

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

ALICE MELMETH



CURRENT ROLE: ALUMNI PROGRAMS OFFICER (COLLEGE LIAISON) UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

PREVIOUS ROLE: PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CULTURES & CITIZENSHIP MAJOR), UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

Alice is a proud Ngarabal woman, currently residing in Newcastle NSW on Awabakal country. Alice works as an Alumni Programs Officer as the dedicated College Liaison within the Alumni Team at the University of Newcastle, where she is passionate about identifying and fostering meaningful alumni connections.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Whilst completing her Bachelor of Development Studies, Alice was a Cadet in the [Indigenous Cadetship Program](#). The cadetship not only supported Alice financially whilst she studied, but it also led her down a pathway into a [Graduate Development Program](#) with the [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications](#) after she graduated. As part of the Cadetship, Alice had the opportunity to complete a three-month placement in Canberra with the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) (DFAT). Alice cannot speak highly enough of the Cadetship, and she encourages any Indigenous students to apply.

As Alice was supported by the Cadetship, she reflected that the application process for the Graduate Development Program involved culturally responsive recruitment. Alice was interviewed by other First Nations people. This process was incredibly important to Alice as she felt supported during the transition from university to the Graduate Development Program. During the program Alice was placed on a three-month rotation in various departmental divisions including Surface Transport Policy, then Infrastructure Investment, and then the Office of Northern Australia. As part of the Graduate Program Alice was also provided the opportunity to complete a Graduate Certificate in Public Policy and Administration at the University of Canberra.

Following the completion of her Graduate Development Program, Alice retained fulltime employment as a Project Officer. Alice assisted in the management of major road and infrastructure programs in the Northern Territory and Queensland. This involved Alice travelling to Queensland, for the Federal government and meeting with representatives from the state government to discuss strategic aspects of the

projects. Alice was able to build many skills during this role such as stakeholder engagement and program management.

After her role as a Project Officer, Alice kept busy with raising her family and starting a [Master of Social Change and Development](#).



Currently, Alice is working as an Alumni Programs Officer, as the dedicated College Liaison within the Office of Alumni and Philanthropy at the University of Newcastle. Alice engages with internal stakeholders of the university to understand how they work with their alumni and to collaborate with them to boost and support this engagement. This can be achieved via activities such as mentoring, guest lectures and work integrated learning opportunities. Alice works directly with internal stakeholders from the 13 schools at the university to advocate the importance of these alumni engagements and provide advice around achieving meaningful and sustained alumni involvement. A large part of Alice's role is stakeholder engagement and programming and much of her previous experience and developed skills lends favourably to this role.

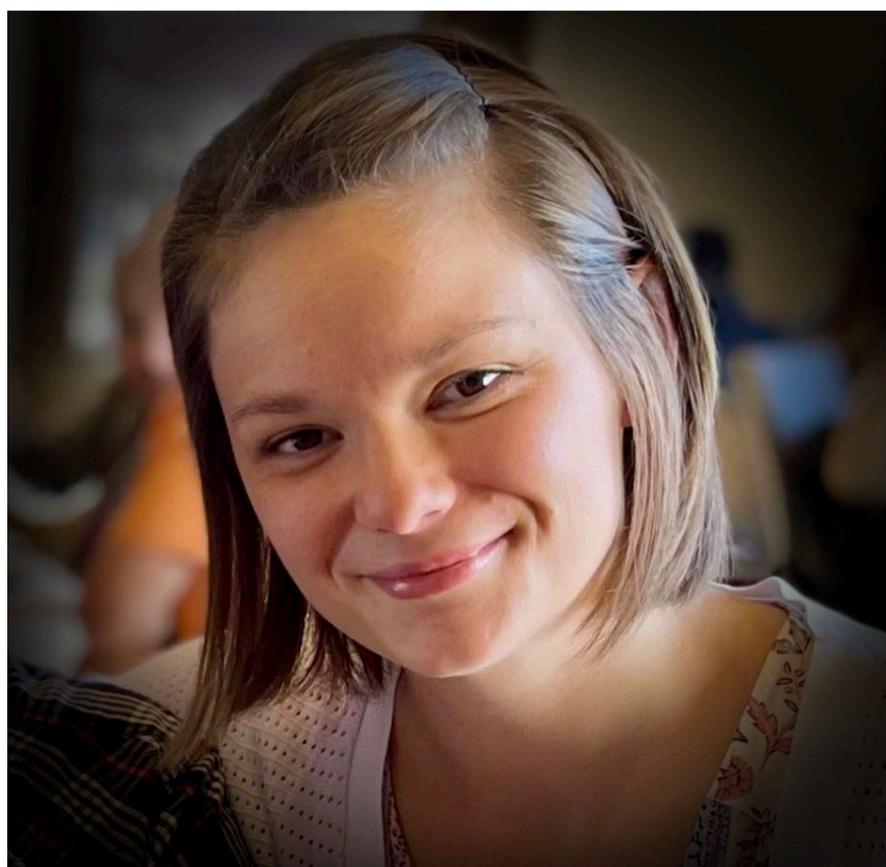
Another important part of Alice's role is managing the Indigenous Alumni Program. Alice works with key stakeholders at the [Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership](#) and the [Wollotuka Institute](#), aiming to nurture meaningful engagement opportunities for the university's Indigenous alumni. One strategy has been through the establishment of the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alumni Collective](#), a Facebook group for deadly alumni to join, connect, and it acts as a place for meaningful content to be curated and shared. Alice is incredibly motivated to find and enhance alumni engagement and believes alumni are universities best advocates.



Image: Alice and her colleagues during Close the Gap Day 2022 at the [Wollotuka Institute](#).

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

The Bachelor of Development Studies had a wonderfully positive impact on Alice, in terms of leading her to a fulfilling career and her own personal development. The Indigenous content within the degree allowed her to consider the importance of culture, and its influences when developing sustainable and culturally responsive policies and programs. The Wollotuka Institute was an important part of Alice's undergraduate experience. It was a place for her to go, feel comfortable and engage with other Indigenous students. Returning years later to the University of Newcastle, Alice feels an even stronger welcoming and connection with the community.



During her undergraduate degree, Alice also engaged in many social justice focused volunteering opportunities with the Australian Red Cross, Greenpeace, and Wesley Mission.

“When you're passionate about something, you want to contribute where you can.”

ADVICE: SEEK SUPPORT

Alice's advice is to use the supports you have available, including from your lecturers and fellow undergrads. From Alice's experience, her lecturers were understanding, flexible and more than willing to help. Connecting with your fellow undergrads is a great way to establish a supportive network whilst you are studying.

For Indigenous students, Alice strongly recommends investigating Indigenous support pathways, such as the Indigenous Cadetship Program. For Alice, the Cadetship was incredibly supportive and provided invaluable opportunities whilst studying at university and thereafter.

“You can achieve great things if you put yourself out there.”

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

At present Alice is focused on delivering positive outcomes for her team while also aiming to finish her Masters by the end of the year. Thinking about the future, Alice is open minded and will look at what opportunities are present and the direction she would like to pursue.

To find out more about Alice and our other Development Studies graduates please visit; uonblogs.newcastle.edu.au/ges/graduate-profiles/facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/

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