

DARALUMNI

NEWSLETTER

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ANZAC Day Ceremony

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Only six months have passed since our last DarAlumni Newsletter but there has been no shortage of news to fill this edition. So much has happened in our community in such a short space of time.

Looking back on the stories we've shared over recent months, the diversity of paths our graduates have taken is truly remarkable. From theatre scriptwriters to concrete builders, dog trainers to digital security specialist, the list goes on. However, when we consider the wide range of opportunities available to students during their time at school, perhaps this variety should come as no surprise.

Our Daramalan community continues to thrive, staying connected and supportive of one another, while the younger generations maintain strong personal ties with their schoolmates and teachers. The future of our Daramalan community seems stronger than ever.

Fortes in Fide!

Arina Yakovtseva
Community and Alumni Officer

International Women's Day

On International Women's Day in March, we welcomed five wonderful former students back to campus to share with our students their insights on health, family–work balance, career pathways and general life wisdom. **Adrienne Day** (1978), **Alex Hodge** (2014), **Sarah Watson** (1996), **Mel Kovacevic** (2005) and **Letitia Kennedy** (1994) answered a wide range of thoughtful student questions.

The event was led by another outstanding alumni and current Daramalan Assistant Principal, **Ms Amy Thomas** (2005). It was fantastic to see both girls and boys stay after the main session to continue conversations with our guests and ask even more questions.

A huge thank you to our inspiring speakers, our wonderful and curious students and everyone who helped make this event happen. We hope to continue this alumni–student International Women's Day celebration as a strong and meaningful tradition.



Amy Thomas, nee Smith (2005), Sarah Watson, nee Hingston (1996), Alex Hodge (2014), Adrienne Day (1978), Mel Kovacevic (2005), Letitia Kennedy (1994) and Arina Yakovtseva

ANZAC Day Ceremony

As per tradition, we commemorated Anzac Day with a whole-school ceremony. It was a special honour to welcome back Daramalan alumni from the Class of 1989, **Lieutenant Colonel Scott Foster**, who delivered the address.

After the ceremony, Scott spent time speaking with students and even took a short tour of the school to refresh his memories.

It is always wonderful to see graduates return to the school, reminding us of the meaningful connections built at Daramalan that last a lifetime. Of course, Daramalan is proud to have so many graduates who have dedicated their lives to serving in the Australian military forces.



Daramalan Community Trivia

Many birds were fed with one scone on Friday 15 May when we hosted our Trivia Night at Daramalan!

Bird One: We had a fantastic time! More than 100 people came together to laugh, enjoy some food and drinks and show off their knowledge. Former students, staff, parents and friends all mixed in and had a great night. It was wonderful to meet parents and reconnect with old friends!

Bird Two: Together, we raised over \$5,000 for the Scholarship Fund! It's a great feeling to support those in need—especially members of our community facing difficult circumstances. The Daramalan community truly shines when it comes to helping others.

Bird Three: We all learned something new! For example, some discovered what Batemans Bay residents call Canberrans (yogies), while others realised that milk is more expensive than Coca-Cola and petrol.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and supported this event. A special thanks to **Ben McGee** who once again showed his true colours (black and red!) and made the night incredibly fun, **Michael Castrission** for writing those very challenging questions and our amazing events team and volunteers!

Now... time to start preparing for the next Trivia Night!



Daramalan Community Trivia (continued)



Daramalan Community Trivia (continued)



QUIZ TIME

Would you like to test yourself? Here are the questions from the Daramalan/Canberra section that our participants had to crack!

Answers are on page 20.

1. *Teddy Sheean was the great-grand uncle of former Dara students Matthew, Ryan and Ben Rickard. What bravery medal was Teddy posthumously awarded for his actions during the sinking of the HMAS Armidale during the Second World War?*
2. *Prize-winning Canberra-region vintners Ken Helm (Helm Wines) and Tim Kirk (Clonakilla) have what Daramalan connection in common?*
3. *Which Daramalan old boy and former parent scored the first ever points for the Canberra Raiders in 1982?*
4. *In which Canberra suburb did Capital Brewery recently open the Lager House?*
5. *Which former Daramalan student represented the British and Irish Lions on their Australian tour in 2025?*
6. *According to Canberra folklore, what day marks the time of year when fires are allowed to be lit/heaters turned on to provide heating?*
7. *What famous pub in Nelligen do motorists pass on their way from Canberra to Batemans Bay?*
8. *Daramalan teacher James Keeley has recently been announced as the next principal of which Canberra school?*
9. *Canberra Milk famously produced Raiders Lime flavoured milk. What other Raiders flavour did Canberra Milk produce?*
10. *What cartoon-themed nickname is bestowed on Canberra people by residents of the Batemans Bay region?*

Where Are They Now...

Not one but two Daramalan alumni stepped onto Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne for the Australian Open One Point Slam, a thrilling knockout tournament where every player has a chance to win \$1 million.

Ashleigh Simes (2020) has earned her spot in the finals after winning the ACT Championship. Together with **Nick Kyrgios** (2012), she competed against some of the world's best players in the ultimate showdown.



Four Daramalan alumni have made it onto The Canberra Times' "30 Canberrans Under 30" list, recognising young people making waves in their fields!

Mark Rusanov (2020), **Lang Stratton** (2018), **Lochie Carey** (2018) and **Matthew Kingma** (2018) — four schoolmates set out to make some wine just for fun. Now, Selecta Wines has made its way onto restaurant menus and the four mates into a Canberra Times feature.



Photo by Keegan Carroll

Just look at these birds do you think they're photos? No! These are amazing watercolour artworks created by talented Daramalan alumni **Frances McMahon** (née **Hardy**, 1982).

Frances' illustrations also appear on four Australia Post stamps featuring rare and endangered birds, giving her work exposure to a worldwide audience.

Professional watercolour bird artist Frances Norton (trading as Frances McMahon) won Best in Show at the prestigious Holmes Prize for Excellence in Realistic Australian Bird Art 2025. She also won Best in Show in 2022, along with Awards of Excellence in 2023 and 2024.

Frances has also been awarded the title of Art Renewal Centre Associate Living Master (ARCALM), an internationally recognised honour, held by only 14 other Australians.

You can check Frances' website [here](#).



Michael Casey (2025), has been selected as one of just 18 students, from an initial pool of 246 applicants, to receive the Snow Scholarship at the University of Canberra.

Michael is passionate about creating built environments that are welcoming, inclusive and functional for everyone. This commitment is reflected in his studies: a Bachelor of the Built Environment (Architecture) / Bachelor of the Built Environment (Interior Architecture) at UC.



John Vukovic, Michael Casey and Jo Howard

Our 2023 alumni, **Alesha Bennetts**, was recently featured in The Canberra Times, and this time, not only for her extraordinary athletic abilities. Alesha opened up about the epileptic seizures she experienced throughout her school years. To raise awareness and funds for the cause, she took part in a “purple muck-up” challenge. You can read the article [here](#).

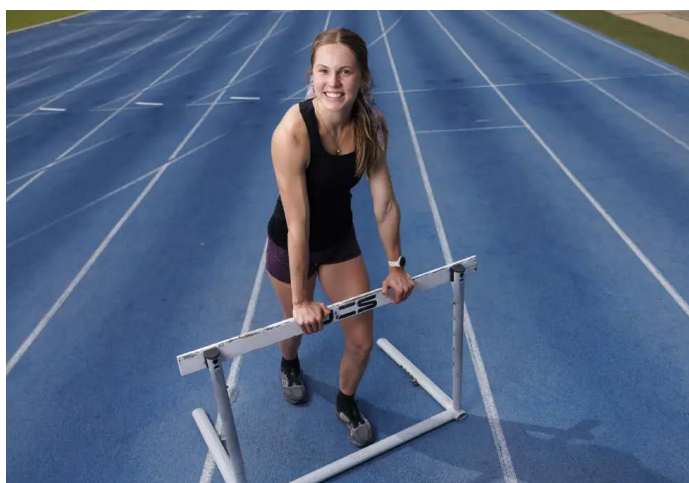


Photo by Keegan Carroll

Claudia Marcks (2021) made it back-to-back elite women’s 1km Time Trial national titles, hours after breaking her own national record in qualifying. Way to go, Claudia!

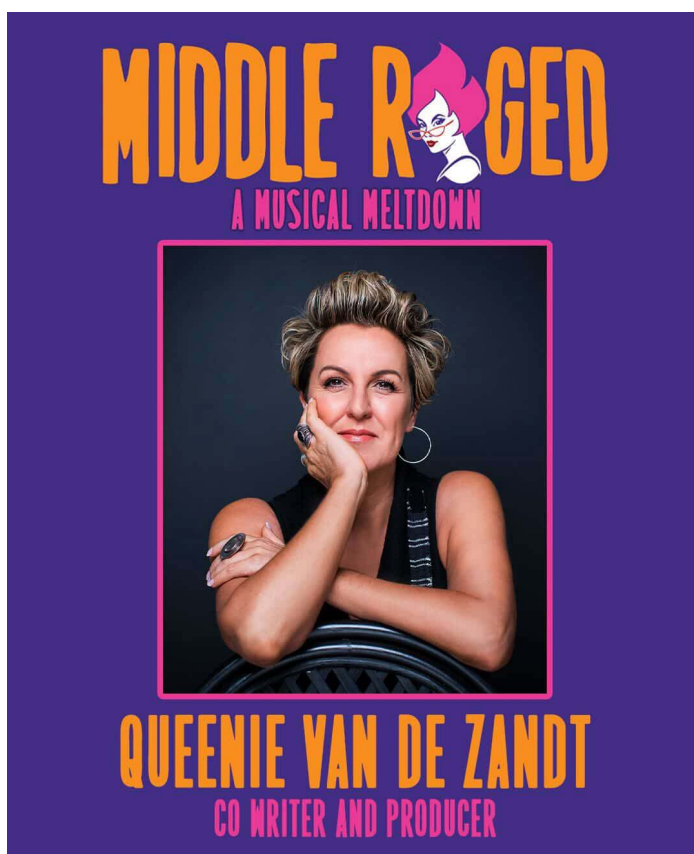


We are excited to share that our 1988 alumni, **Queenie Van De Zandt**, is bringing her brand-new show Middle Raged to the Canberra Theatre Centre this July!

Middle Raged: A Musical Meltdown runs from 8–11 July.

Part comedy, part musical, Middle Raged is a fresh and funny Australian show about what really happens when women hit midlife.

You can buy tickets [here](#).



The youngest, 2025 alumni **Elijah Wilson** claimed gold medals in both the U20 Discus and Shot Put at the Australian Athletics Junior Championships. He also achieved a world-qualifying distance in the Discus, earning automatic selection to represent Australia at the World Junior Athletics Championships, held in the USA in August.



Dr Clare Huppatz (1991), has been appointed Western Australia's Chief Health Officer. Dr Huppatz is a former Goldfields doctor with a longstanding involvement in community-led programs focused on improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and rural and remote communities across WA. Congratulations on such an impressive and outstanding achievement!



The Gold Coast SUNS welcomed **Lily Quigley** to the SUNS list and we are delighted to congratulate our Class of 2025 alumni on this incredible achievement!

Lily, who has represented Australia in both Oztag and Touch Football, has been selected to play by the Gold Coast SUNS in the 2026 NAB AFLW season.



Our 1991 alumni **Michael Gately** is at the forefront of keeping Australians' data safe at a time when artificial intelligence and declining trust in digital media raises serious concerns. Michael is the founder of Agentaus, a sovereign AI platform designed to keep Australian data securely onshore while delivering performance that rivals the world's leading models. Built for government, defence and high-security environments, Agentaus operates entirely from Australian data centres and meets Defence-grade security standards. You can read the full article about Michael's achievement [here](#).



We don't often feature animals in our posts, but 1998 alumni **Jamie McGahey** has dedicated his life to helping both unwanted working dogs and ex-military veterans and first responders living with PTSD. Jamie rescues working and sheep dogs that are more interested in people than livestock and trains them to become companion dogs for those experiencing PTSD. Together with RuffTRACK, an Australian charity, Jamie is also transforming the lives of at-risk youth by pairing them with rescue dogs.



Jack Ward (2011) and his wife, Maddie, are pilots flying for Qantas on the A380. Jack's flight routes include London, Johannesburg, Los Angeles and Dallas.

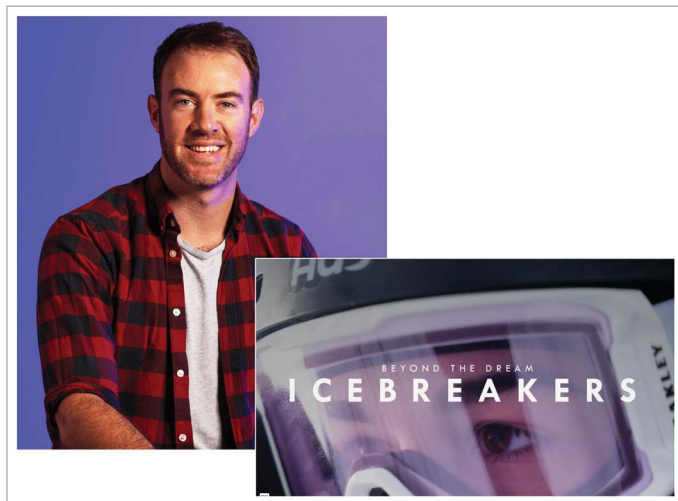


Most of us love watching house-building shows on TV, but did you know that our 1988 alumni, **Mick Johnson**, was one of the talented builders featured on Channel Nine's Jamie Durie's Future House?

Mick Johnson, a registered builder and founding director of REZICAST® Systems, is leading the way with his innovative Rezicast concrete panel system. Designed for efficient delivery and installation, Mick was confident he could get a house to lock-up in just 10 days, and he delivered!

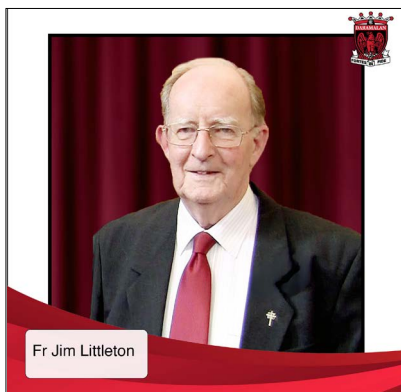


Did you know that Daramalan alumni **Brett Frawley** (2007) and his video production company, Good Shout, are behind Ice Breakers, a documentary celebrating Australia's six Winter Olympic Gold medallists on Channel 9? Daramalan College is certainly proud of Brett and his team, who have created a number of outstanding sports documentaries over the years.



In Memoriam

Sadly, a number of much-loved former Daramalan students and staff members passed away this semester. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.



Fr Jim Littleton

It is with great sorrow that we let you all know that **Fr Jim** passed away on Wednesday 6 May at the age of 96 after a short illness. He is now at peace, held in the loving presence of his God. A wonderful man who has left an enduring legacy of which we are the benefactors each and every day.

“On 20 May, a large number of our staff travelled to Kensington and then to Douglas Park to attend the funeral service for Fr Jim Littleton MSC following his passing on Wednesday 6 May. Fr Jim was Principal of Daramalan from 1971 to 1979 and returned to Daramalan where he lived onsite at the MSC residence from 1998 until 2019 when the residence was closed. Throughout these years, Fr Jim was not simply a leader of our College, he was an integral part of the daily life of Daramalan. In his role as Chaplain, Fr Jim continued to accompany staff and students in learning about the MSC charism, celebrating Mass and he was a frequent visitor at staff

morning tea where he would share stories and offer his wisdom. Fr Jim was also the Principal of Downlands College in Toowoomba, where he had been a student, Chevalier College in Bowral, was the first Director of MSC Education and had also held the role of Provincial Superior. Fr Jim was a prolific writer and historian publishing many books throughout his life.

*Please join us for a memorial service at the College on **Saturday 4 July** to celebrate Fr Jim’s life and his contribution to Daramalan and the wider MSC community.”*

*Rachel Davies
Principal*



Father Jim Littleton MSC

27 February 1930 - 6 May 2026

Please join us as we celebrate the life of
Father Jim Littleton MSC.

Saturday 4 July 2026 at 9.30am.

McCowage Hall, Daramalan College.

Mass will be followed by light refreshments
served in McMahon Courtyard.

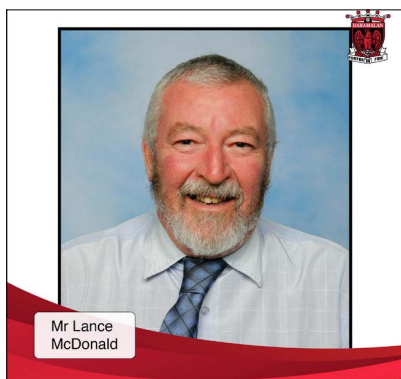
All welcome, please RSVP for catering purposes.



[Click to RSVP](#)



In Memoriam

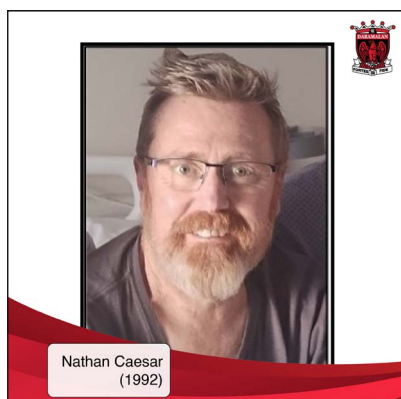


Mr Lance
McDonald

Mr Lance McDonald

Mr Lance McDonald, a former Daramalan staff member, passed away in May 2026. Lance was a member of our community from 1992 until he retired in the mid-2000s. He was our RE Coordinator for some years and then became a senior Pastoral leader in the years before his retirement. He will be remembered as a wonderful man, friend and much loved colleague.

Rest in Peace.



Nathan Caesar
(1992)

Nathan Caesar (1992)

It is with much sadness and heavy hearts that we share that on Friday 27 February, **Nathan Caesar** passed away.

Nathan is the son of staff alumni Ms Wendy Wade, who taught Mathematics and later served as Assistant Head of Maths at Daramalan College from 1984 through to 2016.

Nathan was a son, brother, godfather, uncle, amazing dad and a friend to all who met him. He lived an adventurous and varied life, working in many different areas.

Nathan is survived by his two children, Max and Holly.

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.



Scholarship Fund

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

[DONATE](#)

The Daramalan College Scholarship Fund provides vital support to parents of current students whose family's current financial circumstances would otherwise prevent the student from attending the College. A scholarship helps ensure students can continue their education by covering part or all of their tuition fees or providing essential resources, such as a laptop, to support their learning.



Dear Friends of Daramalan College,

As always, 2026 has already been filled with a large number of wonderful events, made even more special by the strength of our community spirit. Despite only being half way through the year, we have already experienced so many memorable community moments, from our Opening Mass, our three whole-school sporting carnivals, ANZAC and Holy Week Commemorations, the Sustainable Market Day and, most recently, our Sacred Heart Day celebrations where we were able to welcome back again this year, Fr Bob Irwin MSC. It is no surprise that the semester has flown by so quickly.

We have been incredibly grateful for the strong support of our alumni and parents again this year, and I would like to sincerely thank our dedicated alumni for their ongoing contribution, not only to our co-curricular programs and events, but to the broader Daramalan community. We are looking forward to welcoming many of our alumni who are now grandparents at the College to our Grandparents' Day activities.

As we approach the end of Semester One and the end of the 2025-26 Financial Year, I invite you to consider supporting the Daramalan College Scholarship Fund. Every donation, big or small, helps provide life-changing opportunities for

students whose families are facing financial hardship. Daramalan Scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need rather than on academic, sporting or cultural excellence. Their purpose is to provide the chance for students to attend Daramalan who may not otherwise have the opportunity.

Since 2008, the fund has supported an average of five students each year, and with your help, we hope to assist even more into the future. You can learn more about the impact of these scholarships, including stories from our former scholarship recipients, as well as other ways to support this cause on our Alumni website.

If you are able to make a contribution before **30 June**, you will receive a tax benefit for this financial year. Find out [here](#) how to make tax-deductible contributions.

We are grateful for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Rachel Davies

Principal

(On behalf of the Daramalan College Board Community Engagement Committee and Scholarship Fund)

2026 Upcoming Events

Each year, Daramalan College, in partnership with the Community and Engagement Committee, hosts a variety of initiatives and social events that bring

our community together while supporting the Scholarship Fund. We also warmly invite alumni, parents and friends of Daramalan to join us at school art exhibitions, drama performances and sporting events—your presence makes these occasions even more special.

6 AUG	EAGLE PEOPLE BOOK CLUB (upcoming meeting)
3-6 SEP	VISUAL ARTS STAFF & ALUMNI BIENNALE
10-17 OCT	DTC PRODUCTION "INTO THE WOODS"
OCT NOV	REUNION SEASON
30 OCT- 2 NOV	VISUAL ARTS STUDENTS EXHIBITION
NOV	"DARA DOZEN" Wine Sale

Staff and Alumni Biennale

Staff and Alumni Biennale 2026

Clouds

Call to Artists!

The Visual Arts Department is excited to announce our upcoming biennale exhibition. All current staff, past staff and alumni are invited to enter.

Please see the link to the form below for details and entry.

This year's theme is Clouds, opening in the Joe Woodward Theatre - see the application form below.

[All artists and makers are welcome to apply.](#)

Entries Open: Monday 18 May

Entries Close: Monday 20 July, 5PM

Exhibition Opening:

Thursday 3 September 5:30 - 8:00 PM

Please direct queries to:

StaffandAlumniExhibition@daramalan.act.edu.au

Dara Dozen 2026

Dara Dozen is an online wine sale aiming to introduce a great selection of wines from some of the best Canberra district wineries associated with Daramalan College, while also helping the Scholarship Fund.



- ✓ *Taste the best regional wines*
- ✓ *Prepare your Christmas gifts early*
- ✓ *Support our Scholarship Fund*

Sales start in October



Notice - It is illegal to purchase alcohol if you are under the age of 18 and to buy or supply alcohol for/to someone under the age of 18. For further information, please visit the ACT Policing website. Please drink responsibly.

Reunions 2026

SAT
24
OCT

1976 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS &
TICKETS**

SAT
31
OCT

1986 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS &
TICKETS**

SAT
7
NOV

1996 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS &
TICKETS**

SAT
31
OCT

2001 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS &
TICKETS**

SAT
31
OCT

2006 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS &
TICKETS**

SAT
7
NOV

2016 YEAR REUNION

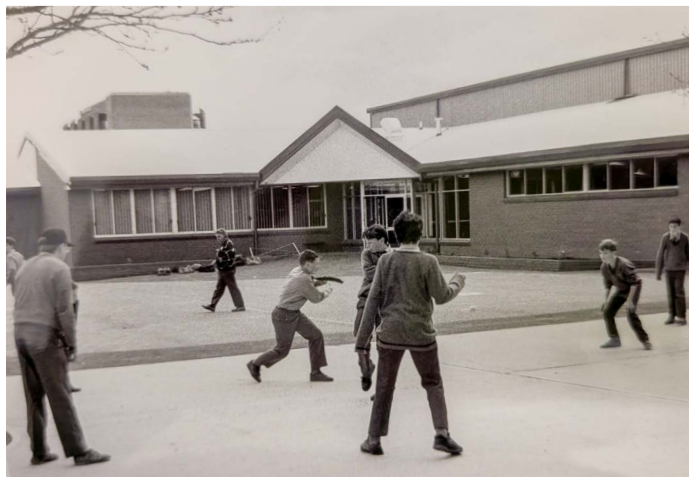
**EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST**

SAT
21
NOV

2025 YEAR REUNION

**MORE DETAILS
COMING LATER**

Down Memory Lane



School Year in Pictures



Earth Day



Opening Mass



Athletics Carnival



Water Walk



Spelling Bee



DTC Production "Rhinceros"

Quiz Answers

1. The Victoria Cross (upgraded in 2020 from a 'Mention in Despatches').
2. Children attended Daramalan.
3. Peter McGrath
4. Campbell (technically Parkes)
5. Mack Hansen
6. ANZAC Day
7. The Steam Packet
8. St Edmund's College
9. Raiders Malt (also briefly Raiders Chocmint)
10. Yogies

COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Join our Daramalan College Community Business Directory!

For just \$150 per year, your business will be featured on alumni social media with more than 6000 followers, Newsletter and Year Book - and every dollar raised goes directly to the **Scholarship Fund**.

Interested? Email us at alumni@daramalan.act.edu.au.

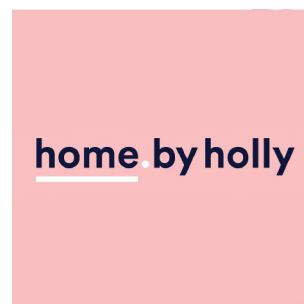
With your support, the Directory will continue to grow and become an even more powerful tool for the entire Daramalan family.

Company	Contact	Website
ACT Cabs	Hamza	www.actcabs.com.au
All IT Solutions	Anthony Cataldo	https://allit.au/
AllClass Carpet & Upholstery Care	Peter Nassar	www.allclasscarpetcare.com.au
Australian National Character Check	Hamza	www.australiannationalcharactercheck.com.au
Caday Workplace Relations	Cath Day	www.caday.com.au
CBR Recruitment	Adam Kowalski	www.cbrrecruitment.com.au
Corver and Co Chartered Accountants	Trevor Corver	www.corverandco.com.au
Eat Cookies	Lisa Jansen	www.eatcookies.com.au
Element Building Projects	Dennis and Aldona Stravopodis	www.elementbuildingprojects.com.au
Ginger Books	Phillip van Zomeren	www.gingerbooks.com.au
Griffin Legal	Claire Carton	www.griffinlegal.com.au
Holly Komorowski – home.byholly	Holly Komorowski	www.homebyholly.com.au
Leader Security	Troy Cassell	www.leadersecurity.com.au
Loop Booth	Michael	www.loopbooth.com.au
Mel Hill Photography	Mel Hill	www.melhillphotography.com
Pacific Facilities Maintenance	Justin Hyland	www.pacificfm.com.au
Pinnacle Driving School	Lisa Murphy	www.Pinnacledrivingschool.com.au
Q1 Dental Care	Dr Susan Leonera-Salazar	www.q1dentalcare.com.au
Ray White Canberra		www.raywhitecanberra.com.au
Ray White Rural Canberra-Yass	Simon or George Southwell	www.raywhiteruralyasscanberra.com.au
Red Shed	Monique Gassan	www.redshed.org.au
Riteway Cleaning Services	Alan	www.ritewaycleaningcanberra.com.au
Sentinel Security & Technology Group	Ellena	www.sstg.com.au
T.A.T. Building Group	Toby & Ancke Ward	
The Athlete's Foot	Ashleigh Hogan	www.theathletesfoot.com.au
The Corner Market	Katherine Olmos	
The Energy People	Alex Morrison	www.energypeople.com.au

COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY



**HEATING
COOLING
HOT WATER
SOLAR**



RED SHED

**corver
and co**



**Loop
Booth**

**MEL
HILL
PHOTO
GRAPHY**

**CHARTERED
ACCOUNTANTS**

griffinlegal.



**Book an appointment
with us today!**

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