



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA



2016 President's Report

A report of the
Alumni Advisory Committee



The year in review

It has been my privilege to serve as President since November 2013, following three years of general membership on the Alumni Advisory Committee (AAC). From the solid foundations established by previous members, the AAC continues to work closely with the Office of Alumni and Philanthropy in developing its strategic objectives, deepening key relationships with stakeholders, and engaging with University leadership on behalf of the University of Newcastle (UON) Alumni.

Serving the University as President of Alumni is an enormous privilege. Our successes as a committee is only possible due to the efforts of each member of the AAC, both past and present, and the commitment of the team in the Office of Alumni and Philanthropy as our essential and dedicated partners.

I would like to formally acknowledge and thank both Mrs Winnie Eley, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International and Advancement) and Ms Rebecca Hazell, Director of Advancement, for their unending support, and the resources provided by the Alumni team. I would also like to pay a special tribute to Ms Rosemary Thomson who, after nearly 10 years of dedicated service in developing and reinvigorating the alumni program, has chosen to leave UON. Rose worked tirelessly over many years to develop the Alumni and External Relations program at UON to be the success it is today. UON would not have achieved these successes without her dedication and the highly valued relationships she developed for UON during her time with us.

I also thank and acknowledge several senior staff who generously gave their time to present to the AAC at meetings throughout 2016, in particular Professor Caroline McMillen, Vice-Chancellor and President, and

Professor John Germov, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Education and Arts and Convenor of Strategy, who presented on the NeW Futures strategic plan and sought the Committee's feedback, and most recently, Professor Andrew Parfitt who discussed opportunities for alumni engagement on the Central Coast.

I am also grateful for the support of my AAC colleagues and the various UON Alumni Chapters and Networks with whom we engaged throughout 2016. With their input, we have been able to represent the views of a broad range of alumni, and through doing so increase the wealth of knowledge that helps to serve our Committee.

2016 Alumni Advisory Committee

Belinda Smith, President

Nick Killin, Vice-President

Brian Kennaugh, Immediate Past President

James Callender

John Church

Lillian Eastwood

Murray Evans

Belinda Grealy

Associate Professor Neil Morpeth

Meg Purser

James Tocci

Chad Watson



Strategic focus

During my third year as President of the Alumni Advisory Committee, the committee members and I have had the privilege to provide advice to the University on behalf of over 135,000 UON Alumni across more than 120 countries. We started the year with a strategic planning workshop to ensure clarity of the overall direction, manage members' and University's expectations, and identify tangible ways we could help alumni connect with UON in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way.

In 2016 we have focused on four key areas:

- 1. Strengthening engagement activities with the Alumni Award finalists and recipients**
- 2. Supporting the Hunter Alumni Network (HAN)**
- 3. Supporting the strategic positioning of UON's philanthropic objectives**
- 4. Increasing engagement and alumni participation to both external and internal stakeholders.**

On Thursday 25 August, the AAC held a meeting in Sydney followed by a networking event as part of the strategic plan to reinvigorate the alumni base in Sydney and showcase UON facilities in the city. The Office of Alumni and Philanthropy have since built relationships with key alumni based in Sydney with the aim of building a sustainable network. The AAC will continue to support this program and utilise a similar process of engagement for the Central Coast strategy.

In continuing to support student engagement, Belinda Grealy, an AAC member, volunteered along with 21 other alumni and professional volunteers at the Open Day Speed Mentoring Event. This event was a series of discipline-specific speed mentoring sessions between UON alumni and prospective students.

Several enhancements were made to the Alumni Awards Program to increase the reach and engagement opportunities. My thanks to everyone who prepared an Award nomination. What a wonderful response having received a record number of nominations from community members this year. It is humbling to read the calibre and wonderful achievements of our graduates and the impact they are having in our communities.

Looking ahead in our continued effort to support and improve the visibility and relationships of UON Alumni globally, the committee will continue to provide strategic positioning and advice during 2017. The Central Coast will be a major focus, connecting and partnering with our alumni to build a visible presence and network to support each other and the strategic direction of the University. The AAC will continue to support HAN in raising their visibility to alumni in the Hunter Region and provide advice on their 2017 engagement program along with our key focal areas that will arise.



The Alumni Awards program

The 2016 Alumni Awards Gala Dinner was an opportunity to recognise the extraordinary accomplishments of our alumni and the contributions they have made in the community across the globe. The evening was again hosted in the Great Hall on the University's Callaghan campus.

The "Connect to Greatness" theme was evident among the number of high calibre nominations that were received. The selection panel, consisting of 15 judges both internal and external to the University, had the extremely hard decision to review the nominations, using a new judging system to ensure transparency, finally announcing 25 finalists across the nine categories.

We were fortunate again this year to have our finalists return to Newcastle from across the globe, trekking all the way from Leeds in the United Kingdom, Singapore, Vanuatu, Cairns and of course, Lambton, NSW.

One of the new initiatives that occurred this year was 'Raising the Bar'. An event held on the eve of the Alumni Awards, showcasing six of our finalists in a relaxed environment, attracting over 160 guests engaging not only local alumni, but the broader community and current students as well.

My sincere thanks to our 2016 Alumni Award Corporate Sponsors for their continued support; Cutcher and Neale, GHD, Hunter Financial, Newcastle Airport and PwC.



2016 Alumni Award recipients

Alumni Medal for Professional Excellence

Professor ER Meng Hwa

PhD (Electrical and Computer Engineering) 1986

Newton-John Alumni Award

Conjoint Associate Professor Doug Absalom

PhD (Linguistics) 1977

Master of Arts 1971

Diploma in Education 1968

Bachelor of Arts 1967

Indigenous Alumni Award

Professor John Maynard

PhD (Aboriginal Studies) 2003

Diploma in Aboriginal Studies 1996

Alumni Award for International Leadership

Dr Suzanne Hill

Graduate Diploma in Epidemiology 1997

PhD (Medicine) 1994

Bachelor of Medicine 1982

Alumni Award for National Leadership

Dr Andrew Walker

Bachelor of Medicine 1987

Bachelor of Medical Science 1985

Alumni Award for Regional Leadership

Andrew Donaldson

Bachelor of Architecture 2005

Bachelor of Design (Architecture) 2001

Alumni Award for Exceptional Community Service

Dr Neelam Pradhananga

PhD (Architecture) 2011

Beryl Nashar Young Researcher Award

Dr Andrew Gardner

PhD (Medicine) 2015

Young Alumni Award

Dr Vincent Candrawinata

PhD (Food Science) 2015

Bachelor of Science (Food Technology) (Honours) 2011

Bachelor of Food Science and Human Nutrition 2010



The Alumni lecture

The 2016 Alumni Lecture was held in collaboration with the New Professor Talks on Wednesday 31 August, giving an opportunity for UON alumni to engage with the wider community. As President of the AAC, I introduced Professor Tania Sourdin (pictured above), who serves as the Dean and Head of Newcastle Law School.

Speaking to over 120 attendees at the event, Professor Sourdin presented the topic "What is Justice?" addressing the roles of lawyers and courts in the future of both Newcastle and the wider region.

This lecture brought together attendees from both within the University and the wider community, helping to build the profile of UON Alumni within Newcastle, and highlighting the outstanding calibre of UON Professors.

An abstract painting of a landscape. The foreground is dominated by large, textured brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, and brown, suggesting a rocky or uneven terrain. In the middle ground, there are patches of green and blue, representing grass or water. The background is a mix of light blue and white, with a faint, ethereal figure or shape in the upper right corner. The overall style is expressive and textured.

A shared future with our communities

Through reciprocity and commitment we work together with our partners to support the economic, social and cultural transformation of strong regional communities.

In looking to the future, we hope to reach, and build greater relationships with our vast community of alumni, both within our community and across the globe. The AAC welcomes the opportunity to support the initiatives of NeW Futures, the University's 10-year strategic plan, and the opening of NeW Space, the University's City campus in 2017. We will continue to work closely in partnership with our University Council and each of the Faculties to support the needs, innovations and opportunities of the University.

Belinda Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'B' and 'S' followed by a long, flowing horizontal line.

President
Alumni Advisory Committee
The University of Newcastle