



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

2009

ACHIEVING MORE
TOGETHER

Time, talent or
treasure

A global connection

A new learning curve

Celebrating our
cultural diversity

A sporting chance

Handling industry
relationships

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A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR

This inaugural edition of *Engaging Communities* showcases the breadth of the University's community engagement. It explores the themes of engaged teaching and learning, research partnerships, commercial engagement, philanthropic engagement, alumni and leadership. The common thread is working together and effecting change.

Community collaboration has always been a defining feature of the University of Newcastle. The support of the Hunter community was the driving force behind the University becoming an autonomous institution in 1965. One of our landmark buildings, the Great Hall, was funded through a community-driven campaign and our teaching and research is strongly influenced by community needs.

Community desire for a university presence on the NSW Central Coast was a key factor in the establishment of the University's Central Coast campus at Ourimbah – a unique partnership that includes TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute and the Central Coast Community College.

Community engagement and partnerships are fundamental to every aspect of the University's business. Emphasis is placed on identifying and supporting mutually beneficial activities that build skills, capacity and knowledge within communities while at the same time enhance the reputation and achievements of the University. The Office of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships was established in 2006 to provide a more strategic approach to the development of the University's partnerships in local, regional, national and international communities.

The stories in this publication illustrate the true meaning of community engagement. From the importance of philanthropic support for the University, to regional leadership, connecting with our region's schools and the value of our graduate networks – all activities foster relationships that enrich and develop our communities in mutually beneficial ways.

Genuine, two-way understanding of the benefits of the University working in collaboration with the community will promote opportunities and there is much more that we can do to forge strong and productive partnerships. The Office of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships provides the portal for the University and the community to consider what they can do together.

We hope that you enjoy this first edition of *Engaging Communities*.

**Professor
Nicholas Saunders**
Vice-Chancellor and President

**Associate Professor
Martin Fitzgerald**
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Corporate Development
and Community Partnerships

GRAND DESIGNS

Overlooking the University of Newcastle's sprawling bushland campus, the stunning Great Hall is a grand symbol of the community's commitment to 'its' University.



According to University Foundation Executive Officer Dr Bernie Curran, the building symbolises the bond between the University and the community.

Talk about establishing a university in the Hunter began more than 150 years ago. However it was not until 1951 that university facilities opened on the technical college campus at Tighes Hill operating under the auspices of the then NSW University of Technology in Sydney, which later became the University of NSW.

"But the wonderful people of Newcastle and the Hunter would not rest until they had a university of their own design and making," Curran said.

"The most remarkable thing was that they fought hard for an arts faculty. It was only when that happened in 1958 that people believed they had a 'real' university based on the traditional model of a higher education institution."

Curran said this ownership and ensuing bond was given a physical embodiment when the community came together in 1966 with the idea of a Great Hall shortly after the University moved to the Callaghan campus.

In response, the late Alderman Frank Purdue led a public appeal to raise the money needed to build the Great Hall.

Called the 'Buy a Brick' campaign, the community's work raised the \$600,000 needed to complete the project.

Not only did the community raise the money, it also built the hall from the ground up, with local bricklayers, painters, carpenters, plumbers and electricians working on the project.

"When I talk about it with people now, they all remember the little badge they were given when

they bought a brick during the campaign," Curran said.

"The people who worked on the Hall are so proud to have been part of it – especially when many of them have since had sons, daughters and even grandchildren graduating from the stage of the very building they helped construct.

"The Great Hall will always be a symbol of the community's commitment to establishing a university and creating a building that would link it to the tradition of great universities around the world."

Decorating the hall today are other gifts from the community such as a hand-woven tapestry donated by the Friends of the University and stained-glass windows depicting the crests of the University and Newcastle City Council, donated by former graduates.

Filling the hall with music is a pipe organ, donated to the University in 2007. Half of the installation cost of the combination wind-blown and digital pipes was donated by Novocastrian David Pitts, a well-known organist in the Hunter in the 1960s and 1970s.

Pitts said the Great Hall was an icon in Newcastle and being able to treat it to such a wonderful instrument was extremely satisfying.

"To know that Newcastle has such a remarkable cultural landmark and being able to make a small contribution to that is personally very satisfying for me," he said.

"The sound of the organ fills the space so beautifully. My hope is that having it there will give people the opportunity to be in contact with such a magnificent instrument."

FRIENDS INDEED

The Great Hall has a special place in the heart of Friends of the University President Vic Levi.

In 1974 Levi was one of the first graduates to receive a degree during a ceremony in the recently completed Great Hall. That memory is why he has remained connected with the University ever since.

Formed in 1981 to provide a connection between people wanting an involvement with the University, the 'Friends' raises money for projects ordinary University funds do not cover. More than \$500,000 has been raised since its inception.

Levi said the money was garnered almost exclusively through the group's Book Fairs held in the Great Hall every odd-numbered year.

"During the week of our Book Fair we consistently raise more than \$60,000," Levi said. "We had more than one million items up for sale at the 2007 event, including many books not found anywhere else.

"Every three months we also host a 'Lunch With a Writer' with well-known authors, such as Helen Garner and Peter Yeldham.

"All of these events are held to bridge the University and the broader community and provide a point of connection for everyone."

Projects funded by the Friends include a contribution towards the Great Hall's organ and funding for the pavilion overlooking the University Wetlands.

The Friends also purchase and restore books for the Auchmuty Library's Rare Book Collection. Significantly, the Friends have donated 'milestone' books to the University libraries including the one-millionth volume.

"All members of the Friends are motivated by a love of the University and the pure enjoyment of remaining connected to it," Levi said.

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All of these events are held to bridge the University and the broader community and provide a point of connection for everyone ”

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TIME, TALENT OR TREASURE

Thanks to a generous donation by philanthropist Jennie Thomas, researcher Dr Frances Kay-Lambkin developed an innovative program to treat depression, alcohol and substance abuse.

Kay-Lambkin's ground-breaking research has been recognised locally, nationally and internationally.

A long-time supporter of the University of Newcastle Foundation, Thomas' philosophy is simple.

"I like to give with a warm hand and a warm heart," Thomas said. "It has been a joy to watch so many recipients develop and grow as they achieve their dreams.

"I have had the pleasure of being part of the lives of so many in various fields of endeavour."

Thomas is just one of the University's many generous contributors who give time, talent or treasure to advance research, the community and the University itself.

University Foundation Executive Officer Dr Bernie Curran said there were many ways philanthropists gave their support to help students and to keep tradition, continuity and memory alive.

"There is such goodwill in this community from people who want to see great things flowing from the University," Curran said.

"People give in many ways. Some donate money towards book prizes or scholarships. Others offer their time to sit on one of our many committees."

When graduate Kevin Hoffman, now an architect and Commissioner in the Land and Environment Court, wanted to give something back to the University he endowed the Kevin Hoffman Prize in Urban Design for final-year architecture students.

Kelver Hartley was the Foundation Professor of French at the University. On retirement Hartley sold off nearly everything he owned and donated his books to the University library. However, the most startling news came on his death.

He had bequeathed all he had to the University's French department, creating the Hartley

Bequest Program that provides students the financial assistance to complete part of their studies in France.

The Bequest – which is in the millions of dollars – is considered among one of the most prestigious in the world.

"Then there are business people who support a specialty industry professional position so they can have input into the discipline," Curran said.

"We have also been given amazing collections of items, such as a unique collection of insects from around the world, which give the University valuable access for research and other study."

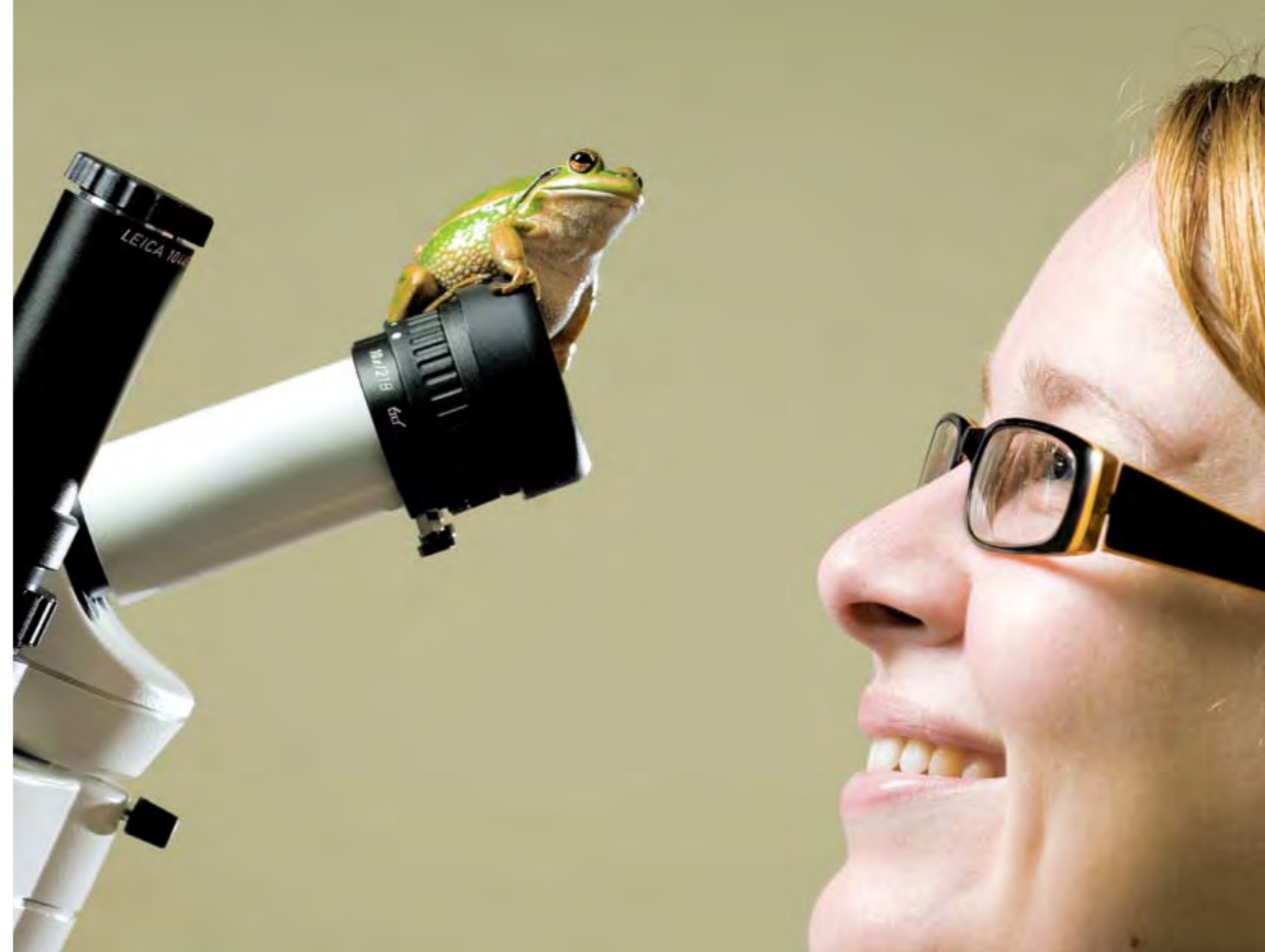
Curran said he believed the University received such generosity because the community had a deep respect for education.

"There is a growing realisation that a lot can be achieved through supporting the University," he said.

"People give because education and research can make a difference. They give because they care about a cause and want to add something to the University that will benefit the community."

Curran said each year the University Foundation received donations that supported research, academic positions, scholarships, prizes and endowment funds.

"At the heart of every donation we receive lies affection, respect and a belief in our University and how it enhances people's lives."



DREAMS CAN COME TRUE

It was like a fairytale for Michelle Stockwell when a princely scholarship brought her dream of saving frogs from global extinction one step closer.

The University of Newcastle conservation biologist was awarded the Barker Family PhD Scholarship in 2006 to continue her research into why frog populations around the world were being decimated by an amphibian chytrid fungus.

It is study that requires constant fieldwork, which she says is very expensive.

"Being granted this scholarship means I can extend my study and pay for travel," Stockwell said.

"I have recently returned from Brazil, where I presented my work to the sixth World Conference of Herpetology. The scholarship enabled me to go."

The Barker Family PhD Scholarship was established in

2001 with a \$100,000 donation from the family. Each recipient of a scholarship receives \$5,000 a year for their final two years of PhD study, an additional \$2,500 to write their thesis and \$2,000 to assist with travel expenses to attend conferences.

Stockwell said receiving the scholarship was a welcome financial boost and acknowledgement of her work.

"The prize means so much to me, it is validation of my research."

"It is a wonderful feeling to know that what you are doing is important to people like the Barkers who are themselves so strongly committed to helping the local environment."

“
The prize means so much to me – it is validation of my research”





A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The concept of mutual benefit is the driving force behind the many ways the University of Newcastle ensures its teaching, learning and research reach far beyond the University walls.

Collaboration between community organisations, businesses, education and other community relationships deliver mutual benefits for all partners.

For example, University law students provide free legal advice to members of the community in a clinic each year. In turn, the University is able to give its students the opportunity to practice their theoretical learning in real-life situations.

Such mutual benefit addresses community needs, problems and aspirations while ensuring the University's academic endeavours are relevant to society's needs.

In-kind benefits are complemented by economic gains with research showing that every dollar of University-generated revenue generates \$2.75 in economic activity for the Hunter and Central Coast regions.

As president of the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA), the University of Newcastle's Associate Professor Martin Fitzgerald knows how important and rewarding engaging with the community can be.

"True community engagement is absolutely invaluable to everyone involved," Fitzgerald, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships, said.

"Each holds a treasure trove of ideas, knowledge and experience and by bringing them together we develop real-world solutions to some of the world's key issues."

Nearly all of Australia's universities are members of the Alliance, which promotes mutually beneficial interaction between universities and their communities.

"The political, academic and community agendas have all come together and it is time to take AUCEA's role to the next level by demonstrating real leadership and raising the profile and engagement of the Alliance."



INSPIRATION AND PASSION

For Brad Webb, inaugural winner of the University of Newcastle Leadership Awards, the events of 11 September 2001 were a catalyst for reflection and change.

At the time Webb was the General Manager of a leading Newcastle accounting and business firm.

"September 11 spurred my desire to give something back. That period was the culmination of a lifetime of wanting to contribute something to the community," Webb said.

Webb had previously volunteered with PULSE, a fundraising group for the Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI). In 2004 he accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer at HMRI – trading business for the not-for-profit sector.

Awarded the University of Newcastle Leadership Award in 2006 for demonstrating leadership professionally and

in community service, Webb said winning had opened up an opportunity for him to create a network of young people who were chipping away at the edges of what they wanted to achieve.

"Although it is great to win, what was really wonderful was getting to know the other nominees and what they were doing.

"Our community is home to many amazing young people doing great things in business and the community. Being able to share their experiences as leaders was invaluable for my own development."

David Newham, named the 2007 winner for his work with Aboriginal youth, said receiving the award was empowering.

"The Leadership Award made me analyse the way I am, the way I operate and the true definition of leadership," Newham said.

"As an Aboriginal man, it is important to me to work with young Indigenous people to reconnect them with their culture and strengthen their identity.

"I am trying to help them build self-esteem, their wellbeing and their capacity, so they can be the best they can be and become leaders in their own ways."

LEADING THE WAY

Helping to build a team of committed, strong young community leaders is the driving force behind the University of Newcastle's prestigious annual Leadership Award.

Introduced in 2006, the award recognises the achievements of young leaders in the Hunter, Central Coast and Port Macquarie regions, encourages them into the public arena, and guides their growth and development through a mentoring program and a \$10,000 leadership development scholarship.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders said the Leadership Award program aimed to nurture professional and community leadership skills in young people under the age of 35.

"Sometimes being a leader can be lonely, so offering advice and support for young people to develop their networks and leadership skills can help them go on to achieve their best," Saunders said.

"People in our communities are strong and resilient no matter what challenges they face, but communities still need to nurture and develop future leaders who can stand up, take charge and get things done.

"The University Leadership Award is about finding those emerging leaders."

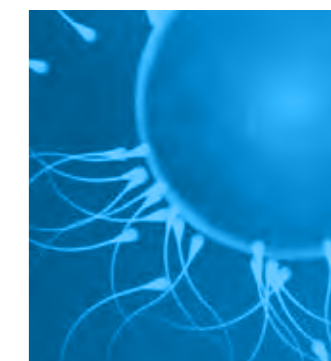
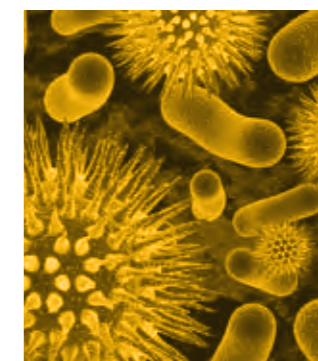
As part of its commitment to encouraging leadership, the University will hold a Leadership Forum in 2009 to host local, national and international leaders and Leadership Award winners and finalists.

"The forum will bring together emerging leaders with those who are more experienced and help them form networks and explore what it takes to be a great leader," Saunders said.

AT HOME ON THE CENTRAL COAST



TRUE INNOVATION



In its rainforest setting, the University of Newcastle Central Coast campus at Ourimbah has a connection with its surroundings that belies the fact it has only been there since 1989.

Mirroring a comfortable physical affinity with the landscape is the ever-strengthening relationship the campus has established with the community. From schools and service groups to local businesses and government departments, the campus plays a role in the lives of many people from many age groups.

Exciting community initiatives, teamed with cutting-edge research and innovative degree programs have established the Central Coast campus as a dynamic centre of learning in a unique multi-sector arrangement.

A partnership of the University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute, in association with the Central Coast Community College, the campus is also affiliated with the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music.

Campus Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director Professor Stephen Crump said that as a multi-sector organisation, the campus offered seamless pathways through higher education and training.

"This partnership gives our students flexibility and the opportunity to build on their skills and knowledge, moving from TAFE or the Community College to the University as they set and achieve new goals."

A key to many of the relationships forged with various community organisations is the provision of relevant coursework and industry experience for students.

A relationship with NSW Health gives Bachelor of Nursing students work placement opportunities in community centres, aged care areas, mental health settings and major teaching hospitals throughout the Central Coast and surrounding areas. Students studying teaching-related degrees and TAFE programs spend time in local schools, childcare centres and community agencies.

Similar partnerships have been formed with sporting communities, such as the Central Coast Mariners and the Central Coast Academy of Sport, to provide students with valuable work experience. The two-way partnerships also give elite athletes access to the latest research being undertaken by Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science students and staff.

Academic excellence is foremost in all of these activities. Several research centres, including the WorkCover NSW Research Centre of Excellence, the Sustainable Use of Coasts and Catchments group and

the Children and Education Research Centre, are located at the Central Coast to ensure a dynamic exchange of knowledge for students and community groups alike.

Crump said the University was a centre of expertise that also gained enormously from the insights and contributions of the community.

"The University and its partners benefit immeasurably from our relationships – we learn what is needed from us in their role as employers and community representatives, while they are able to access the University as a source of knowledge and expertise," he said.

"Our partners also have the opportunity to drive our research by commissioning studies into their area of interest or need."

The campus serves as more than just an academic experience for many, with plans underway to form Central Coast Alumni and Young Professionals groups. A Friends of the Central Coast campus group has also recently been established.

The common cold virus transformed into a cancer buster. A device that sorts the good from the bad when it comes to sperm. Both major medical breakthroughs, both happened in the Hunter and both are examples of the entrepreneurial spirit on display at the inaugural Hunter Means Innovation Festival.

Held in May 2008 as part of the Australian Innovation Festival, the event was the result of collaboration between the University of Newcastle, the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the Hunter Economic Development Board, Newcastle Innovation and the NSW Department of State and Regional Development.

More than 2,300 visitors attended the Festival, which featured 50 events at 13 locations across the region.

Ranging from seminars, art exhibitions, tours, public lectures and workshops, each function demonstrated to the community the importance of sustaining the Hunter's culture of innovation.

Of the 50 events, nine were University initiatives, designed to show the community the value of the education provider's cutting-edge research.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Barney Glover said the Festival had been extremely successful.

"It was an important way for the University to engage with the community and show the breadth of our innovative research," Glover said.

The discoveries of the cold virus being used as a treatment to kill melanoma cells and the sperm isolation device were part of the 'Patent to Product' symposium. The University researchers involved outlined their journey from lab bench to commercialisation and how truly innovative research evolves from an idea to a product.

The symposium was hosted by the Hunter Medical Research Institute and the University's commercial arm Newcastle Innovation. It provided local researchers the opportunity to hear first hand the trials and tribulations involved in the development of health and medical technology.

Another of the events was the Energy Exchange held by Newcastle Innovation. Showcasing the University's research capabilities and current industry projects in the clean and sustainable energy sector, representatives from more than 30 organisations attended.

Other University contributions to the Festival included introducing the community to the University's new ArtsHealth: Centre for Research and

Practice, a behind-the-scenes look at the 'Back to the City' program, and research and teaching work of the Family Action Centre and Special Education Centre.

Glover said the University's role in the success of the Festival highlighted the depth of its contribution to the region.

"As well as producing graduates and researchers, we are the second largest employer in the Hunter and make a significant economic contribution to the region," he said. "We also have a cultural dimension that adds to the vibrancy of the Hunter."

"For all these reasons, we need dialogue and interaction with the community through events such as the Hunter Means Innovation Festival.

"Through these initiatives, we not only highlight how significant our research contribution is to the region but we discover what we can do as a regional university to support our communities.

"The Festival was a wonderful way to showcase the incredible range of research being undertaken here in Newcastle."

“It was an important way for the University to engage with the community and show the breadth of our innovative research”



20:20 VISION FUTURE IN FOCUS



Government, irrespective of its political persuasion, does not have a monopoly on policy wisdom.



This sentiment, offered by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, provided the impetus for an Australian-first meeting of the most dynamic and innovative minds in the nation to tackle the long-term challenges confronting Australia's future in the 21st Century.

As Australia's best and brightest prepared to head to Canberra for the 2020 Summit, local community leaders came together to set out regional priorities for the national forum.

One hundred and fifty groups and individuals representing industry, business, education and the public sector met at the University of Newcastle to harness local ideas, talent and energy to create an informed and united voice that could provide a strategic direction for the region.

Co-chairing the local event were Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson and University Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders. Saunders said he jumped at the opportunity to be involved.

"One of the key roles of a university in its region is to promote discussion and debate about important issues for the community," he said.

"We have a lot of intellectual capacity at the University and we want to see that being drawn on by the community.

"It is also important that the University understands the aspirations of the region, how it sees itself in the future and the path it will take to get there. The 2020 Summit has provided a wealth of ideas."

Grierson said the local Summit was held before the national event to ensure the ideas and issues it produced could be included as part of national discussions.

"Newcastle is a significant contributor to the Australian economy and it was important our city had a strong voice at the national Summit," she said.

"It was natural the University would be central to discussions – it is a place of vision and a

centre of knowledge engaging with many people. I knew it would bring a great deal to what we wanted to achieve."

The same 10 topic areas set down for the national agenda were examined at the Newcastle event. They included the future of Indigenous Australia, a long-term health strategy, sustainability, economic infrastructure, governance, creativity and future directions for rural communities.

"The willingness of the community to participate in the local Summit showed that Newcastle is a place of great ideas," Grierson said.

"The process allowed more people to become part of the decision-making process and helped us identify the community leaders who could be part of the region's future."

The spectrum of discussion ranged from grassroots issues in the local community to matters affecting people across Australia.

"The Summit agreed, for example, that further discussion is needed to look at why Australia doesn't have a Bill of Rights," Saunders said.

"We have acted on that and the University hosted a symposium on the subject in October 2008 involving a range of interested parties including the NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos.

"Health was another important area and we will be working with governments to ensure our vision can be integrated into state and national initiatives."

This commitment has also borne fruit with the announcement of Commonwealth support for 50 new postgraduate places at the University to train nurses in the critical area of mental health. The allocation represents more than one-third of all new places Australia-wide.

A clean and sustainable energy solution for the region was also a key initiative the University, government and other stakeholders agreed to work towards.

Grierson said she was pleased the Summit had picked up on this agenda – one that she has promoted over many years.

"The Summit agreed that the University is well-placed to support a bid for the Australian Government's Clean Energy Innovation Centre," Grierson said.

"The Innovation Centre will support small and medium-sized clean energy companies find and adapt the latest research and technology to improve business performance."

Saunders said that the breadth of research the University was undertaking in this area made it an attractive proposition.

"It is a perfect example of how our expertise can be used by the community as part of a broader strategy for regional innovation. The University has also taken on the challenge of engaging with the community to help devise a Sustainable Cities plan for Newcastle," he said.

Grierson said there needed to be a collective intellectual voice in regional planning and it was important the University was involved with community decisions.

"As the Prime Minister indicated, governments cannot make policy decisions in a vacuum and many issues need to be tackled in a collective way," she said.

"Harnessing the knowledge stemming from the University and the broader Hunter community not just today, but well into the future, will ensure our region is best placed to prosper."

SHINING A LIGHT ON COLLABORATIVE SUSTAINABILITY



No one wants a world where taps run dry and lights do not come on at the flick of a switch.

While it is not news that two of the world's most precious resources – energy and water – need to be carefully managed, we still have a long way to go in order to ensure their sustainability.

To help address the issue, a world-first initiative is bringing together great minds in the Hunter to create and provide public programs showing people how they can be smarter in their use of energy and water in their homes, workplaces and schools.

Called 'Together Today', the collaboration links community, business, industry, education and government leaders to harness existing and in-development smart initiatives and technologies.

'Together Today' aims to establish the Hunter as Australia's most energy and water efficient region.

Not only will the project create public awareness, it will also stimulate markets for environmentally-efficient products and services, creating economic growth in the region.

The University of Newcastle is one of the major Foundation Member partners who have pledged a commitment to the project. Through the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment, the University will add value to the collaboration through ongoing, relevant research nominated particularly for the 'Together Today' pledge.

University Foundation Executive Officer Dr Bernie Curran said 'Together Today' gave the Institute additional opportunities to engage with the community and build on the University's expertise.

"At the request of the 'Together Today' forum, the Tom Farrell Institute is conducting research into how to best monitor water and energy usage in the Hunter," Curran said.

"The University of Newcastle has a long record of quality research and teaching in the natural and built environment,

and it is important we share that knowledge with our local community.

"Having just approved our own University Environmental Sustainability Plan, we will be able to share our knowledge with the forum."

While steering 'Together Today' toward community education, Foundation Members will also support the research and development of regional collaborative and individual energy and water saving initiatives. The Foundation Members include: the University, Newcastle City Council, NBN, Coal and Allied managed by Rio Tinto Coal Australia, Macquarie Generation, EnergyAustralia, CSIRO, Hunter Water, Port Waratah Coal Services, NSW Department of Education and Training, TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute, and the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

By supporting smart environmental initiatives through a major collaborative commitment, 'Together Today' members aim to secure a better environmental and economic future in the region.

'Together Today' Executive Director Chanti Richardson said the continued support of the Foundation Members was important if real action was to be taken on climate change.

'Together Today' aims to engage our community and create a market for the use of energy and water efficient products and services," Richardson said.

"We have created a forum to foster the development and integration of smart environmental initiatives we can roll out across the region."

She said the University's Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment would contribute the specialist knowledge that would make 'Together Today' dynamic and unique.

"The students of the University are our future community leaders and through 'Together Today' they can be agents of positive change for our environment, economy and ultimately, our future."

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

The idea behind the introduction of an annual lecture in honour of Australia's first Prime Minister, Sir Edmund Barton, was to provide an avenue for the exploration of politics and federalism in the Australian context.



Whether organisers envisaged national newspaper headlines that screamed 'Abolish state governments!' following the inaugural Barton Lecture in 2008 is doubtful. However it demonstrated the role the University of Newcastle plays in facilitating debate on issues of public interest.

Federal Member for Hunter and Minister for Defence Joel Fitzgibbon, was the person behind the call for wholesale constitutional reform. The University of Newcastle graduate's Barton Lecture address also presented an argument in favour of an Australian republic.

It is through forums such as the Barton Lecture that the University provides staff, students, the broader public and the media the opportunity to engage with community leaders, internationally renowned experts and local scholars.

Pro Vice-Chancellor of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships, Associate Professor Martin Fitzgerald, said the University's Public Lecture Series and Visiting Scholars Series were created to stimulate debate on important issues, and had developed into educational and informative resources for the community.

"Lectures canvas issues of local, national and global significance, and give people a forum for the sharing of ideas and debate."

In addition to the Barton Lecture, the University's Public Lecture Series has been hosting the Morpeth Lecture since 1967 in celebration of its partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle. The Morpeth Lecture examines relevant and challenging issues from a theological perspective.

The John Turner Memorial Lecture honours the research of Turner, a former history lecturer at the University and one of the foremost historians in the Hunter region.

The annual lecture looks at local history and research that build on Turner's comprehensive work on Newcastle and the region.

The Office of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships also invites visiting scholars to present public lectures on issues relevant to the local community. One such lecture featured internationally renowned community development expert Jody Kretzmann discussing the importance of community in successful urban revitalisation.

Other lectures in the 2008 series have explored human rights, medical research and law.

ALUMNI: A GROWING COMMUNITY

The connection shared by graduates, academics and those involved in guiding the University of Newcastle's strategic direction is as important as it is enduring.

As members of the University's ever-growing Alumni, this special group are a global network of dynamic and talented people who will always carry with them the reputation of a University known for its pursuit of quality and excellence.

Boasting a roll call that stretches from High Court judges, government and business leaders, eminent academics, sporting and media identities to the new teacher at the local primary school, the Alumni are a diverse and influential mix of people.

University Chancellor Professor Trevor Waring said the University's relationship with Alumni was vitally important.

"It is not just academic achievement that makes our University great," Waring said. "Our community relationships and ongoing connections with Alumni keep us lively, vibrant and forward-thinking."

"In many cases, modern living removes us from a lot of our traditional groups, such as churches and extended families. Alumni membership offers a way of staying in touch and providing inclusion in the University community."

President of Alumni, Brian Kennaugh, said the very nature of the Alumni community was broad.

"Individual Alumni benefit through the relationships they establish with fellow graduates and the University is strengthened through the global networks created," he said.

"However, the communities where our Alumni live and work also benefit through their knowledge, networks and skills – the value of which is enormous."

A GLOBAL CONNECTION

In 100 countries around the world, more than 100,000 University of Newcastle Alumni are sharing a common bond on which relationships are built and treasured.

Alumni are graduates of the University, people who have taught at the University over the years or who have served on the University's governing body. Wherever they are in the world they remain connected to the University and the growing professional network of fellow Alumni.

Providing friendship, support and contacts with people who may otherwise not come together, Alumni chapters give members an important link to a unique global community.

Associate Director of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships, Rosemary Thomson, said the Alumni network was large and ever-growing.

"In addition to our Hunter-based network, we have long-established chapters Sydney, Brisbane, Singapore and Hong Kong," Thomson said.

"Exciting new developments are also happening globally as graduates head back to their home countries after completing their studies, with chapters emerging in Botswana, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand and The Philippines.

"Our Alumni are an impressive group of people committed to doing something extra, not just for the University but for their own countries and regions."

Singapore's Minister for Health and graduate of the University, for example, is Patron of the local chapter. The architect of Kuala Lumpur's airport and conference centre is also one of the University's former students and is now one of several distinguished Patrons of the new Malaysian chapter.

Alumni stay connected through a range of activities including research projects, program reviews, mentoring

opportunities, and professional and social networking. Members reap the benefits of strong and productive global connections and relationships which help them contribute to a stronger society.

Many also engage in philanthropic activities for the University such as the recently established 1968 Singapore Colombo Plan Scholarship and the scholarship for a current student offered annually by the Sydney chapter.

Localised chapter activities commonly include fundraising, social events, award nights and business breakfasts.

A watershed event for Alumni took place in June 2008 when 15 Alumni leaders, chapter leaders and coordinators came together in Singapore for the University of Newcastle Alumni Summit.

"The Summit allowed us to have comprehensive discussions about the future direction of the Alumni," Thomson said. "The aim was to build strong relationships, share our ideas and set a solid platform for our future activities.

"We explored the purpose and primary role of Alumni, the development of a sustainable global network, how it will need to be shaped in the future, and the University's role regarding Alumni.

"It was an outstanding success. The interaction and deep level of fellowship among the Alumni was significant and will allow us to continue this kind of dialogue on an ongoing basis as we continue to grow our global network."

AN OLYMPIC RECEPTION

Nowhere could the talent and enthusiasm of University of Newcastle Alumni global chapters be more evident than in Beijing during the 2008 Olympic Games.

Mark Arkinstall, an engineering Alumni, played a key role in the design and construction of the breathtaking 'Watercube' – the home of Olympic swimming and diving events. The signature building became one of the lasting impressions of the Games, and with it the University of Newcastle became entrenched in Olympic history.

Behind the scenes, Beijing Chapter Alumni were busy ensuring a lucky group of current University communications students settled in to the bustling city.

The 40 students were given the chance of a lifetime to work with the international media contingent at the Games. They were treated to a traditional Chinese lunch followed by a tour of Beijing's ancient drum and bell towers by members of the Beijing Chapter.

The event, organised by the University of Newcastle Alumni and supported by the Australia China Alumni Association, was a friendly affair for students and Alumni alike.

The Beijing visit was an opportunity for chapter members to connect with current University students and demonstrated how they hold out the hand of friendship and connectivity across the globe.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Well-known Newcastle pharmacist Chris Piggott has realised his ambition to have a pharmacy degree program at the University of Newcastle. Now he is pursuing a new phase for the University of Newcastle Alumni story with the establishment of its first professional Pharmacy Alumni chapter.

While not a graduate of the University of Newcastle himself, Piggott's strong sense of community was integral to his support for emerging pharmacists in the Hunter region.

"This is a wonderful example of how community members, who are not necessarily Newcastle graduates, can work with the University to achieve great outcomes," Associate Director of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships Rosemary Thomson said.

"It is also testament to the strong connection local people have with the University, regardless of whether they study here."

Already the new chapter has held its inaugural function, bringing together graduates from the innovative Master of Pharmacy program. Fundraising to support the appointment of a Professor of Pharmacy at the University is one of the key aims of the Pharmacy Alumni.

“ This is a wonderful example of how community members, who are not necessarily Newcastle graduates, can work with the University to achieve great outcomes ”





KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

It was 1968 when nine teenagers met at an airport in Singapore to board a plane that would take them far from the comfort of home to a different world and a unique opportunity in Australia.

The nine, who hardly knew each other, were on their way to the University of Newcastle where they would study for the next four years under a Colombo Plan Scholarship from the Australian Government.

Early in 2008, they came together again to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the life-changing event. During the reunion, the idea was floated to establish a scholarship in perpetuity to annually fund a second-year, Australian engineering student at the University of Newcastle.

And so the 1968 Singapore Colombo Plan Students Scholarship was born, giving this unique group the opportunity to give something back to the University.

Peter Tay, recently retired President and Chief Executive Officer of leading international integrated food company Singapore Food Industries, was one of those nervous undergraduates in 1968. Having completed a combined Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Arts degree all those years ago, he played a key role in setting up the new scholarship scheme.

He said the scholarship was one way for the fellow Singapore Alumni to thank Australia and the community for providing them with the rare opportunity to study overseas.

"That experience enabled us to be what we are today," Tay said. "Without the Colombo Plan Scholarship, it would have been very difficult for my family to finance a university education in Singapore for me, let alone one overseas."

The Colombo Plan Scholarship originated in 1951 to fund promising students from

former British colonies to study at universities in British Commonwealth countries.

In 2009, the first 1968 Singapore Colombo Plan Students Scholarship recipient will benefit from the group's largesse.

"This is our small contribution to build meaningful and tangible people-to-people relationships with Australia," Tay said.



THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD BREAKFAST

While breakfast is arguably the most important meal of the day, in Newcastle it is now serving a whole new purpose in replacing the so-called 'power lunch'.

The Alumni Breakfast Program was introduced to ensure University of Newcastle Alumni still had the opportunity to network with their peers while maintaining their busy professional and personal lives.

Held four times a year at various locations across Newcastle, the breakfasts provide a relaxed setting where members can share their stories and ideas, and be kept up-to-date with key University initiatives.

While still in its infancy, there are big plans ahead for the Breakfast Program, according to Alumni President Brian Kennaugh.

"There are currently four groups that meet regularly in the Hunter but our focus in 2009 is to grow the program and build a critical mass that we can use to leverage interest in other places, including the Central Coast and Mid-North Coast," Kennaugh said.

"We want to see the program running across all University Faculties and then in each Australian city where an Alumni chapter is operating."

Kennaugh's hope is to have 20 or 30 breakfast groups meeting regularly and then once a year bring everyone together for a high level meeting.

"Imagine if each group has 10 or 15 members – that will be real strength in numbers and a strong capacity for global networking, community service initiatives and raising funds to help the University achieve its strategic goals," he said.

"From there we hope to take the program to our international chapters, tailoring the program to meet the individual needs of the different Alumni groups."

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

With such a large number of Alumni who have achieved excellence in their chosen field, the task of singling out three each year to receive Alumni Awards should be an unenviable task.

Not so, according to University of Newcastle Alumni President Brian Kennaugh.

"These prestigious awards are an important way for the Alumni to recognise the outstanding, lasting achievements of their peers," Kennaugh said.

"It is a pleasure reading through the list of nominees and seeing the talents and contributions of people that we can proudly identify with our Alumni and the University."

The winners list in 2008 was no exception.

Internationally-renowned conductor Dr Phillip Matthias was awarded the Newton-John Award for developing a vibrant culture of choral and organ music, inspiring and motivating students to perform at international levels. Under his direction, the University Chamber

Choir has performed at world-class venues including St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

Professor Sue McNeil was awarded the Medal for Professional Excellence in recognition of her outstanding contribution to engineering as a researcher, academic and teacher. Originally from Maitland in the Hunter Valley, O'Neill is currently Professor of Civil Engineering, Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Delaware in the United States.

The Alumni Award for Exceptional Community Service recognises the work of an outstanding individual who has made a significant contribution to the University or the community. Alumni chose to posthumously recognise former Lord Mayor of Newcastle Greg Heys for his commitment as a University educator, environmental campaigner, community development practitioner and committed activist. At the time of his death in 2007, Heys was one chapter short of completing his PhD thesis at the University.

Kennaugh said each recipient made significant contributions to the community in many different ways.

"University of Newcastle Alumni are people for the University and the broader community to be very proud of."

TRANSFORMING CITIES

A large shipping container sitting on a bed of canola seeds in the Honeysuckle precinct would, on face value, have nothing to do with architecture or the revitalisation of Newcastle's central business district.

Yet this artistic interpretation of events that took place in Newcastle Harbour some four years earlier, when Greenpeace activists tried to stop a cargo ship transporting 57,000 tonnes of genetically modified canola seed, helped spark discussion and debate about sustainable urban renewal.

Part of a major international exhibition called 'Back to the City', *Surrogate Trojan* was one of a series of temporary urban art installations scattered throughout the centre of the city in early 2008.

The public exhibition and symposium brought together more than 150 architects, artists, landscape architects and graphic designers to show how collaboration across the disciplines can achieve the basic concepts of a healthy community through sustainable design.

"The event provided benefits for everyone – the community, industry and the students," said Professor Steffen Lehmann, Chair of Architectural Design at the University of Newcastle – a position jointly funded by Suters Architects and the University.

"Collaboration is possibly the greatest asset. Through 'Back to the City', artists and architects

got to know each other and continue to work together, long after the project had finished."

In Lehmann's view, initiatives such as this encourage communities to take responsibility for their own environment and empower them to make better choices regarding their public space.

The project resulted in a 260-page book titled *Back to the City: Strategies for informal urban interventions* which is now available in 36 countries. It showcases Newcastle as a prime example of how art and architecture can work together to create a healthy community.

"Like many cities around the world, Newcastle is transforming and developing a new identity," Lehmann said.

"Newcastle is now being watched by an international audience as an example of how a traditionally industrial city can evolve into a sustainable city, both physically and economically."

Since his appointment in 2006, Lehmann has demonstrated an enduring commitment to involving the local community and students in collaborative, interdisciplinary projects relating to contemporary cities and public space.

Designing a sustainable city in the Middle East, helping China build new cities and doubling the size of an inner city Indian university are all actual projects being undertaken by students in the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment.

Lehmann believes working on tangible projects such as these and 'Back to the City' are key to enhancing learning for his students and enriching communities across the globe.

"Architecture by its nature is a practical and helpful tool to engage with the community and those with influence, such as councils, major business and design leaders," Lehmann said.

Adding to his commitments at the University, in the local community and to range of international projects, Lehmann was recently appointed to coordinate the first United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Chair in Sustainable Urban Development.

The role of the UNESCO Chair is to lead research in sustainable urban development relating to local and regional needs of the Asia Pacific region.

STORIES OF OUR PAST

Every Novocastrian would be aware of the iconic nature of Fort Scratchley and many have a special fondness for the recently refurbished landmark.

But how many could tell you anything about the fort's history? How many know it was the site of Australia's first coal mine? Or that it was the only coastal military installation in Australia to have returned fire on an enemy vessel in time of war?

From the time Newcastle was settled, Fort Scratchley has been many things to many people.

Even before the fort was built and the site became known as Fort Scratchley, it was used by the Awabakal people, mined by convicts and provided lighting to guide mariners to the entrance to the Port of Newcastle.

Lecturer in the University of Newcastle Faculty of Science and Information Technology,

Susan Kerrigan, has captured the stories of the historic site in a documentary called *Using Fort Scratchley*.

The 50-minute DVD was produced in partnership with the Fort Scratchley Historical Society, Newcastle City Council and the Newcastle Region Maritime Museum. It features new oral histories, animations, photos and graphics depicting the diverse use of the site over the years.

"The documentary isn't just about the location as a fort because there is so much more history to it than that," Kerrigan said. "It is a site of historic national significance."

Included is a 3D animation recreating the night of 8 June

1942 when a Japanese submarine attacked Newcastle.

Kerrigan said the documentary would not have been possible without the local love, knowledge, understanding and passion for the fort.

So rich is the history of the site, Kerrigan also developed and launched the *Living History of Fort Scratchley* website to complement the documentary.

It includes a comprehensive timeline providing access to more than 150 images, 80 documents and newspaper articles, and over 60 video clips.

Fort Scratchley Society President Bill Hopkins said Kerrigan's work was invaluable in preserving the iconic site's history.

As a member of Army Reserve unit 15th Northern River Lancers, Hopkins knows first hand the allure of the fort, having served there in 1950 and again from 1952 to 1954.

"Fort Scratchley gets into your blood," Hopkins said. "Its history is an integral part of Newcastle's history – the coal under the fort was the reason for the city's settlement."

"Susan's work has made sure the stories of its past will be preserved."

Kerrigan's project built on the work of the Coal River Working Party on the early history of Fort Scratchley. The Coal River Working Party was established to ensure the ongoing protection of historical sites and landmarks in Newcastle East.



COMMUNITY CLINICS DELIVER TWO-WAY BENEFITS

Each year, thousands of people benefit from the University of Newcastle's health and legal clinics.

Health clinics are held regularly during the semester at both the Newcastle and Central Coast campuses and associated facilities. They include oral health, podiatry, psychology, and nutrition and dietetics clinics. Each is offered at little or no cost and provides fast and efficient treatment to those in the community who need it most.

Through the health clinics second, third and fourth-year students provide high quality care to patients under the supervision of fully qualified practitioners.

In some cases, the services are delivered in purpose-built teaching spaces that replicate the clinical environment in hospitals and community-based health clinics. The Colgate Oral Health Clinic located on the University's Central Coast campus at Ourimbah, for example, would not be out of place in a major metropolitan dental hospital.

Head of the University's School of Health Sciences, Associate Professor Darren Rivett, said the clinics delivered benefits for both the University and the community.

"They are a practical demonstration of an effective two-way partnership," Rivett said. "While community members receive quality health services, the students gain invaluable face-to-face experience – an essential component of their degrees."

While practical experience is a compulsory part of most degree programs in the Faculty of Health, the community clinics allow students to complete placements in their local area instead of having to always travel to other facilities to gain the hands-on experience.

According to Rivett, demand for affordable health advice in the Hunter and Central Coast regions continues to grow, making the clinics an effective and important service to the community.

“

This type of work provides students with the opportunity to not only help clients but to also shape the legal landscape in Australia”

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"Due to the shortage of health professionals patients may have to wait weeks or months to see an oral hygienist or podiatrist in the public system but the University clinics offer almost immediate access to services."

A similar service model is used by the University of Newcastle Legal Centre. The Centre was established in the mid 1990s to help law students gain the professional experience required to secure employment after graduation.

According to the Director of the Legal Centre, Shaun McCarthy, the law program offered at the University of Newcastle is truly innovative.

"While most law programs require students to undertake six months of work experience at the completion of their degree before they can practice as a lawyer, our approach is to integrate work experience into the degree," McCarthy said.

Staffed by fourth-year law students who are supported by qualified law practitioners, the Legal Centre offers free legal advice to around 550 clients each year.

"Our service is available to the public but is particularly directed to those who are financially disadvantaged and may not otherwise be able to afford legal advice," McCarthy said.

The Legal Centre hosts drop-in clinics each Wednesday afternoon during the University semester, as well as regular evening sessions.

Students meet and greet the client and then listen to and assess their legal issue. The student then consults with one of the qualified lawyers onsite while the client waits. They both return to the client where the lawyer provides advice and the student does the follow-up work on the case.

"Many cases relate to government departments, credit and debt problems, accessing health information or tenancy issues," McCarthy said.

"The clinics are well attended but we realised not everyone who requires legal advice will actively seek it, which is why the University introduced the annual Law on the Beach project.

"Taking law out of a potentially intimidating office environment and onto the beach creates a more casual and accessible approach and encourages young members of our community to ask for help.

"Through Law on the Beach, the students often deal with cases they can closely identify with. For example they are approached by clients seeking day-to-day contract advice on issues such as mobile phone bill disputes."

Another objective of the Legal Centre is to handle legal

matters that are in the public interest, such as acting for the family of Cornelia Rau. Rau, a permanent Australian resident, was mistakenly detained for 10 months by immigration officials as a suspected illegal immigrant.

The Legal Centre played a key role in shaping the family's case in the Federal inquiry into the matter. A number of students worked with University academics and staff members to research and compile a 107-page submission, outlining 44 recommendations into preventing an incident such as Rau's occurring again.

"This type of work provides students with the opportunity to not only help clients but to also shape the legal landscape in Australia," McCarthy said.

"Due to the cost burden, without the support of institutions such as the Legal Centre, public interest cases like these may simply never be actioned."



THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

For more than 55 years, the Conservatorium of Music at the University of Newcastle has been bringing together the community for enjoyment and education. It is on this foundation the Conservatorium's new Professor of Music, Richard Vella, plans to build.

At the heart of this approach are the creation of new relationships with diverse music communities and the strengthening of existing partnerships to steer the Conservatorium on an innovative path.

Vella said it was essential the Conservatorium was dynamic and forward-thinking in developing new activities.

"Music touches everyone in different ways," he said. "We want to attract and tap into the diverse demographics of music lovers in our community."

"For example, we should be forming relationships with the over-60s, instead of just assuming we will only attract young musicians. And then there are communities such as refugees, who come here from so many interesting places and have so much to teach us about their musical heritage."

"Welcoming all types of music lovers into our fold and providing innovative musical activities will allow us to expand our engagement with communities to create new relationships that provide something for everyone."

As part of the Conservatorium's broadening focus, a series of Higher School Certificate Workshop days were held recently to inform students about what was required in order to study music at the University.

"This was a way for us to connect with the high schools and also show them where we are going with our new jazz program," Vella said.

The Conservatorium has always played an important role in Newcastle's vibrant music community. With a long history of Conservatorium performances at the Newcastle

Art Gallery openings and other community events, Vella is taking the role of public performance further.

"We have now opened that side of things to include performances at LiveSites and other less traditional events," he said.

Another new venture for the Conservatorium was the 2008 collaboration with the *This Is Not Art Festival*, a nationally regarded cultural event.

"We opened up space in the Conservatorium for activities during the Festival and will continue to nurture this exciting new partnership that takes us into in a non-traditional music arena."



Photo: courtesy of Channel 7

Propelled into the national spotlight in 2008 after winning Channel 7's *Battle of the Choirs*, the 40-member University of Newcastle Chamber Choir is an eclectic fusion of music students and community members including RAAF pilots, sculptors and office workers.

While winning *Battle of the Choirs* was undoubtedly a career highlight, Choir Master Philip Matthias is more excited about the community projects now possible thanks to the \$100,000 prize money.

"The competition has dramatically increased our profile," Matthias said. "We are currently looking at the best way to leverage the recognition and use the prize money to introduce a number of community programs."

Taking a close lead from good friend Jonathan Welch's Choir of Hard Knocks, Matthias aims to implement a number of community choirs through the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music.

"The Choir of Hard Knocks is the most obvious example of how a choir can provide incredible benefits to the community," Matthias said.

"Our goal is to create a number of choirs involving people from

a range of backgrounds and community groups such as youth, seniors, people with mental health issues and people from overseas to help build supportive social networks."

Whatever the future holds for the Choir, it will almost certainly include a research component.

"There is an increasing body of evidence that suggests music has a direct effect on people's health and wellbeing," Matthias said.

"It would be an outstanding accomplishment for the University of Newcastle to become the world leader in research looking at music as therapy."

The Choir has been in its current format since its inception in 1995. Over the years all members have shared a common love of singing and performing challenging and varied repertoire in some of the world's great performance venues.

“Our goal is to create a number of choirs involving people from a range of backgrounds and community groups such as youth, seniors, people with mental health issues and people from overseas to help build supportive social networks”

Typically performing Renaissance and Baroque music in addition to more recent 20th Century compositions, enthusiastic Choir supporter, University Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders, said the move out of its comfort zone was a brave step.

"It has been incredible to watch the transformation of the Choir during the television competition and to expose Australia to their amazing talent and versatility," Saunders said.

"The University and its communities are extremely proud of the Choir for what it brings culturally and musically to our region."

Since winning *Battle of the Choirs*, the Choir has been asked to participate in a number of projects, including performing on the Myer Christmas CD, singing at the Carols in the Domain and at several corporate events in Sydney.

In between those commitments, the Choir will continue its roster of concerts.



LEGACY OF LOVE

When William Bowmore began teaching the cello at the Conservatorium of Music in the 1950s, his love of his instrument was obvious to all who saw him play.

It is a passion that lives on, thanks to his generous \$250,000 gift to the Conservatorium. The bequest was used to establish the Bowmore Music Scholarship for cello students.

The son of Lebanese migrants, Bowmore moved to Newcastle from Brisbane in 1935 and established his business in the hospitality industry.

His connection with the Conservatorium ran deep and during his years as a teacher and beyond, he became an unofficial patron through his donations and the funding of scholarships.

Bowmore was awarded an OBE in 1978 and an Order of Australia medal in 2002. The following year, the University recognised his contribution

to music in Newcastle by awarding him an honorary Doctorate of Music.

University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders described Bowmore, who died in 2008 aged 98, as an inspiration and a good friend.

CELEBRATING OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Heaton Park in Jesmond came alive in 2008 as Novocastrians and international students from the University of Newcastle turned out to celebrate and acknowledge the diverse cultures in their vibrant neighbourhood.

Each year students from all corners of the globe come to the University to take advantage of its reputation as a place of opportunity and achievement and many make the suburbs around the Callaghan campus their new home.

The Community Cultural Festival offered neighbouring Jesmond residents the opportunity to welcome international students, and to embrace new members of the community from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Held in March 2008 in partnership with community support group Jesmond Junction Committee, the Festival coincided with Harmony Week. It engaged the broader community and created an environment of celebration, interaction and sharing of cultures with the local population.

University Business and Community Partnerships Advisor Sandra Gilshenan said the inaugural Festival was an incredible success attracting more than 1,500 visitors.

"We are very fortunate to draw students and community members from so many different parts of the world," Gilshenan said.

"Each of them has so much to share in the way of heritage and tradition and it was a great opportunity for the local community to embrace and celebrate that."

The day involved demonstrations of local and global song and dance. Face painting, children's activities, games and demonstrations such as hair braiding, basket weaving, embroidery and story telling added to the rich diversity of the day.

A display of the pictorial history of Jesmond also brought the story of the local area to the local and international community.

In the lead-up to the Festival, the Jesmond Junction Committee hosted a series of cultural events at the Stockland Mall including a display about Project Abraham, which builds and promotes community harmony by promoting peace and reconciliation between people of diverse beliefs and faiths.

The three Abrahamic faiths – Islam, Judaism and Christianity – have many cultural and religious similarities.

"Highlighting the similarities between the Abrahamic faiths can foster and promote mutual respect for other cultures, and help to achieve community harmony," Gilshenan said.

She added the Festival was such a success it would become an annual event on the community calendar.

"The University's students, international guests and community members are important to the Jesmond community and the Festival was just one way to celebrate our cultural diversity," she said.

The Jesmond Junction Committee includes representatives from the University, Jesmond Neighbourhood Centre, Newcastle City Council, Stockland, the Department of Education and Training, Catholic Schools, the Smith Family, Jesmond Uniting Church and Shortland Catholic Church.

WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES: A TWO-WAY STREET

During a regular visit to a local caravan park, researchers from the University of Newcastle Family Action Centre came across 16-year-old Jess.

Despite being in a gifted and talented class during primary school, Jess left high school in Year 7 because her mum, without access to transport, was unable to take her.

Sadly, her story is not unique.

For too many families, the simple things most of us take for granted – like getting to school, receiving basic entitlements and participating in the community – are beyond reach.

The University of Newcastle's Family Action Centre works with families like Jess's to achieve the Centre's vision of a truly civil society based on a belief that family wellbeing

is the cornerstone of healthy communities.

The Centre drives a range of focused programs, each designed to inform research and provide evidence-based ways to strengthen families and promote sustainability, social justice and community leadership. Its foundation program – the Caravan Project – provides a perfect case in point.

In 1986, the Family Action Centre began working with residents of Hunter Valley caravan parks.

Family Action Centre Director Judi Geggie said today's caravan parks represented a complex part of the social housing market.

"There are people who choose to live in a caravan as a lifestyle and seasonal workers can find them a convenient place to stay for short period of time," Geggie said.

"But with housing affordability decreasing and reduced public housing there are families who

have no other option but to live in caravan parks."

The program offers a range of services to caravan park residents including organising play group activities for the social, cognitive and physical development of children and the creation of support networks for parents.

After school activities are arranged for school-age children and social groups help bring residents together in a relaxed environment.

The Centre also works with park managers and residents to strengthen a sense of community and wellbeing, in addition to acting as an advocate on their behalf for improvements to government policy.

Geggie said the Family Action Centre represented a unique model of university/community engagement.

"Through of a range of community programs we undertake related research that contributes to best practice

frameworks for practitioners, and teaches community engagement practice to undergraduate and postgraduate students.

"So in effect it's a two-way street – the University and the community both benefit. The Caravan Project, for example, has helped thousands of people – including Jess – in its 22 year history through improving policy and practice.

"Jess is now completing her high school education and is looking forward to university studies in the near future."

“With housing affordability decreasing and reduced public housing there are families who have no other option but to live in caravan parks”





CHANGING LIVES

Thanks to the University of Newcastle Special Education Centre, when five-year-old Hamish McKenna starts 'big school' in 2009, he will do so confidently and happily. What is more, his parents will say goodbye to him knowing he is as equipped for the ups and downs of school life as any of his peers.

It has not always been an easy road for Hamish, who was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome at the age of four. Through the University of Newcastle Special Education Centre's Early Childhood Intervention Program, he has had the support and assistance to make his transition to school as smooth as possible.

The Centre runs the program for children aged from birth to six. Designed to provide assistance to families and children who

have a disability or are at risk of developmental problems, the program has access to the latest research and resources of the Special Education Centre and the University of Newcastle.

Ongoing family education and support is provided by staff including specialist teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists and music teachers. Children attend a number of sessions a week, with support also provided through family workers, an Aboriginal

liaison officer, early childhood intervention workers and outreach support staff.

Hamish's father, Greg McKenna, said his son's attendance at the Centre had been a life-changing experience for the whole family.

"The Centre ran a course for the families of children with a recent diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The course taught us how Hamish thinks and how to best handle his behaviour," McKenna said.

"The Centre was fundamental to me understanding my little boy. Attending the course made me a better dad which, in turn, has made life for Hamish much easier."

McKenna said he was so grateful to the Centre for the life-changing strategies and support it had given his family,

he wanted to become part of it by giving something back. As a consequence, he is now the President of Firstchance, the not-for-profit association of parents and friends of the Special Education Centre. University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders is Patron of Firstchance.

Recognising the family unit as the most important influence on a child, Firstchance helps fund programs to assist families.

It offers family-centred programs such as early childhood intervention, school-age family support, training and skill building, occupational and speech therapy support, family counselling, case management, group programs and professional development.

THE GIFT OF COMMUNICATION

The University of Newcastle's Special Education Centre is helping families across Australia leap communication hurdles with an award-winning training program.

Called Makaton Australia, the program is used for children and adults who can usually hear but cannot talk or whose speech is difficult to understand.

Borrowing features from Auslan – the sign language of the Australian deaf community – and Signed English, Makaton uses a key word approach to communicate or support speech.

This means people combine visual signs of key words in sentences with the spoken word.

A national training model was developed in 2000 and it is supported by a wide range of teaching resources for disability and education services, as well as parent support programs.

Coordinated by the University of Newcastle, Makaton Australia received the Speech Pathology Australia Community Contribution Award in 2007.



STUDENTS TEACHING STUDENTS

An innovative collaboration between the University of Newcastle and the Callaghan College's Jesmond campus is helping guide a number of the school's Higher School Certificate (HSC) art students in their choices.

“ It is a motivating exercise that strengthens their interest in teaching and, most significantly, gives them a sense of ownership ”

Established in 1998, the Visual Arts Mentor Program provides art students with advice and collaborative decision-making to help them complete their HSC major works.

Through a 10-week program, fourth year Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Fine Arts undergraduates mentor year 12 students for two hours each week. Where possible students are matched on conceptual and material interests such as animation, painting, photography or sculpture.

The University's Dr Kathryn Grushka runs the program in conjunction with Head of Creative and Performing Arts at Callaghan College, Mark Haley.

"The mentor program has assisted many students gain higher results in the HSC than they may have otherwise achieved, with Visual Art becoming one of their most successful subjects," Haley said.

The mentor program and reflective evaluation is a major component of the University course accounting for 50 per cent of the assessment for that subject.

"The program gives University students the opportunity to put into practice the teaching principles they learn during their degree," Grushka said.

"It is a motivating exercise that strengthens their interest in teaching and, most significantly, gives them a sense of ownership.

"The program is also inspiring many of the year 12 students to go on to further studies in visual arts at university after completing their HSC."

Grushka believes the standard of work being produced by Callaghan students is becoming increasingly advanced and is a promising sign for the world of art.

"Students are producing sophisticated artwork partly due to the contemporary curriculum but also because of innovative initiatives like the Visual Arts Mentor Program that help take their talent to a new level.

"The program has proven a highly productive model for a decade and, thanks to the collaborative benefits, its longevity is almost assured," Grushka said.

DEBATING THE ISSUE

Do good looks get you further than a good mind? Are elections a waste of time? Can we really trust scientists? These are just some of the questions put to Year 7 and 8 students at the University of Newcastle's High School Debating Day.

Held annually on the Central Coast campus since 2005, students from more than 15 schools take part in a battle of wits and public speaking skills and try to convince adjudicators their team has the winning argument.

The School of Education's Deborah O'Neill said debating was a valuable tool for school students to master.

"The young students coming through today's schools are tomorrow's leaders," O'Neill said.

"Finding your voice and using it in public for the benefit of your community is an important part of democratic participation.

"Debating not only hones public speaking skills, it also teaches students empathy because they need to consider someone else's point-of-view in order to combat it."

O'Neill said in deciding the topics for debate, organisers consider statements that reflect real-life conundrums and issues in order to test students' ability to think critically.

"By asking students' to debate topics such as 'good looks get you further than a good mind', they must think about the underlying message this kind of statement makes.

"Whether they agree with the sentiment or not, they still have to craft a credible argument and clearly articulate their point of view – both important skills."

When the University began Debating Day, organisers became aware there was a shortage of qualified adjudicators on the Central Coast. To address this, a relationship was formed with the NSW Department of

Education and Training Debating and Public Speaking Team to help train adjudicators. Already more than 55 students from education degree programs have undertaken training.

"The multiple benefits of the program are clear. High school students get the chance to hone their debating skills, our undergraduate students can gain new qualifications and the shortage of adjudicators is being addressed.

"It is also a great opportunity for the University to extend its links with local schools, and give the students a taste of life on a university campus."

ON TRACK FOR HSC SUCCESS

Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams can be a nerve-wracking experience. To help HSC students along the path to success, the University of Newcastle holds annual HSC Study Days.

Presented by experienced teachers and senior HSC markers, the study days offer high-quality reviews of subjects for students to inspire confidence and help guide their study in a strategic way.

Held on the Newcastle and Central Coast campuses, HSC Study Days are programmed in close consultation with secondary schools to ensure the most relevant subjects are covered.

University Business and Community Partnerships Adviser Catharina Boer said the sessions were designed to add maximum value to students' study.

"The students are given an insight into the exams and what markers expect, as well as motivational information and study tips," Boer said.

"Just to gain a different point of view, or experience a topic presented in a different way, can make a great difference to a student's understanding of their subject. It can also broaden their perspective and build confidence."

Students from as far away as Dubbo, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Kempsey, Scone and Sydney, as well as students from Hunter and Central Coast schools, have taken part in HSC Study Days.



Photo: Newspix

BUDDING BUSINESS BRAINS

Keeping surfers hydrated as they ride the waves is just one of the curly marketing challenges spawned from the Faculty of Business and Law and Kip McGrath Education Centres' Year 11 Business Planning Competition.

Now in its seventh year, the competition attracts teams and individuals from across NSW who pit their business brains against each other to come up with the winning entrepreneurial idea.

Designed to facilitate business thinking among high school students, entrants design or select an innovative product or service, and develop a comprehensive business plan to take to the market and generate sales.

All participants submit their business plans for assessment by a panel of judges. The best four are then invited to present

their plans at a Grand Final Day at the University. The winning team receives \$1,000 to be divided among team members and another \$1,000 for their school.

The University's Program Coordinator Michael Seamer said the competition in 2008 attracted more than 110 entries from across the state.

"Plans need to include information on how they intend to develop and market their product, as well as how they would handle the financial and human resource implications," Seamer said.

"Some of the ideas are fantastic and one of the hardest things for us is to narrow it down to just four finalists."

Last year's winning entry was 'The Titan', from Illawarra High School on the NSW South Coast. The product was a lightweight, streamlined backpack for surfers and other water-based athletes that allowed them to stay hydrated while in the water.

Other entries included business proposals for a retro clothing shop and an African restaurant.

A NEW LEARNING CURVE

The real-world work experience that students undertake as part of a University of Newcastle degree program is providing the dual benefit of producing work-ready graduates and a valuable community service to those in need.

Just one example is the free Law on the Beach clinic held each summer at the Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club. Here students work through clients' legal issues and provide advice on ways to resolve them.

Often termed engaged learning or service-learning, this type of practical experience together with the concept of curriculum-based volunteering was the topic of a one-day symposium held at the University in July 2008.

The symposium was a partnership between the University, the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Schools Office, Independent Schools, TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute and Empower, a national not-for-profit group formed by Managing Director Margaret Richmond, facilitates service-learning by bringing together education providers and community organisations.

"I believe service-learning is a useful way to build resilient communities," Richmond said.

"Students are able to direct their own learning by undertaking a project that is relevant to their study. This has the mutual benefit of the students keeping on track with their program course work and at the same time providing a constructive community service."

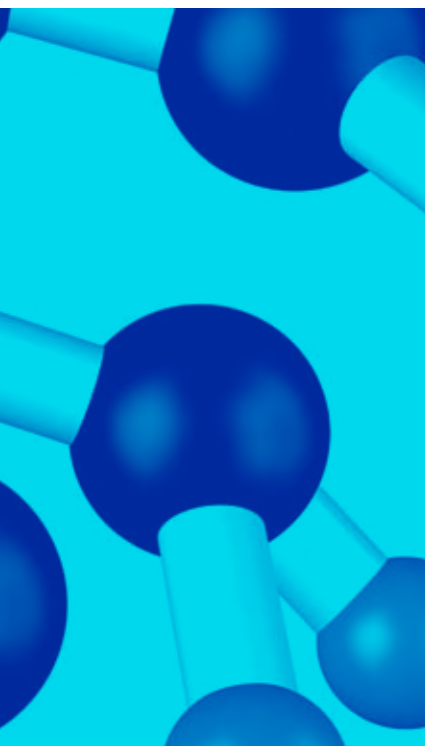
The symposium was attended by education providers, local and state government representatives and community organisations. Speakers from the various groups brainstormed ways to successfully implement service-learning across the Hunter region.

Pro Vice-Chancellor of Corporate Development and Community Partnerships Associate Professor Martin Fitzgerald said service-learning was a valuable tool with broad

benefits for students and the communities they were serving.

"The students are adapting what they learn in the lecture theatre and classroom to create solutions for real problems and issues. This not only extends the value of their education but also means they emerge from their educational institution as young leaders with an awareness of their social responsibilities," Fitzgerald said.

As a result of the symposium, the Service-Learning Partnership has been formed to implement service-learning as a whole-of-community strategy involving the University, schools, local councils and community organisations.



HANDS-ON APPROACH TO THE HSC

Designed to give Higher School Certificate (HSC) students a hands-on understanding of what they learn in the classroom, the University of Newcastle's innovative ExperimentFest puts them to the test as they unveil mysteries of flight paths, the transfer of light and phosphoric acid content in soft drinks.

More than 1,300 Hunter and Central Coast students take part in the annual event, where they participate in experiments directly linked to their HSC study.

Chemistry and physics gain new dimensions as students learn how to assess the level of sodium in sports drinks and determine the sulfate content in lawn food.

An initiative of the University's Physics and Chemistry departments, ExperimentFest is run by academic and technical staff, two retired science

teachers and PhD students, and helps give HSC students a taste of university life.

School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences' Associate Professor Colin Waters said schools considered ExperimentFest an invaluable learning tool for HSC students.

"Teachers who come along on the day are able to talk with the University team about the Year 12 curriculum, teaching ideas and different approaches to explaining difficult physics and chemistry concepts," Waters said.

UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

This year more than 18,000 students from 640 high schools across Australia battled it out for the ultimate prize in what Professor John O'Connor describes as a "science and engineering sports carnival".

Aimed at inspiring young students to become engineers and scientists, the Science and Engineering Challenge is just one of the University of Newcastle's exciting school engagement activities.

O'Connor, Head of the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, said the Challenge was designed to show students how careers in science and engineering were based on problem solving.

"Teams compete in a variety of activities such as Hover Frenzy (constructing a hovercraft) or World Sailing Spectacular (making the rigging and sails for a boat). This teaches them about working as teams and each member may have something to add, or an idea no-one else has thought of," he said.

"Our challenges always involve a twist to make them more complex. For example, we don't just ask them to make an item the fastest – we ask them to make it the fastest and the lightest."

Students participate in one-day local events and ultimately come together for the Grand Challenge to determine the national championship team.

O'Connor said the final event for the national championship was always Bridge Testing.

"Students have to build the infrastructure for a bridge to run from one side of a gully to the other," he said.

"The twist is that the bridge has to be strongest relative to weight. The fun part is that we test them to destruction."

The challenge was devised as a way of addressing Australia's skill shortages in the engineering fields by showing students how interesting and challenging science and engineering-related subjects can be.

"Since we began the challenge in 2000, student enrolments in secondary high school physics, chemistry and mathematics have increased," O'Connor said.

Today, it is not only hotly contested in Australia but also in Singapore where schools have welcomed the innovative program.

The initiative is supported by local communities through Rotary International, Engineers Australia and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

“ Since we began the Challenge in 2000, student enrolments in secondary high school physics, chemistry and mathematics have increased ”

THE COOL SIDE OF SCIENCE

Hooking into the imaginations of children of all ages, the SMART (Science, Mathematics and Real Technology) Roadshow brings the magic of science to students' doorsteps.

An initiative of the University of Newcastle, SMART began in 1998 to show how much fun science could be. The program is designed to engage students, from preschoolers to seniors, and also demonstrates how science is an integral part of daily life.

In conjunction with community partners Rotary International, Hunter Water, and Coal and Allied, the University's SMART presenters hit the roads, taking a range of hands-on shows with them.

Each year around 20,000 students are dazzled by interactive exploration of

topics including water, flight, computers, light and sound.

SMARTbots Inc explains the technology used in robots. The multimedia show features RoboRaptor and Andy the humanoid robot who rap dances and brings alive the wonders of robot technology.

The Body Show introduces and explores the systems that make up the human body. Students enter through a giant mouth made from a dome tent and investigate a large foam heart, an enormous nose and meet 'Skeleton Steve' – a child-size skeleton puzzle.

The Director of SMART, Dr Terry Burns, said every show was designed to bring science alive for students and to challenge their imaginations.

"We want to show them the cool, interesting side of science," he said.

In 2008 the SMART Roadshow crossed state borders for the first time. After years of successfully conducting the program in schools in all parts of New South Wales, students in Arnhem Land, Alice Springs and Adelaide were given the chance to meet RoboRaptor, Andy and Steve during a regional tour.





HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

A baby breaks the surface of the swimming pool for the first time and stretches his arms to his mother. At the same time, a corporate group triumphantly reaches the top of one of Australia's highest indoor rock climbing walls. Outside, students analyse the training techniques of a local professional football team using GPS technology.

What these diverse events have in common is they are all taking place at one location – the University of Newcastle.

From children's health and fitness programs to elite athlete training facilities and corporate wellbeing courses, the award-winning sport and leisure experience at the University of Newcastle is diverse and dynamic.

With its state-of-the-art facilities managed by Newcastle University Sport (NUsport), the University is a hub of sporting opportunities for everyone, from the youngest beginner swimmers to elite athletes competing at Olympic level.

The two key venues managed by NUsport are The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre, University, and The Forum Health & Wellness Centre, Harbourside. Every year, more than 1.5 million visitors – students, Alumni and the wider community – visit the University's sporting venues to enjoy the amenities.

Other sporting facilities available to the community include the Ray Watt Pavilion (home to the Newcastle United Jets), the Squash and Tennis Pavilion, six ovals at the Callaghan campus, eight tennis courts and the Rowing Pavilion at Berry Park.

These services make NUsport the largest provider of health, fitness and wellness services in the Hunter region.

NUsport is also one of the largest providers of group fitness classes in Australia. It works in partnership with the University's researchers and health and fitness professionals to develop outcome-based programs for the local community.

"The support and knowledge of the University's researchers and lecturers underpin many of the programs we offer," NUsport Chief Executive Officer Samantha Martin-Williams said.

"Because of this valued partnership and our commitment to quality, we provide services, programs and facilities that are well used by our community."

The partnership between NUsport and the Australian Institute of Sport enables the University to support elite athletes to study while maintaining their hard-earned sporting status.

"Through the Elite Athlete Friendly University (EAFU) network, the University offers a supportive environment to help students maximise their achievements academically and through sport," Martin-Williams said.

"Elite student athletes are identified from enrolment and given assistance with timetable planning and integrated scheduling of sport and study, as well as access to the University's premium sporting facilities."

NUsport manages each athlete and the negotiations with their lecturers to ensure the right balance between sport and study.

More than 40 elite student-athletes from approximately 20 different sports are currently enrolled at the University and supported under the EAFU program.

One demonstration of the success of the program was the number of the University's students and graduates representing Australia at the Beijing Paralympic Games.

The group included Heath Francis, a sprinter, who broke a world record to win gold in the 200 metres. Francis also won the 100 metres and the 400 metres at the Bird's Nest in Beijing.

Discus thrower Kath Proudfoot took home a Silver medal in the F35/37 classification Women's Discus Throw, while swimmer Prue Watt placed fourth in the S13 classification 100m Women's Butterfly.

NUsport also has memoranda of understanding with the NSW Institute of Sport and the Australian Institute of Sport, giving elite athletes and sporting teams access to its facilities. These teams have included the Australian Women's Football team (Matildas), Australian Women's Rugby Union team, Australian Rugby Union Talent Squad, Hunter Hurricanes and Northern NSW Sabot Sailing Association squad.

NUsport is also the preferred training facility for visiting sporting teams including the Australian and English netball teams, National Rugby League teams, international swimming squads and Rugby League World Cup teams.

The success NUsport has had in engaging with sporting communities is in no small way a result of the tenacity and drive of Martin-Williams and her dedicated team of experienced professionals.

A graduate of the University, her efforts were recognised by her Alumni peers with the awarding of the 2004 Newton John Award for her work with NUsport and its contribution to the region.

A SPORTING CHANCE



For many, the discipline of science conjures up images of lab coats and test tubes. But for one group of students, science means getting to hang out with some of the most recognisable sporting faces in the Hunter and Central Coast regions.

Students in the Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science degree program are in this enviable position thanks largely to the strong relationships formed between the University of Newcastle, local sporting bodies and the health sector.

Through work placement opportunities with elite sports teams, the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Department of Health, students benefit through the hands-on application of their studies in the environment in which they will eventually work.

In turn, local organisations and athletes have the advantage of working with students who are in touch with cutting-edge research, theory and practical knowledge.

Students decide their placements according to their specific study interests. On the Central Coast alone, where

the degree program is based, students have more than 50 local organisations to choose from.

Students with clinical aspirations can train in hospitals, while those keen on health promotion can work with organisations such as NSW Health or the Department of Sport and Recreation.

In 2008, for example, students observed clinical work in the Cardiology Department of John Hunter Hospital including cardiac stress testing on patients. Respiratory testing and exercise rehabilitation also formed part of student placements in other hospitals and clinical settings.

Exercise and Sport Science Lecturer Dr Xanne Janse de Jonge said experiences such as this could not be replicated in text books or lecture theatres.

"Actual work-place experience of what students study in their degree means they are learning so much more than they would in a classroom," Janse de Jonge said.

"This hands-on approach means our students are workforce ready and in many cases have already developed the industry contacts that can help them get a foot in the door after graduation."

Those with an interest in health promotion are placed in organisations such as the Department of Sport and Recreation where working on projects like volunteer training programs and school holiday activities provides students with the chance to tackle practical projects.

The Central Coast campus' links to the sporting community range from informal partnerships with local sporting clubs to close links with the Central Coast Mariners Football Club and a memorandum of understanding with the Central Coast Academy of Sport.

These ties give elite athletes access to valuable feedback on specific areas such as fitness and endurance levels, provide coaches with information for

enhanced training regimes and at the same time build students' practical skills.

For example, students have conducted extensive performance testing with the Central Coast Academy of Sport surf lifesaving team. Another group of students is training with the Central Coast Mariners to undertake exercise testing. The group then analyses the results providing coaches with fitness snapshots of their players.

The Mariners are also benefiting from a research relationship with the University, which provides access to sport science equipment including Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receivers. GPS provides state-of-the-art analysis of player movement during matches and training.

Relationships are also in place with the Newcastle United Jets footballers and the Newcastle Knights rugby league team for student placements.

The University's partnerships with athletes are set to strengthen in the near future with the construction of new purpose-built exercise physiology and biomechanics fitness laboratories on the Central Coast campus.



The drive of talented athletes to achieve great sporting heights is fierce and all-consuming. Reaching that goal takes 24/7 commitment, which is why a little financial support goes a long way.



Nurturing athletes academically as they make their mark in their chosen sport is central to the University of Newcastle's partnerships with the Hunter and Central Coast Academies of Sport.

The two not-for-profit academies provide sporting programs that support promising athletes to achieve to the highest levels. Thanks to the partnership, athletes across a wide range of individual and team sports are also being financially supported to help them pursue their dreams.

Funding from the University allows the Central Coast Academy of Sport to offer 14 scholarships to promising athletes each year.

The University works with the Academy to provide lectures for high-performance athletes on sports nutrition, sports psychology, injury treatment and performance planning.

The Academy's approximately 200 athletes, coaches and administrators also have access to the University's Central Coast lecture theatres, equipment and testing laboratories for their sporting programs.

Central Coast Academy of Sport Managing Director Ian Robilliard said the partnership gave its athletes a leading edge.

"The University of Newcastle is a highly regarded institution and our alliance with it has provided the Academy untold benefits," Robilliard said.

"Not only does our relationship offer some of our athletes financial assistance, it also gives them access to the latest technology in training equipment and important research data.

"We also appreciate the opportunity to give our athletes a taste of university life."

The Hunter Academy of Sport is the largest regional academy in Australia with more than 580 talented young sports people participating in 30 talent development programs.

The University provides funding annually to the Academy to provide scholarships and further develop its programs.

Academy Chief Executive Officer Ken Clifford said the University's generosity provided welcome financial assistance to young athletes.

"We select one athlete from each of the 30 programs to receive a University scholarship to help with travel expenses and purchasing sporting equipment," Clifford said.

"We use the balance of the annual donation to support a cricket program and the partnership is celebrated each year when our cricket squad plays a match against the University team."

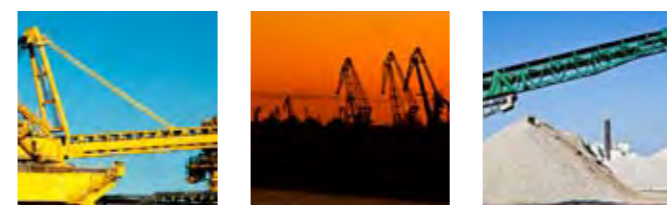
Clifford said the Academy had a valuable role to play in the development of young sports people.

"Even though the majority do not go on to become elite athletes, we are able to provide them with good life experiences and exposure to important skills such as sports psychology and public speaking," he said.

"This is a very important part of what we do and, hopefully, when they leave our program, they are better community members."



HANDLING INDUSTRY RELATIONSHIPS



Established in 1975 to promote consulting activities with industry, TUNRA Bulk Solids (TBS) is the University of Newcastle's most commercially successful venture. Boasting a worldwide reputation as a leader in bulk solids handling, TBS completes more than 150 industry-commissioned projects each year.

"The majority of our work is in large-scale mining and minerals projects," Director of TBS and Head of School of Engineering, Professor Mark Jones, said.

"We work with a broad range of national and international organisations who want to tap into the University's research excellence in bulk solids handling. Our strong track record of commercialising research and using it in industry applications has considerable benefits for both the University and our industry partners."

One example is the highly successful partnership with Rio Tinto. Having built a solid reputation in delivering quality services, TBS now has a standing contract worth up

to \$1 million per year covering Rio Tinto's iron ore expansion project in the Pilbara.

The contract streamlines and simplifies the engagement, quotation and payment processes between the two organisations.

"It is recognition of both the volume of work we do and the level of trust we have through this close collaboration," Jones said.

"As well as advising Rio Tinto on how to handle, move, store and convey their materials, we also deliver intensive training programs to their engineers and metallurgists to facilitate their understanding of materials handling."

A TRULY COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIP

ResTech is a perfect example of a successful union between industry and research. Like any perfect partnership, ResTech combines the strengths of two separate entities to create a balanced, mutually supportive relationship that is continually maturing over time.

A partnership between market-leading firm Ampcontrol and the University of Newcastle's Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, ResTech is a research and engineering company that develops power electronic technologies for heavy industry, mining, power distribution and defence markets.

It is an ideal combination of the skills, competencies, knowledge and diversity of Ampcontrol as a provider of innovative products and services, and the intellectual expertise of University researchers.

As a result, ResTech is now working on the commercialisation of a number of projects that both Ampcontrol and the University agree would have been well beyond the capability of either partner individually.

Ampcontrol Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Dr Alan Broadfoot, said in the ever-changing world of technology it is imperative that we maintain a competitive edge.

"When ResTech was first formed, there was a period of acceptance for both partners," Broadfoot said.

"But we quickly established credibility in terms of the quality of the products we were producing and this helped the partnership evolve. Now we

are at a level of maturity where we have excellent staff making outstanding contributions and growing their reputation in the marketplace."

A future outcome of the partnership will be a new capability for Australia to replace imports, at the same time generating a strong export market, in the power and electrical industry. Using its specialist knowledge, ResTech is overcoming barriers in evolving technologies by providing local services previously offered only by large-scale multinational companies that were expensive and, at times, did not operate effectively in the Australian setting.

The result has been the development of cost-effective techniques and technologies that easily adapt to both small and large-scale operations in Australia. The technology can also be adapted to meet the needs of similar small-scale operations overseas.

With the support of Ampcontrol, ResTech is also able to extend its research and development capabilities and services to other companies. An example is the current collaboration with Tasmania's Aurora Energy to develop technology that will help minimise the risk of electric shock in homes.

In 2004 Ampcontrol contributed financially to establish a Professor in Power Engineering position at the University. The position helps foster and reward academic excellence in the field of power engineering and power electronics through the development of the resources and capacity of the University.

A PhD graduate of the University, Dr Broadfoot sees enormous business advantages in engaging and collaborating with the University. His belief in the institution is reflected in the company's ongoing generous financial support.

TESTING THE WATERS – A FRESH APPROACH

Australia's love affair with water extends well beyond the annual summer pilgrimage to the beach. While one of the world's driest continents, Australia is also one of the highest per capita consumers of water.

Add climate change, population growth, urbanisation and intensive agricultural and farming activities and the impact on the diminishing natural water supplies becomes stark. Fresh approaches to water management are needed as are creative ways to secure access to quality water supplies.

Enter Professor Geoffrey Evans. The University of Newcastle researcher has joined forces with Hunter Water to research sophisticated, cost-effective processes to treat water contaminated by toxins and other water-borne pollutants.

To produce drinking-quality water from natural sources, a number of compounds – including toxic micro pollutions and dissolved natural organic matter – must be removed.

Chemical oxidants, such as chlorine, are most commonly used to remove the dissolved contaminants. However, when chlorine reacts with the naturally occurring organic compounds in treated water there is a risk that by-products causing health problems may be produced. An alternative to chlorine is ozone.

"Ozone is one of the most powerful oxidising agents known to man and is a strong micro-organism disinfectant," Evans said.

"We already know that the by-products produced during ozonation are much less toxic than those produced during chlorination, so this makes the use of ozone an attractive proposition."

Evans said the key was whether an appropriate cost-benefit ratio could be achieved.

"Our research is looking into whether ozone-enhanced

disinfection is a cost-effective way to remove dissolved contaminants in water.

"If so, we could reduce the need to use chlorine to an absolute minimum, therefore removing potential health risks and providing an efficient and sustainable use of our limited water resources."

The three-year Australian Research Council Linkage investigation is the latest project undertaken through a research partnership between Evans and Hunter Water stretching back more than 15 years.



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

The ongoing partnership between leading Hunter developer Jeff McCloy and the University of Newcastle is a prime example of the benefits of combining the University's world-class research with forward-thinking corporate partners.

In establishing the D.F. McCloy Fund, McCloy sought to honour the life of his father and to focus on improving the urban environment through better planning.

"The Hunter region is expected to face significant population growth over the next 50 years and it is important we plan now," Dr Andrew Johnson, Associate Director of the University's Research Division, said.

With this in mind, a call went out for research proposals focusing on the built environment. The resulting studies are now the subject of a benchmark report – *Creating Better Developments: Environment, Lifestyle and Wellbeing in New Housing*.



“

The Hunter region is expected to face significant population growth over the next 50 years and it is important we plan now

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"The research provides important contributions to issues relating to the social, planning, health and wellbeing, and environmental domains within new developments," Johnson said.

"It draws on the University's expertise in tourism, construction, health, architecture, environmental sustainability, biology and philosophy to identify opportunities and challenges provided by the urban environment.

"We envisage the report serving as a discussion paper for all involved in urban planning – from government bodies to private industry developers."

In addition to this fund, another initiative between the McCloy Group and the University has been established – the Australian Competition Policy Research Alliance (ACPRA).

The Alliance offers a forum to examine and influence the impact of government policy on the economy and society in regional, state and national contexts. ACPRA's most recent research was *Housing Affordability in Australia: A Supply-Side Analysis*, a comprehensive review of a range of regulatory and other factors impacting on housing affordability in Australia. It calls for substantial reform of the land and housing supply process to improve housing affordability.