



Happy Holidays from the Vice Chancellor

University of South Australia Vice Chancellor & President, Professor David Lloyd, reflects on the year that's been and thanks the entire alumni community for all the support during 2019 as we head into the holiday season and new decade. [more...](#)



LOST in Hong Kong for 45 minutes

MBA Graduate, Rick Woo, has been bringing people together with his LOST escape rooms since 2013 filled to the brim with his unique brand of bespoke puzzles and riddles amongst historical adventures, that now boast more than 13 branches in a number of countries. [more...](#)



Former Vogue Online Editor branches out on her own

Alexandra Brown has always loved fashion and clothes, so it was only natural she followed her heart into the world of women's magazine publishing. Now in Sydney, she has branched out on her own with a stunning bespoke line of home and body products inspired by her idyllic childhood on Kangaroo Island. [more...](#)



Why are you giving this Christmas?

Have you ever wondered why the act of gift-giving is so ingrained in us as humans? We've asked three of UniSA's expert researchers about our giving behaviours heading into the festive season. Plus, you might just discover some rewarding inspiration if you've left your Christmas shopping to the last minute too. [more...](#)



Ending homelessness cycle with dignity

With some much-needed funds from the Australian Communities Foundation (through the Wantless Family Fund), Dr Katia Ferrar's Open Door Health Justice Clinic has just been given a boost to continue her vital work in providing physiotherapy, podiatry and legal services to adults in crisis or experiencing homelessness. [more...](#)



Communities together against bushfires

As devastating bushfires continue to rage across the country and the scorching weather not likely to let up anytime soon, it is more important than ever to be prepared for the worst-case scenarios and the realities of our enviable, yet often unforgiving, Australian summers. [more...](#)



Alumni Events

- 12 FEB The Art of Social Change**
An opportunity to hear first-hand from the International Sanaa artists as they will share their artistic journey, how they use their art form to positively impact their communities back home, and the changing face of contemporary art in Africa.
- 13 FEB Sanaa Storytelling**
An evening of theatre, poetry and storytelling, ActNow's Theatre of the Global Majority are set to take to the stage, showcasing some of their latest work. Steven Tongun will MC the evening which will include poetry reading and storytelling from Chwis Best, DyspOra, Tailor Winston and Eva Thupi.

Exhibitions

- 03 FEB-24 MAR Sanaa: A Better World Through Creativity**
Showcasing the work of contemporary African artists - from grassroots level to some of the continent's leading artists, this exhibition includes artwork from Africa's street artists, prolific visual artists and photographers.
- 30 NOV-24 MAY MOD. Seven Siblings from the Future**
Meet the siblings and help to shape the future of Eucalera 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?



>> Image gallery: UniSA alumni events

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Happy Holidays from the Vice Chancellor



As this year comes careening to a close far too soon, it's the perfect time to reflect on what a spectacular year our University of South Australia community has had.

It's been an honour travelling the world to meet all of you in your hundreds at our alumni events in places like Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Mt Gambier, London, Malaysia, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong, and of course all our Adelaide trailblazers as well.

I've loved hearing what you have got up to since graduating, reading your stories and seeing your photos each month in Alumni News, and how you've been putting your education to work.

These networking and reunion events culminate each year in the Alumni Awards where we proudly honour four of our outstanding graduates, relishing the opportunity to celebrate the success of our graduates, honour their achievements, and thank them for what they have done for those around them.

This year, artist and educator, Darren Siwes; entrepreneur and businesswoman, Dr Pauline Wong; Amnesty International Crisis Response Director, Tirana Hassan; and Director-General of Security at ASIO, Mike Burgess, were the stars at our 2019 Alumni Awards Gala Dinner in Pridham Hall, and it was an honour to be in their presence on the night.



VC Professor David Lloyd with Mike Burgess at the 2019 Alumni Awards

As a graduate of UniSA you belong to a global network of more than 215,000 alumni which extends across 134 countries. Our alumni are very important to us; you are our success stories, the role models for current students and those who might follow in your footsteps.

Make sure you stay engaged and take advantage of our extensive Alumni Network at your fingertips too with the Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre, Hawke EU Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, MOD. (Museum Of Discovery), View From the Top, and our exciting upcoming schedule of exhibitions and events for 2020.

As your career grows and your success is assured, current students look at you and see what is possible in their own lives, so please do keep us informed with where life takes you.

It's now time to start slowing down and preparing for the upcoming festive season and as we look back on the year that's been, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for all your support during 2019.

It would not be possible without our cohort of impressive alumni out there changing the world.

Vice Chancellor's 2019 Highlights:



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LOST in Hong Kong for 45 minutes



Rick Woo
Co-Founder, LOST
Graduate Certificate of Business
Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Hong Kong entrepreneur, Rick Woo, has built an escape room empire from the ground up that – just six years after its inception – now spans eight countries and 13 separate branches. Rick attributes the rapid growth and success of LOST not just to smart, ambitious business decisions, but the power of the team-building, unity, and the great equaliser his escape room and physical adventure games have become.

LOST is a series of real-life escape rooms based on different historical adventures and legends, UniSA MBA graduate Rick co-founded, where players must solve a series of puzzles and find clues, using a combination of their interpersonal and observational skills, to 'escape' within a time limit.

When you step into LOST anywhere in the world all airs and graces are put aside. You must together work through the series of riddles that may take you on a journey through the ancient ruins of Castiglione's Tuscan Castle or escape the infamously unforgiving Alcatraz Island.

Rick established his first interactive escape room in 2013 in Hong Kong's energetic retail heart, Causeway Bay. Now just six years later, he and his LOST team have created over 100 different themed rooms and currently operate 13 branches in eight countries, including Canada, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, and Australia.



The entrance to LOST Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

"At LOST, there is no language barrier, it brings those from different cultural backgrounds and players with different abilities together to participate," Rick says.

"We don't care about who you are, we encourage people to work together, to use your brain and not your physical strength during these escape games."

"It really is a team work game that can expose a person's strengths and weaknesses but is also a great experience for unlocking a person's hidden power and increase group bonding."

10 years ago, Rick was an ambitious entrepreneur looking to enhance his business know-how with a flexible but reputable master course. Hence, he enrolled in UniSA's 5-star MBA experience.

Since the day he graduated in 2011 he was determined to start-up his own business wanting to "work with" inspiring entrepreneurs instead of "work for" someone and found he most enjoyed creating a brand and had hopes to penetrate to overseas.

In 2013, Rick Woo noticed his friends and colleagues were throwing themselves into Hong Kong's growing online boom – building e-commerce services, app matching platforms, social applications became all the rage.

While this was an exciting time full of innovation and new technological conveniences, Rick was always one step ahead, looking to the future wondering what will happen when the bubble inevitably pops.

"Many retail outlets and shopping malls were facing a big challenge, and still are, thus I started to do some research and realised the experiential business is picking up in some other countries," Rick says. "So, we started up LOST in October 2013."

"Our advantage was we adopted a range of real adventure historical stories and legends, to make it a true reality-based escape game, paired with our own proprietary designed auto-gadgets, giving players an unforgettable experience."

"We found people loved to be immersed in a different world to be engaged during the game, and if it sounded like a movie or the narrative was inspired by a true story, that made the audience more into it"



Rick sharing his knowhow at a recent speaking event.

However, even though Rick carved out his own niche with LOST in the experiential retail store space, there was still many naysayers that didn't believe it was a viable business in such a technology-focussed industry amongst the online boom.

"At the very beginning, around two years after LOST started up, the escape game industry seemed to be shrinking and people around us were adamant this wasn't a long-lasting business," Rick says.

"But I love the challenge of building brands, problem solving, and brainstorming different ways to tackle issues. This challenging moment pushed me to breakthrough with our LOST competitive advantages, and eventually prove to the market that escape game rooms were a successful business venture."

"We did in part by marketing to corporate clients as the perfect experience for team building, retail clients for fun-based social activities, and school-aged clients for play-based learning."

The success of which spurred Rick and his team to create a now thriving sub-brand LOST Junior which targets children aged 6-14 and fully embeds STEAM education elements within the games as an educational and exciting experience.



Lost Junior in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

In the past six years, LOST has accomplished so much more than Rick could have ever imagined and been awarded with a number of accolades that Rick attributes to his hard-working, devoted team which he is undoubtedly proud of.

This year, Rick was also nominated for the 2019 Australia China Alumni Awards in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation category, in which Australian Alumni who have demonstrated their entrepreneurial abilities are honoured.

"It really is the greatest honour to be a finalist in this award – especially as I treat Australia as my second home."

"Being a Hong Kong brand and being recognised by the Australia China Alumni Association is definitely motivating for my team and I, and we are thankful for the endorsement of our efforts and achievements."

"Sharing my success and failures to young entrepreneurs is another motivation which drives me and makes me more hopeful and energetic for the future."

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Former Vogue Editor branches out on her own



Alexandra Brown
 Bachelor of Journalism
 Director & Founder of Ms BROWN

After being immersed in the world of women's luxury fashion as an editor for magazines brands such as Harper's BAZAAR, VOGUE Australia and VOGUE Living, UniSA Journalism graduate, Alexandra Brown, developed a keen eye for beautiful considered products – ones that actually work.

With this knack for recognising beauty in simplicity and a desire to remove harsh and toxic ingredients from our everyday routines, she established own line of natural, beautifully branded and packaged, environmentally-conscious products for the home and body.

Ms BROWN takes inspiration from her idyllic childhood growing up on a merino sheep farm in Kangaroo Island – implementing plant-based, chemical-free ingredients – to provide the most effective and gentle wash for your most precious clothes and delicate skin, something the environment is thankful for too.

Alexandra tells us about how she became a thriving entrepreneur with the coolest cleaning products on the market, and why you no longer have to choose between natural and luxury with her simple approach to products for the home and body.



1. You originally studied Journalism at UniSA and spent many years at leading Australian Magazines, could you tell us about this period in your career?

I enrolled in the Journalism degree at UniSA with the goal of becoming a print journalist and was already quite interested in women's magazines at this point. Halfway through the degree, my mind was made up, and I spent many of the uni holidays (and most of the final year actually thanks to accommodating tutors and lecturers) doing work experience and internships at a broad range of lifestyle magazines and newspaper inserted magazines in both Adelaide and Sydney.

I aimed to meet as many people in the industry as possible and get as much experience as I could. This included working in the press department at UniSA too! I worked for one year at Jigsaw Publications in Adelaide on a range of custom and consumer titles before moving to Sydney where I interned some more before getting a job in the advertising department at ACP Magazines working on Madison (now closed) and Harper's Bazaar.

Eventually I landed my dream job at Vogue where I began as assistant to the editor then edited the arts section of the magazine. I moved from there to run the website for Vogue Living. While it wasn't without it's hard work and persistence, I feel so lucky to have had the career I long dreamed of. Each were wonderful places to work and in addition to some pretty incredible experiences – meeting and interviewing talented and fascinating people, some fabulous overseas travel and cultural experiences – I also made lifelong friends.



Alexandra Brown the Director & Founder of Ms BROWN

2. What made you branch out and begin your own business – what was this transition like? Did your previous career as an editor influence you at all?

I suppose a big part of the reason I was drawn to magazines was because I love fashion, I love clothes. I also had in the back of my mind for some time that I wanted to have my own business at some point. Throughout my career I was exposed to so many beautiful brands and products and noticed there was an opportunity to create an environmentally-conscious garment care product that was not only natural but beautifully branded and packaged – special, like the clothes you want to wash with it.

My career in magazines certainly prepared me well for running my own business – as a magazine journalist, in my experience at least, you need to be very resourceful, adaptable and willing to work hard and sometimes long hours.

The biggest or most difficult part of the transition for me was leaving a fun and busy office filled with colleagues who had become friends, to working alone and from home. I found it very isolating. I much prefer it now that we have a small team and an office and warehouse.

3. What was the inspiration behind Ms BROWN, your garment care and body care line? Did your upbringing on a Merino sheep farm influence this?

Growing up on a merino sheep farm on Kangaroo Island I learned about the benefits of natural fibres and how to care for them. Then, while working in magazines I realised there was an opportunity to create a product for this purpose and to educate the customer on how to care for wool and other seemingly tricky to care for garments. A key ingredient in our Wool & Cashmere Wash is pure Kangaroo Island eucalyptus, sourced from a small, family owned distillery not far from our family farm.



4. All your products are natural, plant-based and organic – what was the thought behind this more considerate and environmentally-conscious approach?

Growing up we used only natural products (like Ki Eucalyptus) for washing and cleaning and as I grew older this translated into my skincare and other products around the home. So, when it came to creating my own brand there was no question that the ingredients would be stringently chosen to be safest for both the consumer and the environment.

Caring for beautiful clothes properly will ensure they stay looking lovely and you can enjoy them for much longer. This of course is better for not only your purse, but the environment. Additionally, part of the motivation for creating the garment care was to offer an alternative to dry cleaning – which is not only damaging to the environment, but over time to the clothes themselves as well.

5. How has it felt going from writing for magazines to being featured in Elle Australia, Vogue Australia, Vogue Living, Harper's Bazaar and Gourmet Traveller?

It has been wonderful to have Ms BROWN supported by the Australian press. Even though I worked in the industry (or perhaps even more so because of that), it's always very flattering to be contacted by a publication. It's still such a thrill to see our products on the pages of magazines and newspapers and it is a great way for people to discover our products as it is still a very young brand. It also helps that I know what and how the editors like images and copy to be sent!

6. Do you have a favourite scent or particular product from your line?

I use the Wool & Cashmere Wash on almost all our washing at home – and that now includes my daughter's clothes. I also use the Unscented Hand Cream every single day as an all-over body cream for both my daughter and myself.

7. What's next for you – are you planning on expanding the line?

We do have rather a large pipeline of products on the way in the next 12 months, so watch this space! I also recently became a mum so am enjoying spending precious time with our daughter Louisa, who is now four-months-old.

For more on Alexandra and her stunning line of body and home products visit the Ms BROWN website [here](#)



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Why are you giving this Christmas?



Gift-giving and the sharing of goods have been a keystone in nurturing and maintaining our social relationships since the beginning of human civilisation. However, in our modern capitalist society, it may seem like we are trapped in a cycle of consumerism, literally buying into the commercialisation of Christmas where perceived value equates to how much an object can cost.

Three of our researchers at the University of South Australia reflect on the act of gift-giving and charity during the festive period and if it can still evoke the same nurturing benefits to us as individuals and wider communities today.

Professor Bernard Guerin from UniSA's School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy is an expert in social behaviour and has a particular interest in the diverse forms of relationships between strangers to those in close communities.

His research shows gifts are an intrinsic and effective way to strengthen our communities and relationships in ways that align with our social values, while also feeling a strong sense of purpose and personal satisfaction.

"Our sense of community as humans sets us apart from other species and the act of gift-giving only reinforces and strengthens these relationships," Professor Guerin says.

"Gifts are social exchanges for maintaining our social relationships. Gifts are outside of our normal economic exchanges, but they still aim to reinforce the social relationships we need in life."



"Some Pacific Islanders exchange common sea-shells with their trading partners emphasising that they value these social relationships over and above the normal trade exchanges."

This includes the act of Christmas gift-giving where he notes that this festive time of year in our modern society brings a bustle of buying gifts unlike anything else during the other 11 months.

However, he also comments that capitalism and our modern commercialised society has posed a whole set of different values when it comes to gift-giving, particularly in the lead up to Christmas.

"We now seem to be trapped into showing how we value our social relationships in the same way that capitalism itself works: more money equals higher value," Professor Guerin says. "It is not that we are bad people doing this – it is just how our present economy shapes us."

"There's an enormous group of people who profit from marketing objects, using Christmas to do their regular business, and usurp what gift-giving was originally about."

"This has left many people finding gift-giving and Christmas not doing what they hoped it would do and looking for alternatives or stopping the practice altogether. People often express this by saying that this time of year is no longer special or is not meaningful anymore."

All is not lost though. This alienation and disenfranchisement in the spirit of Christmas has led to an uptake in more meaningful experiential gifts and charitable giving. With the act of giving also having benefits for individuals because the sense of personal gratification associated with the release of oxytocin, the feel-good hormone or that warm glowing feeling.



Dr Cathy Nguyen (left) and Dr Margaret Faulkner (right)

At the University of South Australia Business School's Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science, Dr Margaret Faulkner and Dr Cathy Nguyen have been studying cause-related and charity marketing, investigating consumer behaviour and how brands grow in the non-profit and charity sector.

They have also noticed this time of year brings with it more consumption, but with an increase in more charitable giving as a positive contribution to society.

Acknowledging the spirit of Christmas goes beyond giving just to family and friends, Dr Faulkner and Dr Nguyen say we tend to think of the wider community and those less fortunate around this time as well, either through the giving of money, the giving of time, or the donating of previously owned goods.

It's also a time where people spend and buy a lot – when people will get new presents – forming the catalyst for clearing out the old or unwanted goods in the home and driving donations to charity stores such as the Salvos or Vinnies.

"There is also a social norm to support charities and non-profits in our society. We have previously asked people about the expectation to give this kind of support. The results confirmed this expectation exists for many people."

"From the study, over half agreed with an expectation to spend time helping someone in the next three months, and a third expressed agreement with the expectation to give money over the same timeframe."

The two researchers also recently conducted a survey on helping behaviour asking people to share how they felt when they give support. They stress it is important for charities to remind us that they exist and need support. This is called being mentally available so they have a greater chance of being thought of when a giving situation arises.

"Our survey last month of 1500 Australians asked about their helping behaviour and how they felt when they give support," Dr Faulkner says. "On a scale from 0 to 10, 55% reported scores of 9 or 10 for giving to be 'satisfying' and 'pleasant', with over 93%, agreeing with both statements."

"This confirms the 'warm glow' or release of the feel-good hormone oxytocin often documented in literature that can motivate us to help others."

So why not bask in the warm glow of charitable gift-giving this Christmas?

How do you want to change the world?



I want to change a student's life forever

Some of our students face real barriers to success. A UniSA education can be a game-changer.



I want to embed myself in the DNA of Pridham Hall

Before the sound of voices ring through the foyers and graduation stage you can be part of a unique opportunity which will inspire future generations.



I want to join UniSA's fight against cancer

Every day our researchers are getting one-step closer to saving more lives as well as improving the quality of life for cancer survivors. But they need your help.



I want to ensure a healthy future

Help our researchers continue their work in preventing illness, improving health systems and services creating more effective therapies, and advancing health equality.



I want to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their potential

Through the Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship fund you can help change the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through higher education.



I want to inspire new ideas in science, art, and innovation

MOD is a futuristic museum of discovery, provoking new ideas at the intersection of science, art, and innovation.

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Ending homelessness cycle with dignity



Dr Katia Ferrar
Physiotherapist & Open Door Health Justice Clinic Founder
Bachelor of Applied Science in Physiotherapy
Bachelor of Health Science (Honours)
Doctorate by Research, Human Movement

In 2016 the ABS Census determined that on any given night 1 in 200 people in Australia found themselves homeless. In fact, 60 per cent of people 'sleeping rough' were under 35-years-old and 17,845 were children under 12-years-old.

Struck by the unending cycle of poverty and homelessness in her own backyard – driven by her strong sense of social justice and dedication to being an ethical health practitioner – UniSA Academic and Physiotherapist, Dr Katia Ferrar, established the Open Door Health Clinic in 2017.

The aim of the Clinic, which is an initiative between the University of South Australia and The Salvation Army, was to address these alarming numbers and support some of the most vulnerable people in our community by offering free health appointments in a welcoming and non-judgemental environment.

Following the Clinic's initial success, in 2018 it expanded to include legal services and is now known as the Open Door Health Justice Clinic – a ground-breaking service being the first student-led clinic in Australia using the health-justice model.

Now two years later the Clinic is going from strength to strength having provided over \$50,000 worth of quality physiotherapy, podiatry and legal services free of charge to adults in crisis or experiencing homelessness in South Australia at its Pirie Street location.



Enterprising Research: Combining health and law to help people in crisis.

"People experiencing homelessness suffer many of the same conditions as the rest of the population, but they also suffer some unique problems," Dr Ferrar says.

"Sleeping rough and homeless people often experience low back and neck pain. Plus, as many don't have appropriate footwear, they can present with toenail issues and injuries to their feet, that can easily develop into larger issues."

The Clinic is dedicated to delivering hands-on quality care to vulnerable individuals to help restore, maintain and promote optimal function across a variety of different areas – with health issues they treat everything from foot and ankle injuries, chronic neck and back pain, joint and muscle injuries, and neurological conditions.

For example, a client may come in seeking treatment for chronic back or neck pain and they can also access free legal advice on issues such as housing eviction or managing welfare payment requirements if they are unable to look for work.

Every week up to nine physio appointments, six podiatry appointments, and five law appointments are available in one afternoon. The Clinic therefore has the capacity to help up to 20 people experiencing disadvantage and homelessness each week, providing services they otherwise would not access.



Dr Ferrar and her team have been awarded an Australian Communities Foundation Grant, with support from sub-fund the Wantless Family Fund, to continue the vital work and expand the Clinic with funds going toward linen and consumables, portable treatment beds, specialised client software and laptops, and other services that keep the doors open on this much needed support to Adelaide's most vulnerable.

But evidence indicates that people experiencing homelessness still do not receive the type and quality of care required when they seek out health services in the wider community. In fact, they are routinely judged and not treated with respect.

This leads to a mistrust of health service providers and avoidance of seeking treatment. Unfortunately, this has major impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of people who are already living in vulnerable circumstances.

This why Dr Ferrar and the Open Door Health Justice Clinic team's work is so important in targeting social inequity by increasing access to desperately needed health and legal services for vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians.

"People experiencing homelessness face many challenges in accessing health and social services. Even attending a medical appointment in a traditional clinical setting can be daunting," Dr Ferrar says.

"This presents a barrier to people seeking help, so we established the clinic to address an identified need and to help alleviate the cycle of social disadvantage and social problems in a practical way."



Dr Katia Ferrar at the City West Health and Medical Clinic with Physiotherapy student Blake Palmer

The Clinic's current expansion, aided by the \$15,000 Australian Communities Foundation and Wantless Family Fund Grant, will also benefit UniSA undergraduates with the delivery of these high quality, evidence-based services provided by highly skilled students in a safe and welcoming environment, with the provision of a rich and rewarding learning opportunity for these health and law students.

The program has already assisted in the education and training of over 80 UniSA undergraduate students during their degrees who will now go on to provide these services professionally with compassion.

"Our clinic is unique and ground-breaking, being the first wholly student-delivered service in Australia that acknowledges the links between law and health – providing desperately needed services and improving the lives of people experiencing homelessness," Dr Ferrar says.

"This will also ensure the next generation of health and law practitioners are compassionate, socially aware, and able to respond to disadvantage within the community, coming that much closer to ending the cycle of homelessness in South Australia."



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Communities together against bushfires



As Australia confronts devastating bushfire conditions, people across the nation are doing all they can to ensure the safety of their homes, property and loved ones.

But while many individuals are responding well to bushfire risks, a lack of preparation on the community level could be hampering their efforts, according to new research from the University of South Australia.

Conducted in partnership with the University of Adelaide and the University of Minnesota, researchers examined the perceptions of almost 1000 residents, landowners, and local fire and environmental authorities across high-risk fire regions of South Australia, finding a significant disconnect between the bushfire preparedness of individuals and that of the broader community.

Lead researcher Associate Professor Delene Weber says the lack of a cohesive community fire protection plan could place thousands of residents in danger over the fire season.

"Communities need to start thinking differently about preparing for bushfires, going beyond their individual fire protection plans, and looking to ways they can further support the community," Assoc Prof Weber says.

"When people think about protecting themselves from bushfires, they naturally focus on their immediate surrounds – their home, property and family – but bushfire safety is far more than the sum of individual efforts.



"Know your community's fire safety plans, make sure you check in on elderly or disabled neighbours who don't have capacity to get their property safe and talk with neighbours who are new to Australia and may not be fully aware of the potential of fire dangers.

"These things are imperative for people living in high-risk regional areas but are also important for those living in peri-urban landscapes such as the Eyre Peninsula and Adelaide Hills, both of which are increasingly at risk."

With more than 1.85 million Australians living in peri-urban regions, there's a growing need for greater bushfire awareness in metropolitan fringe areas.

"Residents and authorities have told us – and previous bushfires have shown us – that inadequate communication between developers, emergency services and planning authorities in metropolitan fringe areas means these areas are not as fire safe as they could be," says Assoc Prof Weber.

"Conscientious planning is vital for protecting all communities – established and new. But for new communities we have opportunities to construct homes specifically for bushfire conditions, to plant streets with appropriate vegetation that can help protect our homes from ember attacks, and to plan roads with better access.

"Well-planned transport systems are vital, and they need to be managed appropriately. Authorities must also ensure that scheduled road maintenance or closures are done outside of peak fire periods, and endeavour to manage road incidents smoothly and efficiently. Small oversights in either of these spaces can have very high consequences."



An ongoing challenge for peri-urban communities is the fact that many residents do not realise they may be at risk of bushfires, or grass fires, which move more quickly.

"People move to areas outside the city for many reasons – for the greenery, to escape the hustle and bustle, or because of costs. But because they're still in built-up, residential areas, they don't perceive themselves to be at-risk of fires.

"As a result, some residents in peri-urban developments are not as informed as they should be about bushfires, and they don't tend to be as prepared.

"It is not good enough to have a bushfire survival plan in your head – people need to take the time to prepare a written plan and think about the likely scenarios, such as no power, not knowing where everyone in your household is, and not being about to use your phone.

"Bushfire safety is everyone's responsibility. We all have to pitch in, and we all have to look out for one another. One weak link and the results could be devastating."

To get your home bushfire-ready, visit the South Australian Country Fire Service website.



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