

COLLEGE OF HEALTH, MEDICINE AND WELLBEING

ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2024

INSPIRING PEOPLE



HEALTH RESEARCHERS RECOGNISED IN CITY OF NEWCASTLE'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Two leading University of Newcastle health researchers, Professor Nathan Bartlett and Emeritus Professor Julie Byles have each been honoured in the 2024 City of Newcastle Citizen of the Year Awards.

Assistant Dean Industry and Partnerships at the College of Health Medicine and Wellbeing, Professor Nathan Bartlett, helped develop an effective preventative treatment for respiratory viral diseases including COVID-19, and has been selected as Newcastle's 2024 Citizen of the Year.

Director of the Centre of Women's Health Research, Emeritus Professor Julie Byles, was named Senior Citizen of the Year. She is a long-time advocate for the health of women and older people.



INSPIRING WOMEN IN RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The College held the Inspiring Women in Research Symposium showcasing leading women in research, who shared their stories on overcoming the barriers and challenges of being female researchers and how they have excelled in their successful careers not only in research, but beyond.

Keynote speakers: Professor Anne Kelso AO, Former CEO, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Professor Caroline Homer AO, Deputy Director: Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Burne Institute, Associate Professor Emily Wong, NHMRC Investigator and Snow Fellow, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute.

INSPIRING PEOPLE

PROFESSOR PETER O'MARA RECIPIENT OF LIME LIFE AWARD

Professor Peter O'Mara attended the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) Connection X conference and LIMELight awards in October 2023. At the LIMELight awards Professor Peter O'Mara's was awarded the LIME Life Award for contributions made to the LIME Network over the past 18 years. Professor Peter O'Mara is a member of the LIME Reference Group where he regularly contributes time and cultural knowledge to the LIME Network. Recipients of the award helped to form an international community of practice between Indigenous medical educators and non-Indigenous medical educators teaching Indigenous content.

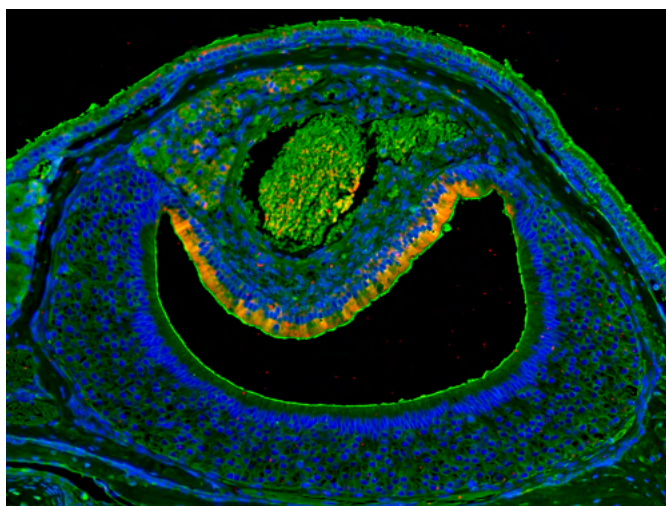


Professor Peter O'Mara receiving the LIME Life Award

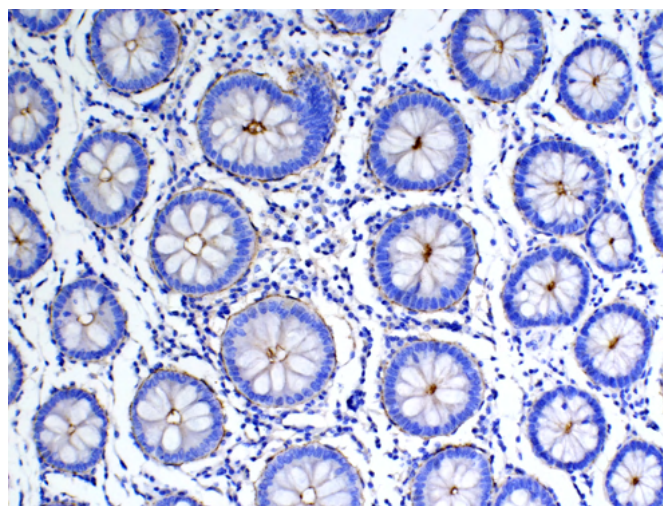
RESEARCHERS HONORED WITH SCIENTIFIC PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

The Hunter's best scientific photographers were honoured at HMRI's "Through the Lens" photography exhibition. The University's Dr Jason Girkin took out first prize for his photograph titled 'Nosey Wasowski' depicting a coronavirus replicating in the nasal respiratory epithelium.

Associate Professor Paul Tooney was the runner-up with his photograph titled 'The field of flowers lining the colon', and Ayesha Ali received Highly Commended with a photograph of a highly differentiated rare cell type of intestinal epithelium. 'Through the Lens is a testament to the idea that art and science are not mutually exclusive but rather that they are two sides of the same coin,' says HMRI Director Professor Kay-Lambkin.



Nosey Wazowski by Dr. Jason Girkin



Field of flowers lining the colon by Associate Professor Paul Tooney

ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

BETTER, HEALTHIER LIVING

SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS OF PRESTIGIOUS AUSTRALIA AWARDS FELLOWSHIPS

The 'Master-Reach-Teach: Short Course for Field Epidemiologists' by Dr James Flint and Melinda Phillips, from the School of Medicine and Public Health, was a successful recipient of the highly competitive and prestigious Australia Awards Fellowships.

The University of Newcastle's Field Epidemiology in Action (FEiA) program has been supporting high impact field epidemiology and rapid response team training in the Pacific since 2013.

Co-funded by Hunter New England Health, partnering with Papua New Guinea's National Department of Health, 15 field epidemiology training fellows will come to Newcastle representing all levels of government (local, provincial, and national) to undertake a two-week intensive field epidemiology training program.



PROFESSOR DILEEP SHARMA PRESENTED WITH TWO FELLOWSHIPS FOR WORK IN ORAL HEALTH THERAPY

Professor Dileep Sharma received two fellowships at the FDI World Dental Congress, the Fellowship of Pierre Fauchard Academy and the Fellowship of International College of Dentists. The fellowships recognised Professor Dileep Sharma's contributions and leadership in the field of Clinical Dentistry, Research and Dental education. The FD Congress was attended by 10,000 delegates from all over the world.



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PATHWAYS

Professor Charlotte Rees, Head of the School of Health Sciences, leads the National Mental Health Pathways to Practice Program Pilot as Chief Investigator in collaboration with Monash University. Her leadership has secured \$865,000 in Commonwealth Funds, underscoring her commitment to advancing mental health research and education.



ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

BETTER HEALTHIER LIVING

ADVANCES IN IMMUNOLOGY AND MICROBIOLOGY

Two Newcastle scientists are among six promising researchers recognised with a prestigious NSW Government grant designed to support and build health and medical research talent in NSW. Dr Emily Hoedt and Dr Guy Cameron have each received a \$500,000 NSW Health Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant.

Dr Guy Cameron, a proud Aboriginal man and immunologist, will establish a genomic technology platform with Dr Trent Butler of NSW Health Pathology for the future control of infectious upper respiratory and ear diseases across our regions.

Microbiologist Dr Emily Hoedt is working to improve colorectal surgical outcomes. Colorectal surgery to remove damaged tissue is the main treatment for many digestive diseases; such as cancer and inflammatory bowel disease.



Dr Guy Cameron



Dr Emily Hoedt

\$450,000 TO FUND NEW IMAGING EQUIPMENT

University of Newcastle researchers have secured funding from the Australian Research Council for specialist imaging equipment that will reduce the number of animals required in research projects.

The new equipment will be based at the University's BioResearch Building and will complement existing instruments to establish a state-of-the-art imaging facility for animal-based studies - a first of its kind for the Hunter region. The new funding will enable the purchase of a Micro Computed Tomography (microCT) Imaging System that captures high-resolution and high-speed 2D and 3D imaging of the anatomy of living animals in real-time.

The team is lead by Associate Professor Susan Hua (the lead Chief Investigator on the funding application), Professor Robert Aitken; Professor Pradeep Tanwar; Associate Professor Nicole Verrills; Dr Behnam Akhavan



Professor Susan Hua

ASIA PACIFIC FOCUS



The New Colombo Plan (NCP) is an initiative of the Australian Government that aims to strengthen ties between Australia and the Indo-Pacific region by providing opportunities for Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

In 2023, the College supported a record number of students to undertake trips through the NCP. A total of 167 students from 7 disciplines participated in study tours. 18 tours were organised to 6 different countries: Japan, Thailand, China, Philippines, Indonesia, and Fiji.



Students in Japan



Students in Thailand



Students in Thailand



Students in the Philippines

EXCELLENCE IN OUR PEOPLE

\$12.3 MILLION NHMRC GRANTS

College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing researchers have been awarded more than \$12.3 million in National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Funding.



PROFESSOR MURRAY CAIRNS

Fund: Investigator Grant

Amount: \$2,897,165

Using genetically informed precision medicine to improve the treatment of schizophrenia, Prof. Murray Cairns research program will establish a new precision medicine approach that uses a patient's genetic profile to specifically match their disease-associated biology with a broad spectrum of treatments, including existing medications used in psychiatry, as well as those currently used for other conditions.

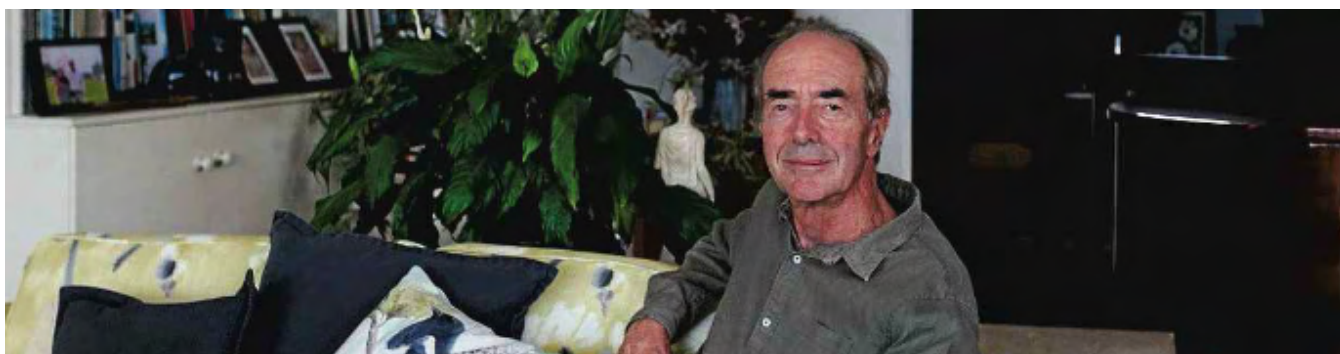


PROFESSOR PETER GIBSON

Fund: Investigator Grant

Amount: \$2,553,040

Lead by Prof. Peter Gibson, this research program will investigate how different types of treatment can achieve the complete removal of asthma symptoms and attacks, called treatment-induced asthma remission. The cost savings of achieving asthma remission, and consumer views about this new treatment outcome in asthma will be identified.



DISTINGUISHED LAUREATE PROFESSOR ROGER SMITH

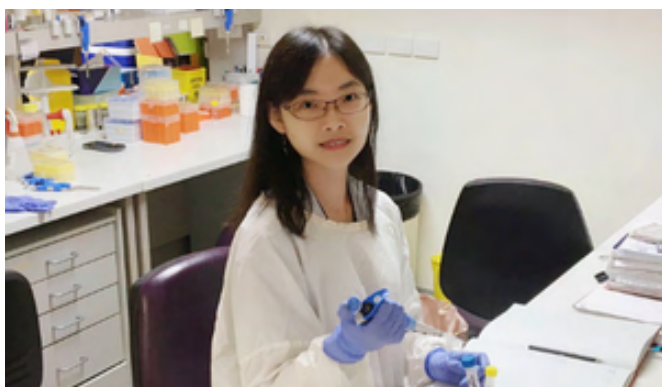
Fund: Investigator Grant

Amount: \$2,953,040

Distinguished Laureate Professor Roger Smith will develop drugs aimed at preventing premature births and associated health risks. The grant money will be used to develop nanoparticles that target drugs to the muscles of the uterus.

EXCELLENCE IN OUR PEOPLE

NHMRC GRANTS



Dr Yuchen Feng

Fund: Investigator Fund

Amount: \$579,632

Project: Exploiting long noncoding RNAs for lung cancer diagnosis and treatment



Dr Shafiq Syed

Fund: Investigator Fund

Amount: \$662,040

Project: Dietary and metabolic control of Axin2+ stem cells in endometrial physiology and cancer



Lead Researcher: Professor Craig Pennell

Fund: Ideas Grant

Amount: \$1,363,053

Project: Precision medicine tools to predict spontaneous preterm birth in early pregnancy

Further lead investigators: Ms Carol Wang (The University of Newcastle), Professor Jon Hyett (Western Sydney University), Professor Stephen Lye (Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto), and Professor Fabricio da Silva Costa (Griffith University)



Lead Researcher: Professor Jay Horvat

Fund: Ideas Grant

Amount: \$1,299,359

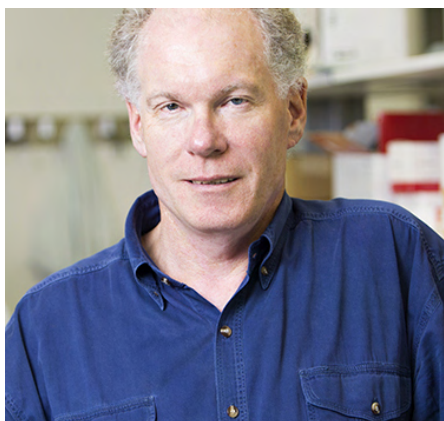
Project: Manipulating iron metabolism in the airway mucosa for the treatment of severe asthma and COPD

Further lead Investigators: Associate Professor David Reid (The Council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research), Dr Ama-Tawiah Essilfie (The Council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research), Dr Alexandra Brown (The University of Newcastle), and Professor Jodie Simpson (The University of Newcastle)

EXCELLENCE IN OUR PEOPLE

\$9.3M IN MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND

Two projects led by University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute researchers received \$1.7m in total through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Indigenous Health Research scheme; while a further three projects were awarded \$7.6m in total through the MRFF Genomics Health Futures Mission.



PROFESSOR RODNEY SCOTT

Fund: MRFF Genomics Health Futures Mission

Amount: \$2,705,260

Project: DPYD and UGT1A1 genotyping for fluoropyrimidine and irinotecan dose personalisation to reduce severe toxicity



PROFESSOR MURRAY CAIRNS

Fund: MRFF Genomics Health Futures Mission

Amount: \$2,619,700

Project: Using polygenic scores to guide the treatment and prophylaxis of hypertension



A. PROFESSOR TRACY DUDDING- BYTH

Fund: MRFF Genomics Health Futures Mission

Amount: \$2,295,611

Project: Using facial recognition in genetic diagnosis for children with intellectual disabilities.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MICHELLE KENNEDY

Fund: MRFF Indigenous Health Research Fund

Amount: \$999,186

Project: Koori Quit Pack - Mailout smoking cessation support



PROFESSOR KIRSTY PRINGLE

Fund: MRFF Indigenous Health Research Fund

Amount: \$726,149

Project: The Gomeri Gaaynggal Breastfeeding Study: A Community-Led Program to Enhance Breastfeeding Support

LIVING OUR VALUES

GROWING INDUSTRIES

2023 HMRI Awards

Professor Balogh, Director of Trauma at John Hunter Hospital, and Professor of Surgery at the University of Newcastle won \$20,000 towards his research when he won the HMRI Award for Research Excellence.

- The \$20,000 Director's Award for Mid-Career Research went to A. Professor Matt Dun from the Cancer Research Program.
- The \$20,000 HMRI Award for Early Career Research was awarded to Dr Rachel Sutherland for her work in preventing childhood obesity via the SWAP it campaign.



EXCELLENCE

Academic Promotions

The College celebrates the excellence of staff who have been successful in their academic promotion for 2023.

Promotion to Professor

- Amanda Dawson
- Doan Ngo
- Mark Baker
- Michael Pollack, (Conjoint)
- Patricia Crock, (Conjoint)
- Tracy Dudding-Byth, (Conjoint)

Promotion to Senior Lecturer

- Alix Hall
- Arvind Kendurkar, (Conjoint)
- Daniel Beard
- Danien Wong
- Dawn Simpson
- Fiona Hawke
- Hayley Croft
- Lizzie Manning
- Lyndall Mollart
- Marie-Anne Hockings, (Conjoint)
- Melanie Kingsland
- Melissa Tadros
- Nicholas Jackson, (Conjoint)
- Sarah Dineen-Griffin
- Tanmay Bagade
- Vicki Maltby, (Conjoint)

Promotion to Associate Professor

- Ferdinand Miteff, (Conjoint)
- James Lynam, (Conjoint)
- Katie Baines
- Nicole Nathan
- Rachel Sutherland
- Rebecca Wyse
- Richard McGee
- Stephen Bollipo, (Conjoint)
- Susan Lord, (Conjoint)

Promotion to Lecturer

- Colin Sanctuary
- Grace Burns
- Lucy Kocanda
- Marina Pau
- Prabuddha Pathinayake
- Punnam Veerati
- Ryan Duchatel
- Yuchen Feng

LIVING OUR VALUES

Employability Excellence Awards

The 2023 Employability Excellence Awards showcased the community of achievers that enable the university's reputation for producing life-ready graduates. The College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing students, staff, and industry partners featured across several categories, highlighting the College's strength in championing excellence in employability.



WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Dr. Hayley Croft
Senior Lecturer
Pharmacy and Experimental Pharmacology

Hayley was recognised for her leadership in national initiatives that enhance working conditions for intern pharmacists.



WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Samuel Clarke
Occupational Therapy

Samuel Clarke earned the Work Integrated Learning Student of the Year for applying classroom skills to real-world Occupational Therapy with exceptional dedication.

OUR COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION, INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

BIGGEST INDIGENOUS COHORT

In December 2023, the College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing proudly celebrated the graduation of 17 Indigenous medical students, our largest-ever cohort. This significant occasion highlights the College's commitment to Indigenous higher education.

The graduation of this sizable cohort reflects the College's dedication to addressing the underrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in medicine. The College's innovative approaches to medical education, and strong community engagement, through programs such as Miroma Bunbilla, have contributed to the success of these graduates.



Emily Manson and Professor Peter O'Mara



Lily Harvey and Taslena Tapim



Georgia Love and Professor Peter O'Mara



Aislinn Bell



Demi Cheetham

LIFE READY GRADUATES

HUNTER MEDICAL STUDENTS EARN WHILE THEY LEARN

An Australian-first initiative to boost healthcare staff and provide medical students with invaluable paid experience, is now underway in Hunter New England Local Health District, thanks to a new partnership with the University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW.

Minister for Regional Health Ryan Park said the 'Learn while they Earn' pilot program invites first and second year Bachelor of Medical Science/ Doctor of Medicine (Joint Medical Program) students at the University of Newcastle to become Assistants in Nursing through TAFE NSW workshops and clinical placement.

Several wards at John Hunter Hospital, Rankin Park Centre and Belmont Hospital have participated in the pilot program, with hopes to further expand the program to other facilities across the District during the summer semester break.



GRADUATION STORY

Midwifery research delivers insight into student learning.

University of Newcastle teaching academic Nicole Hainsworth is graduating with her PhD focused on midwifery continuity of care.

Initially beginning her career as a registered nurse, Nicole was inspired to pivot and pursue a career in midwifery after a positive experience working with a midwife in Maitland. Now, with 25 years experience in midwifery to her name, Nicole's passion for the profession only continues to grow. Passionate to help educate the next generation of midwives, Nicole has also been teaching at the University of Newcastle for 11 years.

Her PhD research specifically focused on 'midwifery student experiences of undertaking continuity of care'. Nicole hopes her findings can support the implementation of an educational framework that is based on the learning outcomes achieved by midwifery students through continuity of care experiences.



University of Newcastle PhD Student, Nicole Hainsworth

INSPIRING PEOPLE

2023 UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE EXCELLENCE AWARDS



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD

Dr Elissa Jane Elvidge - School of Medicine and Public Health



RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARD – EARLY CAREER

Dr Sarah Valkenborghs - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy



INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AWARD WINNER

Florence Bartlett - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Professor Hubert Hondermarck - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Conjoint Associate Professor Jim Scurry - School of Medicine and Public Health, Dr Ken Jaaback - School of Medicine and Public Health, Dr Muhammad Fairuz Jamaluddin - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Professor Pradeep Tanwar - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Mr Riazuddin Mohammed - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Dr Shafiq Syed - School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, Dr Tania Day - School of Medicine and Public Health

INSPIRING PEOPLE

COLLEGE OF HEALTH, MEDICINE WELLBEING STAFF AWARDS

The College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing celebrated the achievements of college staff across two events at Callaghan campus and the Central Coast Clinical School in December 2023.

Indigenous Engagement

- Dr Elissa Elvidge

Rural Engagement

- Dr Luke Wakely

Industry Engagement

- TACTICS VR Team – Centre for Advanced Training - Lead by Prof. Rohan Walker with Steven Maltby, Murielle Kluge, Conjoint Prof. Chris Levi, Prof. Neil Spratt, Dr. Carlos Garcia-Esperon

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Ricky Pomroy

Clinical Leadership and Engagement

- Monica Anderson

Wellbeing, Health and Safety

- Simone Stanger

College Kindness Award

- Dr Jessica Bergmann
- Dr Victoria Pitt
- Dr Alexandra Day
- Matthew Kolasinski

Early-Career Teaching

- Nicole Hainsworth
- Katie Gandy

Mid-Career Teaching

- Dr. Daniel Beard

Early-Career Research

- Dr. Sarah Dineen-Griffin

Mid-Career Research

- Dr. Lizzie Manning
- Dr. Fiona Hawke

PVC College Leadership

- Professor Lisa Wood
- Dr Daniel Johnstone
- Darren Nolan

Newby Award

- Dr Michelle Stubbs
- Elly Burley
- Dr. Ben Bailey

Campus Contribution

- Dr. Eleonora Leopardi
- Highly Commended: Gosford PEU Team



PVC Liz Sullivan and College GM Roberta Anderson presenting the awards to staff at Gosford campus



PVC Liz Sullivan with TACTICS VR Team

INSPIRING PEOPLE

APPOINTMENTS

College General Manager

Roberta Anderson is the newly appointed College General Manager, bringing over 15 years of experience in Higher Education from her role as Director of Faculty Operations at Swinburne University of Technology. In her previous position, she collaborated with academic leaders in diverse disciplines, providing strategic guidance in areas such as Health, Science, Design, Architecture, Communication, and Education. Known as a passionate and authentic leader, Roberta empowers her team members to advance their careers while ensuring the continual improvement of research and education quality. She emphasises the vital role of universities in shaping future citizens and highlights the significance of research for societal well-being.



Interim Assistant Dean Education and Innovation

Professor Alison Hutton is passionate about youth health and safety. Backed by the likes of the World Health Organization (WHO), her work in Australia and worldwide is leading to innovative new ways of supporting young people at social events such as Schoolies, outdoor music festivals and sporting tournaments. Alison is also busy creating safer spaces for youth here in Australia. Among her most recent projects includes a collaboration with the Kurri Kurri Youth Health Service to help mitigate youth drug use in the lower Hunter. In both her research and teaching roles, Professor Hutton is committed to advocating for youth by listening to their challenges, providing tailored support and valuing their perspectives.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS





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