

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

ALICE JARRETT



**CURRENT ROLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER,
WATERNSW
ORANGE, NSW**

**PREVIOUS ROLE: COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER – LAND AND WATER COMMISSIONER, NSW
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
BURONGA, NSW**

**DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

Growing up in Orange, Alice has always had a passion for community engagement in regional and remote Australia. Alice works to ensure there is effective two-way communication between remote and regional communities and government.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE WE LAST SPOKE?

Since graduating Alice has worked in various roles within community engagement in regional and remote Australia. At present Alice is based near Orange working with WaterNSW. The region is facing dam infrastructure upgrades and as a Community Engagement Officer Alice plays an important role in facilitating effective communication between communities and the government. It is up to Alice to ensure both sides are heard in a meaningful and productive way. Alice listens to the issues and concerns held by the community at town hall meetings, workshops and even over a cup of coffee. Alice will facilitate visits from industry experts such as engineers, politicians and economists to speak on the issues raised.



Image: Alice Jarrett.

“Working in Community Engagement you do some of your best work over a coffee.”

Although the information that Alice must deliver, at times,

may be disagreeable to members of the community, Alice believes her role is important for communities. It is important that people can hear all the information relevant to them, and that it is delivered in a respectful and appropriate way.

Prior to working with WaterNSW Alice was with the Land and Water Commissioner. Last year Alice worked with the Menindee community during the 2018-19 fish kills. Alice was the face of the community when it came to voicing concerns around major infrastructure and water policy changes that were occurring. Alice is passionate about ensuring regional and remote communities are involved in decisions that impact them. Water is a massive topic and has huge implications on communities.



Image: Menindee resident.



Image: The Darling River.

The Aboriginal Studies courses that Alice completed have equipped her with an understanding of Aboriginal culture and lore. This has been incredibly important for Alice and has allowed her to engage effectively and positively with Indigenous communities. Unfortunately, this area of knowledge is often overlooked within the area of community engagement. Living in the community that she is advocating for is important to Alice. Living within the region is vital for build relationships and create trust with the communities.

“You can’t underestimate the power a face to face conversation has when you are talking to people about issues impacting them.”



Image: It is important to Alice to live within the communities she is speaking on behalf of.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

The Development Studies degree challenged Alice’s way of thinking and how to adapt your communication strategy in order to convey your message to your given audience. In Alice’s role she needs to take community concerns and opinions which are often about very emotional topics and then deliver these as key points and facts to ministers, directors or CEO’s. This is not an easy thing to do, but Alice developed these skills during her degree and continues to build on them after each meeting.

Alice volunteered with the Australian Red Cross and the

Student Volunteer Committee while living on campus. Volunteering developed a lot of Alice’s skills as she was involved with running meetings, creating budgets, taking minutes and working with a team. Alice believes that those skills complemented her Development Studies degree and made her more employable. As the Development Studies degree is so broad, volunteering is a great opportunity to get an idea of what you want to do and narrow down the options.

Alice completed her [Work Integrated Learning in Development Studies and Human Geography](#) placement at NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) with the Land Use Planning team in Orange. The team was looking at mining and exploration projects across NSW and grading the agricultural land to determine the impact of mining on that area in relation to agriculture and regional communities. For Alice this project merged her interest in environmental sustainability and progression with the agricultural and mining sectors.

“Often you have to have a seat at the table to be part of the change”

Alice was offered six months of work at NSW DPI after graduating, and her career has continued to develop since then.

ADVICE: LOOK OUTSIDE THE BOX AND GO TO PIZZA EVENTS

Alice often hears of graduates not being able to find work. However, her advice is to be open minded and look outside the box, there are plenty of job opportunities if you are willing to travel.

Alice made a lot of great friends whilst studying. She encourages anyone to join social and sporting clubs to meet people and make friends. Most importantly Alice says go to the Development Studies Pizza Events. These events are organised biannually by the Program Convener. They are a fantastic way to not only meet your fellow students but also connect with your tutors and lecturers. Alice connected with her teachers at these events and from then on she was comfortable approaching and talking with them.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Alice is currently studying a [Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture](#) online and part-time. Food sovereignty and sustainability was a topic that resonated with Alice during her Development Studies degree. Alice chose this post graduate program to increase her understanding and hopes to work in this field in the future. When looking at jobs Alice noticed that often multiple qualifications are required and this was an additional motivation to further her studies.

Alice loves that she can make a big impact working in a small community and connecting with Indigenous culture in Australia.

To find out more about Alice, and our other Development Studies graduates please visit; uonblogs.newcastle.edu.au/ges/graduate-profiles/ [facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/](https://www.facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/)

For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:

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