

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

PHOEBE WARD

**CURRENT ROLE: WASTE EDUCATION PROJECT AND POLICY OFFICER
WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL**

**PREVIOUS ROLE: WASTE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER
GREENHUB, VIETNAM**

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



Phoebe is passionate about environmental sustainability and currently works in waste management where she is able to make a positive impact within her community.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Phoebe is currently working at Wingecarribee Shire Council as the Waste Education Project and Policy Officer. Phoebe's job involves a diverse range of activities. Phoebe is responsible for writing policies, applying for grants and funding, procurement processes, creating social media content, developing new recycling streams (such as for bread tags and oral cleaning products) as well as having a big focus on community education.

In preparation for [National Recycling Week](#) 9th – 15th November 2020, Phoebe will be facilitating free, fun, interactive and educational [workshops](#) involving beeswax wraps, composting, worm farming and eco cleaning products. Members of the public will also be able to tour the [Resource Recovery Centre](#) to learn more about the circular economy and what their recycled goods are being turned into.

Policy and education are key to ensuring the public are aware of how to correctly dispose of their waste. Phoebe is involved in developing new policies in the event of kerbside contamination. If kerbside contamination occurs, it may be due to a lack of information. Phoebe provides education through a range of different streams such as sending out educational material and inviting people to workshops so they can learn about the importance of recycling. With a big part of her role being education, Phoebe must cater to the local population to ensure the messages about correct recycling processes are being received by all community members.

Although Phoebe is doing a lot of learning on the job, this is not her first experience within waste management. Phoebe's first role after graduating was as the Waste Management Support Officer for [GreenHub](#) in Hanoi, Vietnam. Phoebe applied for the role through the [Australian Volunteer Program](#) and worked in Vietnam for five months. GreenHub is an NGO involved in sustainable lifestyles, climate change responses,

energy efficiency and natural resource conservation. Illegal dumping is a big issue in Vietnam and Phoebe focused on marine waste. She also applied for grants and funding and set up plastic-free exhibitions which had local organisations involved. Phoebe helped to build their reporting and research capacity and shared good practice examples from Australia with the organisation. Although Phoebe worked on different issues, her experience in Vietnam is directly relevant to her current role.



Image: Phoebe (right) with a friend and colleague at GreenHub (left).



Image: Visioning exercise with GreenHub Staff.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

International travel was a big part of Phoebe's Development Studies program. Phoebe travelled overseas three times for her Bachelor of Development Studies. Her first trip was through the [iLead Plus Program](#). Through the program Phoebe travelled to Hanoi, Vietnam for the [7th University Scholarships Leadership Symposium](#). The trip was a wonderful opportunity to meet like-minded people from all over the world, it built Phoebe's confidence for working overseas and it was also during this experience that she realised the importance of networking. Through the iLead Program Phoebe was also involved as a volunteer with Stress Less Week, Green Week and Speed Conversations held at the Language Centre where Phoebe sat down to chat with international students to help them improve their English.

Shortly after returning from Vietnam, Phoebe was off again, this time for a six-month student exchange at the University of Liverpool, England. This experience was a wonderful opportunity to meet and engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Phoebe's final overseas trip was to Jamaica to complete a placement as a Disaster Management Project Officer. Phoebe's main project was working with a children's home and educating them on different disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding which are all common in Jamaica, and how to evacuate in the event of a disaster. This experience was a big learning curve for Phoebe as she needed to cater her teaching to children ranging in ages from two up to 17 years. It was during her Development Studies degree and this overseas placement that Phoebe realised she had a real passion and interest in the field of disaster risk management. After Phoebe graduated, she pursued this interest and completed a [Graduate Certificate in Disaster Risk Reduction](#).



Image: Phoebe at a presentation for a children's home, Jamaica.

When reflecting on what Development Studies taught Phoebe, she said it was learning the importance of community engagement. Working closely with people is important in her new role. Shifting mindsets and changing behaviour is just one of the barriers to sustainability in Australia. It is essential for Phoebe to work with local community groups to promote that change.

As well as understanding the importance of community engagement, Phoebe says that Development Studies also taught her how to think critically and why that is important. Questioning why things are the way that they are, is particularly important in today's quickly changing world. It is necessary to continue to re-educate yourself as new information becomes available and to be open to learning from people and new experiences.



Image: Phoebe hiking in Italy.

ADVICE: PUT YOUR HAND UP

Phoebe actively sought out new experiences and she strongly encourages current students to do the same. Take any opportunity that comes up whether that be volunteering, placements, internships or workshops with guest speakers. You will always be able to gain something from these opportunities. Phoebe also encourages you to follow your passions. Although it might take a while to get into an area that you want to work in, it is important to work hard, be open to new opportunities and be open to different avenues.

Before travelling to Vietnam, Phoebe had not considered working in waste management. Now she is happy in her role and passionate about the work.

“Waste management is something I'm really interested in now and I wouldn't have known that if I hadn't taken all the opportunities that I have had.”

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Through her experiences Phoebe has identified that she has two key areas of interest, disaster management and waste education. Phoebe has continued to pursue her interest in disaster management by starting a [Masters of Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Development](#). In the future Phoebe hopes to combine her two interests and possibly work overseas in disaster waste management.

To find out more about Phoebe and our other Development Studies graduates please visit;
uonblogs.newcastle.edu.au/ges/graduate-profiles/
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For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:

Program Convenor, Assoc Prof Kathy Mee
kathy.mee@newcastle.edu.au
+61 2 4921 6451