



Alumnus Subject Graduated Mason Willis
Geography & Geology
2006
Place of Work Position South Australian Water
Environmental Management Officer



SA Water is the sole water and wastewater provider for South Australia, supplying safe, clean drinking water to 1.5million South Australians. Owned by the Government of South Australia, SA Water is focused on providing essential services to support growth and economic development throughout the State. Mason is responsible for managing the site contamination issues of the Corporation. He moved to Australia in 2005, and has been working with SA Water for 3 years.

Great minds *go on to* great places

What attracted you to the College?

I always knew that Royal Holloway was a very prestigious university and had a great reputation around my School in Portsmouth. I visited many Universities to try and find the one that felt the best, and without doubt, the history, grandeur, compact setting of Royal Holloway won me over. There is always an element of the unknown that comes with choosing a university and signing on the dotted line, but I never had any second thoughts when it came to Royal Holloway. Everything felt comfortable and now when I look back, I become even more certain I made the right choice.

What was your Royal Holloway experience like?

Having been fortunate enough to study at university in Australia as well, I had the opportunity to compare experiences of education and lifestyles of two different institutions. Both Universities gave me unforgettable and life changing experiences, but Royal Holloway certainly left me with a feeling that I had not only made the most of my student time, but that I had also achieved academically. The close knit community of Royal Holloway is a unique and enjoyable factor of student life. University gives you the opportunity to mix with people from all

over the country, and indeed all over the world, but I felt that with Royal Holloway, that diversity was much closer and easier to experience. Something that I always try to pass on to new Undergraduates that I meet is that university is a once in a lifetime factory of opportunities. I was fortunate to secure an Exchange Year at Flinders university in Adelaide, through a College Bursary that allowed students to travel and study overseas. I learned about the Bursary through Campus advertising and talking to Careers advisors and lecturers. I realised at that moment that university really is full of opportunities, and one just has to look around. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, because without it, I wouldn't be living in Australia now!

What attracted you to your Course?

I studied Geography at school, and it was my favourite subject. I felt however that I wanted a wider challenge from my university education, and so chose to do a joint degree in Geography and Geology. Geology was new to me, but I am glad I applied for the course when I look back at the opportunities it gave me. I visited the Department and felt that I could learn so much from two prestigious faculties. I felt I could build upon my school education, and compliment it with a whole new subject. I look back on my studying time

as very challenging, but incredibly rewarding. I was incredibly fortunate at the end of my Undergraduate degree to secure a Bursary, to study for a further year in the Geology department for a Masters in Environmental Analysis and Assessment. I now work in Environmental Science, so what began as a brand new challenge, ended with a rewarding career path. I owe a lot to my course at Royal Holloway.

Were you involved in any Clubs or Societies?

I think I tried pretty much everything at Royal Holloway! I hadn't played much football before I came to university, but I found myself playing it every year. I captained a team in my final year. I was involved in several drama productions, and even tried some dance. I have always enjoyed sport and the arts, and at Royal Holloway, I found that I could do both. I loved getting involved in everything, and I am grateful to Royal Holloway for that. I even managed to find part time work raising money for the College's Annual Fund several years in a row, and I also worked with students with special needs. I found that at Royal Holloway, I could enjoy every aspect of life, as well as studying. I'd go back to university if I could!



people with passion

“Royal Holloway is full of opportunities... without it I wouldn't be living in Australia now!”



Did you do gain any work experience while at Royal Holloway?

I gained a great deal of work experience while at Royal Holloway, both directly and indirectly. I worked for several years at the Annual Fund Alumni Call Campaign that was on campus, and I also worked with students with Special Needs. These jobs were great as they enabled me to earn extra money whilst studying, but I have found that in job interviews post-university, companies have been very interested in those jobs. I have been able to call upon experiences I gained whilst studying and working at Royal Holloway, and use them to good effect after my studying. My Exchange Year at Flinders University in Adelaide presented many employment opportunities, and these proved to be incredibly valuable as they gave me experience working in another country. Every job I did whilst studying has contributed to helping me secure my intended career path now.

What did you learn at Royal Holloway that has helped you in your current role?

I certainly believe that a great part of university experience is about growing up and finding out about yourself, and what you really want to do in life. Even if the path may change as you go along, I learned that university gives you the

perfect time to discover what's most comfortable for you in the long term. When I look back I really appreciate all the advice and assistance that was given to me, I find that I can draw upon that on my current career path. At Royal Holloway I learned to always embrace opportunities and be open to where they may take you. I took advantage of a great opportunity, and found that many other opportunities presented themselves as I went along. I find the same applies to my current role. Having seen how rewarding and challenging new opportunities can be, I have great confidence in embracing them in my professional life.

Tell us a bit about your current role?

Currently I work for SA Water in Adelaide, the sole water utility in South Australia. I work in the Environment team and manage the processes and procedures the Corporation must follow when encountering contaminated land. The role is directly related to my Masters degree in Environmental Analysis and Assessment, and I call upon my university training daily. SA Water is a fantastic place to work, and before securing my current role, I was fortunate enough to gain a place on the Graduate Program, which involves the rotation of work in the Corporation to different Business Groups, across 4 placements. This was a

fantastic opportunity to experience the workings of the Corporation, and sets young people up for long and rewarding careers in the water industry.

What advice would you give to current Royal Holloway students?

Sit back and enjoy the ride! At the time, university can seem quite daunting, and the experience can remain that way for many people, but I firmly believe that it should be a wholly enjoyable journey. Try to imagine the bigger picture- your enjoyment and embracing of opportunities now will pay off in the future. It is a skill, but learning to adapt to change is essential. School isn't like university and university isn't like work. But managing these changes will prove invaluable in the long run. For me, I found that Australia isn't like England! But I chose to embrace unknown, and it was the best decision I ever made.

Are you planning on visiting anytime soon?

I have lived in Adelaide now for 4 years, and love every minute of it. I come back to the UK quite regularly and always endeavour to visit the College and my old Department, and meet my former Lecturers, notably David Alderton and Duncan Macgregor, the former of which I am still in contact with. I am incredibly proud of my time at Royal Holloway and would go back and do it all again if I could. But for now, I may have to settle for visiting, which on its own, is a great experience.

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