When Roy Palmer and his wife Marie bought their slowly regenerating bush block at Broke in 1978, they found the greatest asset it had was its ability to grow ‘tranquility’.

But as its tranquility grew, so did a desire to preserve and honour it to ensure the magical combination of returning flora and fauna could never be threatened by bulldozers and buildings.

“A lot of people who live in the bush work hard to keep nature at bay,” Roy said. “But Marie and I always worked hard to give nature every chance.”

After buying it as a weekend retreat more than 30 years ago, Roy and Marie made a small area of the 10-hectare block their permanent home in 1994, and in 2004, had 8.5 hectares of it gazetted following a Voluntary Conservation Agreement in perpetuity, negotiated with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

For Roy, who sadly lost Marie earlier this year, his beautiful bush block is now not only a home, but also the perfect place to study and record the bountiful flora and fauna living there. Linked to the NPWS’s Atlas of NSW database, as well as to the CSIRO’s Australian National Herbarium, his detailed database will yield invaluable information for Australian botanists for generations to come.

To date, Roy has logged more than 350 species of flora and 100 species of birds on his block.

It was this love of the land and a desire to give back that many years ago inspired the couple to support the University of Newcastle Foundation through scholarships and ultimately a bequest.

*Marie and I were fortunate enough to cross paths with some local Indigenous elders on the Central Coast, Newcastle and Singleton, which led us on a journey to a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture,* Roy said.

*On that journey, we met Aunty Barbara Foot and we were inspired to support the Kooris in a direct sense. That is when we began giving to the Jack Doherty Undergraduate Scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

*It gives me enormous satisfaction to know that my help goes directly to the recipients.*

Roy, who also supports the Tom Farrell Institute, says leaving the University a bequest is a way of enabling others to benefit from an education.

“My education has been so important to me on the path I have taken in my own life, so giving money to the University makes sense to me and links me to my interests – the environment, engineering and medicine.”

**INSIDE THE GIFT**

**Choir dazzles world stage**

**Annual Appeal on target**

**Community ties reap rewards**

**Pharmacy students get back to nature**

**Staff give with their hearts**

**New members for Foundation Board**

**A man with a plan**

**Friends indeed**

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MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING CEO

OUTGOING UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE FOUNDATION CEO

Louise O'Connell is honoured to have experienced the generosity of the Foundation’s many donors.

The University of Newcastle Foundation recently said goodbye to its inaugural Chief Executive Officer, Louise O’Connell. After three years in the role, Louise said she would always be honoured to have experienced the generosity of the many donors who contributed to the University of Newcastle in so many ways and with such open hearts.

The gift of education comes in all shapes and sizes and I have never ceased to be amazed by people’s capacity to give. Since the University of Newcastle Foundation was established more than $30 million dollars has been given through donations and bequests to support scholarships, prizes, academic positions and research.

This figure continues to rise. In 2010, more than $4 million was given – twice the amount of the year before, while last year, the University benefitted from more than $5 million in gifts.

Giving to the University is an investment in lives with a powerful ripple effect. No gift is too great or small and each one empowers students to go on and help change lives around them.

I would like to thank the many individuals, businesses and community groups I have had the honour of dealing with. During my time at the Foundation I have been humbled and inspired by your generosity and warmth – it is your great passion for education and its role in our future that has the power to transform lives.

CHOIR HITS HIGH NOTE WITH WORLD TRIPLE SILVER WIN

Hundreds of hours of rehearsals paid off for the University of Newcastle Chamber Choir in June when it dazzled the world stage and brought home three silver medals from the Seventh World Choir Games in the United States.

One of Australia’s premiere choral ensembles, the choir received high praise from the Games’ judges in Cincinnati for its “remarkable ability and versatility”.

Choir Manager Greg Kerr said the choir was inspired by the quality of competition at the Games and he was grateful for the University and community support that made the trip possible.

“Not only was it a challenging task to rise to the level of the Champions Competition, it was really inspiring to be with so many other choristers from all round the world – the energy level was extraordinary,” Greg said.

“We are truly grateful to our sponsors, the University and all of the donors for having faith in the choir’s abilities and sharing our vision by supporting us.”

ANNUAL APPEAL IS SHAPING FUTURES

The success of this year’s Annual Appeal will afford 12 students an easier path on their journey through University.

The University of Newcastle Foundation’s appeal raises money for the Shaping Futures Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships of $4000 each for academically gifted students facing hardship.

“Our Shaping Futures Scholars are students who have overcome enormous obstacles to attend University,” Acting CEO Libby Rodgers-McPhee said. “Being able to assist them on their journey is wonderful and I’d like to thank everyone who gave to the Appeal for their incredible generosity. We are very close to reaching our target.”

The Fund was established in 2011 with three scholarships.

Eight more scholarships were awarded this year with the proceeds of the inaugural Appeal in 2011.

Donations can be made through the University Foundation on 02 4921 7453 or at www.newcastle.edu.au/foundation/annual-appeal
Local students in need are benefitting from 10 new scholarships funded by the Central Coast Freemasons.

The textbook scholarships worth $500 each have been provided for students enrolled in subjects unique to the University of Newcastle’s Central Coast campus.

The inaugural recipients received their awards at a joint University and TAFE NSW – Central Coast Campus event during the University’s Scholars’ Week.

Central Coast Freemasons President Gary Young said that the scholarships provided practical support for local students in need.

“We want to help students, particularly those who are academically sound yet find themselves in circumstances that make study quite a struggle.”

Community-minded students committed to making a difference have been rewarded for their efforts through $5000 scholarships.

The 12 first-year students, all from the Upper Hunter, each received a Coal & Allied Community Development Fund Scholarship to recognise their strong commitment to their local community.

Coal & Allied Community Investment Principal Stephen Sneddon said the scholarships were part of Coal & Allied’s commitment to developing sustainable communities in the Upper Hunter.

“Our partnership with the University of Newcastle is not only an investment in the future of these 12 students, but an investment in developing a diverse range of skills in the entire region,” he said.

Scholarship recipient Caitlin Du Chateau from Singleton said her school teachers and her supportive family inspired her to pursue a career in education.

“Coming from a small town I have a strong sense of community spirit,” Caitlin said.

“I am so grateful to Coal & Allied for helping me get through my studies so that one day I can help others.”

“We are keen to help the community so these scholarships will make a long term difference to our local community, especially if we keep them going for three or five years,” he said.

The Hunter Wetlands provided a change of scene for University of Newcastle students when they headed there recently with a group of high-profile pharmacists to gain some valuable industry insight from the professionals.

The day was packed with activities including nature walks, orienteering challenges and talks from national pharmacy leaders.

University Foundation’s Pharmacy Fund Chairman and local pharmacist Chris Piggott said the day was “a great success” for all students involved.

“The aim of the workshop for students was to build stronger relationships with the Newcastle and Hunter regions, as well as to develop team relationships with their friends and establish social links with hospital and community pharmacists,” Chris said.

International student Dong Ho Soh said the workshop was a great opportunity to learn from industry professionals as well as to experience some of the Hunter’s beautiful flora and fauna.

“It’s a very relaxing and productive way to spend some of our holidays and it’s been a good opportunity to meet other students as well as experienced pharmacists,” he said.
Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan was teaching an organisational behaviour class when her mother died unexpectedly. “I remember thinking ‘I’m an orphan’, but just kept going with the lecture,” Professor Ryan said.

Shortly afterwards, she established the RA Ryan Memorial Prize for Organisational Behaviour in memory of her mother, Rachel Ann Ryan. “The University of Newcastle has given me a life and a career and I thought it was appropriate that I should establish this prize in my mother’s memory,” she said. “The best way for me to give back is through the students.”

Three new faces on the University of Newcastle Foundation Board have become part of a dynamic new era for the organisation.

Director of Surveying, Planning and Project Management at Monteath and Powys Rob Monteath and Snowy Hydro CEO and Managing Director Terry Charlton recently joined the board.

Changes also saw long-term Foundation supporter and University benefactor Jennie Thomas step down alongside the UoN Foundation’s tireless founding Chairman Jeff Eather.

John Asquith, who chairs the Central Coast Community Environment Network and the Foundation’s Central Coast Committee, has also joined the board.

Professor Ryan isn’t the only University of Newcastle staff member experiencing the joy of giving within the boundaries of the campus.

The University’s staff giving program offers opportunities for engagement and fulfilment with students in ways that are personally meaningful for individual staff.

Senior Management Accountant Damien Harvey, who supports the Endowment Fund, said the program allowed him to “value his place in the world*.

“The best way for me to give back is through the students.*

*She is such an inspirational, big-hearted lady and hearing her talk about the students made me realise that while we (the staff) are on campus, we really don’t see much of the students at all and it’s easy to forget the wonderful things they are doing.

“I want to support the students and my help, combined with that of others, can give them that leg up to make their way and help them with their financial needs.

“I chose the Endowment Fund because I’m happy these needs are recognised by the appropriate people – I trust them.*

Acting CEO Libby Rodgers-McPhee said the board comprised a wealth of experience as well as a shared passion for the University of Newcastle and the work of the Foundation.

“I’d like to thank Jennie and Jeff for the unwavering support and invaluable input they have brought to the Foundation Board over the years,” Libby said.

“At the same time, change is always welcome and our new members each bring with them new ideas and ways forward. Rob, Terry and John are experienced professionals, and I’m looking forward to working with them as the Foundation grows into the future.”

A new Chair is expected to be appointed shortly.
NATIVE FLORA PROJECT NEEDS FUNDS TO FLOWER

The sight of a flowering Commersonia rosea always brings a smile to the face of the University of Newcastle Foundation's Executive Officer Bernie Curran.

“We are incredibly lucky in the Hunter to have so many varieties of beautiful native flower species,” Bernie said.

But sadly, the much-admired pink flowering shrub is increasingly rare in its natural habitat, and like many of the Hunter's native flora species, is under threat of dying out completely.

Through his role at the Foundation, Bernie is helping raise funds for a book project that combines his love of flora with his second love – the work of students at the University of Newcastle.

Guided by botanist Stephen Bell, the proposed book will chronicle the Hunter's 96 native plant species and will be illustrated by current and past students of the University's Bachelor of Natural History Illustration, the only course of its kind in Australia.

At the moment, $80,000 is still needed to achieve the $150,000 the project requires.

Illustrator Tanya Hoolihan said the project was historically and environmentally significant.

“It will contribute to sustaining the unique biodiversity we have here in the Hunter region,” she said.

Bernie agrees.

“The book will play a vital role in protecting the Hunter's precious local environment, and will become a collector's item,” he said.

“It is my hope we can attract support from those members of our community who are committed to protecting the vulnerable plant species of our region. The last thing we want to see is that these plants disappear off the face of the earth.

“This book will be a living museum, illustrated and described by talented, passionate people, and in a very real sense, it will be about our future,” Dr. Curran said.

Anyone interested in supporting this project can contact Dr Bernie Curran on 02 4921 7453 or Bernard.Curran@newcastle.edu.au

ARCHITECTURE SCHOLAR IS A MAN WITH A PLAN

University of Newcastle Architecture student Matthew Kelly will visit five countries in 2013 to discover first-hand how urbanisation has impacted residential architecture around the world, thanks to the 2012 Parker Fellowship Scholarship.

Matthew, a third-year student, will travel to regions of China, India, Turkey, France and England to assist him in bringing home ideas for a culturally sensitive, egalitarian and holistic architectural approach to managing increasing global population and decreasing global resources.

The scholarship is named in honour of Eric Parker, who was the first permanent teacher of architecture at the University of Newcastle.

He came to the city in 1957 with the belief that every architect would benefit from the global perspective gained through travel and this scholarship aims to inspire students to share his global view of architecture.

The $10,000 scholarship is funded by the Architecture Foundation, a group of University of Newcastle architecture graduates.

“I am so grateful to the Architecture Foundation,” Matthew said.

“This is a remarkable opportunity and I am incredibly enthused about my travel plan and being able to return to Newcastle to share what I’ve learned.”
FRIENDS, ART AND LAUGHTER PAINT A PICTURE OF SUCCESS

Pablo Picasso once said that the purpose of art was to wash the dust of daily life off our souls.

So when art lovers from all over the Hunter came together recently for the opening of the Friends of the University Art Show, spirits were high as the dregs of workaday humdrum faded away at the door.

The fruits of a collaboration between The Friends of the University and the University Gallery, the show featured works by Hunter artists, with all pieces priced under $2000.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Friends’ new Margaret Olley Friends of the University Post Graduate Scholarship in Fine Art, which was won by PhD candidate Susan Cairns.

Well-known artist Peter Tilley won the main $6000 acquisitive prize, with two $2000 student prizes awarded to Jenny Muldoon and Will Maguire.

Friends of the University President Vic Levi said the show was a “huge success”.

“We had a great crowd. Gillean Shaw (University Gallery curator), Alison Smith and our Friends’ secretary Judi McLaughlin did an outstanding job in making the whole event happen,” Vic said.

“Margaret Olley had such a strong connection to the Hunter and establishing a fine art scholarship in her name is a wonderful way of honouring her, and at the same time, recognising the work of our talented students. It’s a real thrill to see deserving students make a mark for themselves.”

Friends of the University, which also runs the biennial book fair at the University Great Hall, will host the exhibition each alternate year to raise funds for student scholarships.

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