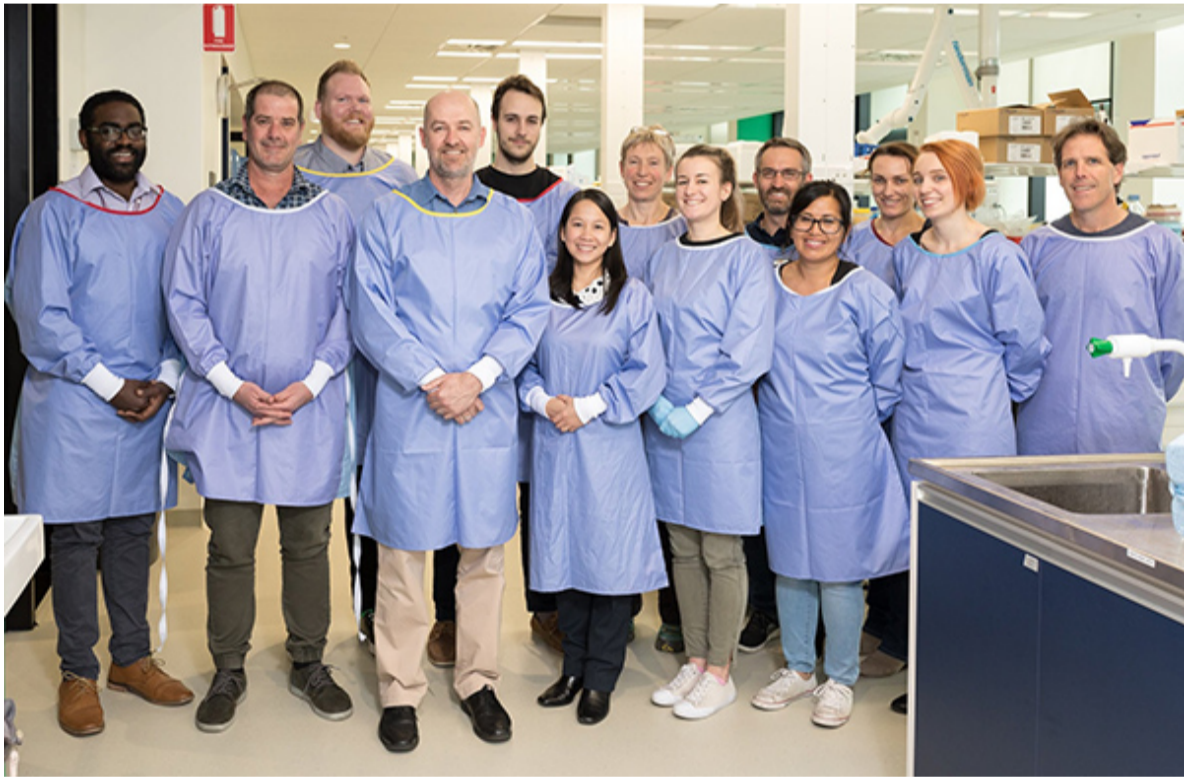
Ultimately, this intensive training course provides the Molecular Signalling Lab with a better understanding of how GBM tumours respond to new and improved therapies, and in the long term may lead to desperately needed improved outcomes for these patients.

NRF Chair of Brain Tumour Research and Head of the Molecular Signalling Lab at CCB, Professor Stuart Pitson, is in full support of Dr Melinda Tea and says the grant funding is going to a worthy project in investing in micro-CT education.

"In 2017 Dr Tea moved within the CCB to my laboratory where she has since been instrumental in driving our research into the fatal glioblastoma brain cancer," he says.

"Micro-CT is a non-invasive, 3-dimensional imaging technique, that provides specialised information above that of the tools currently used and allows for the volume of the tumour to be determined at various stages of disease progression can be determined.

"This is particularly important, as an increase in tumour volume causes an increase in the pressure inside the skull and is associated with an increase in neurological symptoms, resulting in rapid cognitive and functional decline and eventual death.



Dr Melinda Tea (fourth from the right) with her Molecular Signalling Laboratory colleagues.

"The training Dr Tea will undertake in the advanced use of the Bruker Micro-CT system is vital to our brain tumour research and is key to her research efforts and her development of advanced pre-clinical models of GBM that we are establishing to drive glioblastoma research locally and nationally."

The annual \$5,000 grant has been made possible thanks to the memorial Chris Adams UniSA Research Grant that pays homage to Chris Adams' indomitable spirit to help others facing a brain cancer diagnosis.

Chris Adams lost his battle with the rare grade-three anaplastic astrocytoma brain tumour in November 2015, in the midst of his UniSA business degree.

Taken far too early by a disease that has devastating effects on the lives of patients and their loved ones, Chris' family is now dedicated to honouring his memory and spirit by supporting vital research to find a cure with the Chris Adams UniSA Research Grant.

Chris' family and friends established the 'Strong Enough To Live' campaign raising \$125,000 to support the grant which will be awarded each year to an early-career researcher working in a field of high-quality brain tumour research.

"We would like to congratulate Dr Melinda Tea on being this year's recipient of the Chris Adams Research Grant," say Cherie and Marty, Chris' parents.

"How fortunate we are that we have gifted and dedicated researchers like Dr Tea who are working tirelessly to find a way to improve the odds of survival for people like Chris and the thousands of other brain cancer sufferers that do not deserve to die.

"We hope that the fundraising initiated by Chris and continued in his name will assist researchers to find a cure for this insidious disease."

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