



CLYTIE BINDER

ARISING FROM DISRUPTION

This unique season of life during the coronavirus pandemic has revealed the creativity and ability to adapt that people around the world are tapping into, with the Churchill Fellowship a perfect example.

Words by **Jane Milburn and Sasha Davenport**
Pictures **contributed**

As the world faces profound change and travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, everyone's life, work and study has been disrupted, and we are sheltering in place unless required on the frontline.

This means only a handful of the 2019 Churchill Fellows have been able to complete their overseas investigations and the Churchill Trust has extended their timeframe by an additional 12 months.

Churchill Trust CEO Adam Davey said that as the COVID-19 pandemic started to unfold, the focus was on ensuring the safety of Churchill Fellows who were already travelling and providing a quick response for those who had not yet travelled.

"We made the decision in early March to give all of our untravelling Fellows an additional 12-month window to undertake their Churchill Fellowship as a way to take the pressure off them, give them certainty and keep the focus on their health and wellbeing," Mr Davey said.

"Meeting with people around the world, building new understandings, taking in cultural perspectives and other international contexts of the issues being explored is at the heart of a Churchill Fellowship and what makes the experience life changing. For that opportunity to be delayed is obviously a huge let down for many of our Churchill Fellows who had planned to be on their journey overseas now."

In a creative response to that delay, Queensland Fellow Jane Milburn decided to undertake a Virtual Fellowship during this mandatory 'down-time', and utilise technology to meet people online and share their stories of adaptation, resourcefulness

and self-sufficiency. This virtual preparation for Jane's Fellowship will complement her overseas investigations, which are now rescheduled for 2021.

"In true Churchill spirit, people like Jane are demonstrating drive, determination and innovation to keep moving towards their goals. Turning what could be seen as a setback into an opportunity to establish deeper connections with people now. Using the advanced technology we have at hand to have 'virtual' meetings will more than likely strengthen the benefits of meeting face-to-face when that is possible again. It may



JANE MILBURN
PHOTO BY CHARMAINE LYONS



PETAH CHAPMAN

well be a way that Churchill Fellows choose to prepare for their Fellowships in the future," Mr Davey said.

Necessity is the mother of invention and Jane's ARISING from Disruption video interview series is highlighting creative responses from makers and entrepreneurial people about how they are innovating in the way they source, use and reuse resources, and continue to earn a living at this time of transformative change.

"It is not what happens, it is how we respond that makes the difference. We humans are adaptive and resourceful, and sharing how others are being more hands-on and self-reliant in these changed circumstances will sow seeds of hope and inspiration," Jane said.

There were 115 Churchill Fellowships awarded to Australians by the Churchill Trust in 2019 and the selection process for 2020 Fellowships will begin again after applications close at the end of April.

Brisbane-based Clytie Binder had already commenced her Fellowship to study community composting in United States, Canada and Cuba, when the gravity of the pandemic suddenly erupted.

When the Zero Waste Week conference on her agenda was cancelled and San Francisco shutdown, she realised the need to return home immediately - just 10 days after she left Australia.

"We had no idea of how drastically everything would change and suddenly, overnight, everything was shut down, police were everywhere and the streets were eerie," Clytie said.

Now that she's home and emerged from the mandatory fortnight of quarantine, Clytie has returned to her job with Brisbane City Council and working from home as the council's community composting hubs are shut down until the virus threat passes.

"I felt I dipped my toe in America, even in the short time I was there. Now I'm reassessing how we can improve the composting program here, and building momentum for

completing my Churchill when travel becomes possible again."

Social change advocate Dr Amanda Cahill was looking towards a May departure date to Europe and the United Kingdom to study how climate action can build regional economies that are more resilient, just and prosperous.

The travel disruption was a windfall opportunity for her in some ways. Amanda can now study how things have worked out for those communities that were already preparing for a disaster of some kind, in this case the global pandemic. And she's also using the eight weeks earmarked for travel time to instead focus on a book she has in the pipeline.

Opera singer Petah Chapman, from Tarzali in far north Queensland, was scheduled to head off on her Churchill Fellowship to London and Demark for eight weeks in May.

As a freelance performing artist and teacher, she felt grief and frustration that what was to have been a secure year of performing and professional development unraveled due to the pandemic.

"I was on my first contract with Opera Australia in Sydney, preparing to perform Verdi's La Traviata, when everything was cancelled. It was a weird feeling, to build and build, and then not get to the final show," Petah said.

As well as her Churchill Fellowship, Petah had also won an Arts Queensland individual professional development grant to travel to Italy, and had a solo concert tour planned with her debut album Trio Cavallaro due for release in June.

"I was able to travel from Sydney to Canberra and am now bunkered here with my boyfriend. It took a while to pick myself up, after a week or two of frustration and sadness. Now I've picked up my teaching of singing, violin and guitar, language and theory classes online at petahchapman.com and am using the time to get other grant applications in."

Petah was home-schooled at Tarzali in a musical family and has always lived for music and theatre. She discovered opera while studying at Griffith University's The Conservatorium of Music, from which she graduated five years ago.



AMANDA CAHILL

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— Jane Milburn



Located at 1100 metres above sea level, the Bunya Mountains are typically 5-7 degrees cooler than the surrounding plains. The flora and fauna are mesmerising, and include incredibly rare species - some of which date back 150 million years. The sunsets (and sunrises) alone make the trip worthwhile, plus each night you'll see a sparkling array of stars painted large across an inky black universe.

So if you're looking for a romantic weekend getaway or a family holiday, the Bunya Mountains is the perfect destination. Just 60 minutes from Dalby and under 3 hours from Brisbane it's easy to get to. There are 41 kms of walking tracks, clear mountain skies, soaring pines, rainforest, creeks, waterfalls and rolling hills of white beauty when there's been a heavy frost. There's a market on the last Sunday of every month and Poppies coffee shop is always busy. So lock up the car, breath in the crisp mountain air and wander amongst the wallabies as everything is within walking distance.

Book your trip today. There are 100 Bunya Mountains holiday homes all situated adjacent to the National Park. Jump onto bunyamountains.com.au or phone the Accommodation Centre on 4668 3126.