



### Daniel Zalec

#### Why did you choose to study with the DECV?

As a serious tennis player, *standard* school was often getting in the way of my traveling and training commitments. Underlying this was a natural tendency to want to work alone and in peace, thus my school teachers believed that I would be best suited to distance education.

One day, someone recommended DECV as the best option. I quickly came to the same conclusion and, with considerable enjoyment, I completed Years 11 and 12 via DECV.

#### Since completing VCE, what academic path have you travelled?

In 2007, I graduated from Griffith University with a Bachelor of Arts (Literature and Composition, Australian Studies). In 2010, I obtained a Master of Arts (Writing) from Swinburne University of Technology. I chose these degrees specifically because they were available as off campus courses. With my overwhelmingly positive DECV experience behind me, this was an easy choice, as I continued to enjoy the freedom of distance study. I also aim to begin my PhD in the not too distant future.

#### An environmental issue of immediate concern to us all currently occupies your time. Can you simplify the issue for us?

'FIRE WATER: Australia's Industrial Fluoridation Disgrace' ([www.firewaterfilm.com](http://www.firewaterfilm.com)) has recently been invited to two separate film festivals in India and New Zealand, with the total upload views for the project approaching 70 000 (on YouTube alone). It is clear that many people in Australia and around the world consider this issue to be an important one. Fluoridation chemicals are the only chemicals added to public drinking water with the intent to cause physiological changes in the human body. This automatically raises the matter of the universal human right of informed consent to medication. In Australia, when authorities forcibly fluoridate a water supply, they are not obtaining the informed consent of individuals within the community. The other major concern, which we cover in the film extensively, is that of the actual chemicals used to fluoridate public drinking water – i.e. highly toxic industrial waste products that have never been formally approved for human consumption, based on rigorous scientific testing. It can safely be said that the average person does not want to be drinking industrial waste, scrubbed from the pollution smokestacks of industry. The best scientific website readers can visit to learn more is: [www.fluoridealert.org](http://www.fluoridealert.org)

#### What is the next chapter in the Daniel Zalec story?

Since obtaining my MA, I have continually explored various professional writing options. The bulk of this work has been scriptwriting/editing, but in between I managed to secure a co-author publication in *The Online Journal of Writing and Practice-led Research*. I try to remain open to various styles of writing. One recent project is *Helix Key*, a Sci-Fi/Action short film that I co-wrote with

Leon Tasi in early 2011. It is due to be shot in mid-late 2011:

[www.facebook.com/HelixKey](http://www.facebook.com/HelixKey)

#### What advice would you give current DECV students – about their studies and about life in general?

Being a distance student can be a lonely existence, but with the aid of sophisticated online technologies, one need not be intellectually isolated. Therefore, network with like-minded students and teachers when required. Stay on top of your study load, as you will tend to enjoy the richness of learning when you are on top of things. In terms of life in general, follow your passions based on your particular skills and talents. As Mark Twain said, "the secret of success is making your vocation your vacation". The worst thing is spending your life doing something you hate. Use/plan your education to make sure that doesn't happen! Also, don't accept everything at face value. Use the skills you learn during your studies to do your own research in order to form your own conclusions. If you graduate with an advanced ability for critical thinking and inquiry, then you are truly educated. By default, be prepared to tackle tough issues.

