

# THE GIFT

## THANK YOU FOR BUILDING BETTER FUTURES

Inside this edition:

- Teaching financial skills for life
- Research to improve health in regional areas
- Breaking down barriers to employment
- And much more...

ALSO INSIDE:  
**2025 REVIEW OF THE YEAR**

Demonstrating the impact of your generosity



UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE

**PHILANTHROPY NEWS**

How your generosity makes a difference

APRIL 2026 EDITION

# MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

For more than six decades, we have partnered with donors to drive transformational change in our communities. Our commitment to equity, excellence, engagement and sustainability continue to guide us as we look to the future.

Together, we are making higher education attainable for people who once believed it was out of reach. Groundbreaking research is addressing some of our most urgent human and environmental challenges. And community programs are delivering meaningful, systemic change – reaching people when and where they need it most.

I am proud to share that your collective generosity in 2025 enabled 532 students to receive life-changing scholarships, supported 55 areas of critical research and helped fund 47 projects benefiting our communities – thank you so much to our generous donors.

In this edition of The Gift, we highlight our long-standing partnership with the Greater Bank, which is equipping high school students with the skills and confidence to make informed financial decisions for their futures.

We share alumnus, Michael Wilson's journey to graduating from university and how that experience inspired his decision to leave a gift in his Will for future students studying environmental and life sciences – helping them overcome financial barriers to education.

You will read how support for the Unity Works program is breaking down barriers faced by migrants and refugees who are seeking meaningful employment – building confidence, opportunities and belonging in our communities.

We also explore how a visionary gift establishing a new PhD scholarship will advance research focused on improving health outcomes in regional and disadvantaged areas, ensuring geography and circumstance do not determine access to quality care.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to improving lives. My wife Olga, a proud alumna of the University, and I are honoured to be part of a philanthropic community whose generosity and kindness are building a better future for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Zelinsky'.

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

The University of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our footprint areas: Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, and Eora Nations. We also pay respect to the wisdom of our Elders past and present.

COVER IMAGE: Hunter School of the Performing Arts student, Scarlett at the Greater Bank Finance Lab located at the University of Newcastle's City campus.

# FROM MA & MORLEY SCHOLAR TO CHANGEMAKER

The Ma & Morley Scholarship Program's aim is to inspire, educate and cultivate the next generation of globally aware and socially conscious Australian leaders. Recent graduate, Dr Tanika Ridgeway, is already changing the way we approach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in Australia.

In the first weeks of working as a Junior Medical Officer, proud Worimi woman, Tanika was on her way home from a night shift when she made an important detour.

Sharing her experience with a brand-new cohort of Ma & Morley Scholars at their welcome event, felt like a full-circle moment for Tanika.

"I can remember my first day like it was yesterday, so it was important to me to welcome the new Scholars and show them what is possible," says Tanika.

Tanika says her Ma & Morley 'family' backed her through the intensity of completing her Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine, strengthening her confidence to lead with intention. Now completing her internship part-time as a Junior Medical Officer, Tanika is balancing training as a doctor, with her work as a researcher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through the University of Newcastle, alongside her cultural commitments and responsibilities to her community.

At the heart of her work is connection.

Tanika prioritises taking time to listen, to learn people's stories and to break down barriers so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel safe in healthcare.

"My passion is in systems change," Tanika says. "If we do health better, and truly listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, we will improve health outcomes. We need to take health back into our own hands."

"Being part of the Ma & Morley Scholarship Program affirmed that leadership in health doesn't have to look a certain way. It gave me confidence to pursue my path as an Aboriginal doctor and health researcher, committed to empowering communities to take sovereignty over their health."

**Dr Tanika Ridgeway**

2021 Ma & Morley Scholar

B Med Sc & Doctor of Medicine, 2025



Ma & Morley Ambassador, Dr Tanika Ridgeway, is already making a difference in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. She recently welcomed the newest cohort of Scholars, sharing how the Program gave her the confidence to lead with purpose.

## FROM ACTION PROJECT TO PUBLISHED RESEARCH

From 2023 to 2025, Tanika and fellow Scholar, Kayden Roberts-Baker (Wiradjuri), completed their Ma & Morley Action Project, alongside their work as Aboriginal Research Assistants. Using yarning circles, they privilege the voices of local Worimi and Awabakal community members in response to the proposed National Lung Cancer Screening Program.

Grounded in Indigenous Methodologies and community leadership, the project generated culturally responsive recommendations for how the program should be communicated and delivered, with equity, cultural safety and self-determination at its core.

These community-led insights culminated in Tanika's first-author publication in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (2025), titled *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices on the National Lung Cancer Screening Program: a qualitative study from Worimi and Awabakal country*.

To find out more about the Ma & Morley Scholarship Program, please visit [newcastle.edu.au/ma-morley](https://newcastle.edu.au/ma-morley).

# THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY



## YOUR SUPPORT

**\$27.1M**

in new gifts received for  
research, scholarships and  
community projects

**6**

gifts in Wills received  
to honour legacies  
beyond a lifetime

**55**

areas of research  
received vital funding

**47**

projects provided support  
to benefit the community



## SUPPORTER COMMUNITY

**1,412**

generous supporters

**5,384**

donations gratefully  
received

**423**

loyal alumni donors

**155**

kind staff donors



## ALUMNI

**207,000+**

valued members in our alumni community

**152**

countries represented

**739**

alumni kindly volunteered to support students and the community

**9,385+**

hours generously given



## STUDENTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**24%**

of the more than 31,200 domestic students were from a low socioeconomic status area

**40%**

of our undergraduate students were the first person in their family to attend university

**532**

students supported through scholarships funded by generous donors

**1,644**

students completed a free pathway program to gain entry to university

**214**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students supported through scholarships

**408**

scholarships available to support equitable access to education

# 2025

# THANK YOU

# UNITY WORKS TO UNLOCK TALENT AND BUILD BELONGING



The University of Newcastle has joined forces with the Scanlon Foundation to develop a life-changing program, helping migrants and refugees gain job skills and build connections with employers.

Across the Newcastle and Hunter Region, many migrants and refugees bring professional qualifications, valuable skills and years of workplace experience but still face significant barriers to securing meaningful employment. Limited access to professional networks, differences in workplace culture and English skills used in workplace settings can all create setbacks.

In the pilot round of the program, the Unity Works' team, Associate Professor Rachel Burke, Dr Alice Neikirk, and Dr Lan Nguyen, collaborated with more than 50 jobseekers from migrant and refugee backgrounds, working alongside community organisations, employers, and local industry partners to enhance pathways into meaningful employment.

As part of this initiative, the team also developed a suite of targeted resources designed to promote inclusive employment practices across the region. These resources were formally launched at an event attended by more than 100 local stakeholders, strengthening regional awareness and engagement with inclusive workforce development.

“By co-designing the program with community and local employers, we are working toward employment pathways that are more inclusive, more practical and aligned with community needs,” says Associate Professor Burke.

Participants in the Unity Works' pilot program work with employers and community partners to build skills, confidence, and pathways into meaningful employment.

We are grateful to the Scanlon Foundation for supporting this initiative that strengthens participation, inclusion and social cohesion in our communities. With this valued support, Unity Works is creating more than job opportunities: it is building confidence, connection and a sense of belonging for migrants and refugees.

Kee has more than 15 years' experience in international trade operations and speaks three languages including English. Yet after five years in Australia, and more than 50 job applications, she had secured only one interview.

Through Unity Works, Kee received targeted support to tailor applications, built confidence in presenting her international experience and gained exposure to Australian workplace expectations and professional networks. As a result, Kee has now secured a job in her chosen field.

If you would like to find a community project to support that aligns with your values, please contact our team on 02 4921 8612, email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au) or go to [newcastle.edu.au/donate](http://newcastle.edu.au/donate).

# POWERING POTENTIAL FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS

Building the skilled workforce Australia needs to develop reliable energy systems for the future requires a practical and enduring vision. Empowered by a Sir William Tyree Foundation Scholarship, third-year electrical engineering student Camden Ceccato is ready to meet the challenge.

The Sir William Tyree Foundation Scholarship Program in Electrical Engineering supports students from regional and remote areas – championing equity in higher education and strengthening the country’s future workforce in power engineering.

The scholarship combines financial support with opportunities for real-world industry experience through work placements.

For Camden, the scholarship has done more than ease the financial stress associated with study. It has accelerated his path into the engineering industry and given him confidence, knowing that people believe in his potential.

“I’m passionate about working on challenges that impact the way we generate, distribute and use electricity. My goal is to pursue a career in the field of power engineering, where I can contribute to developing reliable energy systems,” says Camden.

“Receiving this scholarship has made such a difference. The support has allowed me to focus more deeply on my engineering studies as I don’t need to work as many hours to cover my rent.

The scholarship has also allowed me to connect with like-minded students and senior engineers which led to 12 weeks of invaluable industrial experience. The support of this scholarship has shown me that someone believes in my potential, which has been highly motivating.”

#### Camden Ceccato

2024 Sir William Tyree Foundation Scholarship in Electrical Engineering Recipient

Bachelor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Honours) Student



◻ Sir William Tyree Foundation Scholarship recipient, Camden Ceccato (left) with Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Engineering, Science and Environment, Professor Craig Simmons (right) at the 2025 Scholars Ceremony.

## ADVANCING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Founded by the late Sir William (Bill) Tyree and his family, the Foundation has a long-standing commitment to education and research in engineering and medicine. Its support reflects an inspiring vision: backing capable students, strengthening the future workforce, and investing in communities through education.

Sir William’s daughter, and Chair of the Foundation, Robbie Fennell speaks with genuine pride about her interactions with scholarship recipients, saying “It’s truly inspiring to watch our scholars succeed and it’s a real privilege to play a part in their journey.”

Scholarships ensure talented students can thrive in education. If you are interested in establishing or supporting a scholarship, please contact our team on 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au).

# BANKING ON BRIGHTER FUTURES



Budgeting, saving, managing debt and spotting scams are essential life skills, but not everyone has the opportunity to develop them early in life. Thanks to a long-standing partnership between the University of Newcastle and Greater Bank, students are building the financial skills they need for the future.

Since 2018, over 9,000 high school students from across the Hunter, Central Coast and regional New South Wales have participated in the Greater Bank Finance Academy. This free, online and face-to-face financial literacy education program is designed to help students in Years 9 to 11 increase their knowledge and decision-making skills around money.

Ambassadors from the Greater Bank, alongside students from the Newcastle Business School, deliver workshops on topics ranging from budgeting and saving to investing and cybercrime.

## REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE

**43%** of people aged 18-24 years reported they could not meet their personal debt obligations.<sup>1</sup>

**Almost 30%** of high school student participants are in the 10% most disadvantaged socioeconomic areas of Australia.

High school students can attend the Greater Bank Finance Lab for mini lessons to help build the financial skills they need for the future.

This program enables University students to apply their studies, combining theoretical knowledge with practical examples to help young people plan for their futures.

“Learning financial literacy skills helps us manage our money, setting us up for a future where we don’t have to stress and we have time for the things we love,” says Scarlett, a student from the Hunter School of the Performing Arts.

“We are exceptionally proud of our partnership with the University of Newcastle, which has been built on our shared values and our commitment to providing accessible, high-quality educational opportunities that empower students to reach their full potential.

For many teens, saving for a car or earning money with a part-time job is often front of mind. Our program equips them with practical skills in saving, budgeting and credit to help set them up for success for years to come.”

**Emma Dumbrill**  
Greater Bank Financial  
Literacy Ambassador



## GREATER BANK FINANCE LAB

This successful partnership has also led to the establishment of the Greater Bank Finance Lab: a purpose-built, state-of-the-art teaching space located at the University’s Newcastle City campus. Designed for hands-on learning, the Lab features 20 workstations, large digital screens, and facilities that support remote teaching and collaborative research.

High school students can attend the Lab for mini lessons delivered by University Student Ambassadors. The Lab also supports University student learning by providing access to real-time and historical databases and market simulators. These tools allow them to test their classroom learning against the same kinds of tools used by investors and researchers globally, helping them be ‘tech-ready’ for digital futures.

“Joining the Greater Bank Finance Academy was an incredibly rewarding experience. It deepened my understanding of the critical importance of financial literacy for young adults, especially in today’s economic climate with rising inflation. The experience truly opened my eyes to the lifelong benefits of starting financial education at a young age,” says Sarah Merrill, alumna and former University of Newcastle Finance Academy Student Ambassador.

### OUR PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

**73** high schools reached

**250** workshops delivered

**71** Greater Bank Financial Literacy Ambassadors

**37** University of Newcastle Finance Academy Student Ambassadors

Students from the Hunter School of the Performing Arts pictured with Newcastle Business School Senior Lecturer, Dr Caitlin Mollica (second from left), Financial Literacy Program Coordinator, Kathy Rimmer (second from right) and Greater Bank Financial Literacy Ambassador, Emma Dumbrell (far right), are proud to play a role in increasing financial literacy for young people.

Together, these financial programs demonstrate what is possible when we partner to create meaningful, real-world learning experiences, build capability early and empower the next generation to make informed financial decisions.

“Our aligned strengths in education and engagement, alongside our mutual commitment to ensuring a better future for our regions, laid the foundations for a strong partnership between the University of Newcastle and the Greater Bank.

We are proud to play a role in increasing financial literacy within our communities, as well as providing our students with

experiences that mean they are community-minded and ready for work upon graduating.”



Professor James Skinner

Dean

Newcastle Business School

To learn more about how your business can partner to support an area you are passionate about, please contact our team on 02 4921 8612 or email [philanthropy@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:philanthropy@newcastle.edu.au).

# RESEARCH TO IMPROVE HEALTH IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES



A \$1.7 million donation from The Phare Trust will fund a new PhD scholarship supporting impactful research in health service delivery, health policy, workforce planning, and population health challenges in regional and disadvantaged communities.

Across Australia, people living in regional and disadvantaged communities face compounding barriers to good health. Poorer access to services, workforce shortages, higher out-of-pocket costs and longer wait times all point to the urgent need for better place-based solutions.

Professor Lisa Wood, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing, said the scholarship is an extraordinary opportunity to undertake research grounded in local need, and designed to make a practical difference in regional communities.

“After more than 20 years supporting healthcare in the Hunter Region, this gift reflects both the legacy of The Phare Trust and our confidence in the University of Newcastle’s ability to partner with community.

We want to see the work we began, continue, by supporting research that listens to local needs, strengthens primary healthcare, and turns knowledge into real-world impact for disadvantaged communities across the Hunter.”



Gavin Rose  
Director, The Phare Trust

📌 A generous gift from The Phare Trust is driving research to improve health outcomes in regional and disadvantaged communities.

“The Phare Trust’s visionary gift is an investment in the long-term health of our region. By supporting practical, place-based research, this scholarship will help generate the evidence needed to strengthen health services, workforce planning and policy in communities that too often experience poorer access and outcomes,” says Professor Wood.

Over more than 20 years, The Phare Trust has provided a multidisciplinary model of primary healthcare services in the Hunter Region, addressing workforce shortages, improving access, while supporting clinical education and research. With this gift, the Trust is investing in the next phase of impact – supporting research to strengthen the long-term sustainability of primary healthcare in regional communities for years to come.

- **27%** of Australians live in rural and remote areas.
- Rural and remote communities face **poorer health outcomes and poorer access to care** than people in metro areas.

In the most disadvantaged rural and remote areas:

- **27%** of people delayed dental care.
- **11%** of people delayed or missed medication due to cost.\*

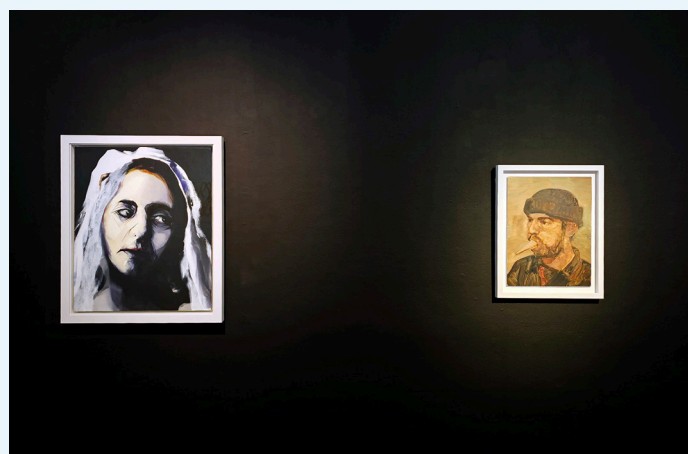
If you would like to support an area of research that is important to you and help improve lives, please contact our team on 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au).

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

A landmark gift is helping strengthen the cultural legacy that has shaped the University of Newcastle's long-standing commitment to Australian artists. Aaron and Samantha Sampson have generously donated 80 artworks to the University of Newcastle Art Collection: a significant contribution that reflects both the vitality of artistic practice in our region and the power of community support for the arts.

The donation includes works by leading Australian artists – many with strong Newcastle connections as alumni, educators and exhibiting artists – which were recently celebrated in FRAMED: The Sampson Collection, presented at the University Gallery.

“We took over 20 years building our collections from a range of wonderful artists,” says Aaron and Samantha.



Left: Nigel Milsom, *Untitled, n.d.*, oil on linen, 60 × 50 cm. Right: Nick Barlow, *Unicorn, n.d.*, oil on board, 41 × 31 cm. Donated by Aaron and Samantha Sampson through the Australian Government Cultural Gifts Program.

“Art is not peripheral to university life, but central to how we understand ourselves, our histories and our communities. More than an extraordinary gift of artworks, the Sampsons’ donation is an investment in creative and cultural engagement across our community and will provide opportunities for learning, reflection and connection for many years to come.”



**Gillean Shaw**

Art Curator at University Galleries  
BAVA, 1998; BFA(Hons), 1999; MFA, 2003



Installation view, works by: Brett McMahon, Alfonso Puautjimi, David Middlbrook, Nick Barlow, Dino Consalvo, Rachel Milne and John Olsen.

“Each artwork had a different origin story and they became part of our world. As the collection grew, we wanted it to receive the love it deserves.

These artworks are from many different artists – including students of the University – using different mediums and created at different times. We are delighted that the collection has a new, respected home in Newcastle, and we hope visitors can experience the passage of time through the collection.”

Cultural gifts through the University can preserve important artworks and place them at the centre of the community, where they can continue to inspire new conversations and new generations.

The University of Newcastle Art Collection has been at the heart of the University's cultural identity since 1965. It has grown over the years to include many works by significant Australian artists, with a focus on artists from the Newcastle and Hunter Region and on First Nations artists, ensuring regional stories and diverse creative voices are represented, shared and celebrated.

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

# BACKING RESEARCH FOR CHILDHOOD BRAIN CANCER

A new PhD scholarship to honour the legacy of the late Robert (Bob) Edwards is backing research at the University of Newcastle to develop urgent treatments for childhood brain cancer.

For children diagnosed with Diffuse Midline Glioma (DMG), an aggressive type of cancer that forms in the brainstem and currently has no cure, time is precious. The Bob Edwards & Family PhD Scholarship in Paediatric Cancer will support research within the Paediatric Stream of the Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research at the University of Newcastle.

Using stem-cell-derived brain and tumour models, PhD candidate and scholarship recipient, Emma de Somer, will test new drugs to block a troublesome signalling protein that helps tumour cells hide from the immune system. Her research aims to reveal how to make these tumours visible to the immune system, and to identify markers that show when treatments are working, paving the way for more targeted immunotherapies for children facing this otherwise fatal cancer.

“I was initially drawn to this project by the heart of the team behind it. This scholarship has given me the remarkable opportunity to work alongside dedicated researchers, where treatments and outcomes for patients and families are always at the centre of decisions.

As DMG is a highly aggressive cancer, it has the ability to adapt to treatments and hide from the immune system. Researching the cellular and systematic processes of DMG and the immune system, requires commitment. This scholarship allows me to focus on advancing scientific understanding to strengthen the fight against DMG,” says Emma.

“For children with DMG and their families, every advance matters. We thank the Edwards family for funding an emerging researcher, to move promising, patient-focused work forward faster, driving discovery and translation.”



**Professor Matt Dun OAM, PhD**  
Leader of the Paediatric Stream at the Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for Brain Cancer Research



Julie-Anne Edwards, pictured with her father, the late Robert (Bob) Edwards, is proud to continue his legacy by supporting research that brings real hope and better outcomes for children.

We are grateful to the Edwards Family for investing in research that offers new hope for children and their families facing paediatric brain cancer.

## A LIFE-CHANGING LEGACY

Bob Edwards believed that research should change lives. The Bob Edwards & Family PhD Scholarship in Paediatric Cancer honours his enduring commitment to advancing paediatric research, and supporting emerging researchers dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of children. Through this scholarship, his family continues to support work that brings real hope and better outcomes for children.

If you would like to support vital research to save and improve the lives of children with Diffuse Midline Glioma, please visit [newcastle.edu.au/donate](http://newcastle.edu.au/donate).

# A GIFT OF HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE



A decision to leave a gift in his Will to support students studying environmental and life sciences is ensuring alumnus Michael Wilson's enduring passion for the environment will continue beyond his lifetime.

Michael grew up in northern England, where high school students were typically divided between two paths: those who would attend university and those who would enter the workforce. At the time, higher education wasn't an option for Michael so he joined the world of work.

In 1979, Michael moved to Australia. He began his new life with a job washing dishes in Bondi. With hard work and determination, his career evolved and he became a pioneer in the Hunter Valley's olive industry.

**“For those considering leaving a gift in your Will, you will not only be leaving a gift of financial support, but you will also be sharing your dreams and aspirations with future generations – a gift of hope for a better future.”**

**Professor Clovia Holdsworth**  
Head of School  
School of Environmental and Life Sciences



**▶** After Michael's own journey through higher education, he chose to create opportunities for other students with his decision to leave a gift in his Will through the University of Newcastle.

Approaching retirement, Michael made a bold decision to enrol in Open Foundation, a free pathway program to higher education offered by the University of Newcastle. Fuelled by a lifelong passion for the environment, Michael went on to complete a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management.

While studying, Michael saw first hand the financial pressures faced by many of his fellow students. He noticed many left class early to go to work while others dropped out altogether due to financial hardship.

Inspired to make a difference, Michael chose to leave a gift in his Will to help students in need of support studying in the fields of environmental and life sciences at the University of Newcastle.

“I've decided to leave a gift in my Will to lift some of the financial burden for students. I got a lot out of university, and I'd like to give that opportunity to someone else,” says Michael.



**Scan the QR code**  
to watch Michael's story.

To find out how you can make a lasting impact beyond your lifetime through a gift in your Will, please contact Catherine for a confidential discussion on 02 4921 8612 or email [bequests@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:bequests@newcastle.edu.au).

# STRONGER TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITY



The Staff Donor Collective is a group of passionate colleagues from across the University creating positive change through their collective kindness.

With a regular donation from their fortnightly pay, they are helping students access higher education through scholarships, supporting life-changing research and backing programs that make our community thrive.

## Scott Imig

Professor, School of Education, College of Human and Social Futures

**Supports Shaping Futures Scholarships**



“Education is such a powerful way to positively change lives for individuals, families, and communities. During my career, I have seen many talented students leave university because they couldn’t make it work financially. I know students who must work 40 or more hours each week simply to pay the bills and stay in university. Supporting students who are working to build better lives for themselves and those around them feels like one of the most meaningful things we can do.”

## Kat Townsend

Project Officer, Communications, Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources

**Supports HunterWiSE**



“I believe that when we empower more women to enter and thrive in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), we're enriching the entire field with diverse perspectives and talents. Supporting HunterWiSE feels like investing in a future where science and technology truly reflect the brilliant minds of our whole community. HunterWiSE is such an important initiative, and knowing I could contribute consistently through the Staff Donor Collective made the decision effortless.”

## Josh Fry

Head of Alumni Engagement, Office of Alumni Engagement

**Supports Outreach for Women in the Hunter Experiencing Homelessness Program and the LGBTQIA+ Shaping Futures Scholarship**



“I donate to the Outreach for Women in the Hunter Experiencing Homelessness Program and the LGBTQIA+ Shaping Futures Scholarship because Australia still has serious work to do on safety, equity and opportunity, particularly for women and gender-diverse people. Support through the Staff Donor Collective is one way I can help drive the change we all want to see.”

## Miranda Stokes

Infrastructure and Facilities Services Procurement Officer

**Supports the Scholarship for Asylum Seekers Program**



“My grandmother was a passionate advocate for asylum seekers, and her values shaped the way I see the world. After she passed away, supporting this scholarship program through the Staff Donor Collective felt like a meaningful way to honour something she cared about so deeply.”

If you would like to support our students, research or community projects, please visit [newcastle.edu.au/donate](https://newcastle.edu.au/donate).

# CREATING CONFIDENCE IN STEM FOR GIRLS

With the support of industry partners and donors, HunterWiSE is expanding access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for girls in high schools across the region. The program is designed to help young women step into STEM with confidence – taking their ideas, skills and ambition to the next level through real projects, mentors and industry connections.

Founded in 2017 by seven female academics from the University of Newcastle, HunterWiSE represents a range of disciplines including engineering, chemistry, IT, computer science, psychological sciences, construction management and STEM education. The program has empowered more than 900 young women from 23 schools to see themselves in STEM and feel that they belong. During that time, more than 170 mentoring opportunities have also been made available for University of Newcastle students.

“By connecting classroom learning with industry environments and mentors, students can see how their ideas and skills translate into real-world impact. That experience can be transformative – it helps young women recognise the opportunities available to them through STEM,” says Leah Kiem, HunterWiSE Manager.

“Community support signals that there is a shared commitment to building a more diverse and inclusive STEM workforce. We are now beginning to see that belief come full circle, as some of the earliest participants in our programs complete their university studies and begin their careers in STEM.

By the end of 2026, more than 1,000 students will have completed the HunterWiSE program. With the backing of our industry partners and donors, we have been able to maintain a presence in regional areas such as the Upper

Hunter and Dungog, while also reaching students who may not otherwise have had access to these learning opportunities.”

Leah Kiem  
HunterWiSE Manager  
School of Engineering



Students from Dungog High School, Kallie (left) and Zali (right), work with their HunterWiSE mentor, Sarah on their award-winning biogas prototype, designed to support greener transport in their community.

## HUNTERWISE IN ACTION

An example of the program in action is an inspiring project developed by three students from Dungog High School – Zali, Kallie and Ellie – that addresses a local problem with a creative solution. Their project, the ‘Biogas Digester’, converts green waste into energy that could help power public transport in their community. Their idea tackles two local challenges: the lack of regular green-waste collection and limited public transport options in regional areas.

Mentored by Bachelor of Science student Sarah Kattau, who grew up in a regional community herself, the team went beyond theory to build a working prototype of their idea, winning the Outstanding Poster Award for their efforts. Their project demonstrates how we can all benefit from a future that encourages young innovators to use STEM to solve community issues.

If you would like to find a community program to support that aligns with your values, please contact our team on 02 4921 8612 or visit [newcastle.edu.au/donate](http://newcastle.edu.au/donate).

# WHY I DONATE



For almost 50 years, the University of Newcastle's radio station 2NURFM has been entertaining listeners and building community. Supporters Cheryl and Barrie Graves have been there since the beginning.

"It doesn't matter how much you've got, it's always nice to give a little bit to help others. If we can help keep 2NURFM on air – and keep bringing people together through great music, conversation and community – that makes us happy.

When 2NURFM was getting started in the late 1970s, we went along to a meeting at the University with Professor Godfrey Tanner and Nat Jeffries from NBN. It sounded like a great idea and something we could get involved in.

Fast forward all these years and we still listen to 2NURFM every day. We wake up to Breakfast with Todd Sergeant, listen to the Morning Show with Mark Rorke and catch up on the news with Ian Crouch.

The best thing about 2NURFM is the music. We love tuning in to hear songs that we know. Sunday Afternoon Country has been a favourite of ours for years.

*For Barrie and Cheryl, supporting 2NURFM is a way of giving back to the radio station that has been part of their daily lives since the 1970s.*

2NURFM does so much for the local community. They do a great job of getting to know their listeners and welcoming people to be part of the station. We've even been lucky enough to be drawn for Restaurant of the Month a few times, which is great fun.

We donate to 2NURFM because we get so much out of listening to the station and being part of the 2NURFM community. We are so proud to be part of the 2NURFM family and this is our way of giving back."

Cheryl and Barrie Graves

## 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 call 02 4921 8612 or email [donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:donor-relations@newcastle.edu.au).

## HOW TO MAKE A GIFT

### DONATE ONLINE

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

### EMAIL

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