

# THE GIFT



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

## PHILANTHROPY NEWS

AUGUST 2017 EDITION

### SAMARITANS GRANT HELPS MAKE SENSE OF THE PAST

The lives of many people who lived in out-of-home care as children are being positively impacted through a recent \$15,000 grant awarded to the University of Newcastle's (UON) Vera Deacon Regional History Fund. Named in Vera's honour in 2008, the fund uncovers, preserves and shares valuable regional historical records with the community, and is supported by the generosity of many of our donors.

Tracing one's personal history has become a rite of passage for many people. However, the usual records of childhood – school reports, photos, recollections of days out – are often out of reach for those who lived in out-of-home care.

The Samaritans' grant has enabled UON's Cultural Collections team to digitise a portion of records from the

St Elizabeth's Home for Girls (which was in Mayfield, then Singleton) from 1926 to 1977.

The newly-digitised records will provide much longed-for truths for many people whose childhoods were spent at St Elizabeth's, describing details about how they lived, what they did and the property in which they lived, helping to create a more vivid image of their childhoods.

For UON library archivist, John Di Gravio, the work is very important. "Often people are told these records don't exist or they can't be released because they contain other confidential information. This exciting project is bringing these records to light."

*Image: Vera Deacon with UON archivist, Gregg Heathcote*

*Continued on page 3...*



# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Welcome to another edition of The Gift for 2017. We have many exciting program updates and news to share.**

Our story from the front cover is a powerful reminder of the far-reaching impact of the generous support given to our community through UON. A \$15,000 philanthropic grant from the Samaritans for the Vera Deacon Regional History Fund is helping to fund the digitisation of care records from the St Elizabeth's Home for Girls, making them available to search online. The grant has enabled both the preservation of the records and countless acts of community service by helping people piece together memories of childhoods spent in out-of-home care. This is a valued pathway to information for many who lived in out-of-home care and their families, and an important historical resource for our community.

With the Larapinta Trail Challenge taking place in August, we have devoted a number of our stories to highlight UON's support of Indigenous students and causes. Our featured team member this month is Connor Brown, who is leading our 2017 peer-to-peer fundraising challenge with a group of 27 alumni and friends of the University.

**A huge thank you to everyone who donated and supported our volunteer Larapinta Trail trekkers seeking to raise over \$130,000 for Indigenous education, health, research and community initiatives led by UON.**

Our student scholarship story featured in this issue highlights the depth and variety of scholarship support available to assist students at UON. We catch up with 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship recipient Makayla Guest who is just starting her journey in Medicine, but aspires to close the gap in healthcare between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

At UON, the generosity of our donors and alumni constantly reminds us that giving is for everyone. It's not the size of the gift that matters but the intention that surrounds it and the impact it will have. Donors like Tanya Murray-Russell and Robert Russell (page 5) have resolved to leave a gift in their Will to support Indigenous students. This is a wonderful example of planned giving and one of the many ways our generous donors can give to causes they hold dear through our University.

Please enjoy The Gift.



Rebecca Hazell  
Director of Advancement



Vera Deacon in the Cultural Collections office.

UON's Cultural Collections team has been working to scan, index and tag the mostly hand-written records, and hopes to move on to similar collections for other homes in future.

**“Imagine reading a correspondence about a picnic in Swansea and suddenly recalling that day. Making it possible to search these records online is helping people put their childhoods back together again.” Mr Di Gravio**

Samaritans CEO, Peter Gardiner said, “Samaritans is pleased to be working with UON to ensure broader access to these records through a digital platform. This work across the nation is a real partnership between not-for-profits, universities and government agencies; and the collaborative approach will no doubt achieve some positive outcomes for people accessing electronic records.”

This work is the latest project supported by UON's Vera Deacon Regional History Fund.

# MEET THE TEAM

## CONNOR BROWN

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR  
(COMMUNITY GIVING AND APPEALS)

### MY JOB, IN A NUTSHELL

Coordinate broad-appeal programs that engage our communities. By bringing people together through the philanthropic activities of the University, we aim to have a positive impact on the future of our community.

### FAVOURITE PART OF THE JOB

I am able to meet with many interesting people who support education and research, like former scholarship students or alumni, who are now driven by the desire to give others the same opportunities they have been given. I never cease to be amazed by our donors' generosity! As an alumnus, this role is also an opportunity for me to give back to my university.



### ONE DAY I'D LOVE TO

Return to the remote islands of Indonesia to share skills, ideas and opportunities with communities who are struggling to survive in the modern world.

### I'M INSPIRED BY

My oldest daughter who captains her rep netball team, plays fair and always gives 100% against teams who are often much bigger and older.

### MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD DESCRIBE ME AS

A dedicated husband and father. Creative, honest and resourceful. Someone with many varied interests and a passion for learning.



# SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION KEEPS INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT INSPIRED

When she moved from her home in rural Narrabri north western NSW to start the Yapug pathway program two years ago, 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship recipient Makayla Guest wasn't sure where her journey would lead.

A proud Anaiwan woman, Makayla is the first person in her family to attend university. However, it wasn't until she was offered places in both the Bachelor of Speech Pathology and Bachelor of Medicine programs that she recognised her own true potential; and that, with hard work, she could achieve anything.

"I never believed that I had the ability to achieve and participate in something so meaningful as studying Medicine," says Makayla. "But I am determined to participate in and succeed at what no one else in my family has ever done before."

For Makayla and her family, the financial stress of such an intensive degree has been huge. For the first two years, Makayla lived on campus and worked part time. Now in the second year of her degree, Makayla says receiving the scholarship will allow her to achieve more of a balance; enabling her to work less hours and concentrate more on her studies, while still covering the cost of travel and living expenses.

**"Studying Medicine is much like problem solving, it keeps you guessing and searching for answers. I hope to inspire others within my community to strive for greatness and to develop their own passions and opportunities."**

"I'm a long way from home and the community in which I was born and bred. But with the continued support of my family, the extended Wollotuka family and the UON community, I know I'll get there."

Although she's still not sure which area of Medicine she will specialise in, Makayla's goal is to be part of closing the gap in health care between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by travelling to areas in need, gaining insight into their health care problems and seeing where she can make a difference.



*Makayla Guest, scholarship recipient*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Scholarship was established through contributions from the University, both individual and corporate donors, community organisations and the annual Reconciliation Scholarship Dinner Dance.

Yapug is a pathway program designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gain skills for entry into undergraduate degrees at UON.



# LEAVING A LEGACY

## GIFT IN WILL – THE HEART BEHIND IT

UON alumni Tanya Murray-Russell and Robert Russell are passionate about supporting Indigenous education. The couple – who met at UON – have turned their passion into commitment by making, and talking about, their intention to leave a gift in their Will to establish a scholarship to support Indigenous students. We caught up with them to learn more about their decision; and their approach to sharing their intention with family.

### **A bequest is a personal expression of your values. How have your own life experiences influenced your decision to support indigenous education?**

**Tanya:** It was not an expected thing in my family to go to university; we never spoke about it as an option when I was growing up. I put myself through university and have experienced the positive impact higher education can have on a person's life.

**Rob:** Education in all senses (literacy, numeracy, social and emotional) underpins my values approach to life. Everything you do is a learning opportunity if you're open to learning from both successes and setbacks. Resilience matters and education is empowerment. The disadvantage equated with Aboriginality can be turned into stunning and outstanding advantage through education.

### **Why have you chosen UON as a vehicle for your support?**

**Tanya:** As an alumna, I'm proud to be associated with a university that is forward thinking, innovative and continuously improving the provision of education. I'm a proud Novocastrian and I also appreciate the business and reputation that UON has delivered to our community on the world stage.

### **Why do you think it's important to talk about your intention in advance?**

**Rob:** It has enabled us to explore the most efficient and effective ways to contribute, as well as enjoying time with like-minded UON supporters.

**Tanya:** We wanted to leave a legacy that the family knew about in advance so that there wouldn't be any doubt. A legally binding document provides that clarity.

“Education is one way of elevating individuals to achieve great things in their lifetime: for themselves, their families and their communities. This value of learning, plus my lifetime commitment to help disadvantaged communities, influenced my decision to leave a bequest in our Wills.” Tanya Murray-Russell

### **How has your family responded?**

**Tanya:** We've spoken to several members of the family and they're excited and proud of what we've proposed. We intend to involve family at bequest functions so they're taking the journey with us. When we pass away, we hope their association with UON continues as they become involved with students who benefit from our scholarship.

If you wish to have a confidential discussion regarding a gift in your Will, please contact Maria Pavela, Development Manager for Bequests and Major Gifts on +61 2 4985 4163 or email [maria.pavela@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:maria.pavela@newcastle.edu.au)

# 2017 CHARITY CHALLENGE

## SUPPORTING EQUITY FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND HEALTH THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS AND RESEARCH

After months of hard training and enthusiastic fundraising, the finish line is in sight for the 2017 Larapinta Trail Challenge.

A team of 27 UON alumni, staff, students and community volunteers set off to trek 65km of the Larapinta Trail in the Northern Territory on 14 August. The Challenge offers an amazing adventure through the heart of Australia; and a true test of endurance and learning experience for all involved.

Thank you to everyone who has already donated and supported our volunteer trekkers as they hosted dinners and barbecues, organised raffles, sold chocolates and reached out to their family, friends, colleagues and networks to reach their individual target of \$3,500 or more – and a combined fundraising target of more than \$130,000. Your support will change lives.

Every dollar donated goes towards supporting Indigenous education, health, research and community initiatives led by UON, including research into chronic Indigenous health issues, supporting Indigenous undergraduate and post-graduate students through scholarships, and developing future Indigenous leaders of our community.

### You can still support the Larapinta Trail Challenge!

Help our trekkers raise over \$130,000 to support Indigenous education and research. Donations will be gratefully received for the next few months.

[newcastle.edu.au/larapintachallenge](http://newcastle.edu.au/larapintachallenge)

## THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AMAZING LARAPINTA TRAIL CHALLENGE 2017 TEAM:

- Dr Andrew Johnson
- Annie Nichols
- Dr Barry Dowell
- Brad Pritchard
- Aunty Bronwyn Chambers
- Connor Brown
- Dr David Mathers
- Dr Gabor Major
- Gail White
- Glenn Turner
- Helen Le Gresley
- Dr Joe Herbertson AM
- Dr John Doyle AM
- Judy Adnum
- Kurt Dahl
- Assoc. Prof Liz Milward
- Lucy Nichols
- Matthew Chester
- Michael Robertson
- Michelle Van Gestel
- Mitchell Cook
- Nat McGregor
- Assoc. Prof Peter Waring
- Richard Anicich
- Shane Hughes
- Sophie Nichols
- Dr William Tan

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



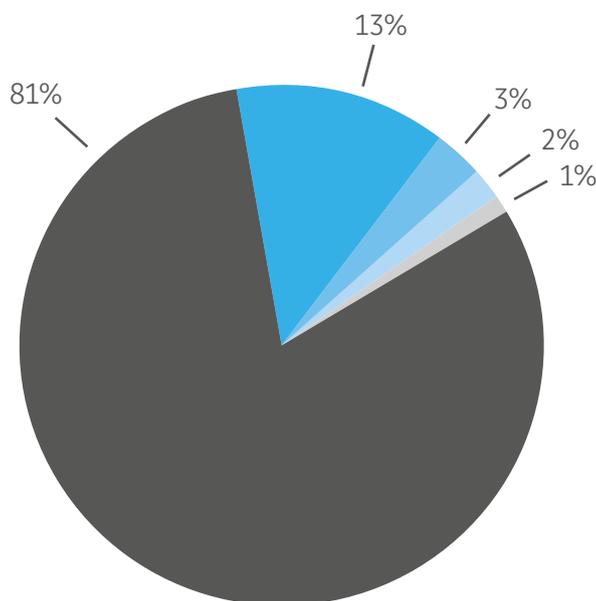
# 2017 JUNE APPEAL

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR ANNUAL APPEAL!

Support from our generous donors has raised \$77,525 so far. Shaping Futures Scholarships change the lives of students by easing the financial burdens of dedicated and talented students who are most in need of your support. This year, many of our donors chose to support this important fund.

When you donate to UON Appeals, you can choose how your funds are allocated. Of the \$77,525 generously donated, our supporters chose to allocate their support to the following areas:

- Shaping Futures Scholarships Fund**  
 To benefit a further 15 students in need with scholarships
- Science and Engineering Challenge Fund**  
 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) outreach program for Year 10 students
- Vera Deacon Regional History Fund**  
 To uncover, preserve and share valuable regional history
- UON Research and Discovery Fund**  
 To support and attract the world's best researchers and put UON at the forefront of groundbreaking research across the globe
- Other**



# NEW SPACE UPDATE

## NEW SPACE OPENED ITS DOORS IN JULY 2017

We hope everyone is enjoying the vibrant spaces, rich learning environments and the stunning views from the glass box. Make sure you get along to visit the newest addition to our UON community spaces soon.

The **NeW Space** building is **14,000m<sup>2</sup>** over **9 floors** and within this there is:



Total project value **\$95m**  
from three funding sources

**\$25m**

NSW State Government  
administered by the Hunter  
Development Corporation

**\$30m**

Commonwealth  
Education Investment Fund

**\$40m**

The University  
of Newcastle

# UON HAPPENINGS

## CENTRAL COAST GRADUATIONS

Through the support and generosity of many donors our students' lives are changed through scholarships. We were delighted to celebrate the achievements and success of our recent graduates from UON's Central Coast campus in July.



## THREE MINUTE THESIS

Supporters had the chance to see the impact of their donations to researchers, as UON PhD and Masters students had just three minutes to share their research learnings and the implications for society in an entertaining way.



## LARAPINTA TREKKERS MEET AND GREET

Our Larapinta trekkers, including renowned Paralympian and UON alumnus Dr William Tan who aims to be the first person to take on the trail in a wheelchair, met their fellow teammates and learnt more about the trail and the training required for the 65km trek.



## HOW TO GIVE

### MAIL YOUR CHEQUE TO:

UON Office of Alumni and Philanthropy  
IDC Building, University Drive  
Callaghan, NSW 2308

### TELEPHONE:

Call us on: +61 2 4921 8612

### EMAIL:

Contact us on: [donate@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donate@newcastle.edu.au)

### DONATE ONLINE:

At our secure website:  
[newcastle.edu.au/donate](https://newcastle.edu.au/donate)

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