

# THE GIFT

## SHAPING A BETTER TOMORROW TOGETHER

THE IMPACT OF YOUR  
GIFTING DAY DONATIONS



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

### PHILANTHROPY NEWS

How your generosity makes a difference

OCTOBER 2022 EDITION

# MESSAGE OF THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Thank you for being part of our strong community of philanthropic supporters at the University of Newcastle. Thank you for sharing our values and contributing to our important work.

Your generosity truly matters, and it is making a positive difference every day.

The University serves our regions and delivers an exceptional experience for our students. We champion our shared values of equity, excellence, engagement and sustainability. We partner with our communities, including wonderful people like you, to make a greater positive impact.

In this edition of The Gift, I am pleased to share the many ways your generosity has made a remarkable difference.

Your donations to our first Gifting Day have already enabled great outcomes across the nine featured projects. Your support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led, community informed health research is helping deliver life-changing outcomes.

Your kindness and support provide scholarship and internship opportunities to students like Donna and Emily who are featured in this edition. This is part of our commitment to excellence and equity.

Your generosity supports investment in sustainability. Our students are studying migratory shore birds in the Hunter and learning more about attitudes to offshore wind farms.

Your gifts are leading to research breakthroughs for cancer in adults and children. The five-year Quality Teaching Rounds research project is improving outcomes for teachers and students. It is great to see industry, foundations and the wider community supporting these important areas.

I also wanted to share with you some of our new and ground-breaking research to remove the pain of diabetes testing and to help save our koalas.

As fellow donors, my wife Olga and I are proud to be part of this community of supporters. I am grateful for your generosity, and you deserve to be proud of the impact that your kindness has enabled. Thank you for your support, and for partnering with us to make the world a better place.



**Professor Alex Zelinsky AO**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
The University of Newcastle

# FORGING THE FUTURE: NEW SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARSHIP



**With the winds of change sweeping through Australia's energy industry, a new philanthropic scholarship generously funded by Oceanex Energy is set to bolster University of Newcastle research into renewable energy options.**

As the inaugural scholarship recipient, Development Studies (Honours) student and alumna Madeleine Novak (Bachelor of Development Studies, 2021) will use the support to focus on her honours research project exploring the key social concerns and attitudes surrounding offshore wind farm developments in Eastern Australia.

With an inevitable shift in energy production and growing consideration for offshore wind developments, Madeleine believes that further research around this expanding industry is both sensible and timely.

Oceanex has committed \$30,000 over three years to fund three \$10,000 scholarships available to University of Newcastle College of Engineering, Science and Environment honours students for research into renewable energy or offshore wind farming.

**"Oceanex Energy is looking forward to supporting and providing industry access and opportunities to students who are interested in the work we do. I am sure we will all learn a lot together."**

**Andy Evans**  
CEO Oceanex Energy

*Madeleine Novak, with Oceanex Energy CEO Andy Evans, is using her scholarship to support her investigation into attitudes towards offshore wind farm developments.*

**"I feel extremely privileged to receive this scholarship which allows me to dedicate more time and energy to conducting in-depth and meaningful research that I hope can be used to inform important decisions."**

**Madeleine Novak**  
Bachelor of Development Studies (Honours) student

The exciting partnership follows collaboration with Oceanex Energy CEO Andy Evans. It highlights the University's commitment to industry collaboration to add to global knowledge and provide opportunities for students to work with companies, bringing the world closer to a sustainable future. We are so grateful to our industry and business supporters, including Oceanex Energy, who enable these opportunities for our students by donating through the University.

**To learn more** about how you or your business can philanthropically support students through scholarships, please email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au) or call 02 4921 8612



# MA & MORLEY SCHOLARS ON-COUNTRY INSPIRATION



In a journey spanning 3,700 kilometres and 60,000 years, thirteen of our 2020 Ma & Morley Scholars experienced an inspiring cultural immersion through north-west and central west NSW this year.

Looking for a new approach that avoided the ongoing challenges with international travel and still met the Program’s objectives, the Ma & Morley team engaged with the University’s Wollotuka Institute and the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership to create a cultural experience closer to home.

Over 11 days, Scholars learned from Country and Elders about the importance of relationships and connection to people, place, spirituality and purpose. They also enjoyed the opportunity to connect with each other.

“I think the biggest takeaway is this real sense of Aboriginal culture as a living breathing culture. But to be part of it and to see it. I hope that it will allow me to use my privilege to stand with people.”  
2020 Ma & Morley Scholar



Scan to view the beautiful video of the Cultural Immersion, as captured by Conor Ashleigh

📷 We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands of the Awabakal, Gomeri, Ngemba, Barkindji, Wongaibon and Wiradjuri people, who care for the Country in which the scholars travelled. Images by alumnus Conor Ashleigh (Bachelor of Development Studies, 2010).

The scholars were guided on their journey by Uncle Paul Gordon and alumnus David Newham (Bachelor of Social Science, 2007, Diploma of Aboriginal Studies, 1998), who shared their traditional knowledge and offered a deeper connection to the lands and communities the Scholars visited as they traced the song-line that runs along the Murray Darling, the Barwon River and all the way through to Menindee.

Between storytelling and sacred sunsets, the Scholars connected with Indigenous organisations, local leaders and young people to learn about the unique challenges and priorities of each community; and reflected on how they could help bring these issues to the fore as the next generation of socially conscious Australian leaders.

Returning home, the Scholars are eager to take their newfound knowledge into their communities to encourage others to learn about how we can preserve and continue the world’s oldest living history.

Thank you to the Jack Ma Foundation for their generous and enduring commitment to support students aspiring to lead and find solutions to global challenges.

To find out more about the Ma & Morley Scholarship Program and how to apply, please visit [newcastle.edu.au/scholarships/ma-and-morley-scholarship-program](http://newcastle.edu.au/scholarships/ma-and-morley-scholarship-program)

# NEW \$25 MILLION MARK HUGHES FOUNDATION CENTRE FOR BRAIN CANCER RESEARCH



Great minds unite: The Mark Hughes Foundation and the University of Newcastle partner in new centre for brain cancer research.

Brain cancer research in Australia is taking exciting steps forward with the new \$25 million Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research in the heart of the University’s health sciences research precinct. The Mark Hughes Foundation has now committed \$15 million over five years to intensify brain cancer research efforts on a national scale, bringing hope to patients and families.

Professor Michael Fay has joined the University of Newcastle as the Mark Hughes Foundation Chair in Brain Cancer and Director of the Centre. Professor Fay brings extensive experience in medical and radiation oncology and an excellent track record in brain cancer research.



“The fight against brain cancer is an urgent one and the establishment of a dedicated brain cancer research centre further cements our commitment to helping solve this devastating disease. My ambition is to advance brain cancer research and achieve the greatest impact for brain cancer patients and their families.”

Professor Michael Fay  
Mark Hughes Foundation Chair in Brain Cancer and Director of Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research

📷 Alumna Kirralee Hughes (Bachelor of Business, 1998) and Mark Hughes (centre front) are pictured here with University of Newcastle researchers.

“This is a game changing step for brain cancer research in Australia and something we have been working towards since 2014. More progress is urgently needed to improve the outlook for brain cancer patients – who are often in the prime of their lives, like myself – and their families.”  
Mark Hughes  
Co-Founder, Mark Hughes Foundation

The new Centre will harness the power of a team approach, bringing together the community, leading researchers, clinicians, patients and their families. Every aspect of cancer care will be under the microscope including prevention, early detection, recovery and rehabilitation, treatments and models of care. Research will span all ages and stages of brain cancer but will seek to fill a recognised gap in adult brain cancer.

Brain cancer is all around us, with one person diagnosed every five hours in Australia. We are extremely proud to build on our valued partnership with the Mark Hughes Foundation to take brain cancer research to the next level.

Learn more about the new Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research at [newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/mhf-brain-cancer-research](http://newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/mhf-brain-cancer-research)



# GIVING BACK TO RURAL HEALTH

“As a farming family, we experienced financial hardship during years of drought. My scholarship allowed me to direct my full attention to my studies, enabling me to receive first class honours in my final year.”

Alumna Sophie Welsh (Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours), 2021) is one of our health students from rural and remote areas taking up the challenge to support better health outcomes for rural Australians thanks to generous support available through the Betty Josephine Fyffe Rural Health Scholarships program.



“The Betty Fyffe Rural Equity Scholarship has helped me immensely through my university journey and I know it will help many other capable rural students in the future. That makes me truly ecstatic.”

Sophie Welsh

As one of the program’s inaugural recipients in 2020, Sophie says connecting with Betty’s story added to her motivation to apply herself to helping others living in remote areas.

“My passion for rural health led me to complete my final year at the University’s Department of Rural Health in Port Macquarie, where I immersed myself in the local community of the Mid North Coast.”

“I am now working at John Hunter Hospital which gives me a unique opportunity to participate in rural secondments through Hunter New England Health. I believe working at a tertiary hospital is enriching my skillset to give back to rural communities as my career progresses.”


Sophie hopes to also provide health promotion education to rural communities, ideally in community centres and schools, with an emphasis on making informed decisions for a healthier life, no matter where you come from.

We are so grateful to Betty Fyffe, and to everyone involved with The Elizabeth Cahill Fyffe Trust. Our particular thanks go to trustees Stephen Mathews and Michael Smith for upholding Betty's legacy and making this transformational program possible.



## HONOURING A PASSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Betty Fyffe was a local Tamworth girl who grew up around her father’s chemist shops. We are proud to honour her great passion for nursing and rural communities through this life-changing scholarship program dedicated to improving the education of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in training. It is a privilege to honour her legacy and witness our students’ passion to deliver more equitable health outcomes for all Australians.

 Betty Fyffe’s generous bequest ensures that her passion for rural healthcare lives on through the recipients of the Betty Josephine Fyffe Rural Health Scholarships.

Our [Gifts in Wills brochure](#) details how you can make a lasting impact beyond your lifetime.

To receive your free copy, or for a confidential discussion about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Jacqueline Hamilton on 02 4921 8612 or email [bequests@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:bequests@newcastle.edu.au)

# DIPG: THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE GIVING

It takes a village to raise a child and in some cases that village becomes something truly remarkable.

As a cancer researcher initially focussed on blood cancers, alumnus Associate Professor Matt Dun’s research took an unexpected turn in 2018 when his daughter Josephine was diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG).

Associate Professor Dun (Doctor of Philosophy, 2012; Bachelor of Biotechnology (Honours), 2008; Bachelor of Biotechnology, 2007) has since joined the forefront of DIPG research worldwide to investigate timely and innovative anti-DIPG therapies to improve the current standard of care, treatment and management of this deadliest form of childhood cancer.

Associate Professor Dun’s research has led to the establishment of two international clinical trials using new drugs he identified. These drugs now form the backbone of a combination therapy clinical trial for children and young adults diagnosed with DIPG; a clinical trial that is now open in 32 hospitals around the world, including in Australia.



“Thanks to the generous support my team and I have received over the last five years, we have made giant strides towards improving the outcomes for children diagnosed with DIPG. Although we have a long way to go, I feel pride in what we have achieved already and honoured that our community could play a direct role in helping us to develop treatments I hope will lead to long term survival.”

Associate Professor Matt Dun  
NHMRC Investigator Emerging Leader  
School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy

## YOUR COLLECTIVE SUPPORT IS HAVING A POWERFUL IMPACT

Thank you to everyone who generously donates to Associate Professor Matt Dun’s DIPG research.

- ChadTough Defeat DIPG Foundation
- Charlie Teo Foundation
- CureCell
- DIPG Collaborative
- Edie’s Kindness Project
- Isabella and Marcus Foundation (via Australian Communities Foundation)
- John Hunter Hospital Charitable Trust
- Kazia Therapeutics Limited
- Little Legs Foundation
- Liv Like a Unicorn Foundation
- Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee Incorporated
- McDonald Jones Charitable Foundation
- RUN DIPG
- Strategic Group
- The Blackjack Foundation
- The Hirsch Family Funderpants (via good2give)
- The Kids’ Cancer Project
- Tour De Cure
- Yuvaan Tiwari Foundation (via the Pacific Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Consortium Foundation)
- Donors from the community

## TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE

DIPG research at the University of Newcastle is funded by a village of individuals and organisations whose contributions, large and small, enable Associate Professor Dun and his team to advance how we understand and treat this currently incurable disease.

In recent years, generous donations to the University of Newcastle directed to support Associate Professor Dun’s DIPG research have contributed more than \$2.3 million to improve treatment outcomes for patients and families affected by DIPG.

To hear more stories about the remarkable research happening at the University, visit [newcastle.edu.au/research/stories](http://newcastle.edu.au/research/stories)



# EMPOWERING TEACHERS TO EMPOWER EACH OTHER

The pandemic highlighted the value of teachers like no other time in recent history. University of Newcastle education researchers and the Paul Ramsay Foundation have supported them every step of the way.

Empowering teachers to empower each other is the philosophy at the heart of the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) program.

Developed by Laureate Professor Jenny Gore and colleagues from the University of Newcastle, the program puts high-impact, evidence-backed professional development directly in the hands of teachers, empowering them to enrich student learning through collaborative, teacher-driven analysis and refinement of practice.

In 2018, the Paul Ramsay Foundation partnered with the University through a \$17.4 million philanthropic investment to expand QTR and investigate its impact over a five-year period. More than 3,200 teachers and 400,000 students Australia-wide have since benefited from the program. The evidence shows increased student achievement, improved quality of teaching and enhanced teacher morale and school culture after just four days of school-based QTR.

The partnership has also enabled development of a fully online form of QTR to ensure access for all teachers, including those in small schools and rural and remote communities.



## STUDENTS ARE THE ULTIMATE BENEFICIARIES OF QUALITY TEACHING

Research shows the ground-breaking QTR program improves student outcomes by up to 25%.

These results are even stronger in disadvantaged schools, further supporting the Paul Ramsay Foundation's aim to break cycles of disadvantage.



**“Thanks to the support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation, we are delivering a rare level of impact for research in education and making a difference for teachers and students nationally.”**

Laureate Professor Jenny Gore  
School of Education  
College of Human and Social Futures



Scan to see how Quality Teaching Rounds are being implemented at Cessnock High School

The QT Academy was launched in 2020 as an initiative of the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre at the University of Newcastle in partnership with the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The Academy delivers powerful professional development that translates the Centre's rigorous research into practical workshops and resources for teachers and school leaders.

The Paul Ramsay Foundation has a strong record of supporting initiatives that aim to break cycles of disadvantage in Australia. The partnership has been central to achieving positive outcomes for teachers and students. We are so grateful for the Foundation's generosity in sharing our vision.

To learn more about the Quality Teaching Rounds, visit [newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/teachers-and-teaching/quality-teaching-rounds](http://newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/teachers-and-teaching/quality-teaching-rounds)

# A NEW GENERATION BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE



Emily Connell (left) is pictured here looking at "Australian Lepidoptera and their Transformations" from 1864 with Paige Wright (right), Manager, Special Collections.

What began as a passion for history is fuelling the careers of future historians through the Vera Deacon Regional History Fund. Emily Connell is our first Vera Deacon Intern. Emily's work involves making our region's cultural heritage accessible to students, researchers, academics and the community through the University of Newcastle's Special Collections.



Emily is currently in her third year of a Bachelor of Arts degree, studying a double major of English and Creative Writing and History and a minor of Ancient History. We asked her to share her experiences.

## Why work with historical collections?

It is a special opportunity to bring forgotten stories back to life. To me that is one of the most important things a person with a passion for history can do.

## What are you enjoying most about the internship?

I find something every day that makes my hairs stand on end! Working on the Elma Gibbs collection has been very exciting. She was a much-loved female radio presenter in Newcastle through the 1920s and 1930s. To lay out the career and life of someone so special, with documents and artefacts graciously donated by her family, and see the love and warmth the city had for this wonderful woman is an absolute honour.

## How has Vera Deacon's legacy shaped you?

It has highlighted the immense care with which history must be handled, and the importance of telling stories that may otherwise be lost to time. I hope Vera Deacon would know what an honour it is to carry out this work in her name. It truly feels like standing on the shoulders of a giant!

Personally, I've gained hands-on experience which I can apply to my future career; skills I would not have learned without Vera's philanthropic generosity. It's helped me feel incredibly prepared for the future and how working with history and cultural heritage can be translated into a career.

## What would be your dream job?

I would absolutely love to continue working with the University of Newcastle after I graduate and hope to keep curating stories that bring local histories back to life.

## Why do you think cultural gifts are so important?

Making history accessible allows us to connect with the past in ways that are not always possible through books or photos. I hope to be able to provide that interactivity and connection into future jobs after I graduate.

If you would like to donate to the Vera Deacon Regional History Fund, visit [veradeacon.donate.newcastle.edu.au](http://veradeacon.donate.newcastle.edu.au), contact Bec Stone on 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)



# SHAPING A BETTER TOMORROW TOGETHER

On Gifting Day, 9 March, our global community came together to make a collective impact through kindness. And what a day it was. Together we showed the extraordinary power of collective action – **raising an incredible \$323,118 in 24 hours.**

More than 2,500 donors, alumni, staff, students, volunteers, ambassadors, event participants and live stream viewers came together across 10 countries with a common goal: to shape a better tomorrow.

Here’s how your generosity is already creating positive and lasting impact across our community and beyond.

## SHAPING FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

Your remarkable generosity raised **\$54,245** for Shaping Futures Scholarships and had an amazing impact which allowed:

- 13 additional scholarships to be created for students in need
- more support to be directed to students in need from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds
- more support to be directed to our Central Coast students
- even more support for students facing hardship, including students with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.



📷 Gifting Day was a mix of fun and philanthropy – supporters are shown here in the photobooth.

## 2NURFM

You raised **\$72,914** for 2NURFM, supported by Brian McGuigan AM who generously matched donations up to \$25,000, to upgrade their equipment and create an enhanced listener experience. Stay tuned for better sound quality, live-streaming cameras and improved lighting so listeners can catch all the action as it happens.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH RESEARCH

You helped raise **\$45,177** to drive life-changing outcomes through important health initiatives, with the Aspen Foundation generously matching donations up to \$25,000. Your generous donations have established a dedicated role to focus on the design and implementation of regional, place-based strategies to strengthen Aboriginal Health Research, while also acting as a resource for the Community.

Two grants have been established for Aboriginal Community-led Research, creating a process to allow Communities to commission health research. We are working with the Awabakal Medical Service (Hunter Region) and the Yerin Eleanor Duncan Medical Service (Central Coast) to focus on research areas that are important to the Community.

## SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

Your generosity, combined with generous support from Google who matched donations up to \$25,000, raised **\$37,068** to inspire students through the Science and Engineering Challenge. Over 5,000 students have been involved in the Challenge this year, including high numbers of girls and students from regional, rural or remote areas. Thank you for inspiring a new generation to consider a future career in science and engineering.

## ALUMNI HOUSE

As a community you helped raise **\$64,942** for Alumni House, a place for connection, celebration and conversation. This includes generous support from Professor Alex Zelinsky AO and his wife, Olga. These funds will help to create facilities such as a mentoring pod where alumni can give back their time and expertise to students.

## HUNTERWISE

You raised **\$2,340** to support and empower women in STEM. Your generous donations will help our teachers and researchers inspire even more young women in the early years of high school to pursue a career in STEM.



📷 Contestants in the obstacle course donated their winnings to one of the nine Gifting Day projects .

## COLLEGE OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL FUTURES SHAPING FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

Your kindness raised **\$7,197** to support students and remove barriers to achieving academic success in higher education. Two additional scholarships will be created for students in need.

## EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

Your generosity, with matched donations from the University’s Academic Division, raised **\$29,000** to support students through Excellence Scholarships, helping high achieving students continue to exceed expectations and create positive change.

## AREA OF GREATEST NEED (ENDOWMENT FUND)

Together you raised **\$10,235** to support our Area of Greatest Need. Your generosity will advance the University’s work and our goal of enriching and strengthening our valued communities by helping us adjust and thrive in a changing world.



“I was fortunate to be awarded three Shaping Futures Scholarships during my university studies which greatly helped to positively change the trajectory of not only my life, but also both of my daughters.

I am proud of my achievements and could not have done it without the support of Shaping Futures Scholarships. That is why I chose to be an ambassador and donor for Gifting Day – to give others the chance I had.”

Shantelle Common - shown here with her daughter Charlie  
Bachelor of Social Science, 2020  
Gifting Day ambassador and donor

To find out more about Gifting Day and how you can be involved, go to [giftingday.newcastle.edu.au](https://giftingday.newcastle.edu.au) or contact Bec Stone by calling 02 4921 8612 or emailing [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)



# WORLD-FIRST PAIN-FREE DIABETES TEST

Painful tests may soon be a thing of the past with University of Newcastle researchers developing a world-first, pain-free diabetes test, set to change the lives of more than 460 million people living with diabetes globally.

The new test replaces painful finger-prick blood glucose testing with an ultra-thin, chewing gum stick-sized device that, when licked, reacts to detect glucose at the 100 times less concentrated levels found in saliva.

Physicist and research leader, Professor Paul Dastoor, and his team at the Centre for Organic Electronics are working closely with their commercial partner on a purpose-built manufacturing facility in the Hunter after securing a \$6.3 million Australian Government Modern Manufacturing Initiative grant.

The world-class facility will help to transition twenty years of research from the lab to retail shelves. Construction will begin this year, with the first devices due to roll off the production line by 2023.

“Having a dedicated manufacturing facility for biosensors in the Hunter will enable us to dramatically ramp up production of the saliva biosensor to meet global demand and empower more people to monitor their own health,” Professor Dastoor said.

The sensors represent a fundamental shift in disease management, removing typical barriers to health testing such as pain, cost and availability. They could be developed for application across 130 indications including tumour markers, hormones and allergens – with huge potential for gathering information related to disease management across the world.



Painful diabetes testing, as shown here, will no longer be necessary thanks to the work of Professor Paul Dastoor and his team, who are developing a saliva glucose biosensor.



“It’s exciting because the biosensor is a ‘platform technology’ that can be used to detect various substances that identify diseases including cancer, heart disease and allergies.

The potential to revolutionise care for patients, caregivers and health carers is huge.”

Professor Paul Dastoor  
School of Information and Physical Sciences  
College of Engineering, Science and Environment

Has your life been touched by diabetes?  
Would you like to find out more about this research and the many possibilities it offers?



Scan to register for a free community webinar with Professor Paul Dastoor on 2 February, 2023

## IMAGINE THE POTENTIAL

Philanthropic support for research projects provides significant resources to support further discoveries. It also enables our researchers to apply for Australian Government funding through research block grants – increasing the impact of your support and helping to change more lives sooner.

If you would like to contribute to extending this research, please go to [newcastle.edu.au/biosensor-research-donation](http://newcastle.edu.au/biosensor-research-donation)

# LOCAL SHOREBIRD RESEARCH TAKES FLIGHT



The plight of our smallest intrepid adventurers is under the spotlight with the inaugural University of Newcastle Australian Wildlife Society Research Conservation Scholarship awarded to PhD candidate Louise Williams.

A lifelong and passionate ornithologist, Louise hopes to improve our understanding of shorebird behaviour and ecology to shape how we support conservation of migratory shorebirds in Australia.

While the Hunter and Port Stephens estuaries have been identified as key biodiversity areas for migratory shorebird conservation globally, they are also regions where multiple shorebird species are in decline.

Louise’s research aims to fill the gap in what we know about habitat use, movement, foraging ecology and predation risk to inform local action plans and help conserve these threatened species.



“I’m passionate about conservation science and have dedicated my life to birds. This scholarship will allow me to focus on my studies and produce a body of research to be proud of that will help protect native species.”

Louise Williams  
PhD (Environment Science) candidate  
College of Engineering, Science and Environment  
2022 Australian Wildlife Society Research Conservation Scholarship recipient

Louise Williams is passionate about supporting the conservation of migratory shorebirds in the Hunter and Port Stephens region. She is honoured to receive the inaugural Australian Wildlife Society Research Conservation Scholarship which will alleviate some of the stress associated with working part-time while studying full-time for her PhD. Photo by Louise Williams.

## MIGHTY MINI AVIATORS

Native shorebirds can weigh as little as 30 grams and migrate 25,000 km annually. Some species fly more than 6,000 km non-stop. Migratory shorebirds are in sharp decline worldwide and within the East Asian Australasian Flyway due to habitat loss and predators.

“Migratory shorebirds are amazing. They help keep our waterways healthy, transporting nutrients from one region to another, and their gracefulness and long-distance flights are awe-inspiring. Building a body of knowledge will help conservation managers restore and protect these vital habitats for future generations.”

Generously funded by the Australian Wildlife Society, the Australian Wildlife Society Research Conservation Scholarship is open to University of Newcastle students undertaking a research project in the Hunter Valley Region which has a direct relevance to the conservation of Australia’s native wildlife.

If you are interested in establishing an undergraduate or PhD scholarship, please contact Leanne Innes on 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)



# COMMUNITY CONNECTS TO VISION FOR ALUMNI HOUSE

Community support is building around Alumni House, with the exciting project attracting generous support from University of Newcastle alumni and community members who share the vision of connection and celebration.

We are honoured to recognise the \$1 million foundational donation from alumnus Jeff McCloy (Bachelor of Engineering, 1973) and his family. This significant gift will help to provide important facilities and opportunities for students, alumni and our broader community while inspiring other donors to support this exciting project. We thank the McCloy family for their generous support, the wonderful demonstration of their belief in the power of education, and for being part of our University community.

We would also like to express our gratitude to alumna Noni Purnomo (Honorary Doctor of Letters, 2019; Bachelor of Engineering, 1995) for her generous gift to Alumni House which demonstrates her commitment to sustainability and inclusion. It is wonderful to see our global community coming together to support this exciting project.

Philanthropic support for Alumni House will be pivotal in creating a physical and virtual space to bring alumni, business and the wider community together. It will also provide space for loved ones to recognise and celebrate important connections, like Elizabeth and David Graham, who have chosen to honour their late mother through a gift to Alumni House.



These concept images show how Alumni House's purpose-built spaces will provide a warm and welcoming home for alumni to connect, celebrate and further their careers while sparking new connections for our wider community.



**“I am proud to support Alumni House – it will help to connect me back to my University and be a home for all alumni when we return to Newcastle.**

**It will provide students with mentoring and support, and give alumni access to**

**resources and networking opportunities, wherever we are. As a warm, welcoming and culturally responsive space, it will ensure that everyone belongs. This building will celebrate all that we, as alumni, have achieved and continue to achieve. This is an inspiring project that will contribute to alumni, students, the University and the wider community.”**

**Noni Purnomo**  
Honorary Doctor of Letters, 2019;  
Bachelor of Engineering, 1995  
President Commissioner, Bluebird Holding Group  
Board Member of Australia Indonesia Institute

## HONOURING A LEGACY OF CONNECTION

Alumna Carol Graham (nee Eastham; Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Economics, 1968) was a bright young student who enjoyed challenging herself and learning new skills. After graduation, she embarked on a career in the exciting new industry of computer programming, while helping behind the scenes in the family clothing business, Eastham’s. Carol met and fell in love with her husband Ian (Master of Science (Physics), 1970; Bachelor of Science with Honours in Physics, 1967) at the University of Newcastle and the couple had two children, David and Elizabeth, who she adored. Tragically, Carol died in a car accident in 1983.

**“When we heard about the plans for Alumni House, we loved the idea that Mum’s life could be honoured in a place for new and future students that was so connected to her history,”**

**says Carol’s daughter, Elizabeth Graham.**

“Carol loved her time at the University of Newcastle, especially the friends she made. She would be delighted to know she was helping students past and present to connect. Perhaps Alumni House will help launch a few more love stories!”



Scan to learn more about the Alumni House campaign

As part of the University’s commitment to recognise every donor for their generous support, the family is pleased that Carol’s legacy will be recognised through a named mentoring space within Alumni House.

With your help, we hope to raise \$10 million and enable more alumni and friends to show their enduring commitment to our University and our community through the Alumni House project.

For further information on how you can help to bring this exciting project to life visit [newcastle.edu.au/alumni-house](http://newcastle.edu.au/alumni-house)



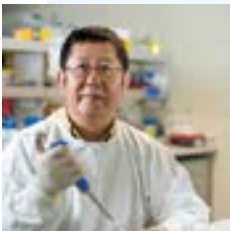
# GENEROUS GIFTS TO CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF GOOD



To mark 40 years since they began in 1982, the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee set their minds on another remarkable milestone – raising an incredible \$400,000 for cancer research at the University.

The Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee is known as a powerhouse of good for its remarkable community fundraising and passionate drive to fund cancer research.

The Committee’s support will enable researchers in each area to continue their important work, which includes testing different drugs and delivering clinical trials to cancer patients. Since 2000, the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee has donated over \$2 million to cancer research in the Hunter region, with \$1 million directly gifted to support cancer research at our University. We are so grateful for their ongoing support and remarkable contribution.



“With the generous support of the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee, we are conducting innovative research to improve the outcome of patients with lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer death in Australia. We are so grateful for the Committee’s support.”

Professor Xu Dong Zhang

The Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee members Fay Murray, Lesley Flannery and Ingrid Heyman are pictured above. Through their op shop and home laundry linen service, the Committee are raising funds to support breakthroughs in cancer research.

## FUNDING HOPE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Earlier this year, four University of Newcastle researchers were each presented with \$100,000 of generous philanthropic funding to advance cancer research and boost the hope of cancer patients in our region and around the globe.

The four recipients were:

- **Associate Professor Matt Dun** for DIPG Research
- **Professor Nikola Bowden** for Ovarian Cancer Research
- **Professor Hubert Hondermarck** for Pancreatic Cancer Research
- **Professor Xu Dong Zhang** for Lung Cancer Research

Learn more about supporting our research at [newcastle.edu.au/engage/make-a-gift/support-our-research](http://newcastle.edu.au/engage/make-a-gift/support-our-research)

# A PASSION FOR EQUITY THAT CONTINUES TO CHANGE LIVES



Warm of heart, mighty of spirit and a champion of the University for all its days.

We sadly said goodbye to alumnus Dr Bernard ‘Bernie’ Curran AM (Doctor of Philosophy 1974, Bachelor of Arts 1968) last year, but his legacy lives on, including through the Dr Bernard Curran AM Memorial Fund. The Fund will provide an annual named Shaping Futures Scholarship to support our students from diverse backgrounds who have overcome barriers to education.

More than 200 generous people have contributed over \$75,000 to the Fund so far, ensuring that Bernie’s passion for equity can continue to change lives.

It is an honour to announce the inaugural recipient of the Dr Bernie Curran AM Shaping Futures Scholarship. Congratulations to alumna Donna (Bachelor of Aboriginal Professional Practice, 2018), who is studying a Bachelor of Criminology to pursue her dream of working in the corrective justice system.

Donna is a full-time carer for her son who has Autism. The scholarship has allowed her to purchase course textbooks and other important resources.

“I am thrilled to be the fortunate recipient of the Dr Bernie Curran AM Shaping Futures Scholarship. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank the donors of this scholarship for their generosity and their selfless contribution to my studies at the University of Newcastle.”

Bernie Curran has left an enduring legacy. He was deeply committed to community engagement and sport at the University and advocated tirelessly for equitable access to higher education.

“For me, education is really important as I believe it has the power to transform people’s lives. I am the daughter of an Aboriginal man who only received five years of schooling.

I feel extremely privileged to be receiving a tertiary education at the University of Newcastle and hope to do as well as I possibly can. The Dr Bernie Curran AM Shaping Futures Scholarship will help me to achieve this.”

Donna

If you are interested in supporting the Dr Bernard Curran AM Memorial Fund, go to [newcastle.edu.au/bernard-curran-donation](http://newcastle.edu.au/bernard-curran-donation)



# RESEARCHERS BANK ON IVF TO **SAVE KOALAS**



Koalas are one of our most treasured species, but their dwindling numbers has prompted a race against time to protect their precious genetics.

Researchers from the University of Newcastle’s School of Environmental and Life Sciences are working on a long-term solution to secure the future of our national icon.

Postdoctoral researcher Dr Ryan Witt, and colleagues are proposing to freeze koala sperm and then apply assisted reproductive technologies – like human IVF – to inject much-needed genetic diversity and boost dwindling koala populations.

Genetic issues in koalas caused by inbreeding can lead to reproductive dysfunction and infertility, compromising survival rates, disease resistance and koalas’ ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Developing a biobank of live koala genetics to impregnate female koalas in breed-for-release programs could give koalas a much better chance of survival.

“Traditional captive breeding programs, like those used in zoos, are expensive and they don’t address many of the issues with koala genetics due to an inability to hold large numbers of animals in captivity,” Dr Witt explains.

An estimated 61,000 koalas were caught in the 2019/2020 Australian bushfires and more than 5,000 died. Unless there is urgent human intervention and more research, studies have predicted that koalas could be extinct in NSW by 2050.



Would you like to find out more about koalas in NSW?  
Scan to register for a free community webinar with Dr Ryan Witt on 30 November, 2022

📷 Researchers and alumni Dr Ryan Witt and Dr Lachlan Howell (Doctor of Philosophy, 2022; Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management (Hons), 2016; Bachelor of Social Science, 2015) with koala Peter Lemon Tree at Port Stephens Koala Hospital – one of 16 wildlife hospitals and zoos identified across Australia that could help collect koala sperm and integrate assisted reproduction.

**“More research and funding is essential to tweak existing assisted reproduction technologies and leverage the tools we already have, before we lose Australia’s wild koalas for good.”**

**Dr Ryan Witt**  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
School of Environmental and Life Sciences  
Doctor of Philosophy, 2018  
Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management (Honours), 2014  
Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management, 2012  
Bachelor of Social Science (Recreation & Tourism), 2008

“The beauty of applying assisted reproductive technologies to koalas is that many of the foundations have been laid. By using frozen sperm, we could reintroduce genetic variation into wild koala populations that are declining rapidly without having to relocate koalas.”

While koalas will continue to face threats, using IVF technology will lower the cost of breeding programs and free up valuable conservation funding to support other koala conservation efforts such as habitat restoration. The hurdle is trying to freeze koala sperm and make use of it – which is where more research is needed.

If you would like to contribute to extending this research, please visit [newcastle.edu.au/koala-research-donation](http://newcastle.edu.au/koala-research-donation)

# **POWERFUL ARTWORKS** ADD PUNCH TO COLLECTIONS

Cultural gifts through the University represent a unique opportunity to showcase significant Australian artists and preserve our cultural heritage for future generations. For artists, making a cultural gift may also provide valuable opportunities to develop their practice by working alongside University staff to curate and exhibit their work.

The richly-patterned storytelling of Newcastle artist James Drinkwater delivered both a stunning visual showcase and lasting cultural legacy, following his exhibition at the University’s Watt Space Gallery earlier this year.

Drinkwater’s generous gift of three paintings from *THE BOXER / ROUND 2 - old photos make me cry* exhibition will add further depth to the University’s Art Collection and sit alongside other gifted works by nationally significant artists including Virginia Cuppidge, Mazie Turner and John Peart.

The pieces feature Drinkwater’s signature power and colourful style and explore the threads of familial lore and the legends surrounding Drinkwater’s enigmatic uncle, Greg, whose short life was played out through the poetry of the everyday.



📷 James Drinkwater *Angry Eyes Implored*, 2021, oil on linen 210x130cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Dean Beletich.



📷 Newcastle local James Drinkwater, shown here in the studio, is a nationally significant artist whose work is held in major collections around the world. Photograph by Ben Adams.



**“James Drinkwater’s richly layered paintings tell important stories about place, family and memory. His voice is unmistakable and we are honoured James has chosen to publicly share his work with our community and Australia through the University Art Collection.”**

**Gillean Shaw**  
University Art Curator  
Master of Fine Art, 2003  
Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours), 1999  
Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts), 1998

To learn more about cultural gifts and their impact, please contact Kade Hinds on 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)



# WHY I DONATE



“I’ve worked with asylum seeker students at the University of Newcastle and seen some of the difficulties they face. So I was excited to be involved in setting up a program to provide extra support for students in similar situations.

The Scholarship for Asylum Seekers Program addresses the educational barriers faced by people seeking asylum. This wrap-around program covers tuition fees, provides financial support and also gives each student access to a coordinator. This means students receive individual support to navigate academic, social, psychological and financial challenges they may face.

I’m passionate about social justice, and I work in equity in higher education and am very passionate about that too. Donating to the Scholarship for Asylum Seekers Program gives me a chance to support those things in action at the Uni.

When I work with the students, I get to see the difference this program makes for them. One of the big things is that this is a group that actually almost definitely couldn’t go to Uni without this support. There are also great flow on effects – a lot of students have families they are supporting. I think it makes a big difference not just for the student, but their families as well.”

#### Emily Fuller

Live, Learn, Grow Program Facilitator  
Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education  
University of Newcastle



Janet's father with her two daughters.

“My husband and I decided that we wanted to contribute to causes that are important to our family. We sat down with our two daughters, who are in their twenties, to talk about causes we are connected to and passionate about.

My father sadly passed away following a brain tumour in August 2006 when our daughters were five and eight years old. My daughter, Maggie, is now studying at the University of Newcastle. We looked at the body of brain research at the University, and the work on mental health – which was also important to my daughters. Making these connections between our giving, our family and our passions adds personal importance to our contribution.

My daughters wanted to make sure that the money was used for research. Emma is a nurse, and Maggie is studying nursing. They wanted to focus on the root cause, and so the Centre for Brain and Mental Health Research really resonated with us.

We gave this gift to improve research, insights and outcomes for mental health and brain research. We hope it will help to support breakthroughs from a cancer perspective and promote better mental health.”

#### Janet Stanley

## WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

Everyone has a unique story about why they donate through the University of Newcastle, and we would love to hear yours! Please email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au) or call 02 4921 8612

## HOW TO MAKE A GIFT

### DONATE ONLINE

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

### EMAIL

Contact us at:  
[donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)

### TELEPHONE

Call us on: +61 2 4921 8612

### MAIL YOUR CHEQUE TO:

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

### IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO RECEIVE THE GIFT BY EMAIL

Please contact us at  
[donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au)

Tax deductibility: Donations of \$2 or more to the University of Newcastle may be eligible deductions for income tax purposes under the Income Tax Act 1997. Privacy: The University of Newcastle complies with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. Your personal information will be securely stored.

UON 2022 1202 | 20221010-12:04 | CRICOS Provider 001093